

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

The 2014-15 ACT Budget invests \$1.06 billion in the ACT education system to improve our schools and training, support our educators and increase access to technology for our students.

Minister for Education and Training, Joy Burch said that the 2014-15 Budget will deliver targeted investment aimed at providing the best possible education for every child, regardless of their ability or background.

Quality early childhood education amplifies a child's development and is a priority of the ACT Government. This Budget builds on the investments made over the last decade to provide quality education and care services to all children and families.

Funding for the public education sector, including teaching and school operating costs, has increased to \$566.9 million. This Budget includes funding of \$82.2 million to improve physical infrastructure, as well as Information and Communication Technology. The ACT Government continues to support non-government schools with \$59.1 million allocated for this sector. Through this Budget's targeted investment, our students will receive the best possible education and the ACT will continue to lead the nation in this field.

Importantly, the government will develop a campus modernisation strategy for the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). The government has included developing a new CIT campus in Tuggeranong as a major project in the central infrastructure investment provision.

Investing in our learning environments

The 2014-15 Budget invests in our school infrastructure to provide optimum learning environments for our students, including:

- **Coombs primary school**

More than \$47 million over four years to continue work on the new Coombs primary school. The school is scheduled to open for the 2016 school year and will accommodate around 720 students (132 preschool, 588 primary school) predominantly from Coombs and Wright. This will be the first community facility in the Molonglo Valley and will include meeting rooms, a school hall, and an oval.

- **Childcare centre upgrades – Stage 3**

\$1.4 million has been provided over two years for the refurbishment and upgrade of the childcare facilities at the Bunyarra and Salem Children's Centres to meet the National Quality Standards for early childhood education and care services.

- **Belconnen Region Schools modernisation**

\$250,000 will build on the master planning work for Belconnen High School, initiated in the 2013-14 Budget. Stage 1 works include building demolition, facilities upgrade and completion of the master planning in consultation with south Belconnen public schools communities.

Building information technology for the future

The 2014-15 ACT Budget recognises the importance of students having access to high quality digital technology at our schools.

\$9.2 million is being allocated through the *Sustaining Smart Schools* initiative to upgrade and maintain our schools' Information and Communication Technology infrastructure, including the expansion of wireless access points in ACT public schools to increase access to digital learning as part of the 'Digital Canberra' initiative.

Investing in early childhood

The ACT Government is committed to providing the best educational start for every child through investing in early childhood services including:

- **Extension of the Early Childhood Scholarship Program**

\$500,000 over two years will extend the existing Early Childhood Scholarship Program (Certificate III in Children's Services) to assist educators to meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework.

- **Regulating the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care**

\$545,000 will be allocated to continue to implement the National Quality Framework in Early Childhood Education and Care, including assessing and rating education and care services to make sure that Canberra families receive the best quality childcare in the nation.