



# **Robyn Parker MP**

## **Minister for the Environment**

## **Minister for Heritage**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Monday, 13 January 2014

#### **A STRONGER FUTURE FOR SYDNEY'S BOTANIC GARDENS AND PARKLANDS**

Environment Minister Robyn Parker today announced a plan to strengthen Sydney's favourite green spaces with operations of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain and Centennial Parklands to be amalgamated.

"This move will provide enormous community and visitor benefits as these amazing sites will have access to up to \$7 million more funding each year from efficiencies achieved by the amalgamation, which will be re-invested in exciting and innovative projects," Ms Parker said.

"This money will be reinvested in new science and education programs, better customer services and management systems – all of which will improve the parks and gardens for the community.

"Whether visitors are seeking botanic inspiration, educational opportunities or recreational activities, Centennial Park and the Botanic Gardens will be ready to deliver high quality experiences.

"Efficiencies will come from the sharing of resources, staff and equipment across the Sydney basin and the amalgamation of the executive teams.

"Up to 50 per cent of the financial benefits come from new revenue – improved booking systems, better customer data base, new activities and experiences."

The operations of Centennial Parklands and Moore Park, the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, the Domain, The Australian Botanic Garden Mt Annan and the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mt Tomah Botanic Garden will be merged, creating a harbour-side to mountain-top network of nearly 1100 hectares.

The Centennial Parklands and Moore Park Trust and Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust will be retained with no changes to their objectives, powers and responsibilities. Importantly, the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust will continue its important work in science and plant conservation.

"The similarities in the aims and objectives of each organisation made this decision very easy," Ms Parker said.

"The Trusts focus on four key areas – botany and horticulture, education, tourism and health and wellbeing. By bringing the operations of these organisations together, they

will benefit from the knowledge and experience that each brings to the table, while having the resources to achieve more.”

A new Executive Director, who will report to the board of each Trust, will be appointed to manage the amalgamation of operations.

“The amalgamation will free funds to invest in improved site experiences and staff development, provide a more engaging career path for staff and greater tourism offerings, and provide an expanded, coordinated events space creating new opportunities through scale and diversity,” Ms Parker said.

“It will deliver coordinated green space education opportunities to within 30 minutes of all Sydney primary and secondary schools; it will coordinate combined recreational and sporting assets that include more than 125 playing fields, equestrian, orienteering, bike riding, running, walking, golf, and soccer. It brings major benefits for the community and the Trusts.”