

**GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3  
INQUIRY INTO TOURISM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES  
9 AUGUST 2013**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**QUESTION 1**

**The Hon. STEVE WHAN:** *Do you have a list of project priorities around the State for those sorts of things which is available or which you could provide?*

**Ms KING:** *We do. We are just going through our capital allocation process at the moment. We would be more than happy to take that on notice and provide that capital allocation.*

**RESPONSE**

We have a number of tourism priorities around the state.

For example, there are six priority precincts that have been identified for further review and assessment in regard to adaptive re-use and potential private sector involvement these are: Barrenjoey lighthouse and accommodation, Gap Bluff, Goat Island, Greycliffe House and Nielsen Park, Middle Head and Royal National Park.

Internal and external resources are engaged where necessary to provide expert advice on environment, heritage and cultural values, market conditions, feasibility and project planning. Work is underway to determine the maintenance and capital expenditure to present these assets to the appropriate standards.

Under the Regional Action Plan, NPWS addresses NSW 2021 priorities through the upgrade of walking tracks and trails around Sydney Harbour. These projects are progressing in consultation with major stakeholders.

The NPWS Delivery Plan 2013-14 identifies the Great Walks project as an organisational priority. A significant portion of this is the upgrade of the Royal Coast Track where \$600,000 is being spent this year on high priority track work to address visitor and environmental risk, a camp site upgrade, way finding signage and environmental assessments to underpin further work in subsequent years. The full program of works is significant and will take several years to complete.

In addition, the implementation of priority horse-riding and mountain biking projects including the construction of new or enhanced facilities is a priority for 2013-14.

**QUESTION 2**

**The Hon. JAN BARHAM:** *Is there any contribution from the State via the agency or generally for the upkeep and maintenance of some off-site infrastructure issues resulting from the impact of high visitation levels on local roads that lead to some protected areas?*

**Ms KING:** *I will take that question on notice.*

**RESPONSE**

NPWS has agreements with other landowners to maintain over 2,600km of roads that are not within park boundaries but which provide access to its parks.

### QUESTION 3

**The Hon. STEVE WHAN:** *We have had a number of submissions from fossickers, who are having a little campaign on our committee, who are saying that they would like access to national parks for fossicking activities. Can you respond to that from an environment point of view as well as a management point of view? You can take it on notice if you want.*

**Ms KING:** *I will take that on notice from an environment perspective particularly.*

### RESPONSE

Under the NPWS *Mining, Exploration & Fossicking Policy Statement*, fossicking is generally not allowed in parks, as all forms of exploration and extraction, including fossicking (or gold prospecting), have the potential to adversely impact the environment. The typical exception is those reserves where fossicking was allowed prior to the adoption of the policy in July 2007. For example, fossicking is able to occur in Torrington State Conservation Area and Abercrombie Karst Conservation Reserve.

In preparing statutory plans of management for parks, NPWS regularly receives and considers submissions from a range of user groups in support of particular activities being undertaken. That includes from organisations and individuals with an interest in fossicking. NPWS considers such submissions on their merits, taking into account the specific circumstances of the park, its environmental values, risks, community interest and any historical usage, to determine the appropriate future uses and environmental controls that may apply.

### QUESTION 4

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** *Those roads normally would not have a high maintenance priority, but because of your high tourism visitor rate to those points of interest council has to maintain them. Are there any grants or funding mechanisms you can give local government for the maintenance and upkeep of those roads off the beaten track? Do you contribute anything to that maintenance of infrastructure?*

**Ms KING:** *From an OEH perspective I will take that on notice because there are a number of grants schemes that I am not involved in. From a national park system, we do not give grants currently.*

### RESPONSE

See response to Question 2 above in regard to Roads and Question 5 below regarding grants.

### QUESTION 5

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** *Fair enough. Many rural local government areas have a lot of opportunities for restoring historic houses. Earlier we talked with Ms Chipchase about areas trying to identify whether they are good for tourism or visitors. Of course, rural residential areas or historic houses seem to be a big direction that many places can go, but local government certainly does not have the funds to prop up and restore those historic buildings. What grants are available for local government particularly to tap into? Is there some program with priorities to try to get these areas up and running so local communities thorough rural New South Wales can exist a lot longer than they would without a tourism attraction?*

**Ms KING:** *OEH has a separate department that actually looks at heritage assets. I will take that question on notice and get the specifics of our programs for the Committee.*

## RESPONSE

### 1. What grants are available for local government particularly to tap into?

The NSW Government has committed \$5.96 million funding over the next two financial years (to June 2015) as part of the NSW Heritage Grants program.

Out of this program, \$1.8 million of funding over two years is targeted directly to local government through the Local Heritage Places program.

The Local Heritage Places program provides funding to assist local councils and local communities across NSW to establish, develop and implement a heritage management program. Grants are provided to local councils to:

- Operate a small grants program for local heritage places
- Support a heritage advisory service, and
- Prepare LGA-wide heritage planning studies that identify and support local and state heritage places.

The Heritage Grants program also includes \$2.5 million funding over two years for State Heritage Register-listed heritage item projects. Local Government as owners and managers of State Heritage Register listed-heritage items can apply for:

- Dollar for dollar grants up to \$150,000 for Major Works projects; and
- Grants of \$10,000 for cultural tourism plans and interpretation planning reports under the Heritage Reports program.

The NSW Heritage Grants program also includes \$400,000 for Aboriginal heritage projects for local communities with dollar for dollar grants up to \$150,000 for Aboriginal heritage projects available for local councils.

### 2. Is there some program with priorities to try to get these areas up and running so local communities through rural New South Wales can exist a lot longer than they would without a tourism attraction?

There are a number of NSW Heritage Grants programs that prioritise funding for heritage tourism projects across NSW, specifically:

- Projects for Aboriginal cultural tourism and interpretation of culturally significant Aboriginal places, such as walking tracks, signs and trails and mapping of tracks or places, available under the Aboriginal heritage program;
- Projects for heritage tourism and site interpretation works, available under the Major works program; and
- Projects for cultural tourism plans and interpretation plans, available under the Heritage reports program.

## QUESTION 6

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** *In certain caravan areas and in some national parks we have caravan parks hosted by the New South Wales Government and, of course, councils get a levy on them. Given that these parks back on to many beaches, does the department supply or believe there should be a process to fund these extra activities as a by-product of coming to these areas by supporting surf lifesaving tourist issues to protect the tourists?*

**Ms KING:** *Again that will be a question of policy.*

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** *I am quite happy if that question is taken on notice.*

## RESPONSE

In Booti Booti National Park, where a surf club is located at Elizabeth Beach, entrance fees were removed.

At Royal National Park, there are Surf Clubs at South Era, Garie and Burning Palms. The surf club volunteers (and nippers) are issued with a local area fee exemption pass. In 2012, over 500 passes were issued across these three locations. This is equivalent to in-kind support of approx \$34,500 in entrance fee exemptions.

NPWS is currently in discussions with Garie SLSC in relation to the clubs future needs for space and rental arrangements.

NPWS also supports the installation of Angel Rings to protect sports fishermen.