



Rob Stokes MP
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MEDIA RELEASE

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ARAKWAL LEADERS CONGRATULATED ON GLOBAL AWARD WHILE MINISTER LAUNCHES ABORIGINAL TOURISM HANDBOOK

Environment Minister Rob Stokes has joined Ballina MP Don Page and Nationals candidate Kris Beavis at Cape Byron to congratulate the local Arakwal leaders and the National Parks and Wildlife Service staff for being recognised among the best protected area managers in the world.

Mr Stokes said the International Union for Conservation of Nature last week announced that the jointly managed Cape Byron State Conservation Area and Arakwal National Park were included in the inaugural “Green List” of protected places.

“The listing is a credit to the traditional owners, NPWS and the local community and we’re here to congratulate all involved on being among the first to be recognised for excellence in conservation management,” Mr Stokes said.

“Cape Byron SCA and Arakwal NP were among only 23 reserves across the world included in this first listing that also included another NSW park – Montague Island Nature Reserve – as well as parks in France, China and Kenya.

Ballina MP Don Page paid tribute to the role of the traditional owners, the Arakwal people, in the IUCN’s recognition of the jointly managed areas.

“These jointly managed protected areas receive 1.2 million visitors annually and are now financially self-sustaining through tourism revenue which is an incredible achievement,” Mr Page said.

“The local community has worked closely together to make Cape Byron and Arakwal what they are today.

“Their inclusion on the Green List is a direct reflection of the close collaboration between NPWS and the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and I congratulate them all on their success.

National Party candidate for Ballina Kris Beavis said: “We acknowledge the extensive support these parks receive from a vibrant and enthusiastic volunteer force that live locally and support our communities.

“Cape Byron SCA and Arakwal NP are magnificent as places of natural beauty and cultural significance, but it is the story of their management that make them truly remarkable.

Mr Stokes also launched a new handbook that aims to increase the profile of Aboriginal cultural tourism in NSW, contributing to increased employment and economic development opportunities for Indigenous people in NSW.

“What the local Aboriginal community has achieved here in Arakwal and Cape Byron by working together with the NPWS is a wonderful example of how cultural tourism can bring many economic, social and environmental benefits to a region,” Mr Stokes said.

“The handbook is part of the NSW Government’s commitment to increasing opportunities for Aboriginal tourism within national parks and focuses on engagement with Aboriginal communities and individuals to develop and deliver new or enhanced cultural tourism experiences in parks.

“The handbook focuses on the tourism industry: how it works, who are the key players, how to access these important networks and understanding the tourism industry’s contribution to the economy.

“This is an incredibly important sector of the NSW tourism industry and this is another positive addition to the NSW Government’s suite of training and education resources for Aboriginal people.

“The program includes the delivery of workshops; development and distribution of learning materials and resources; delivery of training seminars and workshops; assistance with networking and partnership building; and ongoing business mentoring.

“It has been instrumental in assisting six new Aboriginal owned and operated businesses, with four now operating in national parks.

An electronic version is available on the Office of Environment and Heritage website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/parksecopass/CTDProgram.pdf>

Mr Stokes thanked all the CTD Program key partners, including Destination NSW, Joint Management Advisory Committees, Aboriginal Economic Development Officer Network, NSW Aboriginal Land Council and Indigenous Business Australia.