



Australian  
Capital  
Territory  
Government

AUSTRALIAN  
CAPITAL TERRITORY

BUDGET



SPEECH 2001-2002

## BUDGET PAPER N<sup>o</sup>. 1

Presented on 1 May 2001 by Gary Humphries MLA  
Treasurer of the Australian Capital Territory  
Australian Capital Territory • Canberra 2001

## Guide to the Budget Papers

Structure and Content of the 2001-2002 Budget Papers

The 2001-2002 Budget is presented in four Budget papers.

**Budget Paper No 1 – 2001-2002 Budget Speech**  
The Treasurer's Speech to the Legislative Assembly highlights the Government's Budget strategies and key features of the Budget.

**Budget Paper No 2 –**  
The 2001-2002 Budget at a Glance  
Presents a summary of the overall budgetary position together with information on the Government's expenditure in key service delivery areas. It provides cross references to other budget papers to assist readers in locating details of specific budget measures.

**Budget Paper No 3 – Budget Overview**  
Contains summaries of the 2001-2002 Budget and forward estimates for the general government sector, the public trading enterprise sector and the total Territory Government. Details of the projected 2001-2002 Budget results are provided, as well as background information on the development of the 2001-2002 Budget, including consultations with the community, economic conditions, and intergovernmental financial relations.  
The *Appropriation Bill 2001-2002* is appended.

**Budget Paper No 4 – Budget Estimates**  
Provides information on each department and their respective output classes, including descriptions of functions, roles and responsibilities, together with major strategic highlights. Full accrual financial information is provided for the general government sector as well as details of the Territory's public trading enterprises.

**Progressing Social Capital in Canberra**  
Provides information on the Government's agenda for building Social Capital in Canberra. The paper describes Social Capital in Canberra, why it is important to the community and details the many examples of community, business and government partnerships which contribute to building Social Capital in Canberra.

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## ACT Budget presented on May 1, 2001 by Gary Humphries MLA Chief Minister and Treasurer

Mr Speaker

This Budget charts a safe passage through an uncertain fiscal sea. It is an economically responsible Budget - a Budget that ensures we are genuinely living within our means. Above all, this is a balanced Budget.

Mr Speaker, this Budget delivers for the people of Canberra. But it delivers for one reason and one reason only. It delivers because we have done the hard yards - we've had the vision, the ticker, the focus - to get the Territory's economy into a position of strength. Without fiscal responsibility, you can never achieve your social objectives.

This Government has shed a lot of blood, sweat and tears over the past few years to get the ACT economy back on course. After inheriting a \$344m operating loss from Labor, we have weathered the storm with two successive budgets in the black.

Mr Speaker, Labor put the Budget on bankcard. We've not only paid off the card - we've cut it up. Eliminating Labor's loss has turned a millstone into a milestone.

This Budget delivers a modest surplus of a little over \$12m.

It is not our goal to prise huge surpluses from the wallets and purses of the community. We aim for a balanced budget and we will deliver a balanced budget.

Fiscal responsibility has enabled us to return an exceptional and carefully targeted dividend to the community.

We will do this without borrowing. We will do this without raising any new taxes. We will do this by properly providing for our long-term liabilities, leaving our children largely debt free.

But this Budget is not just about balancing the books. It is also a Budget with heart.

It is a Budget with heart because it reaches out to families, to the elderly, to those living in poverty, to our Indigenous population and to young people at risk.

There is a very significant focus on health and education and we make no apologies for that. Hospitals and schools are a high priority for the people of Canberra and they are a high priority for us.

Mr Speaker, the community dividend we return today comes under three broad headings - innovation, early intervention and addressing poverty.

Why these three themes?

Innovation is about jobs and building Canberra's future.

Early intervention is about confronting social problems before they start. It's about investing in our future.

And addressing poverty is about our collective responsibility and obligation to the disadvantaged in our society.

These three themes reflect the Government's investment in social capital, building the partnership between the community, business and government.

They also consolidate our work over the past few years and build a platform for the Territory's future growth.

