

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

OVERVIEW

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Budget 2002-03 \$m</i>	<i>Budget 2003-04 \$m</i>	<i>Variation %</i>
Attorney General's Department			
Total Expenses	508.1	534.2	5.1
Asset Acquisitions	36.3	58.2	60.4
Judicial Commission of New South Wales			
Total Expenses	3.7	3.9	4.4
Asset Acquisitions .....	...	...	...
Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales			
Total Expenses	122.3	141.8	15.9
Asset Acquisitions	3.1	3.7	19.4
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions			
Total Expenses	66.6	72.0	8.1
Asset Acquisitions	4.9	1.8	-63.2
Environment Protection Authority ^{(a) (b)}			
Total Expenses	171.1	124.3	-27.4
Asset Acquisitions	7.0	3.2	-54.3
Environmental Trust			
Total Expenses	25.8	19.3	-25.2
Asset Acquisitions .....	...	...	...
National Parks and Wildlife Service ^{(a) (b)}			
Total Expenses	281.7	305.3	8.4
Asset Acquisitions	52.5	48.1	-8.4
Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust			
Total Expenses	28.0	29.4	5.0
Asset Acquisitions	2.6	3.3	26.9
Public Trust Office – Administration			
Total Expenses	27.2	28.3	4.1
Asset Acquisitions	2.5	2.1	-15.8
Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages			
Total Expenses	15.0	16.4	9.5
Asset Acquisitions	2.0	2.2	9.9

Agency	Budget 2002-03 \$m	Budget 2003-04 \$m	Variation %
Resource NSW			
Total Expenses	31.8	24.2	-23.8
Asset Acquisitions	0.2	0.2	...
Stormwater Trust			
Total Expenses	15.1	8.1	-46.3
Asset Acquisitions .....	...	...	...
Waste Fund			
Total Expenses	44.9	30.0	-33.3
Asset Acquisitions .....	...	...	...
Total, Attorney General and Minister for the Environment			
Total Expenses	1,341.3	1,337.2	-0.3
Asset Acquisitions	111.1	122.8	10.5

(a) A number of Public Sector agencies have been restructured as at 2 April 2003. At this stage only high level aggregates are available for the 2002-03 year and 2003-04 Budget. Detailed Financial Statements and program statements for these agencies will be published on 26 August 2003.

(b) The 2002-03 figures are agency figures prior to the restructure.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

The role of the Attorney General's Department is to administer the legal system of New South Wales and develop and implement programs which promote a safe and harmonious society.

The Department provides the legal and administrative framework to facilitate the conduct of the Attorney General's role as the first Law Officer of the Crown, as well as providing support services to enable the fulfilment of the Attorney General's legislative and advisory responsibilities to Parliament and Cabinet.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Key initiatives and achievements in 2002-03 included:

- ◆ Continued support for the courts to achieve reform to further reduce delays and improve services. In partnership with the judiciary these reforms have led to an immense improvement in the time taken by the NSW Supreme Court to finalise criminal matters. In particular, the percentage of criminal matters finalised within 6 months has increased from 12 percent to 34 percent since 2000-01. The percentage of criminal matters finalised within 12 months has more than doubled since 2000-01, increasing from 38 percent to 79 percent.

- ◆ The Lawlink NSW website (www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au) experienced significant growth during the year, maintaining Lawlink's position as one of Australia's premier legal and government websites. For example, the *Caselaw* link now regularly receives in excess of 900,000 hits per month, an increase of 100 percent in 12 months.
- ◆ Drug crime diversion programs, such as the trial of the Youth Drug Court at Cobham and Campbelltown Children's Courts, and the NSW Adult Drug Court, were significantly enhanced and extended. In addition, the MERIT (Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment) program is now operating in 31 Local Courts across New South Wales.
- ◆ Continued improvement in access to courts for people with disabilities. The Department has purchased 25 infra-red hearing assistance systems and 26 TTY (telephone typewriter) systems. The Department's Flexible Service Delivery Project has been completed at 38 sites within the Department. This Service provides training, resources and a management framework for frontline staff to provide better services to clients with a disability.
- ◆ Improved physical access for people with disabilities was achieved (via ramps, improved signage, and accessible counter designs) at a number of locations including Glen Innes, Kempsey, Kyogle, Tumut, Moree, Bombala, Gundagai, Penrith and Moruya.
- ◆ For victims of crime, service standards were reviewed and procedures for compensation were streamlined. New fact sheets for victims were developed, and information about the Charter of Victims Rights was translated into 24 community languages and made available on the Lawlink website. The Homeless Persons Project was established, and new payment options were provided to debtors, including Direct Debit and Direct Payment. Ninety-eight percent of applications for initial two-hour counselling sessions were processed within 48 hours.
- ◆ A review of the procedures in the Land and Environment Court was undertaken and resulted in a number of recommended reforms which were implemented during the year. These reforms included a merit planning appeals review, which has resulted in a significant improvement through the adoption of on-site hearings.
- ◆ Promotion and extension of the video conferencing infrastructure in the courts and justice agencies which included the addition of a tailored system to support the government initiative in managing child sexual assault cases.

- ◆ Major conservation and renovations at the historic King Street Court complex. The project has included the provision of new cells, new facilities for interviewing and transporting of prisoners, upgrading Court three and new accommodation for the Sheriff.
- ◆ Ongoing major upgrading of court facilities at Woy Woy, Grafton, Glebe Coroners Court, and completion of major upgrading of Moree Courthouse which included the provision of a new local court.

