

ArchivesACT Research Guide

SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED TO THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

BY THE CHIEF MINISTER

ROSEMARY FOLLETT MLA

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RUSSELL BARTON, PRESIDENT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN -

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO SPEAK TO THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB TODAY. SOME OF YOU WILL BE AWARE THAT LAST WEEK I OFFICIALLY "LAUNCHED" THE A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S VERY OWN PRESS GALLERY, AND I AM GLAD TO SEE A NUMBER OF GALLERY MEMBERS PRESENT TODAY. NUMERICALLY THEY ARE NOT LARGE BUT THE SCOPE OF THEIR TASK IS. THEY HAVE, SO FAR, TACKLED THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES WITH RELISH AND HAVE ENERGETICALLY SOUGHT TO ENSURE THAT MY COMMITMENT TO OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE GOVERNMENT IS MAINTAINED.

THE NATIONAL MEDIA HAS ALSO EXPRESSED A KEEN INTEREST IN THE FIRST A.C.T. GOVERNMENT. I WELCOME THIS ATTENTION AND LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR CONTINUED CRITICAL INTEREST.

I HAVE HAD A LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE PRESS, AND WITH POLITICAL REPORTING. MY FATHER WAS A HANSARD REPORTER, AND OF COURSE, RESPONSIBLE FOR RECORDING WHAT THE POLITICIANS IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT ACTUALLY DID SAY. SINCE BECOMING INVOLVED IN POLITICS, FIRSTLY AT THE BASIC GRASS ROOTS LEVELS, AND MORE RECENTLY AS CHIEF MINISTER, I HAVE TAKEN A KEEN INTEREST IN THE SUBSTANCE OF MEDIA REPORTS, NOT ONLY IN REGARD TO MYSELF BUT TO POLITICS IN GENERAL.

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OF COURSE, I HAVE AGREED WITH SOME OF IT, AND DISAGREED WITH SOME OF IT; SOME OF IT I BELIEVE HAS BEEN DOWNRIGHT WRONG. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE A STRONG, VIBRANT, FREE PRESS IS AT THE VERY BASIS OF DEMOCRACY. I HOPE YOU ALL CONTINUE TO REPORT FAIRLY AND HONESTLY ON THE ACTIONS OF MY GOVERNMENT AS WE EMBARK ON THE NEW TASK OF GOVERNING THE A.C.T. THIS IS A TWO WAY PROCESS AND THAT LEADS TO THE CENTRAL MESSAGE I WISH TO CONVEY TODAY.

A CORE THEME OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY CAMPAIGN FOR THE RECENT ELECTION AND THEREAFTER HAS BEEN ONE OF OPEN GOVERNMENT. THIS COMMITMENT TO OPENNESS WAS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE STYLE OF GOVERNMENT WE PROMISED THE PEOPLE OF CANBERRA.

I AM NOT, HOWEVER, SIMPLY COMMITTED TO A STYLE OF GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE AN AGENDA FOR THE A.C.T. - AN AGENDA WITH ITS ROOTS IN THE NEED TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY BASED ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY; A COMMUNITY WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE BROADEST POSSIBLE INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY IN TERMS OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH, EDUCATION, ASSEMBLY, ORGANISATION AND RELIGION. A COMPASSIONATE, TOLERANT COMMUNITY WHICH RECOGNISES AND REJOICES IN OUR DIVERSITY.

OUR ECONOMIC POLICIES ARE A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THIS AGENDA. MY GOVERNMENT WILL BE PURSUING ECONOMIC POLICIES DESIGNED TO CREATE A CHOICE OF MEANINGFUL JOBS FOR ALL CANBERRANS. TO ACHIEVE THIS WE MUST BROADEN THE A.C.T.'S INDUSTRY BASE AND ENSURE STRONG CONTROLLED GROWTH OF PRIVATE AND COMMUNITY SECTOR EMPLOYMENT.

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WE WILL BE PROVIDING AN ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTIVE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED NOT ONLY THROUGH TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC SUPPORT MEASURES, BUT ALSO BY REVIEWING REGULATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ENSURE THAT GOVERNMENT IS NOT STIFLING ENTERPRISE.

THE TOURIST INDUSTRY DESERVES SPECIAL MENTION BECAUSE OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO CANBERRA'S FUTURE. OUR INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES WILL BE PARTICULARLY TARGETTED TO THIS SECTOR.