There are two further themes to this Budget, Mr Speaker, and they reflect a commitment to family and a commitment to fight both crime and the causes of crime.

The family is the keystone in our social arch. While Canberra is undoubtedly one of the best places to bring up a family, as any parent knows, this task is never easy.

Many initiatives in this Budget are designed to help ease the burden on families.

Crime continues to be a major concern for the people of Canberra and this Budget again winds back the cuts Labor inflicted on policing when in power, and puts more police into the community.

We need to be tough on crime, but also smart on crime and that means addressing a major source of crime - the drug problem. This Budget will see more resources for treatment and rehabilitation.

Mr Speaker, this Budget also recognises the economic uncertainty that exists nationally and internationally. We understand the need to keep the ACT economy moving forward in order to provide both job growth and greater job security.

That's why we announce today the Territory's largest new capital works program since self-government. This program will translate directly into jobs and increased economic activity.

The value of new works committed in this Budget is more than \$214m. Total capital works expenditure in 2001-02 will be in excess of \$140m.

I turn now to the economic outlook for the Territory.

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

During 1999-2000, the ACT experienced unprecedented growth. This growth spurt was the strongest of any state or territory. Like any period of exceptional growth, it was not sustainable in the longer term.

Not surprisingly, the ACT economy in 2000-01 has experienced a slower, more sustainable rate of growth. This lower growth rate reflects movements in the national economy over the past year.

In particular, last year's employment growth of almost 5% was clearly unsustainable. This year's forecast is a more modest 2.4%.

As a consequence of this slower growth, we predict that the ACT will experience a decrease in gross state product from 4.9% in 1999-2000 to 4.25% in 2000-01.

Growth of this level is expected to continue into 2001-02 and beyond with 4.6% forecast for 2001-02 and an average of 4.4% during the subsequent three years. But we fully expect ACT growth rates to be higher than the national rate.

Changes in state final demand are somewhat starker, declining from an exceptionally high 12% in 1999-2000, to -1.0% in this financial year. Reduced Commonwealth spending in the ACT has made a significant contribution to lower demand levels. Growth of 3% is forecast for 2001-02 and an average of 2.7% a year for the subsequent three years.

The Government remains confident that the ACT will continue to perform better than the national average, as we still enjoy the lowest level of unemployment and have the highest participation rate of any state or territory.

It is also important to recognise that while the Territory is still affected by movements in Commonwealth Government expenditure, this Government will continue to strive for a diversified economy and growth in the private sector.

There are sound reasons to support reasonable growth forecasts for the ACT.

Canberra is not a large player in the international market - a down turn in the international trading environment will not have the same effect on the Territory as the rest of the nation.

Business confidence remains positive and the expected growth in jobs will translate into solid income growth and increased spending power for wage and salary earners.

Although business profitability has decreased slightly, it has come off a very high base and is currently stable. Business surveys indicate a return to stronger growth levels as the national economy rebounds from the slowdown it is currently experiencing. It is, however, unrealistic to expect the growth to be as high as experienced in 1999-2000.

Commonwealth spending continues to be a significant influence on growth in the ACT, and with a federal election in sight, we can reasonably expect some growth in Commonwealth spending over the previous, very lean year.

Recent interest rate cuts and increases in the first home-owners grant will also stimulate consumer demand and employment in all areas of the economy especially the housing and construction industry.

Overall, this Government's economic strategy includes:

- balancing the budget;

- working to ensure that Commonwealth out-sourced jobs stay in Canberra;
- targeting industry sectors with strong growth potential;
- promoting Canberra as the economic centre for south-eastern NSW;
- keeping taxes in line with or lower than NSW;
- providing sound financial management;
- keeping the top credit rating, AAA; and
- remaining committed to microeconomic reform.

## DRAFT BUDGET INITIATIVES

Mr Speaker, this has been the second year running that the Government has released details of the draft Budget for consultation through the Assembly committee system.

We do this because the community has appreciated the opportunity to have meaningful input into the Budget process, even if the Labor Party hasn't.

