



BUDGET 2009-2010 INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cancer services to receive \$12m boost

About 2,000 women are expected to benefit each year from a new diagnostic mammography service funded in the 2009-10 ACT Budget, ACT Health Minister, Katy Gallagher, said today.

The Budget provides \$3.5 million over four years for the new public mammography service.

Announcing the funding, Ms Gallagher said breast cancer was the most common cancer diagnosed in Australian women.

“This initiative, which fulfils a 2008 election commitment, will provide public diagnostic mammography services for women who do not meet the current criteria for access to the BreastScreen ACT program, which is targeted at well women aged 50–69,” she said.

“Now younger women and women who require follow-up breast cancer surgery will be able to access these services, reducing the additional financial burden many women face.

“This Government will continue to invest in health as a priority and target spending initiatives at areas of need in the community,” Ms Gallagher said.

The Minister said the Budget had also allocated \$4.5 million for the purchase and installation of a Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanner to expand and enhance the Territory’s cancer services.

A PET Scanner is a special type of scanner that allows the diagnosis and monitoring of the spread of cancer, and combined with computer tomography (CT), PET/CT provides clinicians with both anatomical and physiological information during a single examination. PET and CT data can be viewed separately or superimposed on each other.

“Until now Canberrans needing to have a PET scan have had to travel to Sydney or Melbourne for the scan and this can be costly and stressful for the patient,” Ms Gallagher said.

“This machine will be a great addition to ACT cancer services, as it is able to pick up cancer at an earlier stage than other types of scans. And of course the early detection of cancer has

better outcomes for the patient, reducing the need for more aggressive and invasive surgery at a later date.

“PET scanners can pick up areas of active cancer that cannot be seen on other types of scans and provide more accurate information which assists in the ongoing treatment of cancer patients.

“The current demand for PET/CT diagnostics for the ACT and southern NSW is estimated at 600 per annum but as the population ages and grows, demand is expected to increase.”

Under this initiative, an area within the existing Medical Imaging Department at Canberra Hospital will be remodelled and refurbished to create a new PET/CT diagnostics suite to include the scanner and control rooms with patient preparation rooms.

The Minister said the Budget also provided \$4.2 million over the next four years to meet increasing demand for cancer services.

“The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates there will be a 25 percent increase in the incidence of cancer in the Australian community during this decade (to 2011),” she said.

“This growth in incidence is expected to increase further over the next decade due to the ageing of the population and increases in life expectancy.

“This initiative will provide the Capital Region Cancer Service with the funding necessary to meet the growth in demand in 2009–10 and the impacts of that growth over future years.”

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