

Media Release

Tuesday, 21 June 2022

BUDGET BOOST TO BIODIVERSITY

Improving biodiversity is a clear focus in the 2022-23 NSW Budget, with major investments in ground-breaking programs that support landholders to protect and conserve their land, and more than \$2 billion invested in programs focusing on protection, conservation and natural capital investment.

Minister for Environment and Heritage James Griffin said the Budget investment demonstrated the NSW Government's commitment to protecting the environment and growing a clean economy.

"I'm proud to be part of a government that has a strong track record in conserving our environment, and this massive new round of funding ensures we can continue this critical work right across New South Wales," Mr Griffin said.

"This Budget delivers hundreds of millions of dollars to encourage landholders to conserve biodiversity and sequester carbon on their land, which is critical because private landholders own and manage 70 per cent of land in New South Wales and many sensitive ecosystems are found there.

"Our \$206.2 million Sustainable Farming Program will ensure farmers can opt to receive benefits for sustainable land management practices, while improving biodiversity and lowering emissions.

"This Budget is also delivering a \$106.7 million Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund, which will ultimately pay landholders for generating biodiversity offset credits, while conserving biodiversity.

"By partnering with landholders through these new programs, we can continue enhancing existing biodiversity conservation, which is great news for the environment and future generations."

The NSW Budget 2022-23 also includes \$598.2 million over 10 years for the National Parks and Wildlife Service as part of the Government's continued response to the risk of bushfires.

"This funding will maintain record levels of national park firefighters, delivering 250 permanent jobs, including 200 firefighters, as well as critical infrastructure and fleet upgrades," Mr Griffin said.

"After significant flooding and rain this year, the Budget is committing \$18.5 million to expand Beachwatch to ensure we can continue meeting community expectations for monitoring the quality of water at swimming spots state-wide.

"We're continuing our massive investment in our national parks and enticing more domestic and international tourists to visit by delivering another ecotourism drawcard in the Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk on the Mid-North Coast, a world-class feature showcasing our world-famous environment.

“Major changes to the way we deal with waste and plastic are coming too, thanks to a \$286.2 million investment over four years in the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 and NSW Plastics Action Plan.”

New funding for environment and heritage in the 2022-23 NSW Budget includes:

- \$598 million over 10 years for National Parks and Wildlife Service to deliver 250 permanent jobs, including 200 firefighters, and critical infrastructure and fleet upgrades
- \$286.2 million over four years to implement the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 and NSW Plastics Action Plan
- \$206.2 million over 10 years in natural capital for a Sustainable Farming Program, rewarding farmers who opt into an accreditation program to improve carbon and biodiversity outcomes
- \$148.4 million over two years to manage the clean-up and removal of flood and storm-related damage, debris and green waste from the 2022 floods
- \$106.7 million over three years to increase the supply of biodiversity offset credits through a new Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund
- \$56.4 million over four years for a new Arc Rainforest Centre and Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk in the Dorrigo National Park
- \$44.8 million over 10 years for a state-wide environmental and air-quality monitoring program
- \$42.9 million over four years for the Me-Mel (Goat Island) Remediation, paving the way for the transfer of the island to the First Nations communities
- \$32.9 million over four years to safeguard the future of the World Heritage listed Lord Howe Island by rolling out a biosecurity regime targeting invasive species
- \$18.5 million over 10 years to expand Beachwatch to a state-wide program, meeting community demand for water-quality monitoring in NSW swim sites
- Funding is continuing for major programs, including more than \$450 million from 2020-23 for NPWS visitor infrastructure, \$60 million for the Saving our Species program, \$5 million for the NSW Blue Plaques Program, and \$3 million for the Heritage Grants Program to support items listed on the State Heritage Register or declared as an Aboriginal Place

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