This year, we acknowledged complaints that the initial consultation process contained too much detail. Instead of releasing an entire draft Budget, we released the draft Budget initiatives together with costings of these initiatives.

More than a month was available for committees to study the initiatives and report.

While complaints were again made about lack of time, one would have thought that the reports would have reflected a month's work by the committees.

With a few exceptions, some notable, the committees have not shown any enthusiasm for the task. It is one thing to snub the government. But snubbing the community is something you do at your own risk.

We have an enthusiastic government, an enthusiastic community and a recalcitrant Labor Party. Despite that, Mr Speaker, we remain committed to the consultation process and will look at ways to ensure that, in future, the community is not disadvantaged by committees that lack interest in the task.

## FINANCIAL RELATIONS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH

This year was another successful year for the ACT with regard to Commonwealth-State financial relations.

We achieved increases in Commonwealth funding to the Territory amounting to \$92.8m between 2000-01 and 2001-02. This increase, however, recognises the abolition of a number of state taxes and increased costs incurred as a result of national tax reform.

After taking these into account, the net increase in Commonwealth funding to the ACT for 2001-02 is approximately \$55.5m.

The ACT successfully defended this increase in Commonwealth funding against

a wave of ill-informed criticism from both the Victorian and New South Wales Labor Governments.

The ACT is a donor state to the federation, and in per capita terms is the largest net contributor.

What that means is that after analysing the amount of tax paid by Canberrans to the Federal Government, and comparing that to the total amount of Commonwealth funding redistributed from the Commonwealth to the ACT, each and every Canberran contributes \$1,460 more to the Federation than we receive back.

The ACT also has a very real case for additional funding on a number of grounds. For example, the ACT cannot levy payroll tax on its largest local employer, the Federal Government, and cross-border services to NSW involve considerable outlays.

## REVENUE INITIATIVES

Mr Speaker, I am proud to say that this Budget returns revenue to the people of Canberra.

Most significantly, the Government has decided, after community consultation, to return \$10m a year directly to the community through a reduction in motor vehicle and motor bike registration fees for both private and business vehicles.

This means a cut of \$58 per vehicle per year. Registration fees will be \$17 lower than NSW and will apply from July 1 this year.

This measure will help reduce motoring costs, a major factor in almost every family budget.

During 2000-01, the Government put into place tax reform measures that have put more dollars back into the hands of residents and business.

Taxation measures to take effect during 2001-02 include:

- More Canberra businesses will be free of the burden of payroll tax. Payroll tax is nothing more than a tax on employment. Less payroll tax means more jobs. As announced in last year's Budget, this Government will increase the tax free threshold from \$900,000 to \$1.25m from 1 July 2001, with a further increase in July 2002 to \$1.5m. This makes the ACT threshold the highest in Australia, reinforcing the national capital as a great place to do business.
- As foreshadowed at the commencement of the GST on 1 July last year, financial institutions duty and stamp duty on quoted marketable securities will cease to apply on 1 July 2001.
- As announced last year, the removal of the insurance levy will return \$10m to policy holders.

## EXPENDITURE INITIATIVES

Mr Speaker, I now turn to specific expenditure initiatives.

This Budget contains a very large number of well-targeted initiatives and I will be able to highlight only some of these in this speech.

### Innovation

Innovation is a centrepiece of this year's Budget. This Government has a clear vision for Canberra's future as a centre of innovation. This will help diversify our economy and make us less reliant on the spending patterns of the Federal Government.

Our citizens are highly educated and highly skilled. They are innovative and enterprising. Innovation is the future of our city.

We are committing \$11m in 2001-02, including \$4m in capital expenditure, to establish **Canberra Connect**, an initiative that will greatly improve access to government services through shopfronts, kiosks, on-line and by telephone.

Canberra is set to become a national leader in photonics with the provision of \$0.3m to help establish a **National Photonics Training Institute**, the only one of its kind in Australia.

