



BUDGET 2008 - 2009 READY FOR THE FUTURE MEDIA RELEASE

No. 9

\$889 MILLION INVESTMENT IN ACT HEALTH SERVICES

The Stanhope Government is ready for the future with a \$889 million investment in ACT health services in the 2008-09 Budget, to ensure that all Canberrans have access to a high quality and effective public health system now and into the future, Minister for Health Katy Gallagher said today.

“In the 2008-09 Budget, our health system is being positioned to better meet the needs of the ACT community now and into the next decade,” Ms Gallagher said.

“The *Your health-our priority* initiative provides \$300 million as the first investment, of many, to establish a health system for the next decade. This investment will see the Canberra Hospital reconfigured and redeveloped with a large investment to upgrade Canberra’s network of community health facilities.”

“This is the first phase of an anticipated \$1 billion investment in health infrastructure, Ms Gallagher said.

Major projects to be undertaken through this initial investment include:

- \$90 million for the Construction of a Women’s and Children’s Hospital;
- a \$37.6 million suite of mental health facilities, including the design of a Mental Health Young Persons’ Unit, an Adult Acute Inpatient Unit, a Secure Adult Unit, and a Mental Health Assessment Unit. This is in addition to the \$8.5 million over four years provided in recurrent funding to provide greater support for people with mental illness;
- \$9.4 million for an Intensive Care and High Dependency Unit at the Calvary Hospital;
- \$5.5 million for a new Neurosurgery Operating Theatre, integrated with “state of the art imaging systems;
- \$4.1 million for the construction of a Surgical Assessment and Planning Unit; and
- \$18 million for the Gungahlin Community Health Centre.

“This health infrastructure investment by the Stanhope Government will support the health workforce in improving health outcomes, including combating lifestyle diseases and mental health,” Ms Gallagher said. “It will also better enable the health system to meet emerging needs, such as ageing, while reducing the need for hospital care.”

A range of other important health initiatives will also be funded through the 2008-2009 Budget including:

- \$12.6 million over four years for better access to elective surgery;
- \$16.8 million over four years for up to 20 new inpatient beds at TCH;
- \$10.5 million over four years for increased critical care capacity;
- \$4.2 million over four years to improve cancer treatment services;

- \$5.9 million for a new Cardiac Catheter Laboratory;
- \$964,000 million for a public Sleep Studies Laboratory;
- \$4.2 million over four years to enhance aged-care specific health services;
- \$579,000 investment over four years to boost Palliative care services; and
- \$1.3 million for a new Skills Development Centre.

“The 2008-09 Budget will provide a real boost for mental health funding with a total of \$46 million over four years committed for new facilities and support services. This will, over time, include a new Young Person’s Unit, an Adult Acute Inpatient Unit, a Secure Adult Unit and a Mental Health Assessment Unit which will allow our mental health specialists to provide better services to those in need.

Over \$8 million over four years has also been committed to run the ACT’s expanded and enhanced mental health services. This includes community non-government services, enhanced ability for carer and consumer participation, enhanced access to community mental health care across the continuum with qualified and skilled staff.

“The Stanhope Government is committed to providing high quality and accessible hospital services. The 2008-09 Budget provides a further \$12.6 million over four years to reduce elective surgery waiting times through the provision of increased access to emergency surgery at our public hospitals. This will reduce elective surgery cancellations and help to maintain optimal elective surgery throughput.

This will mean that by the end of 2008-09, the Government would have achieved record levels of elective surgery by investing an additional \$49 million.

“Building on the additional 147 beds that the Government has opened, up to twenty new inpatient beds will be delivered at The Canberra Hospital, at a cost of \$16.8 million over four years.

“Critical care capacity across ACT public hospitals is also set to increase, with a \$10.5 million investment over four years. This will provide two additional critical care network beds and provide a flexible mix of intensive-care unit beds and high-dependency unit beds, dependent on demand.

“The 2008-09 Budget also provides \$4.2 million, over four years, to increase and improve cancer treatment services. This funding will provide an additional 3 beds and expand outpatient services for cancer treatment, as well as increase the psycho-social supports available to people who have been diagnosed with cancer.

“Over \$5.9 million dollars has also been provided for a second Cardiac Catheter laboratory at the Canberra Hospital. This will ensure that future interventional cardiology needs can be met.

“The ACT’s first public Sleep Studies Laboratory has also been funded in this Budget with \$964,000 provided for the facility. It will provide high quality sleep diagnostic and treatment services to inpatients at the Canberra Hospital and patients who do not have access to private sleep facilities.

“This Budget also provides \$4.2 million over four years to enhance aged-care specific health services. Services will be expanded to reduce the length of stay in hospital and also to avoid admission. Aged-care services will also be expanded to Canberrans living with chronic illnesses, with a focus on ensuring appropriate care inpatient self-management and risk reduction support services.

“Palliative care services have also been strengthened, with a \$579,000 investment over four years for two new positions to enhance the provision of current palliative care services. This will specifically target the needs of people living in residential aged care facilities.

“The capacity of ACT Health to meet current and anticipated workforce shortages will be strengthened through the provision of forward design funding for a Skills Development Centre at a cost of \$1.3 million. This will enable ACT Health to meet the training and research needs of staff now and into the future.

The 2008-09 Budget recognises that ACT Health needs are changing and it is necessary to develop a health care system that looks after Canberrans now and into the future.

“This boost in our health services will ensure that our health services can remain first-class now and in the future,” Ms Gallagher said.

Statement ends

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