Delivering for families in Darwin’s northern suburbs

Budget 2012 delivers for families in Darwin’s northern suburbs by easing cost of living pressures, investing in a safer community and delivering record investment in health and education.

Treasurer Delia Lawrie said Budget 2012 delivers the most generous subsidies and concessions in Australia, supporting jobs and investing in health, education and police.

“Budget 2012 helps Northern Suburbs families into home ownership with an extension to the $10,000 BuildBonus grant and continued subsidies for electricity bills, childcare, school expenses, pensioners, seniors, carers and veterans help keep household costs down,” Ms Lawrie said.

“A huge $1.3 billion infrastructure spend will support more than 2600 jobs and help keep businesses open private sector investment from major projects transforms our economy.

“Budget 2012 continues the commitment to deliver a safer community for all Territorians through more investment to tackle anti-social behavior and crime with more police, the ‘Enough is Enough’ alcohol reforms and the toughest laws in the country.
“Health and education are the hallmarks of the Henderson Government, and Budget 2012 continues to deliver for families in the Northern Suburbs with more investment into Royal Darwin Hospital, schools and training.”

The most generous homeowner concessions in Australia

Budget 2012 helps more Territorians achieve their dream of home ownership with the best homeowners' concessions in the nation, including grants, stamp duty concessions and Territory Government home loans through Homestart NT.

- Budget 2012 extends the BuildBonus scheme providing a $10,000 grant to all homebuyers purchasing or building a new home up to the value of $600,000. The scheme has been extended by six months to 30 June 2012;
- Budget 2012 continues the successful 'HOMESTART' scheme which has seen more than 1500 low to middle income earners into their own homes since 1 July 2004;

- Generous stamp duty concessions continue, with first homebuyers receiving an exemption on the first $540,000 of the value of their home – a saving of up to $26,730;
- A $3500 principal place of residence rebate for non-first homebuyers; and
- A concession of $8500 to assist senior Territorians and Pensioner and Carer Concession Card holders to downsize or buy a home.

Subsidies to keep household costs down

In Budget 2012, the Territory Government continues to keep costs down for families, with:

- $63.08 million to subsidise the cost of electricity, water and sewerage for Territory households and $0.12 million to provide Energy Smart Rebates, giving Territorians the second cheapest power in Australia.
- The only child care subsidy in Australia, a $4.3m investment saving parents up to $1433 per year for full-time care;

- $20.66 million for the nation’s most generous Pensioner Concession Scheme, a $4.57 million boost, delivering subsidies on electricity, water, sewerage, spectacles, motor vehicle registration, council property rates and garbage rates, and free urban bus travel, licence renewals and interstate travel to eligible pensioners, seniors, carers and veterans;

- Apprentices and trainees can also access the $1.3 million WorkWear/WorkGear Bonus scheme that provides a $1000 grant to trade apprentices undertaking training in skill shortage occupations and $300 to all other eligible apprentices and trainees to help with the costs of tools and study materials; and

- $12.73 million to support Territorians with a disability through Individual Support Packages in addition to other subsidies including taxis.

**Strengthening Health Services**

Northern Suburbs families continue to benefit from the Henderson Government’s commitment to quality health care, with a record $1.2 billion investment bringing to 781 nurses and 255 doctors the number of additional health staff employed since 2002.

Investment in Budget 2012 includes:

- $335m for Royal Darwin Hospital, a 182% increase since 2001;
- $22 million to increase the number of beds in the Emergency Department and Short Stay Unit, and provide two additional operating theatres at Royal Darwin Hospital; and
- $5.3 million for completion of the short stay accommodation complex of 50 units at Royal Darwin Hospital providing up to 80 extra beds.

Territorians continue to have access to among the highest number of public hospital beds in Australia, with 3.5 beds per 1000 population.

**Educating; investing in the future**

A record $950 million investment in education and training initiatives from the Henderson Government in Budget 2012 supports Northern Suburbs families with
quality education options while equipping our workforce for the opportunities of growth.

Budget 2012 supports over 3000 teaching staff in schools across the Territory, an increase of over 465 since 2001. Other funded initiatives include:

- $3.6 million to upgrade 13 schools, including Millner and Jingili;
- $1.2 million to continue to support 50 Specialist Teacher positions in identified schools;
- $9.86 million in upgrades to Special Education infrastructure as part of a $30 million five-year program;
- an additional eight attendance and truancy officers under the Every Child Every Day strategy; and
- $4.6 million to establish a re-engagement centre for disengaged 12 to 17 year olds in the Darwin, Palmerston and Top End regions.

**Building opportunity through training**

Budget 2012 continues the Henderson Government’s commitment to maximising the benefits of economic growth for local workers, with $100 million towards training and apprentices to grow a skilled Territory workforce, including:

- $1.3 million for the WorkWear/WorkGear program to help apprentices and trainees with the costs of buying work wear and other work-related necessities during the first year of their apprenticeship or traineeship with a $300 start-up grant. $1000 is available for people who undertake training in identified skill shortage areas;
- $1.39 million for the continuation of support programs for employers of apprentices in occupations with skill shortages and apprentices from disadvantaged groups;
- $900,000 to continue help young Territorians transition from school into apprenticeships and traineeships; and
- $250,000 to continue providing vocational education and training, and work experience programs for students in the middle years of schooling, particularly young Indigenous men.

**Investing in a safer community**

Budget 2012 further increases police numbers, already the highest number of police per person in the nation, bringing the total number of police in the Territory to 434; up 46% since 2002.
The overall PFES budget rises to $343, a $16m increase since 2011 and a 150% increase since 2001, and Budget 2012 also delivers 12 additional fire fighters, providing a 212 strong frontline service to the Territory.

Other Budget 2012 highlights include:

- $18.24 million in 2012-13 as part of the $71.5 million five-year plan to reduce alcohol-related crime and antisocial behavior, including $4 million for enhanced urban and remote treatment and rehabilitation services including; Outreach services, withdrawal support and clinical support to the SMART Court;
- $7.37 million for Police Beats including Casuarina, Karama, Parap and Nightcliff; and
- $1.75 million for CCTV monitoring including Darwin and Casuarina.

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