Photonics is the technology of light and has a broad range of applications including high-speed communications, data storage, medical imaging systems and sensors. This technology will pave the way for IT industry expansion and job growth. Some \$0.45m over three years has also been committed to help establish the OECD's **Global Biodiversity Information Facility** in the ACT.

More than \$0.5m has been allocated to help build the **export capability of ACT firms**. This will provide a funded export assistance program, export action plans, development of an export capability database and a pilot program on e-commerce for exporting.

Some \$0.75m a year is being provided to the **Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation** to continue a consumer marketing and media campaign that will leverage off the Olympics and Centenary of Federation. The funding will also improve IT-based delivery of tourism information and reservation services provided by the Corporation.

Capital funding of \$0.1m will also be provided to establish the **Canberra Technology Park** in Watson to support our growing multimedia and games industry.

One of the most exciting initiatives in this year's Budget is the development of the **virtual campus at the Canberra Institute of Technology**. Costing \$0.5m in 2001-02, the initiative provides for the development of an on-line virtual campus for delivery of CIT programs through the Internet. This will enable students to undertake vocational education from their home or workplace.

An important innovation in our schools will be the establishment of an **IT centre of excellence**. Costing some \$0.5m a year, it will have a strong focus on teachers and students and act as a demonstration school of the future.

We are also committing \$0.15m a year as the ACT's contribution to the development of **online curriculum** for schools through a joint Federal and State/Territory government project.

A further \$2.5m will be allocated to extend the **IT School Grants program** by two years. This allows government schools to provide and maintain schools' IT facilities to give them access to the Internet and national online curriculum resources.

Innovation is also important for our justice system. More than \$0.35m a year has been allocated for the introduction of **home detention**.

Significant funding has also been allocated to upgrade our **court information and technology support systems** while \$0.3m a year has been set aside for the establishment of a computer-based **register of Territory legislation**.

One of the most significant innovations in this Budget is the delivery of the **Community Health Information System**. Nearly \$13.5m in recurrent expenditure over four years and \$3.5m in capital expenditure has been allocated for this program. It will provide an agency wide information system for ACT Community Care to allow for case management of individuals, better coordinating their care across agencies - a major innovation.

## Addressing Poverty

Mr Speaker, poverty in Canberra is one of our hidden problems. While the statistics continue to show the ACT to have above average incomes, we need to understand that there is still a significant pool of poverty in our city.

That's why we were keen to work with the ACT Council of Social Service to find new ways to address poverty. This Budget forms part of our response to the Report of the joint ACT Government/ACTCOSS Poverty Research Project.

As we know, Mr Speaker, transport can be a major barrier to those in need. This Budget allocates some \$0.5m a year to provide **public transport for low income earners**.

Some \$0.1m a year has been allocated to provide **50 scholarships to enable financially disadvantaged and Indigenous students** to undertake study at CIT.

A further \$0.5m a year has been set aside for a program to help link people living in **major public housing complexes** to service providers, particularly in the areas of employment, family and living skills, education, health and welfare services.

We will also establish a **home-based outreach program for young people with particular problems**. This initiative will support young people with special needs, for example, those with a substance abuse or behavioural problem or a disability, to improve their independence and well-being in the community.

Access to **dental health care** has been a problem for many in our community. We are allocating an additional \$1m to reduce waiting times for vulnerable members of the community and allow an additional 950 clients to be treated in 2001-02.

Some \$0.5m has been set aside in 2001-02 and more than \$0.8m in the two subsequent years to address the **digital divide** - that is the barrier between the information rich and the information poor.

Our program will provide a package of measures to address priority needs and will be shaped by recently released findings of the Digital Divide Task Force chaired by Jacqui Burke.

## Early Intervention

Mr Speaker, we could reduce many social, behavioural and health problems in our society if we had a stronger focus on early intervention.

This Budget seeks to put a greater emphasis on early intervention than has previously been the case. While improvements may not always be immediate, the community will gain real and lasting benefits from these initiatives in years to come.

We are investing in our future.

