

Budget Highlights for Rural and Regional New South Wales

2002-03



New South Wales

INFORMATION ON THE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES 2002-03

Regional Budget Highlights 2002-03 provides information at a glance on key State Government spending outside metropolitan Sydney.

The capital works in this document are a selection only of the total commitment to regional and rural New South Wales.¹

For the purposes of this report, the Hunter, Illawarra and Central Coast are included.

Where capital works are funded over four years through forward estimates, both the 2002-03 spending figures and total project costs are included where available.

¹ For a complete details see Budget Paper 4

Contents

Foreword – By Bob Carr, Premier of New South Wales	4
Premier’s Department.	6
The Cabinet Office	9
Regional Development.	16
Health	18
Education and Training	21
Transport and Roads	26
Police	29
Corrective Services	31
Agriculture	32
Hunter Water Corporation.	34
Energy	35
Land and Water Conservation	37
Sport and Recreation	39
Fair Trading	41
Local Government	42
Citizenship/Community Relations.	43
Attorney-General	44
Forestry	45
Environment	48
Fisheries	50
Mineral Resources	51
Heritage Office	52
Planning.	53
Aboriginal Affairs.	54
Housing.	56
Emergency Services	57
Juvenile Justice	58
Tourism	59
Small Business	60
Information Technology.	61
Arts	62
Community Services	63
Ageing and Disability.	65
Women	67

Foreword – By Bob Carr, Premier of New South Wales

This Budget will help country New South Wales get ahead with record spending on hospitals, roads, schools and police.

Some \$3,570 million will be spent on capital works and road maintenance outside urban areas in the coming year.

Comparisons of population and State capital works spending show that regional and country New South Wales again receives more than its per-capita share of public investment.

Forty-two per cent of the State's population lives outside Sydney. This Budget provides them with 50 per cent of the State's capital works and roads maintenance budget.

This \$3,570 million investment will sustain around 53,000 jobs.

And the 28 per cent of people living outside Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle and the Central Coast will receive almost 36 per cent, or \$2,560 million, of State spending to build and buy new public assets and repair roads.

Once again the Budget provides for a big lift in spending on health and education.

Some \$2,350 million will be spent on providing health care to rural and regional communities, a 75 per cent increase in funding for rural and regional health services since Government took office in 1995.

A further \$504 million will be spent across the State to build or refurbish hospitals. This massive building program includes redeveloping hospitals at Bourke, Hay and Kyogle, upgrading Milton-Ulladulla hospital and providing a new hospital in Henty.

Work continues on hospitals in Tweed Heads, Young, Gosford, Dubbo, Wyong, Tamworth, Newcastle, Kempsey, Cowra, Ballina and other centres.

The Budget provides \$275 million to build and refurbish schools and TAFE colleges outside Sydney.

Construction of major upgrades worth \$107 million on completion will begin on 36 schools and TAFE colleges including Dubbo, Milton, Clarence Town, Lightning Ridge, Merimbula and Cooma.

Works worth a further \$168 million on completion will continue in 32 schools and TAFE colleges.

Country schools will benefit from new investment across the State of \$247 million over four years to link them more quickly and more reliably to the Internet.

More than \$59 million will be spent to improve the literacy and numeracy of rural children and \$101 million is set aside for maintenance work to modernise public school grounds and buildings.

Nearly \$72.5 million will be spent on distance education centres, grants for isolated schools and other measures to tackle educational challenges in rural communities.

This Budget supplies the battle against salt with a further \$13 million under our \$198 million, six-year salinity plan.

In addition, in partnership with the Federal Government we will begin a seven-year reforestation program worth up to \$100 million.

Some \$15 million is allocated this year to save the Snowy River from terminal degradation.

More than 60 per cent of the roads capital and maintenance budget, some \$1,300 million, will be spent in rural and regional New South Wales.

Country rail track will receive its largest ever share of the Budget. More than \$286 million will be spent to maintain and upgrade track outside Sydney and the Hunter Valley with work at Broken Hill, Coonamble, Casino, Albury, Walgett, Moree and North Star and elsewhere.

A further \$71.6 million has been provided to support country passenger services.

This year the Rural Fire Service will receive a record \$120.7 million, a 179 per cent increase in funding since 1995 compared to the seven years before that.

Funding for the State Emergency Service rises to \$29.8 million, an increase of 106 per cent since the Government took office.

More than 28,400 full time jobs have already been created and \$5,910 million of investment secured outside Sydney in the past seven years as a result of Government assistance.

This document highlights many more regional initiatives planned by the Government in the coming year.



Bob Carr
Premier

Premier's Department

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

In 2002-03, \$2.7 million will be allocated to the Premier's Department for the Regional Coordination Program (RCP). Established in 1994, the RCP now covers all of rural, regional and metropolitan New South Wales.

Eight Regional Coordinators work in country centres across New South Wales to improve government services for rural people living outside Sydney.

