



# ACT Government

## 2002-2003 BUDGET

### PROTECTING THE SAFETY OF OUR BLOOD SUPPLY

The ACT Government is allocating an additional \$450,000 a year to protect the quality and safety of the blood supply, Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, said today.

The ACT Budget 2002-03 provides recurrent funding for the implementation of a range of national strategies and actions to enhance services and products in the blood sector with a focus on the quality and safety of the blood supply.

“The transmission of HIV and hepatitis C through our blood supply, with its tragic consequences, has made it clear how vital it is that we act swiftly to protect the quality and safety of our blood supply.

“In a medical emergency the transfusion of blood can quite literally make the difference between life and death.

“It is therefore incumbent upon all Governments that we be proactive and vigilant in ensuring that our blood supply continues to be safe and readily available to save lives.

“Across Australia we now have excellent mechanisms for screening blood but we need to recognise that the blood sector is one of enormous and rapid change.

“The ACT’s commitment to the support of national strategies and initiatives in the blood sector means that ACT residents will have access to new and safer products in the future,” said Mr Stanhope.

The additional funding will be directed to a range of programs including the:

- Implementation of a national Australian Red Cross Blood Service computerised blood management system;
- Increased use of leucodepletion, a process which removes white blood cells from fresh blood products and reduces the risk of transfusion related adverse events associated with donor white blood cells;
- Increased use of recombinant Factors VIII and IX (clotting factors used by people with haemophilia), which are safer because they are not derived from blood products;
- Program to increase the production of Rh(D) immunoglobulin, to meet the NHMRC guidelines on the administration of Rh(D) immunoglobulin to all Rh negative women; and
- Fresh blood regulation to meet new Council of Europe guidelines.

**Statement ends 25 June 2002**



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