



Australian Capital Territory

Budget 2011-2012

Media Release

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Working even harder for our natural environment

The ACT Government will deliver new standards of care for the natural environment while allowing for future planning in funding outlined in the 2011-12 Budget today, Chief Minister and Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Jon Stanhope MLA announced.

“The ACT Government knows that looking after the environment requires evolving strategies and new ideas. The Budget puts in place the necessary investment that will allow us to maintain our natural environment today and into the future.”

Following the release of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment’s tree report, the Budget will deliver \$6.2 million over four years to support Canberra’s street trees.

There will be a focus on implementing scheduled tree maintenance works especially in streets, heritage trees and in high priority parks. This will help prolong the life of our urban forest.

This initiative will be augmented by a \$1 million program over four years to support critically endangered woodlands in the ACT, particularly Box-Gum woodlands, through a range of measures such as revegetation, reintroduction of missing habit elements like dead wood and managing grazing pressure and research.

The 2011-12 Budget will also deliver programs which ensure even more Canberrans enjoy our natural environment. Among the main initiatives is \$3.3 million over three years for the construction of the Canberra Centenary trail.

The self-guided trail, which will include interpretative signage, will start at Parliament House and loop through locations such as Mt Ainslie, Mt Taylor, Red Hill and the National Arboretum. It will use mostly existing trails but some new trails and a camping area will be constructed.

“The Centenary Trail will become a focal point for Canberrans and an attraction for visitors keen to enjoy our wonderful city.

“We are also providing for the future through a \$2.1 million initiative for the design stage of Molonglo Riverside Park, adjacent to the planned Molonglo urban development.

“This project includes design of walking trails, recreation spaces including barbeque and picnic facilities, a fire fuel buffer zone, rehabilitation and protection of Pink-tailed Worm Lizard habitat and rabbit and weed control programs,” Mr Stanhope said.

Further action is also being taken to curb invasive weeds thanks to a \$1.8 million program. This will remove weeds such as Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needlegrass, African Lovegrass, St John’s Wort and blackberry in grasslands and woodlands with high conservation value. These locations include Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Jerrabomberra Creek

A \$300,000 willow removal and revegetation project has also been funded along the Molonglo River waterski area to improve sightlines and stabilise the riverbank. A further \$1.5 million ACT-wide willow removal project will take place on public and private land, including the clean-up of tree debris deposited by recent flash flooding.

The Government will continue its highly successful rabbit control program in nature reserves by providing \$512,000 to target new areas and undertake follow-up work.

“The 2011-12 Budget will also improve the community’s enjoyment and understanding of parks and reserves through a \$100,000 project to install identification, interpretative and directional signage highlighting areas of heritage, environmental and local significance,” Mr Stanhope concluded.

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Media Contact:

Jess Wurf

Ph: 6205 0504 (w) 0411 772 700 (m)

jess.wurf@act.gov.au