



# A Positive Future

For Indigenous People

Canberra**liberals**

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## For Indigenous People

The Canberra Liberals recognise that Indigenous Australians are an integral part of our community's heritage and that the contribution of their culture enriches Australian society.

The Canberra Liberals recognise that Indigenous Australians have experienced some longstanding social injustices and they still continue to disproportionately experience disadvantage. Our vision is for Indigenous people living in the ACT to be given the best opportunity to reach their potential.

We recognise that many of the indicators of personal and social progress continue to reveal quite poor outcomes for Indigenous people. It is imperative that government policies and programs are directed towards improving these outcomes as quickly as possible. A Canberra Liberal Government will work closely in partnership with the Indigenous community to tackle the range of issues that face Indigenous people in Canberra.

## Supporting Indigenous Representation

The Stanhope Government has focussed on symbolic actions, as a substitute for dealing with the substantive issues facing Indigenous people.

After seven years of little action, this year the Stanhope Government established an elected Indigenous representative body. The Canberra Liberals supported the legislation to establish this elected body and we believe in the importance of representation for Indigenous people in the ACT. We believe that the funding that has been allocated for this body is reasonable.

However it is disappointing for those seven people who have been elected to the governing board of this body that they have not received sufficient guidance on their roles and responsibilities.

Greater clarity is needed about the nature of ACT Government consultation with Indigenous people and leadership arrangements within the Indigenous community. There has been a formal group of Ngunnawal elders to provide guidance to the Indigenous community and a link with the ACT Government. The relationship between this group and the Indigenous representative body is not clear.

It is typical of the Stanhope Government, that what seemed like a good idea at the time has been implemented with inadequate policy preparation and development. Only 226 votes were counted in the elections for the Indigenous representative body, out of an Indigenous community numbering over 4,000 in the ACT.

**The Canberra Liberals will consult with the Indigenous community, with a view to ensuring that the representative body is given support and is meaningfully engaged in government decision-making.**

If Indigenous people feel that the elected representative body is genuinely listened to by the ACT Government, then there should be greater involvement in future elections.

## Indigenous History and Culture

Indigenous history and culture are integral components of the story of the ACT. The Canberra Liberals will develop improved curriculum materials, that incorporate more of the history, traditions, customs and lore of the Ngunnawal people, that can be taught in ACT schools. The revised teaching materials will be tailored for use at both primary schools and high schools.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Indigenous curriculum – enhancement of resources on Ngunnawal heritage	60	30		

## Healing Farm

The Canberra Liberals will work with the Ngunnawal community to establish an Aboriginal Healing Farm in the ACT. The healing farm will have a strong cultural base to its activities and it will have the objective of rehabilitating and strengthening young Indigenous people who are 'at risk' and their families.

The healing farm will help empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially young people, by linking them with work, education, training, health and well-being programs. The healing farm also will work to build greater knowledge of and pride in Ngunnawal identity, spirituality and culture, especially for children and young people.

The Healing Farm facility will be located on a rural site that will be determined in consultation with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council. We will review land purchased by the Stanhope Government and other rural leases that have been recently resumed, to ascertain their suitability. An important priority is to ensure there are appropriate land management strategies for a rural lease. For instance a location in a rural setting for a large number of people will need adequate water supply, suitable sewerage systems and weed control systems. Depending on the size of the proposed facility, we may well need to commission an environmental impact study as part of planning approvals.

# Indigenous Organisations

There are a number of organisations in the ACT that assist in provision of support for Indigenous people. A Canberra Liberal Government will help these organisations to build up competencies in education and training and in undertaking commercial activities. The Billabong Aboriginal Corporation is a good example of an Indigenous entity that provides education and training, and encourages people to recognise their own potential to work in and manage commercial activities.

There are some emerging areas of activity that offer exciting potential for Indigenous enterprise and employment. These are based broadly on natural resource management programs and could include land management, grassland research programs (encompassing seed bank programs), forestry management and nurseries and propagation amongst other activities. These programs offer important economic opportunities for Indigenous people, through training, long term employment and the development of commercial activities that will generate revenue flows.

The Canberra Liberals recognise that it is important for Indigenous organisations to be treated equitably with all other non-government organisations in terms of their structures and governance, responsibilities for management of public funds and in the way they are dealt with by ACT Government departments and agencies.

## Indigenous Traineeships

The Canberra Liberals recognise that young people, in particular, benefit from having access to the best possible education and training. The Canberra Liberals will provide \$530,000 over four years to provide up to ten traineeships for young Indigenous people per year. These traineeships will be available in whatever field a person chooses – be their prospective employment in a trade, in commercial activities or in the public sector. The traineeships will comprise a combination of class room education and on-the-job training.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Indigenous Traineeships	20	165	170	175

## Evaluation of Indigenous Groups – their capacity and needs

A Canberra Liberal Government will work cooperatively with the Indigenous community to undertake an assessment of all Indigenous organisations in the ACT. This audit will establish the capacity of each organisation to perform the functions for which each has been established. This audit also will reveal any particular issues that are relevant to the operations of any of these organisations and which will need to be resolved.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Assessment of Indigenous Organisation Capacity and Needs	80			

## Feasibility Study – Indigenous Women’s Shelter

A Canberra Liberal Government will evaluate the potential to establish an Aboriginal Women’s Shelter that will provide a suitable location, in a culturally appropriate setting for Aboriginal women and children to escape from personal crises including violence, substance abuse and peer pressures.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Feasibility Study – Indigenous Women’s Shelter	100			

## CIT Trade Centre

We will appoint an Indigenous coordinator attached to the CIT Fyshwick Trade Skills Campus, to support young Indigenous people in learning a range of technical skills and to provide better awareness of and access to the Indigenous student support services coordinated by the Yuruna Centre from the Reid Campus.

The coordinator will work in association with employers and entities such as Billabong Aboriginal Corporation to assist young Indigenous people in moving from training into work where they can apply their skills.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
CIT Trade Skills centre – Indigenous Coordinator		90	93	96



## The Future

A Canberra Liberal Government will work hard to provide an environment in which Indigenous people can achieve their potential in whatever activity they choose – be it in obtaining appropriate housing, in going to school, in undertaking tertiary study, in finding employment, in starting a business, or in working in the community. Our aim is to help Indigenous people enjoy personal and social progress across a range of indicators of health, economic outcomes and wellbeing.