The most significant early intervention initiative is our commitment to **reduce early childhood class sizes for primary schools**.

This initiative is expensive, costing about \$25m over four years. But I believe it will be worth every cent.

It will reduce kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 class sizes to a maximum of 21 students. The reduction will occur progressively between 2002 and 2004.

It will improve not only educational outcomes but also social outcomes for students.

Funding of more than \$1.2m over four years will also be provided to **non-government schools to support better educational outcomes** for lower primary students. Further funding will be provided for the implementation of a **common literacy and numeracy assessment** in non-government schools.

Importantly, this Budget also provides for a range of early intervention strategies for Indigenous people.

These include a **mentoring program** to support 15 indigenous people in their

existing employment. Financial support will also be provided to the recently incorporated **Indigenous Business Chamber** with the aim of enhancing employment opportunities.

The Government will also enhance the **indigenous youth centre's** services at a cost of \$0.1m a year. This initiative will allow the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to better address the needs of indigenous young people in the community, and indigenous students who are at risk of performing poorly in the ACT education system.

Funding of nearly \$0.2m a year has been provided for additional **indigenous mental health workers** and \$0.25m a year for **enhanced indigenous health services** including outreach and case management workers.

While addressing the issue of early intervention, this Budget also has a family focus. To this end, we have allocated more than \$0.35m a year to strengthen measures for the **protection of children**, with early intervention to prevent family breakdown, child abuse and neglect.

The Government will provide \$75,000 a year to support 60 of the most at risk families in the ACT, through the provision of counselling and support services. This **Youth Connection Family Support** program will provide a specialised family counselling service to help improve resilience in these families.

Almost \$1m will be provided over four years for an early intervention program for families with adolescent children who are experiencing family conflict or dealing with issues such as substance abuse. **The Supporting Families with Adolescents program** will focus on young people aged 16 years and under and will have the resources to intervene within 48 hours.

Some \$0.2m a year will also be provided for **parenting services in Gungahlin**.

Funding of \$82,000 a year will enable us to set up in Canberra the 'Stepping Stones' NSW **Family Drug Support Program**, assisting the friends and families of those affected by alcohol and other drug use.

More than \$0.5m a year has been provided for a coordinated approach to managing **family violence** in the ACT and includes a strongly interventionist police response, the creation of a specialised family violence prosecutor and the establishment of a perpetrator education program.

Mr Speaker, the Government is determined to assist families in the growing areas of Canberra. To this end, some \$4m in capital costs has been allocated **for a childcare centre** to be built in Gungahlin. It will also allow a further facility to be built in Canberra after an assessment of need is conducted.

Early intervention is also important for students. Funding of \$0.357m over four years will be provided to allow government schools to better tackle the growing number of **student management issues**. An early intervention unit will be established as will a program of professional development for teaching and administrative staff.

More than \$0.2m a year will also be allocated to establish a **Support for Students at Risk** program to help those students at risk of dropping out of school.

And \$0.45m will be provided over two years for a **sport and recreation program for young people at risk**. This will focus on young people aged between 12 and 25 years at risk of homelessness, substance abuse, being victims of crime, or becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

Early intervention is equally important in public health. We have allocated almost \$1m over four years to support **national disease control**. The program will provide proactive strategies to enhance food safety as well as treatment based support programs and air quality control measures.

And nearly \$0.5m has been allocated over four years to provide for a **Newborn Hearing Screening Program** for screening of all babies in the ACT before the age of 3 months and ensure the availability of intervention by 6 months.

The Government is very proud to be allocating almost \$2.7m over four years for the Territory's **Health Promotion Strategy**. Embracing the concepts of both social capital and disease prevention, the strategy will expand our healthy city activities, ensure our health protection service has a health promotion focus, introduce a health promotion web site and provide a health promotion recognition scheme.

Mr Speaker, at least 1 in 5 ACT children between the ages of 14 and 17 currently smoke with the proportion in some age groups being closer to 1 in 4 and even 1 in 3. We will provide \$0.2m a year for a **youth smoking and health program**, in an attempt to reduce the carnage caused by smoking.

