



## NEWS RELEASE

**The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt**

Deputy Premier  
Minister for Climate Change and the Environment  
Minister for Commerce  
Member for Marrickville

**The Hon. Graham West MP**

Minister for Juvenile Justice  
Minister for Volunteering  
Minister for Youth  
Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs  
Member for Campbelltown

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*Thursday 11 June, 2009*

### NSW Growing Environmental Volunteering Forum

The NSW Government has today launched a new forum aimed at encouraging environmental volunteering across the State.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, Carmel Tebbutt and Minister for Volunteering, Graham West officially opened the *Growing Environmental Volunteering Forum* at the Powerhouse Museum this morning.

Ms Tebbutt said the forum would look at strategies and opportunities to increase the number of environmental volunteers.

"Already in NSW we have a strong and dedicated community of environmental volunteers," Ms Tebbutt said.

"Around 4,500 volunteers participate in Department of Environment and Climate Change programs each year and volunteers also play an important role with organisations such as 'Clean up Australia' and 'Conservation Volunteers Australia'.

"Importantly what all environmental volunteers do is build support for the environment and conservation at a grass roots level.

"Today, our focus is on finding new ways to support and grow these important communities.

"I am delighted that \$160,000 will be provided next financial year to support volunteer projects in national parks across the State.

"The aim of this funding is both to support the work these groups do and also to encourage some truly innovative new projects."

Speakers at today's forum included the Chairman of Clean up Australia, Mr Ian Kiernan and Associate Professor Melanie Oppenheimer from the University of New England's School of Humanities.

Mr West said volunteering is a positive way to bring people together and to harness their skills for the wellbeing of the broader community.

"As Minister for Volunteering my focus is to strengthen and support all forms of volunteering across NSW," Mr West said.



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“According to research conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were approximately 1.7 million volunteers in 2006 alone. This effort contributed around \$5 billion to the NSW economy.

“Much of the volunteering effort involves the care and restoration of the environment.

“I would like to thank attendees at today’s forum, who included members of environmental, youth and volunteering organisations, local councils, government, and academics,” Mr West said.