Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, today said that the Clarence River was one of two coastal river systems to benefit from $320,000 in NSW Catchment Action funding.

Mr Kelly, who made the announcement during a visit to Yamba, said that the project was targeted at improving key fish habits situated on Crown land.

“These sites occur in rivers and estuaries where native fish have become endangered for a variety of reasons, often related to the management of adjoining lands," Mr Kelly said.

“This innovative project will pilot ways of improving the environmental management of these Crown land sites in Clarence Valley, as well as rivers within the Eurobodalla Shire on the south coast of NSW.

“The project aims to enhance environmental management of aquatic habitats, and improve aquatic biodiversity and the health of creeks and rivers.

“On the ground works may include fencing and alternative or modified water supplies to ultimately facilitate changes to grazing management on these sites. In some cases, revegetation works may also be undertaken.

“The Clarence and the Eurobodalla region are just the start – and hopefully the outcomes demonstrated here can be used in other key areas right across the State.”

Mr Scott Flynn, a long term member of the Big River Bass Fly Fishing Club welcomed the Minister’s announcement as good news for sighers in the Clarence.

"Our catch and release club is on record as saying that anything that improves fish habitat on the Clarence River is good,” Mr Flynn said.

“It is good for the river and the fish stocks which in turn is good for recreational fishing and the community and our club supports this government initiative.”

Mr Kelly said Lands would undertake the project in conjunction with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

“Lands and DPI have already completed a pilot collaborative project which identified these parcels of Crown land in the Clarence and Eurobodalla local government areas that contain key fish habitat sites,” Mr Kelly said.

“The project commenced in September and will be completed by end of June 2009.

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