The Northern Territory Government will invest a record $808 million in education and training as part of Budget 2009.

“A record education and training budget of $808 million will deliver more schools, more teachers, better education resources and protect Territory jobs,” Mr Henderson said.

“This is a 70% increase since 2001, and over that time the number of staff in, or directly supporting, Territory schools has increased by 380.

“We want Territory kids to be schooled in the best possible learning environment so we are delivering more teachers, better school buildings and facilities that will directly or indirectly support Territory jobs and build the Territory’s knowledge base.

“Budget 2009 will continue to focus on getting our kids to school so Territory children receive the education they deserve.”

REBUILDING THE TERRITORY’S SCHOOLS

Record investment in education infrastructure will be delivered across the Territory in 2009-10 to re-build Territory schools and protect Territory jobs.

Budget 2009 delivers $118.9 million to new projects, creating 237 jobs:

- $91 million for Primary Schools for the 21st Century as part of the Commonwealth’s Jobs Plan and Nation Building stimulus package;
- $3.2 million to continue upgrading Ross Park Primary School;
- $3 million to upgrade Dripstone Middle School science facilities;
- $3 million to build a new multipurpose sports facility at Tennant Creek High School;
- $2 million to upgrade homeland learning centres at various schools across the Territory;
- $1.25 million each for schools at Angurugu, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Lajamanu and Numbulwar;
- $400,000 for more office space for student counsellors at Gunbalanya and Nhulunbuy
Works are continuing on the $54.5 million Rosebery Primary School and Middle School in Palmerston with completion in time for the 2011 school year.

The Commonwealth’s Nation Building and Jobs Plan will provide all Territory primary schools with a new hall, library or classrooms.

The Territory and Commonwealth Governments will work together to improve education and infrastructure under the Nation Building and Jobs Plan, providing:

- $91 million for the Primary Schools for the 21st Century initiative which will provide new libraries, classrooms or multipurpose halls for primary and special schools; and
- $11 million for the National School Pride Program, under which every school will receive up to $200,000 for new or refurbishing work.

ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH HUB AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr Henderson said the Territory 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,” Mr Hampton 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.

IMPROVING LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The Territory Government will work with the Commonwealth to improve literacy and numeracy.

Budget 2009 provides:

- $14.2 million for schools in low socio-economic status communities for sustained and co-ordinated effort to improve educational outcomes;
- $4.76 million to develop and implement whole of school approaches to literacy and numeracy;
- $6.83 million to improve computer availability in all secondary schools;
• $1.5 million to ensure that every child has access, by 2013, to an affordable, quality early childhood education program in the year before full-time schooling; and;
• $240,000 for Improving Teacher Quality reforms to improve attraction, development and retention of quality teachers and school leaders.

CLOSING THE GAP

Budget 2009 continues initiatives to close the gap of Indigenous disadvantage, including:

• $2.4 million for more teachers to increase education opportunities for children in remote communities;
• $2 million for five new mobile preschools servicing 25 remote communities;
• $1.7 million for the Stakeholders partnership program to improve student engagement and community involvement;
• $700,000 for a child protection unit to provide specialist support to schools including six school counsellors for remote communities; and
• $600,000 to improve access to information technology.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Budget 2009 is committed to improving educational outcomes for all Territory children:

• $5 million for support services to assist students with intellectual disabilities and students with high level behavioural and emotional difficulties;
• $2.6 million for the Families as First Teachers program; and
• $1.05 million to increase Back to School Payments from $50 to $75 for every school-aged child commencing in 2009.
The Territory Government will spend $2.25 million in 2009 on salaries and training for the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), resulting in 86 additional positions.

Contact: Geoff Fraser 0407 360 256