MATT CONLAN
MINISTER PARKS AND WILDLIFE

PARKS AND WILDLIFE TO RECEIVE FUNDING INCREASE

4th December, 2012

The Mills Government has increased funding for the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (PWCNT) by $2.6 million in the 2012-13 Mini Budget.

Minister for Parks and Wildlife, Matt Conlan, said the Government has provided additional funding of $200,000 ongoing from 2012-13 for the removal of all visible asbestos in public areas managed by PWCNT.

“This follows the finding of non-friable asbestos in the George Brown Botanic Gardens, Casuarina Coastal Reserve and Charles Darwin National park in 2011,” Mr Conlan said.

“The safety of Territorians is important to this Government and we want to see it dealt with correctly.”

An increase of $2.6 million in PWCNT’s 2012-13 Budget and $1.85 million ongoing will fund staffing costs, mainly to continue park ranger positions in remote areas including Indigenous trainee rangers and Indigenous support staff.

Territory Eco-Link funding will cease, resulting in savings of $380,000 in 2012-13 and $450,000 ongoing from 2013-14. The Government will continue to fund the Land for Wildlife component of the program.

Eco-Link was developed through a Memorandum of Understanding between the former Northern Territory and South Australia Governments in 2011 to establish the National Wildlife Corridor Plan.

“The changes reflect a sharper focus to ‘on park’ responsibilities before considering ‘off park’ initiatives,” Mr Conlan said.

“Funding for Land for Wildlife program in the Top End (run by Greening Australia) and in Central Australia (run by Low Ecological Services) will continue.

“These initiatives are gaining increased community and business sector participation and grant funding provides valuable leverage.

“Further efficiencies are being considered from 2013-14 totalling more than $2 million a year, where existing support and service arrangements can be delivered differently in the future.

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“These include reducing remote ranger stations and reducing support for external groups as and when current arrangements are due for review. “These changes are required to ensure the department functions in the best possible way. “Its focus will be directed to ‘on park’ responsibilities.”

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