

## 4.3.8 MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

### OVERVIEW

Agency	Forecast 1995-96	Estimate 1996-97	Variation
	\$m	\$m	%
<b>Environment Protection Authority</b>			
Current Payments .....	68.6	80.9	17.9
Capital Payments .....	8.1	10.2	25.9
<b>National Parks and Wildlife Service</b>			
Current Payments .....	117.9	142.6	20.9
Capital Payments .....	31.2	40.0	28.2
<b>Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust</b>			
Current Payments .....	16.6	17.2	3.6
Capital Payments .....	1.2	2.7	125.0
<b>Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust</b>			
Current Payments .....	5.4	7.1	31.5
Capital Payments .....	2.6	2.8	7.7
<b>Bicentennial Park Trust</b>			
Current Payments .....	1.5	1.5	...
Capital Payments .....	0.6	0.5	(-) 16.7
<b>Total, Minister for the Environment .....</b>	<b>253.7</b>	<b>305.5</b>	<b>20.4</b>

The increase in 1996-97 compared with the previous year reflects the Government's commitment to the Environment portfolio. Specifically, the Environment Protection Authority will spend \$13 million on the waste management program while the increase in the National Parks and Wildlife Service has resulted from additional expenditure for pest species and fire management, and operating costs associated with the establishment of 26 new national parks. The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust will address maintenance and security issues within Trust lands.

Capital expenditure by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1996-97 reflects the establishment of the Western Sydney and Rouse Hill regional parks, the preservation of endangered flora and fauna resulting from the Threatened Species legislation, and increased maintenance costs, particularly for heritage assets. Capital expenditure by the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust in 1996-97 reflects the completion of extensions to the National Herbarium building.

## **ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY**

The Environment Protection Authority's objectives are to protect, maintain and restore the quality of the environment, having regard to the need to maintain ecologically sustainable development, to reduce the risks to human health and to prevent degradation of the environment.

## **Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments**

The Environment Protection Authority commenced operation in March 1992, with current and capital payments increasing by 33 per cent in real terms since 1992-93 to \$91.1 million in 1996-97. This increase reflects the Government's commitment to the environment as well as increased awareness by the community of environmental issues and the Authority's responsibilities.

There is an increasing trend in kerbside recycling in New South Wales with an estimated collection in Sydney of 61 kilograms per person in 1996-97. In addition, a significant improvement in performance against the Government's Waste Reduction disposal target is forecast. It is estimated that there will be a 25 per cent reduction in the disposal target in 1996-97 compared to the base year of 1990.

A significant development during the last twelve months was the commencement of the Waste Management Fund to which the Government will contribute \$35.8 million over the three years to 1997-98. The Environment Protection Authority will spend \$13 million on waste management initiatives during 1996-97.

Other significant developments include the release of public discussion papers on Air Quality Management and the Smog Action Plan and the Government's in principle proposals for a new legislative and administrative framework for the remediation and management of contaminated land in New South Wales.

In 1995, the Government supported the Environment Protection Authority's strategies for increasing pollution related charges payable to the Consolidated Fund. The prime objective is to implement the polluter pays principle. The revenue increases also reflect the use of economic deterrents for pollution reduction and prevention.

## **Strategic Directions**

The Environment Protection Authority has developed strategies involving innovative and targeted monitoring, regulation and enforcement, the use of economic mechanisms, education programs and the planning process.

These strategies will assist the Environment Protection Authority in addressing -

- increased pressure on the environment as a result of urban population and development;
- the cumulative detrimental impacts of small and medium sized industry in contrast to the improving environmental performance of large industry;
- a continuing move to large scale, intensive agriculture and an increase in forest activities as land available for forestry diminishes; and
- the environmental impact of individual activities which combine, interact and accumulate over time.

## **1996-97 Budget**

### **Current Payments**

An amount of \$80.9 million will be available in 1996-97 for current payments of the Authority.

Major allocations include -

- \$13 million for the Waste Management Fund; and
- contributions of \$5.1 million to the Zoological Parks Board for non commercial recurrent purposes including research and education programs.

### **Capital Payments**

During 1996-97 the Environment Protection Authority will continue to improve facilities for computer supported scientific, technical and administrative facilities.

Capital funding is also provided for the initiation, on-going upgrade and installation of projects that will increase and improve the Authority's ability to undertake monitoring of all environment indicators, with specific emphasis on air and water quality monitoring, chemical contamination, waste management, economic instruments, laboratory processing and land contamination.

Capital payments in 1996-97 allow for the completion of the laboratory accommodation project at Lidcombe, the continuation of the upgrade of the air quality monitoring network and the purchase of minor plant and equipment.

A capital grant of \$2.3 million is provided to the Zoological Parks Board.

## **NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

The overall objectives of the National Parks and Wildlife Service are to conserve, protect and manage the State's natural and cultural heritage and to provide opportunities for members of the public to enjoy, appreciate and support national parks, regional parks and conservation of the State's heritage.

## **Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments**

Over recent years, the Service's recurrent allocation has been increased to enable an improved performance in the areas of pest species and fire management, the maintenance of infrastructure within parks and for the conservation of the State's biodiversity.

During 1995-96, the Government declared 26 new parks in fulfilment of its pre-election commitment to declare 24 new parks within its first twelve months of office.

Over the past year, other commitments such as assistance towards the on-going maintenance of Parramatta Park and preliminary work associated with the establishment of Stage 1 of the Western Sydney and Rouse Hill Regional Parks were undertaken.

In addition, an inventory of bushland in the Cumberland Plains region was commenced.

