



Carmel Tebbutt MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment | Minister for Commerce

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A treasure 340 million years in the making

The Deputy Premier and Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Carmel Tebbutt, will today re-open the stunning 340 million-year-old Orient Cave at Jenolan in the Blue Mountains following a \$580,000 upgrade.

Ms Tebbutt, who will join with the Director of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, Peter Austen, for the launch, said that the natural wonders of the Orient Cave would be highlighted with the installation of a \$300,000 light system and the upgrade of more than 300 metres of handrails and fencing.

“The amazing Orient Cave has thrilled visitors to Jenolan since its discovery in 1904 and has become one of our national treasures,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“This re-opening follows a complete redevelopment of the cave, including the installation of a state of the art lighting system that uses computer automation control and the latest generation of LED lighting.

“These combine to create a lighting experience that shows the beauty and natural colour of the cave as never before, while significantly reducing the environmental impact associated with tourist cave development and ensuring the preservation of the cave for future generations.

“The Orient Cave has always been one of the most stunning tourist caves in the world and now it is one of the most environmentally responsible and technically advanced as well.”

Ms Tebbutt said that recent advances in cave development and presentation were a major factor in Jenolan winning ‘Best Tourist Attraction’ at the recent Blue Mountains Tourism Awards of Excellence 2009.

“This stunning underground network offers a unique tourist experience including tours of 11 spectacular show caves, challenging adventure caving, ghost tours and underground concerts.

“Jenolan greeted almost 230,000 visitors last year, a number that will inevitably grow as they continually find new ways to enhance visitor experience.”

The NSW Government has also allocated more than \$2.6 million to primarily fund upgrades to Jenolan Caves House. This will include improvements to the café bar, kitchen and common areas of the hotel and upgrades to staff accommodation and the sewerage treatment works.

Director of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, Peter Austen, said that the Orient Cave had been transformed in to an extraordinary sensory experience.



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“Although it is said that you can never improve on nature here at Jenolan we’ve certainly done all that we can to highlight its natural beauty,” Mr Austen said.

“Even guides who have visited the cave hundreds of times before cannot believe the difference the relighting has made. It really is like an entirely new cave.”

Jenolan Caves is nestled in pristine wilderness between Lithgow and Oberon in the Blue Mountains World Heritage area and is considered to be one of the world’s finest and oldest cave systems.

The redevelopment project was made possible by funding from the NSW Government, and work undertaken by the staff of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust. The Orient Cave was open in limited capacity during the eight-month redevelopment.

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