

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

PUBLIC SPACES TO BLOSSOM WITH MORE FUNDING

The NSW Government will continue to create better, safer and more public spaces with an extra \$54 million over the next two years as part of the 2020-21 NSW Budget.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes said the funding to create better public spaces and improve government infrastructure was in addition to \$250 million over three years for the Public Spaces Legacy Program, which incentivises councils to speed up local development applications and planning proposals with funding for existing and new public space.

“The NSW Government appreciates the many social, health and economic benefits of great public spaces, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic where we have seen people choose to stay local,” Mr Stokes said.

“As NSW’s first Public Spaces Minister, I’m thrilled to be able to focus on how we can further green our cities and urban centres with investment in our beautiful parklands and public spaces.

“As well, any upgrade and maintenance of our public buildings in the city and in regional areas provides much needed jobs and investment in local suppliers.”

Funding in the Budget for parkland and public spaces includes:

- Greater Sydney Parklands and Botanic Gardens Greater Sydney:
 - o Greater Sydney Parklands: **More than \$19 million** over two years for park facility upgrades at Centennial Parklands, now part of the new Greater Sydney Parklands. This includes restoration of ponds and waterways, restoration of rare and endangered bushland precincts, upgrading sports facilities, and safety improvements in Moore Park and Queens Park;
 - o Botanic Gardens Greater Sydney: **Almost \$17 million** over two years for infrastructure across the Botanic Gardens in Sydney, Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, including a \$4 million restoration of the Royal Botanic Garden’s Tarpeian Way at the Sydney Opera House Forecourt.
- Sydney Olympic Park: **\$16 million** to increase participation in sport and cultural activities and improve visitor experiences at key facilities, including a refurbishment of the Aquatic Centre, upgrade of the Quay Centre and the enhancement of Bicentennial Park.

The NSW Government’s plans for a COVID Safe Summer and economic recovery have also been enhanced by \$1.3 million in funding to support councils with events and ideas to draw people back to retail centres, villages and public spaces this summer.

Mr Stokes said the program will allow councils to create environments this summer that encourage people to spend local within their high streets and villages.

“The Summer Fun(d) will create free, safe, quick and vibrant events or activations to stimulate local economies during the summer season,” Mr Stokes said.

It will be bolstered by another \$200,000 to implement some of the best temporary activation ideas from the Public Space Ideas Competition, run by the NSW Government in partnership with the Committee for Sydney.

The Summer Fun(d) for local councils aligns with the NSW Government’s COVID Safe Summer Plan, which provides councils and managers of public spaces in NSW with practical ideas, resources and a guide to keep public spaces COVID Safe this summer.

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