There will also be a \$0.1m upgrade to the **cervical cytology register** and \$0.215m will be provided for the replacement of an ageing ultrasound unit for the **breastscreening clinic**.

Early intervention also applies, Mr Speaker, to our correction system. We will allocate \$1.48m a year for **intervention programs to help prevent prisoners from re-offending** after their release. Reducing recidivism is no easy task. But that should encourage us to do more, not less.

Some \$50,000 a year will also be allocated for mediation services to resolve **neighbourhood disputes**. It will build on a trial project undertaken in Tuggeranong in 2000 by the Conflict Resolution Service.

## Other Initiatives

Mr Speaker, I turn to other Budget initiatives that fall outside the themes of innovation, early intervention and addressing poverty.

Many Canberra families will benefit from the Government's decision to provide a **free school bus service**. Costing \$18.7m over four years in recurrent costs and

\$8m in capital costs, it will enable ACTION and rural school bus operators to introduce the school student transport scheme from 1st September this year. The capital injection will fund the acquisition of new buses that will be required to meet the anticipated increase in demand.

A further \$0.7m has been allocated for an **enhanced transport scheme for students with disabilities**.

Mr Speaker, multiculturalism is important to this community. That's why we are doubling our contribution to the **Multicultural Grants Program**, adding an additional \$50,000 a year. This will enable more applications from Canberra's multicultural communities to be funded.

Supporters of Australian Rules football will be pleased to know that we have committed \$0.25m a year to secure four **Australian Football League** matches at the Manuka Oval each year. Funding will also contribute towards a junior development program for AFL within the ACT. The program will enhance Canberra's chances of securing a team in the national competition in years to come.

There will also be support for the **GMC 400** car race, staging the **9th Australian Masters Games** in Canberra in 2003 and the "**Rally of Canberra**".

Hosting these events, Mr Speaker, means jobs for Canberra.

More than \$0.85m a year has been allocated to maintain current standards of **fire brigade** response to all areas of Canberra. In particular, the initiative provides additional funding for a revised organisational structure, recruitment, a range of occupational health and safety issues and training and staff development.

We will also enhance our ambulance service. More than \$1m a year has been allocated for **additional ambulance paramedics**. The program aims to maintain the current standards of emergency ambulance service response in the ACT, in response to population growth and movement.

On environmental issues, we are providing \$0.31m a year under the *No Waste by 2010 project* to meet the anticipated increased costs in providing **garden waste recycling services** at the Mugga Lane and West Belconnen landfills. We will also provide \$0.351m over four years to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** by 700,000 tonnes a year by 2008.

In line with recommendations from Assembly committees, we are providing \$0.5m in 2002-03 to enable the Canberra Christian Life Centre to establish a **community recreation area and skate park** in the grounds of the former Charnwood High School site.

Also in line with committee recommendations, funds have been allocated as a grant to the **Canberra Police and Citizens Youth Club** for assistance in the purchase of a 12-seater bus and the **ACT/Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group** has also been assisted.

Mr Speaker, we will be providing a \$5m boost for **minor new works** to enhance the learning and working environment for students and teachers in a range of older schools. High schools will particularly benefit from this program.

Non-government schools will benefit from additional funding of \$0.3m a year to meet the increasing demand on the **Non-Government School Interest Subsidy Scheme**.

Some \$0.65m a year will also be provided to enhance the standard of **maintenance of sportsgrounds**, including Manuka Oval, to ensure that playing surfaces remain functional, safe and sustainable.

The Government will also provide an **additional \$1m for health and community services purchased by government from non-government organisations**.

We are taking two very significant measures to help ease the pressure on our public hospitals. We will **abolish the hospital cost efficiency dividend** at a cost of \$21m over three years.

This will take considerable financial pressure off our public hospitals, allowing them to better focus on patient care.