NO MATTER HOW WELL TARGETTED AND HOW EFFECTIVE OUR ECONOMIC POLICIES ARE, HOWEVER, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN OUR COMMUNITY. GROUPS WHO MUST BE GIVEN SPECIAL ATTENTION.

WE ARE CURRENTLY ESTABLISHING WITHIN MY PORTFOLIO A SOCIAL JUSTICE UNIT. THE ROLE OF THIS UNIT, WILL BE TO OVERSEE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL GOVERNMENT POLICY TO ENSURE THAT OUR OBJECTIVE OF CREATING A FAIRER, MORE EQUAL SOCIETY IS BEING MET.

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE, MORE SO GIVEN THE CURRENT OUTRAGEOUSLY HIGH INTEREST RATES. UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS LITTLE THAT A TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT CAN DO TO INFLUENCE INTEREST RATES.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, MUCH WHICH CAN BE ACHIEVED BY OUR GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF ENSURING THE PROVISION OF HOUSING SERVICES AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE COST. I AM NOT ONLY SPEAKING OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING STOCK, ALTHOUGH MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO THE PUBLIC HOUSING SECTOR. WE ARE ALSO ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING THROUGH OUR CONTROL OF BUSINESS REGULATION, URBAN PLANNING AND LAND SUPPLY.

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MY GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF HOUSING POLICY. THIS REVIEW WILL EXAMINE ALL OF THESE FACTORS AND IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO DEVELOP SOME PRACTICAL PROPOSALS AIMED AT ACHIEVING MORE EQUITABLE HOUSING OUTCOMES.

CERTAINLY I BELIEVE THAT MY ELECTION COMMITMENTS TO ESTABLISH A HOUSING AND TENANT COUNCIL, TO ASSIST IN THE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS AND DISPUTES IN THE AREAS OF PUBLIC HOUSING AND RENTAL ACCOMMODATION, AND A TENANCY BOND TRUST WILL IMPROVE EQUITY IN THE DELIVERY OF HOUSING SERVICES.

EARLY IN THE LIFE OF THE ASSEMBLY I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ON A 'MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE' - A MATTER WHICH I HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED TO BE OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE AND BASIC TO ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE. I REFER TO THE ISSUE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN. I BELIEVE THAT CONSIDERATION OF THIS ISSUE IS OF CRUCIAL CONCERN TO THE GOOD GOVERNMENT OF THE A.C.T.. ANY GOVERNMENT THAT IGNORES THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION MADE BY HALF THE POPULATION, WHETHER IT BE IN THE WORKPLACE, THE HOME OR THE GENERAL COMMUNITY, DOES SO AT ITS OWN RISK.

WOMEN EARN LESS THAN MEN - THEY TEND TO BE CONCENTRATED IN LOWER PAID JOBS. EVEN IN AREAS WHERE THEY DO VERY MUCH THE SAME SORT OF WORK AS MEN THEY EARN LESS. WOMEN ARE ALSO MORE LIKELY TO TAKE PART TIME WORK AND CONSEQUENTLY TO HAVE A LESSER INCOME. WOMEN THEREFORE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE LIVING IN POVERTY AND INDEED MORE LIKELY TO BE LIVING ON SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS THAN ARE MEN. THEY ARE MORE LIKELY, FOR INSTANCE, TO HEAD SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES - ANOTHER COMMON SOURCE OF POVERTY.

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IT IS TRUE TO SAY THAT WOMEN ARE MUCH LESS LIKELY TO BE REPRESENTED AT THE TOP LEVELS, WHETHER THAT IS IN BUSINESS OR IN GOVERNMENT OR ON BOARDS OF DIRECTORS AND SO ON; EVEN IN THE A.C.T. HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY FEWER THAN A QUARTER OF THE REPRESENTATIVES ARE WOMEN. I THINK THAT THIS IS A MATTER FOR SHAME.

WE CAMPAIGNED ON A PLATFORM OF SOCIAL JUSTICE - AND BY THAT MEANT EQUAL ACCESS, EQUITY AND PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IS NOT HOWEVER SIMPLY ABOUT EQUALITY, IT IS A MATTER OF EFFICIENCY. WE SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD TO CONTINUE UNDERUTILISING THE RESOURCES OF 50% OF OUR POPULATION.