2002-03 enhancements:

- ◆ The Office of the Public Guardian has continued with the Early Discharge Strategy which involves the employment of additional guardians to better manage the needs of an increasing number of people requiring guardianship and advocacy services; and
- ◆ A project aimed at steering young people away from graffiti vandalism has been introduced through a \$0.4 million grant to the Beat Graffiti Scheme. The scheme funds legal art and other anti-graffiti projects which improve community spaces with art works and community events, as well as developing the artistic and personal skills of the participants. The projects also strengthen relationships between young people and their communities. The Crime Prevention Division is also continuing to develop partnerships with local and state government agencies and industry to find innovative solutions to graffiti vandalism on transport and public facilities such as schools.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The key challenges driving the Department's strategies and business planning are excellence in client service, good management and working well with others. There is a strong commitment at all levels of the organisation to respond to these challenges to ensure client satisfaction, community confidence and a motivated and productive workforce.

Key priority areas include:

- ◆ implementing the CourtLink NSW system (formerly Courts Administration System) in the Supreme Court and District Court;
- ◆ implementing improved court security through the training and deployment of more Sheriff's Officers in key locations throughout NSW;
- ◆ continuing to progress and support reform in NSW courts;

- ◆ establishing the NSW Sentencing Council;
- ◆ establishing Child Sexual Assault Courts in Sydney, Western Sydney and Dubbo;
- ◆ continuing the enhancement of crime prevention responses, including expansion of drug crime diversion programs. These diversion programs are targeted at serious offenders who, without intervention, could face incarceration. They provide intensive supervision and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services to eligible offenders with drug problems. The objective is to break the drug-crime cycle and thereby reduce re-offending by the participants;
- ◆ extending the trial implementation of Circle Sentencing for indigenous communities to Dubbo, Walgett and Brewarrina;
- ◆ continuing development of e-business and electronic service delivery;
- ◆ improving information sharing within the NSW justice sector through linkages between Local Courts and Police which allow electronic exchange of criminal histories and court outcomes. The Department is exploring new approaches to the sharing of information, including complementary work processes across traditional agency boundaries, and common tools to share information in the most efficient and effective manner;
- ◆ progressing the implementation of improved national key performance indicators for courts in the *Report on Government Services*; and
- ◆ continuing to develop and implement initiatives for Corporate Services Reform.

The Department will also continue to take lead responsibility for a wide range of key programs including:

- ◆ support for the Waterfall Inquiry;
- ◆ provide videoconferencing facilities for the justice sector; and
- ◆ provide core legal services to the State.

Due to changes to the workers compensation scheme, the Compensation Court did not accept claims lodged after 31 March 2002. The Court is expected to clear all matters that existed at 31 March 2002, and to cease operations by 31 December 2003. All claims are now lodged at the Workers' Compensation Commission.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

In 2003-04, the total expenses of the Attorney General's Department are estimated to be \$534.2 million.

Funding of \$3 million has been provided to the Office of Protective Commissioner to provide services to those clients who cannot afford its services. Those funds will allow the Office to better assist its clients, particularly those that have less than \$50,000 in assets and cannot afford the fees.

Funding of \$1.7 million has been provided to the Public Trust Office to cover operating losses incurred by the Office on preparation, estate and trust administration costs of wills for estates valued at less than \$50,000.

Continuation of funding of \$4.3 million for video conferencing will allow current and new initiatives to be progressed improving operational efficiency and service delivery across the justice sector. Video conferencing has quickly gained acceptance as a key element in the service delivery strategies of participating agencies.

Over the next four years an additional amount of \$7.1 million will be provided to the Sheriff's Office to enhance existing capabilities to address risks in the State's system of courts. The various measures proposed are considered to be a balanced response to the changed global and domestic risk environment. Of the additional amount provided, \$1 million has been allocated in 2003-04.

The Government has established a Special Commission of Inquiry into the Waterfall Rail Accident. The Inquiry is expected to conclude in 2003-04, and \$6 million has been allocated in that year to meet the Inquiry's costs (\$3.7 million in 2002-03).

Funding of \$0.2 million will enable the Department to establish a pilot project to trial a specialist child sexual assault jurisdiction. The specialist jurisdiction will be staffed by trained judges, prosecutors and court staff to protect children from further trauma and victimisation, and to receive their evidence in the best possible way by using pre-recording and closed circuit television equipment.

Funding of \$0.3 million per annum is provided for the establishment of the NSW Sentencing Council to advise the Attorney General on sentencing matters. The Council will also monitor and report annually to the Attorney General on sentencing trends and practices, including the operation of standard non-parole periods and guideline judgements.

Asset Acquisitions

The Attorney General's Department's asset acquisition program provides for the construction of new courthouses, expansion and modification of existing courthouses, development of major computing facilities, and the purchase and replacement of plant and equipment. The funding for the 2003-04 program is \$58.2 million.

