Budget 2009 Protecting the Territory Environment

The Northern Territory Government will continue to protect the Territory’s natural environment and natural assets as part of Budget 2009.

Chief Minister and Minister for Climate Change, Paul Henderson, said Budget 2009 supports Territory households and businesses to become environmentally responsible.

“Every Territorian has a role to play and Budget 2009 provides Territorians and businesses with the support they need to combat climate change,” Mr Henderson said.

“Budget 2009 will also deliver more funding to maintain and protect all of our stunning and much-loved natural assets for current and future generations.”

CLIMATE CHANGE REDUCING OUR FOOTPRINT

Budget 2009 supports Territory households and businesses to become environmentally responsible and help reduce the Territory’s carbon footprint.

Budget 2009 will provide $2.11 million for initiatives to support businesses and households to respond to climate change in an easy and manageable way.

Funding of $2.1 million is provided over three years for the ecoBiz NT program. The program offers small-to-medium businesses professional advice on energy, water and waste saving opportunities.

The scheme provides funding assistance of up to $30,000 for Territory businesses to implement eco-efficiency projects that result in more efficient use of energy, materials and water, less solid and liquid waste, and improved productivity.

The Power and Water Corporation is providing a one-off rebate of $100 commencing 1 July to small-to-medium size commercial customers in conjunction with the ecoBiz NT’s free six-step program and government grant rebate scheme.
The rebate will be deducted from the participating commercial customer’s next energy bill, on advice from ecoBiz NT.

Other environmental efficiency programs supported in Budget 2009 include:

- $340,000 for Energy Efficiency Hardware Rebates to offset the cost of energy efficient items such as electric hot water system timers;
- $250,000 for the Water Tank Rebate Scheme to encourage collection of rain water;
- $225,000 for the Retrofit Solar Hot Water Rebate for existing households to switch to solar, heat pump or efficient gas hot water systems; and
- $150,000 for COOLmob Energy Audits to help households identify energy savings.

GREEN FLEET

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from Northern Territory Government cars will be cut by 20 per cent in the next five years under the Green Fleet initiative, commencing from 1 July.

The Green Fleet initiative will:

- provide smaller, fuel efficient cars across the passenger vehicle fleet with a minimum greenhouse emission standard of 5.5;
- reduce the percentage of 4WDs to reflect operational needs; and
- replace the VIP fleet of V8s with V6s converted to LPG, which is cheaper and kinder to the environment, emitting 15 per cent less greenhouse gases than petrol.

The policy is estimated to save more than $1 million in fuel costs alone by the end of year 5 and the 20 per cent reduction in emissions is the equivalent of CO₂ absorbed by 8,805 trees per year by the end of year 5.

Under the policy the Government will continue to adopt more efficient cars including hybrids and new models as they come on the market, particularly if they are Australian made and sold in the Territory.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Environment Minister Alison Anderson said the Territory Government will deliver for Territorians by investing in environment protection and sustainable resources.

“The Henderson Government is committed to protecting our pristine natural environment for future generations of Territorians,” Ms Anderson said.

Budget 2009 provides additional funding to improve the Territory’s natural resources:

- $704,000 to continue the Air Quality Program to report emissions data for the Darwin region;
- $640,000 to develop and implement the Strategic Weed Management Program to manage high-risk weeds;
- $600,000 for the protection of biodiversity as part of the Arafura to Alice Eco-link; and
- $100,000 to employ an additional ranger through the Indigenous Ranger Group Development Program.
Budget 2009 also provides continued funding of:

- $514,000 for the Living Rivers Program to assess and monitor biodiversity within the Daly River catchment; and
- $500,000 for water allocation plans across the Territory.

Budget 2009 includes $560,000 for EnvironmentNT and Native Wildlife Protection Grants to community groups, local government and schools to re-think waste, conserve water, manage weeds and feral animals, and for other environmental programs.

Budget 2009 also includes $3.44 million for bushfire mitigation and wildfire suppression strategies as well as $735,000 to manage threatened species.

Initiatives to be further developed in 2009 include:

- development of new land clearing laws;
- a management plan for gamba grass – now a declared weed;
- sustainable development of the commercial crocodile industry; and
- development of a Territory-wide Living Rivers Strategy, to protect the Territory’s rivers and water resources.

**WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

In supporting the contribution community groups make to protecting the Territory’s environment, Budget 2009 provides:

- $750,000 for increased support for volunteer bushfire brigades; and
- $160,000 additional funding for the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory and Arid Lands Environment Centre.

**CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME**

The Territory Government is proceeding to establish a ‘Cash for Containers’ scheme that is appropriate for the Territory, making the Territory cleaner and greener, rewarding Territorians who don’t litter and giving kids and community groups a chance to raise funds.

**UPGRADING OUR PARKS**

Budget 2009 provides for improvements to the Territory’s national parks.

Budget 2009 also provides a new $8 million Territory Parks Infrastructure package delivering $2 million per year for the next four years to upgrade our national parks.

- $1.5 million for the West MacDonnell Visitor Centre and facilities;
- $1 million for redevelopment at Litchfield National Park; and
- $1 million to upgrade utilities at Nitmiluk National Park.
Improvements include repairing boardwalks, toilet blocks, fencing to protect parks from feral animals, improving carparks, sealing access roads and solar lighting. Budget 2009 includes $3 million to develop joint park management arrangements between traditional owners and Parks and Wildlife.

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