## **Strategic Directions**

Priorities for the Service concentrate on achievement of the Government's commitment to the environment. Primarily those relate to such initiatives as the creation of new national parks, the establishment of regional parks in Sydney's west, new endangered species legislation, improved park and reserve management initiatives, continued improvement in fire management strategies and pest species control.

These initiatives are being funded through a combination of increases in the level of Consolidated Fund support and the Environmental Trusts as well as internal realignment of existing resources to ensure that the outcomes expected by the community are achieved.

## **1996-97 Budget**

### **Current Payments**

In continuing the Government's commitment to the environment, an amount of \$10.6 million has been provided as part of a \$50 million initiative over a four year period for the creation and management of new national parks. In addition, funding of \$1.4 million has been provided for on-going management costs of other additions to the park estate during 1995-96.

The Government has provided an additional \$6.8 million so that the Service is better placed to address pest species and fire management issues and maintenance of park infrastructure such as visitor facilities.

An amount of \$950,000 has been provided to enable the Service to upgrade its computers and to improve communications and strategic information flows.

During the year, the Government introduced a new Threatened Species Conservation Act which puts in place a variety of mechanisms to conserve the State's threatened plant and animal species. The Government has provided an amount of \$4 million to meet the Service's obligations under the Act.

The Service is responsible for the management of over 40,000 assets of historical significance in New South Wales. An amount of \$2 million has been provided to commence a program of maintenance of these assets.

### **Capital Payments**

The Service's capital program enhances the community's appreciation of the environmental significance of areas, and minimises environmental degradation. In particular, the program encompasses acquisition of land, construction or major reconstruction of facilities and minor works.

Historically, the Service's strategy has been to give priority to the restoration of infrastructure assets. The main criteria used are health and safety issues, mitigation of environmental damage and use of parks by the public. A portion of the budget is allocated to the acquisition of land with outstanding environmental significance, with the balance being directed towards replacement of the Service's motor vehicles, plant and equipment and information technology requirements.

The provision of additional resources by the Government has enabled funding to be directed to key priority areas such as upgrading of fire trails, fire fighting and pest species control.

The allocation of \$40 million includes \$4.3 million for necessary infrastructure associated with the establishment of new national parks in line with the Government's pre-election commitment to the environment.

The allocation also includes an amount of \$2.5 million for establishment works for the Western Sydney and Rouse Hill Regional Parks.

The program provides \$19.4 million for the continuation of major works including -

- ongoing roadworks in Kosciusko National Park (\$4.7 million);
- the establishment of the Jervis Bay National Park (\$3.5 million);
- land acquisitions (\$3 million);
- fire management and pest species management initiatives (\$1.6 million);

- establishment of the South East Forests National Park stage 1 (\$600,000);
- initial works for the establishment of other national parks (\$1.2 million);  
and
- improvements to Lake Macquarie foreshore at Green Point (\$500,000).

## **ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN TRUST**

The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust maintains the Sydney Gardens and Government House Grounds, the National Herbarium of New South Wales, the Domain and the Mount Tomah and Mount Annan Botanic Gardens. It also provides research, advice, education and extension services in botanical and horticultural areas.

### **Strategic Directions**

The major priorities to be addressed by the Trust during the coming year include -

- maintenance of buildings, roads and plant and equipment prioritised on the basis of Occupational Health and Safety and public safety needs to enable better management of risk;
- review of current and potential revenue generating areas to develop strategies to increase returns to the Trust; and
- development of funding options for urgent major capital works to improve efficiency and replace the aging infrastructure of the Sydney Gardens.

### **1996-97 Budget**

Highlights of the 1996-97 Budget include -

- completion of the Oriental Garden funded from a donation of \$125,000;
- funding of \$1.9 million to complete Stage 2 of extensions to the National Herbarium building providing space for storage of preserved collections and research; and
- funding of \$485,000 to resurface the shadehouse floor at Mount Annan Garden and return this area to full and safe operation.

## **CENTENNIAL PARK AND MOORE PARK TRUST**

The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust is responsible for the management of a highly used area of open space in Sydney, namely Centennial Park, Moore Park, Queens Park and the E.S. Marks Athletic Field.

The principle challenge facing the Trust in the coming year is the planning and successful integration of the Sydney Showground facilities into the Trust's operations. While the majority of the site will come under the Fox Studio lease, the Royal Hall of Industries, Hordern Pavilion and the stables will form part of the management responsibilities of the Trust.

Strategies will increasingly focus on the development of opportunities to increase and diversify the Trust's revenue base, reducing costs through contracting out and the provision of high quality facilities.

### **1996-97 Budget**

Total current payments by the Trust are expected to amount to \$7.1 million, with emphasis on security and maintenance issues within Trust lands. An amount of \$2.8 million has been allocated for capital projects which include upgrading irrigation systems and cleaning of ponds in Centennial Park, a new depot for Moore Park Golf Course and preplanning for Sydney Showground.

### **BICENTENNIAL PARK TRUST**

The Bicentennial Park Trust is responsible for the maintenance and management of a significant area of open space adjacent to Sydney's Olympic Park. Expenditure over the past 5 years has been influenced by increasing numbers of visitors and asset deterioration from landfill settlement.

Expected growth in tourism and proximity to the Olympic site will affect the needs of Bicentennial Park. The Trust is committed to improving visitor services, increasing efficiency and identifying new revenue opportunities.

The Trust aims to improve standards in environmental education to provide high quality services to students and other park visitors. Opportunities for private sector involvement will be examined.

### **1996-97 Budget**

Total current payments by the Trust are expected to amount to \$1.5 million. The Trust has received increased maintenance funding of \$150,000 to address asset deterioration resulting from landfill settlement and maintenance works associated with an increasingly high profile site.

The Trust has allocated \$505,000 in 1996-97 for plant replacement, signage, communication networking, and environmental management works.