The major new works, with their estimated total costs (ETCs), are:

- ◆ planning processes to construct a new Sydney West Trial Court facility at Parramatta. The project includes refurbishing the existing Parramatta Courthouse facility. The new trial court complex will feature nine trial courts, court registry, jury assembly rooms, conference and interview rooms and accommodation for support services. The courtroom will be designed to allow sittings of the Supreme Court, District Court and Local Courts for serious criminal matters as well as the NSW Parole Board (ETC \$58 million, \$1 million in 2003-04);
- ◆ accommodation fitout of the Industrial Relations Commission. This is included in the refurbishment of the Chief Secretary's Building being undertaken by the Department of Commerce at an estimated total cost of \$31.9 million. The Attorney General's Department's component is estimated at \$8.4 million over three years (\$3.3 million in 2003-04);
- ◆ establishment of a regionally based community residential centre for Aboriginal young people at risk of contact with the criminal justice system. This facility will provide drug and alcohol rehabilitation, life skills and cultural education for young people. It is aimed at reducing rates of offending and recidivism, and addressing concerns in regional towns about the level of juvenile offending (ETC \$2.3 million, \$2.1 million in 2003-04); and
- ◆ establish a new centralised information technology network infrastructure. This solution involves the provision of a modern, scalable and reliable network for user access to centralised mission-critical applications via intranet/internet portals. The project aligns the Department with the wider government initiatives related to the development of shared services, the NSW Bandwidth Plan and other objectives (ETC \$11.4 million, \$3.1 million in 2003-04).

Other components of the 2003-04 program are:

- ◆ continuation of implementation of the Courts Administration System (CourtLink). CourtLink will provide a “single counter” ability for the courts and provide seamless access to the Supreme, District and Local Courts together with other courts and tribunals such as the Coroner’s, Drug and Children’s Courts. The centralised database structure of the software will mean that matters can be easily transferred between courts and locations. The estimated total cost of the project is \$15.7 million (\$15.4 million in 2003-04);
- ◆ construction of six new children’s courts at Parramatta (ETC \$21.8 million, \$4.4 million in 2003-04);
- ◆ a new children’s court in the Hunter District at Broadmeadow (ETC \$7.6 million, \$2.5 million in 2003-04);
- ◆ construction of new local courts at Bankstown (rebuilding the existing three courts) and Mount Druitt (a two court complex) and upgrading and extending existing courts at Blacktown (one new courtroom) and Nowra (one new court). These projects will provide capacity for five additional local courts, and modernised support facilities to service the community needs with enhanced security and access (ETC \$35.1 million, \$9.8 million in 2003-04); and
- ◆ a building upgrade allocation of \$8.3 million in 2003-04 to correct non-compliance with current building codes and standards including fire safety.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Commission's major functions are:

- ◆ organising and supervising the continuing education and training of judicial officers;
- ◆ assisting the courts to achieve consistency in imposing sentences; and
- ◆ examining complaints against judicial officers.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Over the last five years, the core responsibilities of the Judicial Commission have remained unchanged. Expenditure trends over that period have also not varied markedly.

In October 2002, the Commission launched a revised Criminal Trial Courts Bench Book for use by judges in directing juries in criminal trials. The standard directions contained in this publication will improve the efficiency of the administration of criminal justice and assist in eliminating error on the part of trial judges. For the first time the Commission has made the Bench Book generally available on its website.

During 2002-03 the Commission undertook a conduct inquiry at a cost of \$0.4 million.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Commission will continue to focus on providing high quality, relevant programs to help judicial officers perform their professional duties. These initiatives include various seminars, publications and the computerised Judicial Information Research System containing sentencing and other information.

An extensive range of conference and seminar programs will be offered to judicial officers in each court. These will range from induction courses for new appointees to specialist conferences on specific aspects of law, procedure, judicial skills and technique. Regular seminars will address current developments and emerging trends in the law as well as areas in need of review.

The Commission will continue to promote judicial officers' awareness of social context issues involving children, women, sexual offences, domestic violence and ethnic minorities.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Total expenses of the Commission are projected to be \$3.9 million in 2003-04.

An amount of \$0.1 million has been provided to maintain the Lawcodes databases to meet current demands from the justice system and to re-engineer the databases to take advantage of new technologies.

Asset Acquisitions

An amount of \$48,000 has been provided to meet the Commission's ongoing plant and equipment needs.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Legal Aid Commission is established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979*, and provides legal assistance in matters arising under New South Wales and Commonwealth law. The Commission promotes access to justice for disadvantaged people by providing legal information, advice, alternative dispute resolution and representation.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The primary sources of funds for the Legal Aid Commission are the State and Commonwealth Governments and the Public Purpose Fund. The Commission is funded by the Commonwealth to provide legal assistance in matters arising under Commonwealth law in line with the priorities and guidelines set by the Commonwealth.

The Commission's Criminal Law program continues to change rapidly as a result of initiatives introduced by other justice sector agencies. Higher expenditure is being incurred as a result of increased prisoner numbers, new laws, a higher incidence of complex and expensive criminal trials and increased courts activity. Additional funding has been allocated in the 2003-04 Budget to offset the cost to the Legal Aid Commission of these trends.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

In 2003-04, the Commission will improve service delivery and better manage costs through the following initiatives:

- ◆ implementation of panels of private legal practitioners in designated areas of legal practice to perform legal aid work;
- ◆ enhancement of equitable access to family law services across the State;
- ◆ enhanced delivery of quality, targeted civil law services across the State;
- ◆ increased use of electronic lodgement of applications and claims;
- ◆ improved business analysis and reporting tools, linking financial, human resource and operational information;

- ◆ implementation of the recommendations of the Commission's Criminal Law Review;
- ◆ development of a comprehensive recruitment strategy to attract multi-skilled entry level staff;
- ◆ enhancement of links with the Government, courts and partners in the justice system; and
- ◆ development of an on-line resource for private legal practitioners.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Total expenses of the Commission are projected to be \$141.8 million in 2003-04.

