MINISTER FOR LANDS, Tony Kelly, today announced the appointment of consultants Urbis, to commence work on a master plan for the Newcastle coastline’s public spaces.

“Urbis is a highly reputable consultancy firm and was appointed following a thorough selection process jointly conducted by the Land and Property Management Authority and Newcastle City Council.

“This appointment continues the work commenced under the memorandum of understanding (MoU) I signed last year with Newcastle City Council, Hunter Surf Life Saving Incorporated and Newcastle’s six surf clubs.

“The MoU commits all parties to a cooperative and integrated approach to the planning and development of the city’s beaches.

Minister for the Hunter and Member for Newcastle Jodi McKay today welcomed this appointment as an important step in the future management and revitalisation of Newcastle’s iconic beaches, from Stockton in the north, to Merewether in the south.

“The appointment is a significant milestone in this project and the plan is expected to be exhibited early in 2010 to allow for full public consultation,” Ms McKay said.

“The Newcastle Beaches Coastal Reserve project complements the overall planning framework for the city and will enable improvement and development of public infrastructure along the coastline,” Ms McKay said.

“Improvements could include anything from cycleways and promenades to upgrading of amenities and picnic areas, and will ensure the coastline is the crowning glory of the city.

“A working group has been formed to guide the project and take into account the needs of all beach users, existing stakeholders and the broader community.”

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