



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

ENV01

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\$3.0 BILLION FOR A SUSTAINABLE AUSTRALIA

Australia will be better placed to meet future environmental challenges through \$3.0 billion of initiatives in the 2008-09 Budget, including the \$2.2 billion *Caring for our Country* program.

Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, said this investment was further evidence of the government's commitment to protect Australia's unique environment through sustainable natural resources management, tackling climate change and minimising the negative impacts of inappropriate development, pollution and pests.

"*Caring for our Country* will cut red tape and focus natural resource investment on national priorities. We want communities to put their energy into practical on ground action, not filling in forms.

"The government recognises the threat of climate change to our unique biodiversity and will invest \$180.0 million in our National Reserve System to ensure we have parks and reserves as refuges for biodiversity in the face of climate change."

In addition to *Caring for our Country*, the Rudd Labor Government has funded a range of measures in this Budget to help Australians take practical action at home, at school and in their communities.

"This includes low interest loans of up to \$10,000 to assist families to take practical action at home by investing in water and energy savings as well as assistance for landlords to install insulation in rental homes," Mr Garrett said.

Other measures include establishing a One Stop Green Shop to link Australians with programs and financial assistance made available by all levels of government, and the expansion of labeling and new standards for energy-efficient appliances.

Further funding will be provided to develop Green Precincts promoting water and energy saving initiatives, establishing new Solar Cities, and grants of up to \$50,000 to make every Australian school a solar school.

"This Budget puts in place a range of substantial measures which will help all Australians protect our precious environment well into the future," Mr Garrett said.