The Criminal Law Program has been allocated an additional \$4 million to offset the downstream effects of initiatives introduced by other justice sector agencies which are resulting in an increasing workload for the Commission.

The Commission will increase activity levels in the Family Law Program in 2003-04 to utilise additional funding made available by the Commonwealth under a four year agreement which commenced in 2000-01.

The Commission has allocated \$0.6 million for its new office at Dubbo. This will enable the Commission to provide the full range of legal aid services to clients in Dubbo and surrounding areas.

Asset Acquisitions

The Commission's asset acquisition program of \$3.7 million in 2003-04 will enable:

- ◆ the ongoing replacement of its core business system, LA Office;
- ◆ continued implementation of electronic lodgement of applications and pro forma invoicing by the private profession and in-house solicitors; and
- ◆ improved access to the Commission by upgrading the existing communications network.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is responsible for the prosecution of all indictable and certain summary offences against New South Wales' laws, and the conduct of appeals in the Local, District, Supreme and High Courts.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Since 1999-2000, the Office has received additional recurrent funding of \$14.4 million as a result of increased workloads, including \$3.1 million per annum from 2001-02 to meet increased costs associated with the appointment of additional police officers.

The Drug Court pilot commenced in 1999 in Parramatta and continued through 2002-03. The Office will continue its commitment to the program during 2003-04.

The *Criminal Procedure Amendment (Pre-Trial Disclosure) Act 2001* commenced on 19 November 2001. The legislation allows the court, on a case-by-case basis, to impose pre-trial disclosure requirements on both the prosecution and the defence in order to reduce delays in complex criminal matters in both the District and Supreme Courts.

Under this legislation, strict limitations apply to the presentation and amendment of indictments in trials before the District Court and Supreme Court. In order to settle a final indictment within the limited timeframe allowed, and to avoid serious consequences of an unamendable error in the indictment, additional Crown Prosecutors were appointed and increased recurrent funding of \$1.3 million was provided to the Office in 2001-02 (\$2 million per annum thereafter). The Office has been involved in a review of the longer-term financial implications of the legislation during 2002-03.

In February 2002, the Office provided a substantial increase in resources to the Supreme Court to permit additional sittings in May and June 2002, mainly to address the increases in the pending caseload of the Court of Criminal Appeal. This trend of increased caseload is expected to continue in 2003-04.

The Chief Judge of the District Court has initiated two additional trial courts-sittings in Sydney West, to address both the increased number of registered criminal trials during the year and to maintain time standards for the disposition of criminal trials. Given the significant increases in serious criminal matters dealt with in Sydney West, these additional sittings are expected to continue during 2003-04.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Office will continue its commitment to improving the criminal justice system and to providing the people of New South Wales with an independent, fair and just prosecution service.

The Office and NSW Police have successfully implemented a system for electronic interchange of information relating to indictable charges. As a further development of this initiative, the two agencies are working closely to develop a project implementation plan for the electronic transfer of briefs of evidence.

The Reporting Service Branch of the Attorney General's Department provided facilities for the Office during 2002-03 to pilot the electronic provision of District and Supreme Court transcripts. The pilot has been successful, and further testing will be conducted in the first quarter of 2003-04.

Upgrading of the Office's information technology infrastructure will continue in 2003-04. This will provide an integrated document management system and improve the Office's capacity to report on performance. The upgrading will significantly improve the Office's efficiency and enable more effective communication with other criminal justice agencies.

The Office will implement an activity based costing system for recording and reporting the costs associated with the prosecution of indictable matters, to enable the Office to compare costs with similar services provided by other prosecuting agencies, and develop benchmarks for improved management of costs.

During 2003-04, the Office will continue to give high priority to increased co-operation with other criminal justice agencies to improve performance of the criminal justice system. Additionally, emphasis will continue to be placed on the provision of services to victims and witnesses.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

In 2003-04, the Office's total expenses are estimated at \$72 million, which includes \$3 million for the reimbursement of witnesses' expenses, and \$2.1 million for the continuation of the pre-trial disclosure regime.

Asset Acquisitions

The Office's asset acquisition program in 2003-04 is \$1.8 million.

The Office will implement an activity based costing system for recording and reporting the costs associated with the prosecution of indictable matters to enable the Office to compare costs with similar services provided by other prosecuting agencies, and develop benchmarks for improved management of costs. Capital funding of \$0.5 million has been allocated to this project.

Testing of the electronic provision of District and Supreme Court transcripts pilot project should be completed in the first quarter of 2003-04. The estimated cost is \$0.8 million.

In addition, the Office will spend its minor works allocation of \$0.6 million for various ongoing plant and equipment replacement, furniture and fittings.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

The Environment Protection Authority has been restructured.

The Healthy Rivers Commission and its staff have moved from the Environment Protection Authority to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning, and Natural Resources.

	<i>2002-03 Revised \$000</i>	<i>2003-04 Budget \$000</i>
Recurrent Appropriation	138,471	95,621
Capital Appropriation	8,729	3,179
Total Expenses	171,432	124,292

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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

The EPA's *1998 to 2003 Corporate Plan* sets its mission as that of guiding the community to achieve and maintain a healthy environment in a productive New South Wales.

The EPA has developed strategies involving innovative and targeted monitoring, regulation and enforcement as well as the use of economic mechanisms, education and the planning process.

Of particular importance have been recent legislative changes to the overall regulatory regime for environmental control in New South Wales. This has included the introduction of a system of load based licensing as a means of focusing on the total load of pollutants discharged into the environment rather than the concentration of pollutants in discharges. The system directly links the level of licence fee to the total load.

