



Rob Stokes MP
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MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW WELCOMES WORLD ENVIRONMENT LEADERS TO SYDNEY

Environment Minister Rob Stokes today welcomed Pacific Island leaders into Sydney Harbour as the World Parks Congress begins in Sydney with over 5,000 delegates gathering to participate in this once in a decade event.

Pacific Islander crews have embarked on a 6,000 nautical mile journey aboard traditional canoes that ended in Darling Harbour today.

Mr Stokes said the Congress is expected to inject around \$34 million into the state's economy and will provide an opportunity to discuss major environmental challenges in protecting the world's most precious places.

"I am delighted that NSW is hosting this important Congress where issues such as sustainable development and climate change can be discussed amongst the world's environmental leaders with a view to finding common ground," Mr Stokes said.

"The history of park protection in NSW stretches back to the establishment of Royal National Park which is the second oldest national park in the world, and Australia's first.

"Today we announced the creation of the Everlasting Swamp National Park, which is one of the largest coastal floodplain wetlands remaining in NSW and an intact ecosystems of this size is extremely rare and globally significant.

"The Congress will provide a wonderful opportunity to showcase to the world the state's over 865 national parks and reserves, further bolstering the approximately 38 million visitors our parks estate attracts each year.

"NSW has grown its national parks estate over the past 46 years from just 860,000 hectares in 1967 to over 7 million hectares or 9 per cent of the state's total land area today.

"Traditional owners continue to be an immense source of knowledge in the management of protected areas in NSW with almost a quarter of the state's parks estate now under Aboriginal joint management agreements."