FUNDING FOR BALLINA COAST

Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, announced today that $78,000 would be spent on walking tracks, wetlands and protecting threatened fauna on Crown reserves in the Ballina region.

Mr Kelly said he was pleased to see $60,000 go towards the Ballina Coast Reserve Trust to improve the well-worn tracks surfers use to access the line-up at Lennox Point.

“The current tracks are heavily used and are suffering as a result. The funding will be used to improve track surfaces, reduce erosion and control access through sensitive coastal vegetation.

“Surfers will be able to access the waves more safely and with less damage to the environment.

“And at East Ballina, the Department of Lands is ensuring two valuable wetland areas on North Creek are being properly managed and conserved for the benefit of the community and a healthy catchment area.

“WetlandCare Australia (WCA) has been appointed to assist Lands in managing these two wetlands under the 'Innovative Tools Project'.

“The Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority has funded WCA to join Lands in a partnership to investigate innovative ways to manage Crown lands with high conservation values.

“WCA has a solid track record across Australia in delivering a broad range of natural resource management projects and is working in partnership with the Grafton Lands office to manage the wetlands.

The Minister was also pleased to announce a further $18,000 towards the control of foxes in and around the Pied Oyster Catcher habitat at South Ballina beach, following a similar contribution in 2007.

“Fox predation continues to pose a threat to remaining populations of the Pied Oyster Catcher and this contribution will ensure the Fox Threat Abatement Plan is active in this important area for these birds.

“The Pied Oyster Catcher is one a resident, non-migratory shore birds with an estimated remaining population of 250 in NSW. Lands is working with other key agencies to ensure this vulnerable species is protected.

“These initiatives are fantastic examples of the Rees Government’s State Plan in action, putting practical environmental solutions in place, encouraging more people to use parks and reserves and building healthier communities.”

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