These strategies will assist the EPA in addressing:

- ◆ issues of waste generation, transport, disposal and management;
- ◆ increased pressures on the environment as a result of increased urban population and development;
- ◆ problems of maintaining and improving the health and sustainability of marine and freshwater environments; and
- ◆ the adverse impacts on the environment and public health of chemicals, hazardous substances and other contaminants.

2003-04 BUDGET

Initiatives/Total Expenses

Due to the estimated accumulated cash balance of \$57.4 million in the Waste Fund, the Government has decided to suspend contributions from the EPA into the Waste Fund until the existing cash balance has been utilised. This has reduced the EPA's expenses in 2003-04 by more than \$40 million.

Major initiatives for 2003-04 include:

- ◆ \$0.6 million in expenditure on the maintenance of the air quality monitoring network; and
- ◆ a contribution of \$23.8 million to the Zoological Parks Board for various purposes, including the continuing comprehensive program of rebuilding and modernisation of facilities, research and public education.

Asset Acquisitions

Asset acquisitions in 2002-03 total \$3.2 million.

Capital expenditure of \$0.7 million will be incurred for the continuing upgrade of the air-quality monitoring network.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

The Environmental Trust operates under the *Environmental Trust Act 1998*. The objectives of the Trust are:

- ◆ to promote environmental education, encourage the development of education programs and increase the awareness of environmental issues;
- ◆ to promote research into environmental problems;
- ◆ to encourage and support restoration and rehabilitation projects that are likely to reduce pollution, the waste stream or environmental degradation within New South Wales; and
- ◆ to fund acquisition of land for national parks.

In addition, the *Forestry Restructuring and Nature Conservation Act 1995* provides access to the Trust's funds to meet various costs. This Act requires the Trust to reimburse the Consolidated Fund for authorised expenditure originally made from the Consolidated Fund associated with the following objectives:

- ◆ restructuring the timber industry for the purpose of conserving New South Wales forests;
- ◆ reserving and conserving new national parks; and
- ◆ implementing a range of high priority environment projects.

The Trust makes grants on an annual basis to projects and programs which often run over two or three years.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Expenditure from the Trust and its predecessor bodies has risen steadily from 1995-96 reflecting refunds to the Consolidated Fund for initiatives under the *Forestry Restructuring and Nature Conservation Act 1995*. Amendments to this Act have increased the total amount of forest industry restructuring payments from \$60 million to \$80 million and extended the scheme by a further five years to June 2006.

Since 1995-96, a total of \$56.4 million has been reimbursed from the Trust for forestry purposes.

Since July 2000, the *Environmental Trust Act 1998* empowered the Trust to fund larger grants programs, land acquisition and high priority environmental projects. These programs and projects commenced in 2000-01 and are still increasing in number and size.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

As the first round of high priority programs (commenced in July 2000) draws to a close, these are being replaced with new programs. For example, in 2003-04, significantly increased funds will go to land acquisition for national parks.

Under the *Environmental Trust Act 1989*, the Trust receives a standing appropriation from the Consolidated Fund to fund its programs (\$15.6 million in 2003-04).

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Total expenses in 2003-04 are projected to be \$19.3 million, an increase of \$3.3 million on actual expenses in 2002-03, and include the following:

- ◆ forest industry restructuring expenditure incurred under section 4 (1) (a) of the *Forestry Restructuring and Nature Conservation Act 1995*;
- ◆ new grants awarded to state and local government agencies, community groups and research organisations; and
- ◆ committed but unpaid instalments on grants from previous years.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Sport and Recreation are in the process of reviewing the administration and transfer of certain regional parks to the Department of Sport and Recreation.

	<i>2002-03 Revised \$000</i>	<i>2003-04 Budget \$000</i>
Recurrent Appropriation	187,439	198,792
Capital Appropriation	32,097	26,144
Total Expenses	342,440	305,305

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The objectives of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) 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, and the conservation of the State's heritage.

The NPWS has adopted three key conservation themes that reflect a shift in focus towards greater community involvement:

- ◆ facilitating conservation outside of the formal reserve system;
- ◆ managing the reserve system within a regional landscape context; and
- ◆ introducing agreed conservation criteria to target further improvement to the reserve system.

Within this framework, specific initiatives focus on strategic additions to the reserve system in under-represented bioregions, especially in western New South Wales, as well as enhancing the conservation value of reserves and improving visitor facilities and education programs. The initiatives also provide improved protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage and foster working with Aboriginal communities in joint management arrangements for culturally significant lands.

The NPWS also works with the general community to promote conservation efforts on privately owned lands.

2003-04 BUDGET

Initiatives/Total Expenses

Total expenses in 2003-04 are estimated at \$305.3 million. Major expenditure areas include fire management, pest species management and the maintenance of essential infrastructure to facilitate management, access and enjoyment of the reserve system by the community. Emphasis will continue on community education and consultation to further engage stakeholders in the delivery of conservation programs.

Major new areas of expenditure include:

- ◆ additional funds for pest, animal and weed control;
- ◆ dedicated funds to establish and facilitate joint management of national parks with Aboriginal people from 2004-05;
- ◆ management of high conservation “icon areas” in North East New South Wales that have been transferred from NSW State Forests; and
- ◆ improvements in parks in the Blue Mountains and Central Coast areas from 2004-05.

