



**Brendan Smyth** MLA

Australian Capital Territory

Minister for Urban Services

Member for Brindabella

## **2000/2001 BUDGET SET TO IMPROVE THE ACT'S ENVIRONMENT**

ACT Urban Services Minister Brendan Smyth today announced a range of initiatives totalling \$1.61million to improve the local environment.

“The 2000/2001 budget demonstrates the ACT Government’s continuing commitment to the ACT environment. Overall, the 2000/2001 environment budget builds on the progress and achievements the ACT Government has made in previous years.

“This budget contains a number of initiatives that are aimed directly at improving our local environment, as well as introducing measures that are designed to empower the Canberra community to play a hands-on role in caring for our environment now, and into the future.

“One of the biggest threats to our environment in the years to come will be the consequences associated with global warming. In the 2000/2001 budget, Environment ACT will receive an additional \$160,000 to implement gas emission reduction targets set down in the ACT Greenhouse Strategy.

“This funding is in addition to the \$1 million ACT Housing will spend during the 2000/2001 financial year on upgrading the energy performance of public housing to increase energy efficiency.

“We have an annual environmental weed control budget of more than \$650,000 spent by the ACT Government. Species to be targeted in 2000/2001 include African lovegrass along the Murrumbidgee River, blackberry control in the Upper Cotter River and ongoing willow eradication throughout the ACT.”

Mr Smyth said the Government was also on target to have the 300 hectare Boboyan Pines plantation in Namadgi National Park removed, and the area returned to its natural state within 10 years.

“A total of \$100,000 has been funded through the 2000/2001 capital works program for the removal of a further 65 hectares of pines and for the ongoing revegetation of Boboyan, with the remaining trees planned to be removed by June 2002.”

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Mr Smyth said the government is also spending \$200,000 in addition to the environment budget on the trial of a new organic and residual waste kerbside collection system.

“The trial will test different organic waste and residual collection methods, including the collection and processing of compostable materials and an assessment of the trial systems to establish the most viable options in the future,” Mr Smyth said.

“The proposed trial will involve an extra 80 litre bin for organic materials provided to the trial households with weekly collections. The trial will enable the ACT Government to establish the most appropriate method for collecting organic and residual domestic waste.

“The ACT Government is making significant gains to No Waste by 2010 – this next step will further reduce domestic waste to landfill, particularly in the area of organic waste.

A further \$125,000 is already identified in the budget for minor works under the Decade of Landcare Plan which funds activities to address land degraded by historical land practices.

“We’ll also continue our commitment to grants programs, including ACT Environment grants and Heritage Trust grants, and we will continue matching funding in Commonwealth programs such as Natural Heritage Trust and Murray-Darling Basin 2000,” Mr Smyth said.

“The last year has been a big one for our local environment, with the launch of the ACT Greenhouse Strategy, and the Duke of Edinburgh’s opening of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve’s Regional Visitor Information Centre.

“A total of \$150,000 will be spent on Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve’s Nature Education Centre.

“This year, we’ll be concentrating our efforts into continuing to implement these new initiatives, and make further improvements to the ACT region’s natural environment.”

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Statement ends / Tuesday 23 May 2000

Further information: Tamsin Davies, telephone 6205 0062 or 0418 633 145