



Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday March 3, 2013

MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP TO LINK THE ILLAWARRA AND SHOALHAVEN

Environment Minister Robyn Parker today visited the Illawarra Escarpment to view an impressive future habitat corridor that will link the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, forming a key section of the ambitious Great Eastern Ranges Initiative.

The NSW Government contributed \$4.4 million over four years to the Great Eastern Ranges (GER) as part of its 2011 Green Corridors election commitment.

“Corridors play a critical conservation role; while national parks provide excellent habitat for native species, many animals require an even greater landscape for migration, foraging and robust genetic diversity,” Ms Parker said.

“For example, birds like the Brush Cuckoo, Fig Bird and Rainbow Bea-eater travel great distances along the Great Eastern Ranges which in many ways is a nature’s equivalent of the Pacific Highway.”

Ms Parker, announcing the launch of the Illawarra-Shoalhaven partnership of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative at the Sublime Point lookout near Bulli, said the partnership marks the seventh major landscape now committed to the GER initiative.

“I am delighted that some 30 local organisations including Landcare, Conservation Volunteers Australia and National Parks Association branches, have agreed in principle to this section of the corridor because it empowers the local community to care for its environment,” Ms Parker said.

“Their coordinated efforts will help restore natural habitat linkages along the Illawarra Escarpment between the Royal and Morton National Parks and between the escarpment and coastal reserves all the way to Batemans Bay.”

The Illawarra to Shoalhaven partnership will now become the seventh conservation region along the Ranges. Already in place are the Border Ranges, Jalligirr on the Coffs Coast, the Hunter Valley, the Southern Highlands, Kosciuszko to the Coast and the Slopes to Summit regions.

Ms Parker and the Member for Heathcote Lee Evans congratulated Great Eastern Ranges Initiative staff, volunteers and partner organisations at the Sublime Lookout today.

“The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative boasts a conservation vision on a continental scale and today we celebrate another major step forward,” Ms Parker said.

"I applaud all involved for taking real steps like these to link habitats and I am pleased to see the \$4.4 million Environmental Trust funding being put to good use."

Mr Evans said the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative is an ambitious project and a win for the environment.

"The initiative spans the entire east coast of Australia and local partnerships like the one for Illawarra to the Shoalhaven are bringing it closer to reality," Mr Evans said.

"To have 30 local organisations agree in principle to the Illawarra-Shoalhaven section of the corridor is really good news and they are to be commended for their interest in this environmental cause."

Read more about the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative:

<http://www.greasternranges.org.au/> or
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/ger/index.htm>

Minister Parker was unable to attend the event due to bad weather in the Hunter.