Asset Acquisitions

Total capital program for 2003-04 is estimated at \$48.1 million, which is a decrease of \$4.3 million from the 2002-03 capital program, due mainly to the near completion of a number of large projects and the high level of land purchases in 2002-03, which is not expected to recur in 2003-04.

For 2003-04 new major capital works projects will focus on:

- ◆ further land acquisitions, including \$2 million for purchases under specific government programs (for example the Dunphy Wilderness Fund), purchasing high conservation lands in Western New South Wales, and further reservations in North East New South Wales;
- ◆ additional funds for establishing parks on lands purchased in 2002-03; and
- ◆ upgrade of water, sewerage and road infrastructure at the Perisher resort within Kosciuszko National Park.

In addition, a number of projects are to commence in 2004-05 to work towards creating an unbroken chain of reserves stretching from the Victorian border, through the suburbs of Sydney, and on to the Hunter Valley.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN TRUST

The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust maintains the Royal Botanic Gardens, Government House Grounds, the National Herbarium of New South Wales, the Domain, the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden and the Mount Annan Botanic Garden. The Trust also provides scientific and horticultural research, together with advice, and education on botanical, horticultural and biodiversity issues.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Expenses for 2002-03 were \$29 million, \$8 million of which was funded from earned revenue of the Trust. The cost of operations has increased over recent years from \$25 million in 1999-2000. Earned revenue of the Trust contributed \$7.2 million in 1999-00.

The Trust implemented a new program structure based on service costing during 2002-03. This change has limited the ability to make historic year on year comparisons in program areas, particularly for average EFT staffing. However, the change will enable a clearer understanding of the true costs and benefits of the Trust's core and commercial activities.

The asset acquisition program for 2002-03 included:

- ◆ improvements to the irrigation and drainage systems at the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Domain, the Mount Annan Botanic Garden and the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden;
- ◆ upgrade of the Tropical Centre at the Royal Botanic Gardens;
- ◆ completion of the vertical compost unit at the Royal Botanic Gardens;
- ◆ implementation of a booking management computer system to enable online tracking and processing of events bookings;
- ◆ commencement of a project to introduce an asset management computer system that will facilitate control over the assets of the Trust;
- ◆ completion of the Rathbourne Lodge refurbishment utilising funds provided through a private bequest; and
- ◆ upgrade of the computer network.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The major priorities to be addressed by the Trust in the coming year include:

- ◆ managing and developing the horticultural displays and living collection of plants at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Mount Annan and Mount Tomah Botanic Garden;
- ◆ maintaining and developing all sites, including the Domain, to accommodate multiple uses including recreation, relaxation, celebration, events, education and the promotion of conservation;
- ◆ advancing knowledge and understanding of plant biodiversity, horticulture and conservation through scientific research, the Centre for Plant Conservation and a wide range of targeted school and community education programs; and
- ◆ managing and developing viable commercial businesses and hosting externally operated commercial services to increase and diversify the Trust's revenue base.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Budgeted expenses for the Trust total \$29.4 million. The Trust has a strong focus on generating additional revenue to offset increased expenses to ensure that services can be maintained and improved. The revenue target for 2003-04 is \$8.7 million, including commercial revenue of \$5.5 million.

The development of the State's node of the Australian Virtual Herbarium will continue in 2003-04. Commonwealth and private funds are matched by the State Government on a dollar-for-dollar basis. On completion in 2005-06, the one million collections held in the National Herbarium of New South Wales will be fully accessible to the general community via the internet.

Asset Acquisitions

The Trust's asset acquisition program for 2003-04 includes:

- ◆ \$1 million to improve the water supply at the Royal Botanic Gardens;
- ◆ \$1.7 million for maintenance of all of the Trust's assets; and
- ◆ \$0.6 million for privately funded capital works including a pedestrian "cross-over" bridge at the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden and the redevelopment of the Rose Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE - ADMINISTRATION

The Public Trust Office offers:

- ◆ will making, where it is appointed sole executor, co-executor or substitute executor;
- ◆ long term asset management in estates and trusts;
- ◆ general estate and trust management;
- ◆ private client services (asset management under a power of attorney); and
- ◆ document safe custody (eg title deeds to realty).

The Public Trust Office also attends to the management of assets seized and confiscated under the *Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990* and the *Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act 1989*.

Total expenses and asset acquisitions are funded mostly through revenue generated from clients. The Public Trust Office has a statutory obligation to accept all estates regardless of their value. The 2003-04 Budget will provide for community service obligation payments from the Consolidated Fund to meet obligations for administering low value estates and trusts, and the preparation of small value wills.

The Public Trust Office's fee structure was reviewed in 2001 with a staged increase over two years to be implemented from 1 November 2001. The 2003-04 Budget reflects full implementation of the new fee structure.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The focus of expenditure continues to be on improving customer service, the consolidation and development of core business and technical support systems. Some savings are anticipated for 2002-03 against budget.

The significant reduction in surplus after distributions in the revised 2002-03 figures is due to dividends not previously included in the budget.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Public Trust Office continues to focus its business and marketing on widening entry points for clients to all products through an “ages and stages” approach. A beneficiary communication plan developed in the previous year is now being implemented, to enhance retention, referral and conversion to other products. Similar strategies will be developed and implemented for other client groups to enhance business development.

The reserves in the Interest Suspense Account of the Common Fund, the clients’ funds under management by the Public Trustee, have been reviewed by actuarial assessment. The review has determined the amount for use by the Corporation on its operations, and funds management.