I HAVE BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE MEDIA CONCERNING MY STATEMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO SET A TARGET THAT WOMEN FILL 50% OF ALL GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES. IT IS MY INTENTION TO ENSURE THAT APPOINTMENTS OF COMPETENT, APPROPRIATE WOMEN ARE MADE, AS THE NEED ARISES. I MAKE NO APOLOGY FOR THIS. IT IS OBVIOUSLY THE ONLY EQUITABLE AND EFFICIENT WAY TO GO.

I WANT ALSO TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF DISCRIMINATION. THE A.C.T. STANDS ALONE IN AUSTRALIA IN HAVING NO ACCESS FOR ITS CITIZENS TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT DISCRIMINATION. I KNOW THAT IN OTHER STATES COMPLAINTS ABOUT DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE COME PREDOMINANTLY FROM MARRIED WOMEN OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND; ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION SHOULD GO SOME WAY TOWARDS REDRESSING THIS PROBLEM.

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THIS WEEK WE HAVE CELEBRATED WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY. MY OWN PARTICULAR ENVIRONMENT DAY ACTIVITY WAS A SMALL ONE - HOWEVER, I HOPE IT WILL BE PART OF A WIDER MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY. ON 5 JUNE THE ACT ADMINISTRATION RECEIVED ITS FIRST DELIVERY OF RECYCLED PAPER - WE ARE CURRENTLY TRYING OUT ITS SUITABILITY IN MY OFFICE. I AM HOPING THAT THE TRIALS WILL BE SUCCESSFUL AND THAT, IN OUR OWN SMALL WAY, MY GOVERNMENT WILL ASSIST IN EXPANDING THE PRODUCTION OF RECYCLED PAPER. I WILL LET YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES.

THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE TERRITORY, BOTH BUILT AND NATURAL IS, I BELIEVE, ONE OF OUR GREATEST ATTRACTIONS. IT HAS ALREADY BEEN USED TO GREAT EFFECT TO ATTRACT TOURISTS TO THE A.C.T. I AM DETERMINED TO DO A LOT MORE TO SHARE OUR SURROUNDINGS WITH THE REST OF AUSTRALIA AND WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF OVERSEAS VISITORS NOW COMING TO THIS COUNTRY EACH YEAR.

MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SO THAT IT IS AVAILABLE TO BE ENJOYED BY BOTH THE PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS THREE MAJOR THEMES. FIRST THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PROCESS. SECOND, THE PROTECTION AND AUGMENTATION OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF NATURAL PARKS AND RESERVES IN THE A.C.T. THIRD, THE ENHANCEMENT OF MEASURES RELATING TO POLLUTION CONTROL, WASTE DISPOSAL AND RESOURCE RECYCLING.

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THE A.C.T. MUST REALISE ITS POTENTIAL TO ACT AS A MODEL TO THE REST OF AUSTRALIA IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS. IN PARTICULAR, WE MUST ASPIRE TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE. THE PEOPLE OF THE A.C.T. CAN BE ASSURED THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ACT LOCALLY IN ADDRESSING ISSUES SUCH AS THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT AND PROTECTION OF THE OZONE LAYER. CERTAINLY, IT IS MY VIEW THAT IT IS MORE EXPENSIVE TO SOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS (IF A SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND) THAN TO PREVENT THE PROBLEM IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

I TURN NOW TO OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE. THESE MATTERS ARE OF GREAT CONCERN TO ME. I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS CROSS-PARTY SUPPORT IN THE ASSEMBLY FOR MANY OF THE APPROACHES THAT MY GOVERNMENT IS PROPOSING.

CANBERRA IS NOT AN OLD CITY, BUT IT IS NEVERTHELESS A CITY OF GREAT DIVERSITY AND CHARM AND THERE ARE ASPECTS WITHIN CANBERRA OF RURAL, URBAN AND GOVERNMENT LIFE WHICH ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE NATURE OF CANBERRA - AND THESE MUST BE PROTECTED. I AM COMMITTED TO PURSUING THIS - WITH SOME VIGOUR - AS I BELIEVE THE PUBLIC IS VITALLY INTERESTED IN PROTECTING BOTH THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE A.C.T.

MY GOVERNMENT PROPOSES AT AN EARLY DATE TO INTRODUCE MUCH NEEDED AND LONG AWAITED PLANNING LEGISLATION AND HERITAGE LEGISLATION. WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT THE PLANNING OF CANBERRA IS UNDERTAKEN IN CONCERT WITH THE PROTECTION OF OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT. DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION SHOULD NO LONGER BE SEEN AS OPPOSING AIMS. WE MUST HAVE INTEGRATED PLANNING AND HERITAGE LAWS.

