Record Investment In Community Services To Support Families and Children

Budget 2009 will protect our most vulnerable Territorians with Closing the Gap and mental health initiatives.

“Protecting Territory children and our youth is a key priority of the Territory Government,” said Malarndirri McCarthy, Minister for Children and Families.

“That’s why we are investing a record health and families budget of $1.05 billion as part of Budget 2009 so that Territorians get the care and services they deserve.”

RECORD CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET BREAKDOWN

- $18.63 million towards initiatives aimed at closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage;
- $13.9 million over two years to create secure protective facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs and once established, funding of $11.43 million to operate the services;
- $15 million will be provided over three years from 2009-10 to support victims of domestic violence;
- $11.25 million over two years for an Alice Springs Youth Hub and Middle School;
- $1.12 million ongoing to expand emergency accommodation for Alice Springs youth;
- $3.5 million for family services.

BETTER SECURE CARE SERVICES

Budget 2009 significantly improves facilities and care for young people and adults with complex needs with $13.9 million over two years to create secure protective facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Once established, funding of $11.43 million is provided to operate the services, including 96 additional nursing, mental health and therapeutic care positions.

The facilities will enhance services for high risk young people and adults who may not be mentally ill but who demonstrate unstable and difficult behaviour, representing a risk of harm to themselves or the community.

The model proposed is based on short-term assessment and stabilisation facilities, with complementary secure care therapeutic and transition services.
CLOSING THE GAP

Budget 2009 continues initiatives to close the gap in health outcomes with:

- $6.2 million to expand the Child Abuse Taskforce, with additional staff to increase investigative activities in remote communities;
- $2.1 million to expand therapeutic and residential care services;
- $2 million to expand services to children in care;
- $1.8 million for continued development of Aboriginal child protection and family support services in regional centres;
- $1.5 million to provide for 10 more child protection workers across the Territory by 2011-12;
- $1.5 million for integrated community family violence and support services in remote communities;
- $1.3 million to expand preventable chronic disease programs;
- $1.2 million to continue the expansion of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre services in Darwin, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Katherine and enhance services to remote communities; and
- $830,000 for child protection reform.

ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH HUB AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ms McCarthy said the Henderson Government will invest more than $15.6 million over the next four years to establish the Alice Springs Middle School and other elements of the Alice Springs Youth Action Plan.

“This includes investing $4.73 million as part of Budget 2009 for capital works at the Gillen and Anzac Hill Middle School campuses,” Ms McCarthy said.

“The formation of an Alice Springs Middle School, with the two campuses, is a key plank of the Alice Springs Youth Action Plan.”

The more than $15.6 million committed over the next four years will deliver:

- Refurbishment work at the Gillen campus (Alice Springs High) to support middle years schooling;
- Refurbishment work at the Anzac Hill campus, including a performing arts and music centre;
- Work at Anzac Hill campus to establish a Youth Hub, including a Police Youth Club;
- Construction of a 30-bed boarding facility; and
- Expanding emergency accommodation for young people at risk.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REPORTING

Reporting serious physical harm arising from domestic violence is mandatory in the Territory.
$15 million will be provided over three years from 2009-10 to support the delivery of crisis accommodation, counselling services, public education and legal support for women and families threatened by or exposed to domestic violence.

EXPANDED EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION FOR YOUTH

Budget 2009 provides $1.12 million ongoing to expand emergency accommodation for young people at risk in Alice Springs, providing a 6-bed safe house.

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