BELMONT WETLANDS STATE PARK FUNDING & PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

Minister for Lands Tony Kelly today announced the adoption of a Plan of Management for the Belmont Wetlands State Park, south of Newcastle.

“I am pleased to announce the Plan of Management, which will be carried out by the Belmont Wetlands State Park Trust,” said Mr Kelly.

“$250,000 will be made available from the Public Reserves Management Fund (PRMF) to implement the Plan.”

The key actions of the Plan include:

- Formal access and entry, walkways, cycle-ways and roads;
- Restoration of environmental values and habitat;
- Establishment of tourist accommodation, visitor facilities and event space;
- Integrated access with the adjacent Fernleigh Track shared cycle-way;
- Enhanced education and heritage values

“The resources needed to implement these improvements will include the recruitment of a project officer and ranger, commercial tourism partners, the regulation of vehicle access and the installation of infrastructure such as amenities and signage,” said Mr Kelly.

The Belmont Wetlands State Park was established in 2005, with LPMA identifying a range of issues to be addressed. These included; the rehabilitation of degradation caused by sand mining and 4WD and trail bike use; protection of the park from illegal dumping and arson; development of an extensive weed and feral animal control program; addressing soil erosion issues; bush fire mitigation; protection of important cultural heritage sites; enhancement of recreation within the reserve; and engaging community members in the long-term care of the park.

“The Plan of Management was developed by LPMA in consultation with Andrews Neil Pty Ltd.

“It was publicly exhibited for six weeks in September and October last year at various locations in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and on LPMA’s website, and was well received by the community.

“This funding brings the balance of support to $500,000. At its inception, the Belmont Wetlands State Park Trust was provided with $250,000 to initiate management of the site formally owned by BHP.

Member for Charlestown, Matthew Morris welcomed the funding.

“The Belmont Wetlands State Park is an important natural area and it is extremely important that we manage its development in an environmentally sustainable way so as to preserve its use and enjoyment for both locals and visitors for generations to come.
Member for Swansea, Robert Coombs said the Belmont Wetlands State Park Trust had been doing a fantastic job.

“Already 40 volunteers are actively engaged in the park, various Landcare projects have commenced and extensive trail rationalisation and access have been installed through the LPMA bushfire program,” said Mr Coombs.

The Belmont Wetlands State Park adjoins the Pacific Ocean between Belmont and Redhead. It comprises seven coastal wetlands and features the largest single open water wetland in Lake Macquarie. The 514 ha site is host to a diverse range of over 170 species of native wildlife and is home to valuable cultural heritage sites with evidence of Aboriginal occupation and early European settlement.

The park is one of 16 State Parks throughout NSW managed effectively by LPMA and State Park Trusts under the Crown Lands Act to achieve the best environmental, economic and social outcomes for the state and the community.