

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 20 July 2015

BLUE MOUNTAINS TOURISM ICON RE-OPENS AFTER MAJOR UPGRADE

Environment Minister Mark Speakman has officially re-opened the Three Sisters walking track in the Blue Mountains after a \$1.5 million upgrade.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service, along with local contractors, have resurfaced the track's pathways, upgraded landscaping and signage and improved visitor safety.

The work, which took 12 months to complete, also involved upgrading Spooner's, Oreades and Lady Game Lookouts.

"The Three Sisters walking track is part of the Echo Point and Three Sisters visitor precinct, which receives close to two million visits per year and is one of Australia's top 10 tourist destinations", Mr Speakman said.

"I'm delighted to re-open this site to ensure many more visitors can enjoy this ancient and spectacular landscape and add another world-class experience to their Blue Mountains visit.

"I'm also delighted that this has been a collaborative project involving the local Aboriginal community".

In early 2014, the Three Sisters became the 98th Aboriginal Place declared in NSW. The declaration recognised the special cultural, social and spiritual significance of the site to the Aboriginal community.

The project received widespread support from other local stakeholders including Blue Mountains City Council, Federal Member Louise Markus MP, and Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism.

Mr Speakman acknowledged that while there has been some short-term disruption to visitors and the Katoomba community, local stakeholders were excited about improving local tourism opportunities and the flow-on benefits for local businesses and the community.

The upgraded walking track complements other improvements in the Blue Mountains, including the Honeymoon Bridge that links Echo Point to the Three Sisters and which was replaced two years ago.

The walking track links Echo Point Lookout to Lady Game Lookout, both of which overlook the Three Sisters.

"The NSW Government is committed to increasing visitor access and enjoyment of the state's parks and reserves," he said.

Visit the <u>national parks website</u> for more information on where to go, what to do and where to stay in our national parks.