



A message from the Minister

All Australians have a stake in ensuring that our environment and natural heritage are protected now and for future generations.

Once again, this year's Budget provides historic levels of funding for projects ranging from on-ground community works to infrastructure and research.

Overall, the 2006–07 Budget increases spending for the environment and heritage to \$3.9 billion of which \$1.076 billion is committed to my portfolio.

This Budget builds on the Australian Government's achievements over the past decade and positions us well to meet such challenges as climate change, water reform, sustainable agriculture and the protection of our terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

The Australian Government will invest a further \$500 million to restore the health of the Murray-Darling Basin. This brings the Australian Government's total investment in the Murray-Darling river system to almost \$2 billion since 1996.

This year, the Australian Government has taken a leading role in forging an international partnership to combat climate change with some of the world's leading economies. Early this year, the Government committed \$100 million over five years to progress the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. This brings our overall investment in tackling climate change to almost \$2 billion, while keeping Australia on track to meet its 108 per cent Kyoto target on greenhouse emissions.

Our international focus is also reflected in the Government's environment aid budget, which now reaches \$316 million, backed with strong diplomatic efforts to protect unique species of whales and dolphins as they migrate through the world's oceans.

With investment through the \$3 billion Natural Heritage Trust and \$1.4 billion National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality, natural resource management (NRM) plans will be in place for all 56 NRM regions by the beginning of 2006–07.

The Government is now complementing this comprehensive approach to land and water management with a new era of marine planning. This Budget commits \$37.7 million to regional marine planning between now and 2010, aiming for both a better understanding of Australia's marine diversity and more certainty for marine-based industries.

Illegal foreign fishing continues to threaten our marine resources and our \$1.448 billion fishing industry, particularly in the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef. The Australian Government will provide \$388.9 million to combat illegal foreign fishing in Australia's northern waters. Our marine heritage is also a priority for the Government, with \$245,000 provided for the historic Duyfken voyage in addition to the \$250,000 already committed by the Australian Government for this voyage.

This Budget also continues to improve air quality and explore alternatives to fossil fuels with \$11.5 million for a package of biofuels initiatives.

Our national parks will benefit significantly from new measures, with the Government investing \$14.5 million to improve Kakadu and Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Parks as tourist destinations and to rehabilitate uranium sites in the Kakadu National Park.

I am pleased to present this overview of the Government's key outcomes for Australia's environment and heritage, which outlines spending on environment activities over 2005–06 and in future years.

Senator the Hon. Ian Campbell



IMAGE CREDITS

PAGE 1 – Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves (Australia) World Heritage Area – P. Candlin and the Australian Heritage Photo Library; **PAGE 6** – Hooker Banksia, Western Australia – J. Baker and the Australian Heritage Photo Library; **PAGE 13** – Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Queensland – C. Totterdell and the Australian Heritage Photo Library; **PAGE 14** – Hartz Mountain, Tasmania – C. Totterdell and the Australian Heritage Photo Library; **PAGE 17** – Bells Beach, Victoria – J. Baker and the Australian Heritage Photo Library; **PAGE 18** – J. Baker and the Australian Heritage Photo Library; **PAGE 39** – Luna Park, Victoria – J. Baker and the Australian Heritage Photo Library; **PAGE 50** – Shark Bay World Heritage Area, Western Australia – J. Lochman.