

**CLARE MARTIN  
CHIEF MINISTER**

3 May 2005

**BACKING TERRITORY FAMILIES**

Budget 2005 is backing Territory families with tax cuts, more support for education and skills development and better health services, Chief Minister Clare Martin announced today.

“Families are the backbone of the Territory community. We are working to provide them with better services and putting more money back into their pockets,” Ms Martin said.

**HELPING FIRST HOME OWNERS**

The Territory Government has the most affordable housing in Australia. The Martin Government is committed to making the dream of home ownership a reality for more Territory families.

- First home buyers who buy a home from 3 May 2005 will not be required to pay stamp duty on the first \$200,000 of their new home – up from \$125,000.

This nearly doubles the amount first home buyers will save on stamp duty to a maximum \$6800. It puts around \$2.7 million a year back into the pockets of Territorians.

1400 Territorians a year will benefit from this saving.

- The highly successful HomeNorth scheme will continue – 500 Territory households have already benefited with a total \$87 million in loans funded, approved and approved in principle. The vast majority have been provided to first homebuyers, including \$4 million in new unit and housing construction.

**BETTER HEALTH SERVICES FOR FAMILIES**

The Martin Government has lifted spending on Health by 43% since 2001-2002, backing Territory families with better health services.

Budget 2005 continues this strong support for families, with:

- \$3.7 million to subsidise childcare for Territory families
- Completion of a \$2.5 million Birthing Centre
- \$400,000 extra for home birth and maternity services
- \$500,000 for the development of an intensive family support service
- \$300,000 to support seven new remote youth services
- \$8.134 million to support Territory Seniors and the Pensioner Concession scheme

The Martin Government is also boosting funding to health and community service non-government organisations by providing grant indexation – this will see an increase in grant payments of \$1.13 million in Budget 2005 to these organisations, increasing by a further \$500,000 a year ongoing.

## BUILDING BETTER SCHOOLS

Budget 2005 delivers a record \$582 million for Employment, Education and Training – a 22% increase since 2001-2002.

An extra \$42 million will be spent improving secondary education over four years through the Martin Government's Building Better Schools program.

Budget 2005 supports the Martin Government's ongoing education initiatives including:

- continuing to fund the 100 extra teachers in our system
- providing 19 High School counsellors above staffing formula
- continuing to fund the eight attendance officers in our system
- continuing to improve IT in schools

In Budget 2005, almost \$50 million will be spent on improving education infrastructure.

A further \$500,000 will be provided to schools to buy more educational resources, bringing to \$2 million the extra funding provided by the Martin Government for school equipment since February 2004.

## A RECORD 10,000 TERRITORIANS TO BE TRAINED

The Martin Government is backing Territorians to gain skilled employment.

Budget 2005 continues Government's efforts to provide Territorians with training and skills that will lead to local jobs.

Over the next four years, the Martin Government will support the training of a record 10,000 trainees and apprentices.

Other training highlights in Budget 2005 include:

- 40 new Vocational Education and Training (VET) scholarships a year worth \$4000 each to help students with course fees and other study costs;
- a Workwear Workgear cash bonus of up to \$500 for new apprentices and trainees to help them buy clothing, boots, tools for their new career;
- \$500,000 to *Build Skills NT* to upgrade workers skills;
- \$4.4 million for VET in schools;
- \$400,000 for pre-employment training programs;
- \$200,000 for *Work Ready NT* a schools to work transition initiative;
- \$35.2 million for VET at Charles Darwin University.

"The Territory Government is backing Territory families with continuing strong investments in health and education services, tax cuts, and support for skills development as part of Budget 2005," Ms Martin said.

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