

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$50 MILLION MORE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

The 2016-17 NSW Budget delivers an extra \$50 million to protect and preserve the State's environment and heritage, bringing total funding to a record \$1.7 billion, Environment and Heritage Minister Mark Speakman announced today.

This investment will go towards keeping the State's environmental watchdog strong, the protection and preservation of NSW's national park estate, preparing and adapting for climate change, Australia's pre-eminent private land conservation program, clean energy investment and the protection of Aboriginal and other cultural and historic heritage.

Mr Speakman said it was a NSW Government priority to support a healthy environment.

"This year's budget shows the NSW Government puts its money where its mouth is on conservation and environmental protection," Mr Speakman said.

"The forward estimates include the Government's commitment to a \$240 million investment in private land conservation over five years to help farmers protect and restore high value biodiversity."

Other Budget highlights include:

Environmental protection

\$175 million has been allocated to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to ensure it continues to operate as a modern, independent and respected regulator, including:

- \$67 million towards transforming waste management in NSW and increased education around better waste management practices
- \$6.2 million to bolster the NSW Government's response to the Williamstown Royal Australian Air Force Base contamination
- \$2.8 million towards introducing a container deposit scheme to help deliver the Premier's priority to reduce litter volume by 40 per cent by 2020
- \$2.4 million (\$10.1 million over five years) allocated for the EPA to address lead contamination and elevated blood lead levels in children in Broken Hill.

Climate change

- \$49 million will be set aside to improve energy productivity, which includes:
 - \$15 million for energy efficiency programs for households including support for people on low incomes
 - \$6 million for energy efficiency programs supporting business
 - over \$9 million for National Energy Market regulation
 - \$2 million for state-wide gas efficiency programs
 - \$1.4 million towards renewable energy programs.
- \$31 million will be allocated to support councils to develop and implement coastal and floodplain management plans and to restore and protect the NSW coastline and its estuaries.

Biodiversity

- An unprecedented investment of \$240 million over five years, with up to \$15 million in 2016-17, will facilitate strategic biodiversity conservation on private land
- A major investment of \$16 million this year (\$100 million over five years to 2020-21) to protect threatened species across NSW through the expansion of the Saving Our Species program.

National parks

- \$40 million has been allocated to manage fire risks in the State's national parks
- The iconic Royal Coast Track will undergo another \$3.7 million in upgrades in the next 12 months plus \$5.3 million over following three years, which includes installing a viewing platform at Wedding Cake Rock and expanding the Wattamolla car park.

Parklands

More than \$287 million has been set aside for the State's public parklands, zoos and gardens to improve community enjoyment, scientific research, education, sport, recreation, leisure and cultural experiences. This includes the following capital programs:

- \$46 million in capital expenditure will be set aside to deliver inspiring new visitor experiences at both Taronga Zoo and Western Plains Zoo, and to develop the Taronga Institute of Science and Learning
- As part of a \$22 million capital program for Western Sydney Parklands, \$5 million will be directed to the 200 hectare Bungarabee super park which will include regional play and recreational areas, a bushland corridor, and an outdoor event and entertainment space
- More than \$17 million in capital investment will be made in Centennial Parklands for upgrading park facilities

- \$4.7 million will be set aside for the Royal Botanic Garden and Mount Annan and Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens to upgrade amenities and infrastructure, and to create an online booking and customer relationship management system.

Heritage

- \$48 million to conserve and protect the state's Aboriginal and other cultural and historic heritage
- \$8.7 million in capital funding has been allocated to improve public safety, amenities and other infrastructure under the care of the Historic Houses Trust.

Environmental Trust

- \$100 million has been allocated to the Environmental Trust to increase opportunities for the community, industry and agencies to protect the environment through restoration, research, education and support programs.