A review of potential shared corporate services continues to be conducted in conjunction with the Attorney General’s Department.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

The 2003-04 Budget provides for total expenses of \$28.3 million, an increase of 4 percent from the previous year. Salary and related items account for approximately 70 percent of total expenses, while working expenses are used to maintain agency structures and a State wide branch network, as well as plant and equipment items.

The Public Trust Office will commence paying cash dividends to government in 2003-04 and will be part of the income tax equivalent regime from July 2003.

Asset Acquisitions

The 2003-04 asset acquisition program will cost approximately \$2.1 million. This includes expenditure on a wills production system, and systems to comply with the *State Records Act*.

REGISTRY OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES

The New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages records in perpetuity all births, deaths and marriages occurring in New South Wales and provides documentation on these events to individuals to help establish a range of legal entitlements. The Registry also collects statistical data for government and other organisations, performs civil marriages and undertakes searches of the records. It has been operating commercially since 1992.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Registry's operating profits for 2002-03 has been impacted by the inclusion of a retrospective adjustment to depreciation owing to changes in the treatment of costs associated with the digital imaging of paper records, and the inclusion of superannuation costs that were previously categorised as "abnormal items".

Total expenses projected for 2002-03 are expected to increase by 8.5 percent to \$16.3 million mostly due to the increase in operating costs associated with the employment of agency staff and contractors. The increases were approved in the Registry's 2002-03 Statement of Business Intent.

Achievements in 2002-03 included:

- ◆ the launch of online marriage registrations;
- ◆ the expansion of the online death registrations to now cover approximately 60 percent of all deaths registered;
- ◆ the start of a joint project with NSW Department of Health under the *connect.nsw* program to establish online systems for the notifications of births and transmission of cause of death information;
- ◆ a review of the BDM website (now receiving approx 3 million hits per month) to improve navigation and content;
- ◆ the development of specifications for a replacement registration system;
- ◆ targeted customer forums with Funeral Directors and Solicitors; and
- ◆ the relocation of the Wollongong office into new accommodation.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Registry's strategic priorities continue to be a focus on innovation, sustained growth, risk minimisation, increased electronic service delivery and better management of customer relationships.

Key priorities for 2003-04 will be:

- ◆ the continuation of the records conversion program with the digital imaging of the 1952-1994 marriage and death records;
- ◆ the continued development of the replacement registration and certificate production system;
- ◆ further development of the services available at www.bdm.nsw.gov.au;
- ◆ continued roll-out of the Fraud Minimisation Plan; and
- ◆ further development of joint national initiatives across all Australian births, deaths and marriages registries.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Total expenses for 2003-04 are estimated at \$16.4 million. This represents an increase of 9.5 percent above the 2002-03 Budget. The increase is due mostly to employee related expenses as a result of the salary award increases from 1 July 2003 and superannuation costs. The rise in staffing costs is caused by the shift to more skilled staff as computerised data retrieval becomes prevalent and recognition of contractors and agency staff costs, which were previously included in other operating costs. Total operating revenue for 2003-04 is expected to increase by 13.8 percent from increased sales of Birth Cards.

From July 2003 the Registry will be part of the tax equivalent regime.

Asset Acquisitions

The Registry's asset acquisition program in 2003-04 will be \$2.2 million. This includes \$0.8 million to convert the Registry's paper record to digital format and \$0.7 million to upgrade technological infrastructure and support service delivery. A further \$0.4 million has been allocated for the continued development of online registration services and the certificate validation service.

RESOURCE NSW

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Formed in October, 2001, Resource NSW was established under the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001* with a clear mission to change the focus of waste management in New South Wales from disposal to waste avoidance and resource recovery.

A key task for Resource NSW in its first year was to produce a Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy in accordance with its legislation. A draft strategy was exhibited for public comment in September 2002 with the final document released by the Government in February 2003. At the same time, successful programs of the previous Waste Boards have been integrated and enhanced and a range of new programs developed. Resource NSW will also take over the WRAPP and Anti-Littering programs from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in 2003-04.

New programs implemented during 2002-03 include a Research and Development Fund and a Household Chemical Collection program designed to clean out stocks of unwanted chemicals from household storage. A program of Public Place Recycling centred on the State Rail network was taken over from the EPA during the year. A Regional Support program was introduced to encourage and assist the expansion of Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery programs into rural areas utilising existing networks of councils and recovery facilities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy was released in February 2003 and is a first for Australia. New South Wales is the first State to develop targets for waste avoidance and resource recovery and a framework for action. The strategy is broadly supported by industry, community groups, environment groups, individuals and state and local governments, all of whom have expressed a commitment to working together to achieve its goals.

The strategy is designed to guide all sectors – to help them identify priorities for action and opportunities for partnerships. It will also enable policy and priority setting and delivery of a more co-ordinated approach across government and industry at all levels.

In 2003-04, Resource NSW will continue development of a detailed implementation plan to support the strategy in the following key outcome areas:

- ◆ avoiding and preventing waste;
- ◆ increased use of renewable and recovered materials;
- ◆ reducing toxicity in products and materials; and
- ◆ reducing litter and illegal dumping.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

As programs continue to ramp up during 2003-04, total expenses are expected to be \$24.2 million which incorporates carry forward funding for Research and Development Grants, the State Rail Public Place Recycling program and take over of the WRAPP and Anti-Littering programs from the EPA. This is an increase of nearly \$480,000 on actual expenditure by Resource NSW in 2002-03.

