



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 25 March 2012

NSW GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHES DHARAWAL NATIONAL PARK

The NSW Government today announced the establishment of Dharawal National Park, creating a new iconic conservation area for families in Sydney's South West and the Illawarra.

NSW Premier and Minister for Western Sydney Barry O'Farrell and Environment Minister Robyn Parker said Dharawal National Park would be gazetted tomorrow - fulfilling a key election commitment and delivering for the community after almost two decades of campaigning.

"The creation of the Dharawal National Park is a big win for the local community, which has fought for many years to have the area protected from mining activities," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The NSW Government has ensured this extraordinary natural playground is protected for future generations to explore and enjoy.

"I am extremely proud that a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has achieved in its first 12 months what the previous Labor Government could not deliver in 16 years.

"We are committed to making Dharawal National Park a destination to be experienced by people of all ages – the State's Nationals Parks are there to be enjoyed and explored, not cut off from human access."

Ms Parker said the new 6,500 hectare National Park had no depth restriction, meaning for the first time it was protected to the centre of the earth.

"It will protect an iconic area close to Sydney and Wollongong, and preserve forever its extraordinary biodiversity, including endangered plants, and animals and part of Sydney's largest surviving koala population," Ms Parker said.

"It will ensure the protection of significant upland swamps, rich in plant and animal life, which feed pristine water to O'Hares Creek, the headwater of the Georges River.

"The Dharawal area also contains significant Aboriginal cultural values, with a high density of important cultural sites and priceless Aboriginal rock art."

Ms Parker said the Government had committed \$1 million to improve visitor facilities and opportunities in the new National Park.

“As well as announcing the establishment of the new park, I can also announce that we will shortly place on public exhibition our vision for proposed new facilities.

“These include a new lookout, with access for the disabled overlooking O’Hares Creek at Wedderburn, improved walking access to the gorgeous pools on Stokes Creek and nearby picnic facilities for local families and visitors.

“At the Illawarra end of the new national park, at Darkes Forest, we are planning to create a loop walk to Maddens Falls and potentially a walk right down to the base of the falls.”

People interested in commenting on future visitor facilities in the park will be able to make submissions once the public exhibition period commences in coming weeks.

Today’s historic announcement was marked by unveiling of the new park signs at Wedderburn today by the Premier, Minister and Heathcote MP Lee Evans, Wollondilly MP Jai Rowell, Campbelltown MP Bryan Doyle, Camden MP Chris Patterson and Oatley MP Mark Coure.

Ms Parker said a community celebration of Dharawal National Park will be held on 5 May 2012.