

**Dr PETER TOYNE  
MINISTER FOR CENTRAL AUSTRALIA**

3 May 2005

## **BUDGET BOOST FOR CENTRAL AUSTRALIA**

Budget 2005 backs Central Australia, with tax cuts for local businesses and families, more local jobs, more funding for skills development and strong infrastructure spending, Minister for Central Australia Dr Peter Toyne announced today.

“As well as further tax cuts, Budget 2005 delivers strong Territory wide infrastructure spending, including roads spending, of \$476 million. This will provide more work for local Centralian businesses and boost local jobs,” Dr Toyne said.

“Central Australians will also benefit from the Martin Government’s continuing strong investment in skills development, with 10,000 Territorians to be supported in training over the next four years.

“Local tourism will be given a boost out of Budget 2005, while work will continue on the \$43 million Mereenie Loop Road upgrade.

“The Martin Government will also increase its record investments in health, with more health professionals for Alice Springs Hospital, and education, with more resources for Central Australian schools.

“There will also be more funding for our commitment to put more police on the beat and a stronger investment in community crime fighting initiatives.

“Budget 2005 is backing Central Australians and helping to drive economic growth in the region.”

### **LESS TAX FOR CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSES, FAMILIES**

Alice Springs and Central Australian households and businesses will benefit from nearly \$40 million in tax cuts outlined in Budget 2005, making the Territory the lowest taxing jurisdiction for locally-based Territory businesses with up to 100 staff from 1 July 2006.

The cuts make the Martin Government the most tax reforming Government in the Territory history.

Budget 2005 highlights include:

- The payroll tax-free threshold will rise to \$1 million on 1 July 2005 and then to \$1.25 million on 1 July 2006. From 1 July 2004 to 1 July 2006, the payroll tax changes will mean 215 Territory businesses will no longer pay payroll tax. Territory businesses continuing to pay the tax will save on average \$31,900 a year.
- From 3 May 2005, the stamp duty threshold for first home buyers will be increased to \$200,000, almost doubling the first home owner stamp duty concession to a maximum \$6800. Around 1400 Territorians will benefit from the threshold increase. It means Territorians will save around \$2.7 million a year.

- Electronic Debit Transaction Duty and Debits Tax will be abolished from 1 July 2005, saving a local business with around 20 employees \$1430 a year.

Government has committed to a further \$40 million in tax cuts over the next five years, including cuts to stamp duty and other business taxes. Less tax for business means more jobs for Territorians.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA**

Further spending on tourism infrastructure, roads and strategic development projects in Budget 2005 will back the local tourism and construction industries, as well as the wider community.

Highlights include:

- continuing work on the three-year \$43 million Mereenie Loop project
- \$1.7 million to complete Stuart Lodge upgrade in Alice Springs
- \$1.2 million over two years for air conditioning upgrade at Ross Park Primary School
- \$1 million for renal and acute care upgrades at Alice Springs Hospital
- \$1 million for upgrades at Flynn Drive renal services
- \$1 million to upgrade and expand visitor facilities at West MacDonnell National Park
- \$800,000 for new Alice Springs Drag Strip
- \$800,000 for upgrades to Maryvale beef road
- \$650,000 for staff accommodation upgrade at Alice Springs Hospital
- \$500,000 for upgrades to Sandover Highway
- \$500,000 for new bores and rising main at Areyonga
- \$1.02 million on going works at the Larapinta subdivision.

## **MORE FUNDS FOR JOBS AND TRAINING**

Central Australians will benefit from the Martin Government's commitment to support the training of a record 10,000 Territorians over the next four years.

Budget 2005 delivers a range of job and training initiatives for Central Australia including:

- \$850,000 in continued support for the Desert Knowledge Australia Corporation and Desert Knowledge Research Centre
- \$600,000 for Flexible Response Funding for training in remote communities
- \$600,000 for tertiary programs through Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in Central Australia
- \$50,000 for training and skills development for young Central Australians with disabilities
- \$400,000 to train and employ traditional owners to work on parks and reserves

## **BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA**

To build safer communities in Central Australia, Budget 2005 includes:

- \$28.36 million to provide police, fire and emergency services in the Alice Springs region
- \$680,000 for repairs, maintenance and minor works to the Alice Springs region police, fire and emergency services facilities
- \$100,000 for a mobile police station in Alice Springs
- \$150,000 for pedestrian-activated crossing on Larapinta Drive
- \$210,000 for an emergency services presence at Kings Canyon

- \$230,000 with Voyagers for expanded fire and emergency services at Yulara
- \$19.8 million for secure custodial services at Alice Springs Correctional Centre
- \$2.1 million for court services in regional and remote Central Australian communities
- \$520,000 for the Office of Crime Prevention to work with remote communities
- \$480,000 for a safe and secure juvenile holding facility at Aranda House
- \$270,000 for the Community Harmony Strategy to address anti-social behaviour
- \$37,000 for volunteer bushfire brigades

### **MORE HEALTH FUNDING**

Central Australians will benefit from record Health spending of \$687 million in Budget 2005, including a boost for Alice Springs Hospital to \$81.2 million.

Highlights include:

- \$1.94 million additional ongoing to improve medical staffing levels in Alice Springs Hospital's Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department
- \$106 million for acute care services in the region
- \$52.1 million for non-acute health and community care services in the region
- \$6.2 million for renal dialysis services
- \$540,000 for Volatile Substance Abuse rehabilitation services
- \$130,000 to expand disability support services in Santa Teresa
- \$250,000 to provide a drop-in service for the Youth Outreach Program
- funding for a school breakfast program for students in the region, including Papunya

### **BUILDING BETTER SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA**

Budget 2005 includes a record budget for Employment, Education and Training. Central Australians will benefit from the investment with:

- \$23.5 million to deliver primary and early childhood education in seven Alice Springs schools
- \$18 million to deliver primary, post primary and early childhood education in 28 remote Central Australian schools
- \$22 million for assistance to non-Government schools
- \$15.6 million to deliver secondary education to students at Alice Springs High School, Anzac Hill High School, and Centralian Senior Secondary College
- \$1.5 million for isolated student education through Alice Springs School of the Air

There will also be more funding for capital works projects, including:

- \$1.2 million to upgrade air conditioning at Ross Park Primary School over two years
- \$200,000 for extensions at Laramba School
- \$200,000 for extra secondary education space at Harts Range School
- \$200,000 for work at Ipolera School

Every Government school in Alice Springs will also receive a share of an extra \$500,000 in funding to be provided for new school equipment.

## OTHER INITIATIVES IN BUDGET 2005

The Central Australian region will also benefit from a range of other initiatives included in Budget 2005, including:

- an extra \$42 million over four years for secondary education
- 19 new counsellors for Territory high schools
- an extra \$500,000 for teacher housing furniture
- an up to \$500 WorkWear WorkGear cash bonus for new apprentices and trainees
- \$4.4 million for VET in Schools
- Increasing spending on minor new works by 40% or an extra \$8 million meaning more work for local small business and more local jobs
- Indexing grants to health and community services non-government organisations to help them meet the real cost of services. This means an increase in grant payments of \$1.13 million in Budget 2005, increasing by an extra \$500,000 a year ongoing

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