

***MEDIA RELEASE***

**Bill passed to empower Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean**

Friday 3 April 2009

Legislation has been passed in the NSW Parliament overnight to empower the new Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Minister for Water, Phil Costa said today.

Mr Costa said the Office will be a one-stop-shop to improve coordination between NSW Government Agencies, the Commonwealth Government and Councils to better manage the health of the river.

“The Hawkesbury-Nepean River Bill has passed through NSW Parliament to give the Office the statutory powers needed to achieve this important task,” said Mr Costa.

“The Rees Government has set up the Office to act as a single point of information and advice on river management strategies.

“Another important role is to facilitate and improve public access to information about the river.

“This will allow more opportunities for the public to be involved in developing the strategies we are using to improve river health.

“Urgent action is required to ensure the iconic Hawkesbury-Nepean River continues to meet the needs of the community into the future,” he said.

Mr Costa said Sydney is very fortunate to have such a natural asset.

“A river that can supply most of our drinking water needs, irrigate a productive food bowl estimated to be worth in the order of \$259 million per year, and provide recreation for many residents, is undoubtedly worth protecting,” he said.

“I thank the members of Parliament for supporting this important initiative.

“Particularly local members Allan Shearan, Karyn Paluzzano and John Aquilina – their strong representations have gone a long way to getting the Office established,” he added.

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