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WE ALSO NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE A.C.T. HERITAGE COMMITTEE WITH ITS OWN LEGISLATION AND WITH REAL POWER. THESE ACTIONS ARE CRUCIAL TO THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF CANBERRA IN DEMONSTRATING THE BEST OF THE AUSTRALIAN LIFESTYLE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.

I HAVE ALREADY TAKEN URGENT ACTION ON HERITAGE MATTERS. I HAVE TOLD THE INTERIM TERRITORY PLANNING AUTHORITY TO WITHHOLD DEMOLITION APPROVALS ON BUILDINGS ON RESIDENTIAL LEASES IN CENTRAL CANBERRA UNTIL A TASK FORCE HAS IDENTIFIED THE HERITAGE ASPECTS INVOLVED. THE TASK FORCE WILL ALSO START TO ASSEMBLE AN A.C.T. HERITAGE REGISTER. WE ARE ALSO KEEN TO PROMOTE THE HERITAGE ASPECTS OF CANBERRA TO OUR MANY VISITORS.

YOU MAY BE AWARE THAT WORK ON THE PROPOSED A.C.T. PLANNING SYSTEM IS WELL ADVANCED. THE MODEL SYSTEM DESIGNED BY JOHN MANT WILL SERVE AS A USEFUL BASIS FOR THE ASSEMBLY AND THE COMMUNITY TO CONSIDER.

IT ATTEMPTS TO ENSURE THROUGH THE LEASEHOLD SYSTEM THE MAXIMUM BENEFITS TO THE GENERAL COMMUNITY. THE NEED FOR PLANNING CONTROLS TO BE "USER FRIENDLY", CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY ALL CITIZENS, IS ADDRESSED, AS IS THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS SYSTEM OPERATED BY BOTH NATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES. THE PLANNING SYSTEM MUST ALSO HAVE APPROPRIATE APPEAL RIGHTS, AND THE SYSTEM MUST GUARD AGAINST CORRUPTION.

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IT IS AN ABSOLUTE PRIORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PUT AN APPROPRIATE PLANNING SYSTEM IN PLACE WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH THE ABOVE PRINCIPLES AND TO FULLY CONSULT WITH THE PEOPLE OF CANBERRA PRIOR TO THE LEGISLATION BEING PASSED.

MY GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS ON HERITAGE AND PLANNING WILL BE OPEN TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY AT ALL TIMES. I WILL INVITE THE PUBLIC TO NOMINATE HERITAGE PLACES AND TO COMMENT ON PROPOSALS. ABOVE ALL I WILL ENSURE THAT PUBLIC HEARINGS ARE HELD AT TIMES AND PLACES WHICH ALLOW RESIDENTS TO MAKE SUBMISSIONS.

IT WAS MY BELIEF PRIOR TO THE ELECTION THAT A CONSULTATIVE APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT WAS THE ONLY WAY FOR THIS TERRITORY TO BE GOVERNED RESPONSIBLY IN 1989 AND BEYOND. OF COURSE, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT - AND I HAVE TO SAY I DO LIKE IT - THE ELECTORS OF THE A.C.T. HAVE FORCED US INTO A CONSULTATIVE MODE. IF MY PARTY WANTS TO GET A MAJORITY ON THE FLOOR OF THE ASSEMBLY THEN WE MUST CONSULT. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT. I MUST STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE NOT BEING DRAGGED RELUCTANTLY TOWARDS A SYSTEM OF OPEN ACCESSIBLE CONSULTATIVE GOVERNMENT. IT IS WHAT WE ALWAYS SAID WE WOULD DO. WE HAVE TO DO IT - AND WE HAVE TO MAKE IT WORK.

TO THIS END, MY MINISTERS AND I HAVE ALREADY HAD MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF MANY COMMUNITY GROUPS IN THE A.C.T., AND OTHERS ARE PLANNED. THESE HAVE BEEN HELD IN OUR OFFICES AND HAVE BEEN NECESSARILY SMALL MEETINGS WITH OFFICE BEARERS OR GROUP REPRESENTATIVES. I WANT TO ASSURE THE A.C.T. ELECTORATE, HOWEVER, THAT CONSULTATIONS WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY ARE BEING PLANNED.

