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MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW ICONIC WALKS TO SHOWCASE STATE'S EXTRAORDINARY NATIONAL PARKS

NSW will soon be home to new iconic multi-day walks in the State's spectacular national parks, thanks to \$80 million in funding as part of the 2021-22 NSW Budget.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet joined Environment Minister Matt Kean in the Illawarra today to unveil the first walk – The Great Southern Walk – which will stretch 59-kilometres and showcase the natural and cultural beauty of the Illawarra Escarpment, Royal and Kamay Botany Bay National Parks.

Mr Perrottet said we want NSW's national parks to become 'must-see' destinations of global significance.

"From Border Ranges in the north, to Kosciuszko in the south, to Hat Head in the east and Mungo in the west, visitation across our extraordinary National Parks estate has surged in the past 12 months," Mr Perrottet said.

"This \$80 million budget injection will enable us to add new iconic experiences to our tourism arsenal, drawing keen hikers from around Australia and when borders reopen the world, to our spectacular regions giving local small businesses and tourism operators a much needed boost.

"The first of the walks – The Great Southern Walk – will provide a spectacular 5-day experience with a range of new accommodation options such as cabins and 'glamping' sites dotted along the track to welcome walkers at the end of each day's trek."

Environment Minister Matt Kean said a new mountain biking network will also be created across the Escarpment and become a major drawcard for visitors to the area.

"This new mountain bike track will offer riders over 44 kilometres of uninterrupted, sustainably managed track between Mount Keira and Mount Kembla," Mr Kean said.

"Both this signature walk and biking network are major initiatives that will not only make our national parks more accessible to a broader audience but also bring new visitors to this spectacular region."

The walk, expected to be complete in 2024, will boost the local tourism economy and create local jobs both during construction and as the walk welcomes national and international visitors. Details on a second iconic multi-day walk will be released in coming months.

NSW national parks already attract more than 60 million visits a year, generating \$18 billion in economic activity for NSW and supporting more than 74,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Since 2019 the NSW Government has invested more than \$257 million across the national park estate to improve visitor facilities - the biggest visitor infrastructure investment in the history of NSW national parks.

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