The second initiative will see the development of a convalescent service for **post-hospital care**. Some \$3.2m will be provided over four years for the development of a range of options to meet the needs of older persons and others immediately after discharge from hospital. The program will fill a gap in the provision of health and support services, and build on existing partnerships within the service provider community.

As I mentioned earlier, we will not solve the crime problem until we solve the drug problem.

We have allocated an additional \$0.26m a year to help cope with demand for public **methadone places** and provide new pharmacotherapy treatments as they become available. This will include the establishment of a satellite clinic on the northside of Canberra.

Some \$0.5m a year has also been set aside to **enhance existing drug and alcohol services** to ensure a high quality service for the treatment of clients.

A similar amount has been set aside for a four-bed residential withdrawal service in association with the **Ted Noffs Foundation** youth residential rehabilitation service.

**Policing services** in Canberra will be enhanced with an additional \$1.5m allocated for extra police. From this, we are providing more than \$1m a year for 10 additional police to patrol the Gungahlin area. The patrol will operate as part of North District and will be the priority response mechanism for Gungahlin. In addition, \$0.5m a year will be provided to increase the ACT policing's task force capacity. **A Streetlight Safety Program** will also be carried out at a cost of \$0.5m in 2001-02.

Mr Speaker, we will provide Canberrans with a **customer hotline service** for services provided by the Department of Urban Services. This initiative will improve the handling of complaints and provide assistance with the department's broad range of services.

The city will also benefit from a \$0.2m a year **graffiti reduction program for private property**. This builds on the success achieved in removing graffiti from public assets under the Government's "Graffiti Removal Youth Employment Program" over the past 3 years.

Some \$2.5m is being provided over four years to continue the program of rehabilitation and upgraded **maintenance to public infrastructure**. This program upgrades the appearance and safety of our roads and public spaces through activities such as tree pruning, grass cutting, weed spraying and removal, footpath repairs and repainting of road signs and line markings.

There has been a great deal of controversy about the decision to impose a fee for entry to one of our most successful festivals, Floriade. The Government has listened to the people of Canberra and has decided to **remove the Floriade fee**. The fee was not wanted – we have heard that - the fee has been abolished - permanently.

Mr Speaker, the Government acknowledges that **the non-government school sector** in the ACT does not receive the same ratio of funding as provided in NSW. We are, however, providing a modest increase in base funding worth \$0.25m in 2001-02 rising to \$0.267m in 2004-05.

The Government is also keen to provide the community with an independent resource to assist them to participate more effectively in planning issues through the provision of advice on planning. We will establish a **Community Planning Adviser**, based outside of the Department of Urban Services, at a cost of \$0.25m a year to carry out this function.

Mr Speaker, whether we like it or not, Canberra is a car city and is likely to remain so for some time to come. In recognition of this fact, the Government is continuing to invest in road building programs to ease congestion and improve safety. In addition to previously announced commitments, we will **advance major road projects** with a capital expenditure of \$8.15m in 2001-02.

## SUPERANNUATION

Mr Speaker, this Budget continues the strategy for meeting the ACT's superannuation liability. Some \$154m will be injected into superannuation in 2000-01 and a further \$35m - that is \$35m above the \$15m already committed in last year's Forward Estimates - will be injected in 2001-02.

Some \$200m will be injected over the Budget and forward estimates period,

reducing calls on future Budgets. On current plans, it is estimated that there will be sufficient assets in the superannuation fund to cover emerging costs by 2019-20. At that time, no further budget funding will be required.

Our superannuation plan includes a review of the current investment strategy to optimise returns and the appointment of an asset consultant and custodian to oversee investment monies held.

## CONCLUSION

Mr Speaker,  
this Government has already been accused of irresponsible spending.

There is new spending in this Budget. That's true.

But it is responsible spending. It is careful spending. We are spending no more than we have earned.

Unlike Labor, we are not spending on credit - we are not going into debt - we are paying in cash. We've balanced the Budget.

It is not just spending for spending's sake. We are investing in Canberra's future - we're investing in our people, our greatest asset.

I commend the Budget to the Assembly.