STORMWATER TRUST

In May 1997 the New South Wales Government released the Waterways Package, which contained a range of initiatives to improve the quality of the State's waterways. A key initiative of the package is improved management of urban stormwater. This is to be achieved by requiring councils to prepare Stormwater Management Plans, trialling innovative stormwater treatment measures and implementing remedial works linked to these plans. Educating the community about essential changes in behaviour is another critical component of the package.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Government has committed up to \$80 million over the years 1997-98 to 2001-02 for the Stormwater Trust Fund. This Fund is intended to assist with the implementation of stormwater commitments in the Waterways Package.

This funding has been allocated to:

- ◆ assist councils and certain state government agencies to pilot innovative stormwater management techniques or to undertake remedial activities;
- ◆ provide assistance to councils for the preparation of Stormwater Management Plans;
- ◆ a statewide education program coordinated by the Environment Protection Authority; and
- ◆ engage nine officers to support council stormwater initiatives.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Government has provided a further \$2 million in 2002-03 to assist the Trust in continuing its grants program while it explores alternative methods of funding urban stormwater initiatives.

An evaluation of the stormwater grants and management plans found they have been successful in reducing waterway pollution and increasing the ability of local councils to manage urban stormwater. The evaluation also found that further efforts should be made to increase the capacity of councils to manage urban stormwater in a more sustainable way. The review recognized the need for sustainable sources of funding for stormwater management.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

The program expenditure will focus on managing remaining grants for cost effective projects, tackling significant stormwater issues across New South Wales and developing the capacity of councils and council officers to manage stormwater issues.

Existing funding will be carried over to 2003-04 to make final part-payments of council grants and to finalise existing stormwater improvement projects. No new funding allocations have been made to date.

WASTE FUND

The Waste Fund (formerly the Waste Planning and Management Fund) is established under the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001*.

Over the past eight years, the total funding allocated to the Waste Fund amounts to \$191 million. Most of this funding was provided for the establishment, operations and waste reduction programs of regional waste boards and their successor organisation, Resource NSW.

Other initiatives funded include a community waste reduction grants program, statewide waste and litter education initiatives, a series of rural pilot schemes to reduce waste, a range of programs to promote kerbside recycling, an industry partnership program of cleaner production grants, waste regulation compliance and enforcement (including illegal dumping), and support for New South Wales' commitments to national programs such as ChemCollect and the National Packaging Covenant.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Major expenditure has included:

- ◆ \$102 million to support Regional Waste Boards and their successor, Resource NSW, for establishment, recurrent and program funding;
- ◆ \$8 million to provide support for kerbside recycling, including emergency support and structural improvement programs and the Government's commitment to initiatives arising from the National Packaging Covenant;
- ◆ \$12 million for the Waste Challenge, litter and *It's a Living Thing* community awareness and education campaigns;
- ◆ \$6.7 million over five years for the annual Community Waste Reduction Grants program;
- ◆ \$2.5 million to support two important programs to tackle the problem of unwanted hazardous substances – farm chemicals and unwanted pharmaceuticals;
- ◆ \$1.7 million to support an Industry Partnership Program promoting cleaner production;
- ◆ \$2.1 million to initiatives addressing compliance and enforcement of waste laws (including illegal dumping);

- ◆ \$1 million to a public recycling initiative aimed at introducing recycling bins across a range of public precincts in Sydney and ultimately across the whole of New South Wales;
- ◆ \$0.9 million to support implementation of the Government's Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy; and
- ◆ \$0.9 million to support an electronic service delivery initiative for the collection and analysis of waste data.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001* established the new agency Resource NSW. A major driver for future waste funding is the NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy, developed by Resource NSW and released in February 2003. Its purpose is to develop a framework and to support implementation of statewide, regional and local programs to avoid waste and recover resources.

The establishment of Resource NSW and the Strategy will provide the framework for:

- ◆ increasing the focus on avoiding and preventing waste;
- ◆ increasing the use of renewable and recovered materials;
- ◆ reducing toxicity in products and materials; and
- ◆ reducing litter and illegal dumping.

2003-04 BUDGET

Total Expenses

It is estimated that by June 2003 the Waste Fund will have a cash balance of \$57.4 million. The Government has decided to suspend contributions into the Waste Fund until the existing cash balance has been utilised.

The Waste Fund forecasts to expend \$30 million in 2003-04, an increase of nearly \$1.2 million on actual expenses in 2002-03. A large proportion of this expenditure will be allocated to Resource NSW to fund major waste avoidance and resource recovery programs and initiatives arising out of the NSW waste strategy, released in February 2003. These include:

- ◆ development of a Waste Prevention Strategy;
- ◆ integration of, and improvement to, waste and resource recovery processes, systems, services and infrastructure;
- ◆ research and development grants supporting innovation in resource recovery;
- ◆ development of whole of system initiatives to prevent waste, recover resources, phase out toxic substances, improve product stewardship, and reduce litter and illegal dumping;
- ◆ ongoing support for regional illegal dumping initiatives;
- ◆ regional and rural support programs for groups (including councils) working co-operatively to tackle waste management issues; and
- ◆ establishment of a coordinated, statewide education strategy to support waste avoidance and resource recovery. This strategy will be consistent with the NSW Environmental Education Plan 2002-05.

In addition, ongoing funding will be provided to maintain the Government's commitments to the *It's a Living Thing* environment awareness and education campaign, the Industry Partnership Program, investigation, compliance and enforcement of waste and illegal dumping offences, and support for enhanced waste data collection and analysis capability.