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BOOST FOR PUBLIC SPACES IN NSW BUDGET

Green and open spaces are a big winner in the NSW Government's 2019-20 Budget, following an election commitment to create well-connected communities with quality local environments.

Planning and Public Spaces Minister Rob Stokes said \$162 million will be used to upgrade existing government-owned land and buy new land for public parklands, increase the tree canopy across Sydney and build more inclusive playgrounds.

"We're committed to creating outdoor living rooms right across Sydney so more people can get outdoors and enjoy easy access to fantastic public spaces wherever they live," Mr Stokes said.

"This budget shows that the NSW Government is planning for open space more strategically – through improvements to land we already own and by buying up forgotten land across Sydney to create new parks, playgrounds, green links and cycleways between existing open spaces."

In Sydney, the Budget devotes \$19 million to improve existing Government-owned land, including:

- \$9 million to improve open space in Frenchs Forest with new green connections, linking the local community to nearby bushland corridors;
- \$6 million to upgrade Kempt Field in Hurstville with upgraded facilities, a new running track or new playground; and
- \$4 million to improve open space at Withers road in Beaumont Hills that could include new playgrounds, nature trails and shared pathways between Smalls Creek and Caddies Creek.

Another \$31 million will be used to upgrade open space in Appin, Ermington, Fairfield, Leppington and Penrith, while \$75 million of recently announced funding will be used to buy new land across the State to be converted for public use.

Funding has also been set aside to continue building inclusive playgrounds across NSW through the Government's Everyone Can Play initiative.

Mr Stokes said four new inclusive playgrounds have opened recently in Hornsby, Willoughby, Lane Cove and Wagga Wagga, with 30 more set to be delivered in conjunction with local councils.

"We're also committed to planting more trees to boost Sydney's urban tree canopy, with more than \$36 million allocated to create greener and cooler environments," Mr Stokes said.

The funding will help build on the 149,000 trees already planted by the community through the 'Five Million Trees for Greater Sydney' program.

MEDIA: Jessica Reid | MINISTER STOKES | 0429 369 565