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I MADE AN ELECTION COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS THAT I BEGAN DURING THE CAMPAIGN. THE FIRST OF THE NEW SERIES OF THESE MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT CORROBOREE PARK HALL ON WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 1989 AT 8.00PM. I WANT PEOPLE TO COME AND TELL ME THEIR CONCERNS, I WANT TO LISTEN - AND THEN, OF COURSE, I WILL ACT.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT IS NOT THE PRESERVE OF ONE OR TWO POLITICIANS; IT IS THE CONCERN OF ALL WHO WANT GOVERNMENT TO REFLECT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE. THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE HAS BEEN RATHER ACTIVE IN AUSTRALIA RECENTLY. ELECTION RESULTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE SERVED NOTICE ON POLITICIANS THAT THERE IS ROOM FOR A SMARTENING UP OF THEIR APPROACH.

AS AN EXAMPLE TODAY I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING OF HOW OUR BUDGET PROCESS WILL OPERATE IN THE A.C.T. I BELIEVE THAT THIS PROCESS WILL PROVE TO BE A BENCHMARK FOR THE TYPE OF OPEN CONSULTATIVE GOVERNMENT WHICH THE A.C.T. WILL HAVE.

THERE WILL BE TWO STAGES IN THE PREPARATION OF THE BUDGET. THIS YEAR, WE WILL OUTLINE OUR BROAD ECONOMIC STRATEGY IN JULY. THIS WILL PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR DECISIONS IN RELATION TO THE FUNDING OF THE A.C.T. IT WILL INCLUDE OUR FORWARD PLANS FOR CAPITAL WORKS AND THE DECISIONS WHICH WE INTEND TO TAKE ON NEW POLICY INITIATIVES. NEW POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL FOCUS ON OUR CONCERN TO SEE CANBERRA DEVELOP AS A SOCIALLY JUST SOCIETY. THEY WILL ENSURE THAT WHAT WE DO IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE WILL LEAD TO THE CREATION OF QUALITY JOBS FOR ALL CANBERRANS.

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FOLLOWING THE JULY STATEMENT OUR PROCESS OF CONSULTATION WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY WILL ACCELERATE. TO FACILITATE THIS WE WILL ESTABLISH A BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE WITH A MEMBERSHIP DRAWN FROM UNION, BUSINESS AND OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS. THESE CONSULTATIVE PROCESSES WILL CONTINUE UNTIL SEPTEMBER WHEN A COMPREHENSIVE BUDGET WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND THE PEOPLE OF THE A.C.T.

I BELIEVE THAT THROUGH THIS PROCESS WE WILL BE ABLE TO FOCUS BUDGETARY PROPOSALS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT COMMUNITY VIEWS. IN THIS WAY I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT OUR AGENDA FOR THE A.C.T. IN THE MOST OPEN WAY POSSIBLE.

BY OPENING UP THE BUDGET PROCESS NOT ONLY WILL THE PEOPLE OF THE A.C.T. BE MORE INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING BUT THEY WILL ALSO LEARN MORE ABOUT BOTH THE SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS ON THE A.C.T. GOVERNMENT.

MY GOVERNMENT IS FULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY IT HAS TO DELIVER SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY TO ALL PEOPLE IN THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY. AS I HAVE SAID TO YOU TODAY, I BELIEVE THAT THE ONLY WAY WE CAN DO THIS IS BY CREATING OPEN, ACCESSIBLE GOVERNMENT FOR ALL TERRITORIANS.

I INVITE YOU ALL TO COME TO NO. 1 CONSTITUTION AVENUE AND SEE THE ASSEMBLY IN ACTION. BY WATCHING THE WORKINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FEEL PART OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS. I ASK YOU ALSO TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN ANY WAY YOU CAN, BY ATTENDING MEETINGS, OR BY WRITING TO ME.

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I WANT TO HEAR THE VIEWS OF MY CONSTITUENTS FOR I DO NOT BELIEVE I AM THE FONT OF ALL KNOWLEDGE. I AM, HOWEVER, DETERMINED TO ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE PUT THEIR TRUST IN ME AS THE FIRST CHIEF MINISTER OF THE A.C.T. ARE FULLY VINDICATED FOR THAT TRUST. IT IS NOT AN EASY TASK, BUT I AM TOLD I AM THRIVING ON IT - MY HOPE IS THAT THIS TERRITORY WILL ALSO THRIVE.

THANK YOU.