Specific Regional Coordination Program projects include:

- **Central Coast Moving Forward:** The NSW Government has been working with the Central Coast community to address the impact of population growth and employment issues in the region. The process has brought together State and Local government and engaged the community in agreeing on strategies to create jobs and maintain the region's lifestyle and environment.
- **River Towns Project:** This two year project is focusing on the river towns of Walgett, Brewarrina, Bourke and Wilcannia. Government and communities are working together to confront issues that affect community health, wellbeing and economic development.
- **Cross-Border Project for New South Wales and Victorian communities:** This initiative will improve service delivery in New South Wales communities along the Murray River on the Victorian border. The project is responding to concerns raised by agencies, local governments, advisory committees, communities and businesses situated adjacent to the New South Wales/Victorian border relating to the impacts on policy, licensing and service delivery differences between New South Wales and Victoria. Significant opportunities exist for cost savings and improved service delivery.
- **The Goulburn Youth Project:** The Goulburn youth project is integrating health and support service delivery for young people in Goulburn. It is providing and coordinating recreational, community education, health and support services in a youth-friendly setting.
- **Brandon Park Redevelopment:** This initiative involves the reuse of under-utilised existing sporting complex for regional development purposes through establishment of an education, research and related business park (known as the Wollongong Innovation Campus). Development will occur over 15 years involving total investment of approximately \$110 million and should yield approximately 3,000 jobs in emerging technology-focused enterprises.
- **BHP Land Transfer:** BHP will transfer its major land holdings in the Hunter to the State Government. These land holdings include 515 hectares of coastal sand dunes and wetlands at Belmont, 1545 hectares at West Wallsend, 230 hectares at Kooragang Island and 150 hectares, being the former main steel site. This land has the ability to provide good employment and conservation outcomes for the future growth of the Hunter Region.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL

Through its agencies and programs, the State Government continues to invest strongly in local initiatives that enhance the quality of life of regional and rural communities.

- \$10 million will be allocated in 2002-03 to support innovative responses to social and economic issues and crime prevention. Rural and regional communities are among those targeted under this approach.
- \$330,000 will be spent in 2002-03 for the Strengthening Local Communities Strategy in Windale, Booragul/Bolton Point, Moree, Boggabilla, Wentworth, Mangrove Mountain and Port Kembla.

STAYING IN TOWN

The Government is providing \$1.25 million in 2002-03 to improve government services in rural and regional New South Wales under the "Staying in Town" program. Projects include:

- **Natural Resources Service Centres:** This project is testing the provision of advice and assistance on natural resources management via a "one stop shop". Pilot centres are being developed in Deniliquin, Tamworth and Maclean. These centres will mean that farmers for example, will be able to get easier access to information about natural resource management issues such as salinity.
- **Place Manager - Wentworth Shire:** A government-community partnership to help communities in the Wentworth Shire to overcome pressing social issues.
- **Community Link & Information Access Centre:** This project will improve the integration of service and information delivery for the small rural communities of Pilliga/Gwabegar and Toomelah/Boggabilla.
- **Staff Recruitment and Retention in Remote Communities:** In Western New South Wales, the Regional Coordination Program is working with communities and Government agencies to improve the recruiting and retention of staff in remote localities.

OFFICE OF REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

An allocation of \$586,000 will be made to the Office of Regional Communities (ORC) in 2002-03. The Office has staff in Orange and Sydney and manages rural and regional projects which require a whole of government or cross agency approach. The ORC supports the Regional Communities Consultative Council: the major community advisory body to the Premier on rural issues.

REGIONAL AND RURAL MISCELLANEOUS GRANTS FUND

In 2002-03, \$1 million will be allocated to the Regional and Rural Miscellaneous Grants Fund to support small scale, local initiatives that have immediate and tangible community benefit.

Towns which have received grants vary widely in size, location and economic capacity, for example: Clarence Town, Dungog, Ellangowan, Evans Head, Grenfell, Gresford, Guyra, Gwabegar, Hazelbrook, Hinton, Kiama, Lightning Ridge, Merimbula, Moree, Moruya, Mudgee, Nana Glen, Narooma, Stokers Siding, Sussex Inlet, Tambar Springs, Tingha, Walgett, Woolgoolga and Young.

THE REGIONAL COMMUNITIES CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

\$150,000 will be provided in 2002-03, to support the work of the Regional Communities Consultative Council (the RCCC). The Council:

- advises on rural and regional policies and services.
- recommends initiatives to advance social, economic and environmental development.
- consults with rural and regional communities regarding community issues, solutions and opportunities.

GOVERNMENT ACCESS PROGRAM

The Government will continue to expand the Government Access Program (GAP). This program uses “one stop shops” in rural and remote communities to provide government services and information. Services provided include vehicle registration renewal, applications for birth, death and marriage certificates and recreational fishing licences.

The Program will utilise existing Court Houses, RTA Motor Registries and other State Government shop-fronts and will provide a range of over the counter transactions, information and access to visiting departmental officers. Transactions provided through the Centres include, vehicle registration renewal, boat licence renewals and birth certificates.

INFRASTRUCTURE

\$900,000 has been provided to the Infrastructure Coordination Unit of the Premier’s Department in 2002-03 to continue its work of coordinating the State Government’s infrastructure initiatives.

The Cabinet Office

SALINITY

The NSW Salinity Strategy has a budget of \$52 million over four years to address the growing salinity problem in New South Wales. The forward estimate for Salinity Strategy expenditure in 2002-03 is \$13 million.

Continuing Initiatives under the NSW Salinity Strategy

\$23 million over four years to develop market based solutions to make it commercially viable for land managers to undertake activities which provide salinity control and other environmental services. Projects include:

- \$2 million for the Environmental Services Scheme Pilot.
- Twenty working examples are being established, in which landholders are given incentives to produce environmental benefits from sustainable land use activities. The Scheme is being funded from the \$20 million Environmental Services Investment Fund.
- \$1 million for the Forest Pilot Project.
- Thirteen landholders are involved in establishing 400 hectares of hardwood forest in the Gunnedah area to test markets for planted forests. One of the blocks is at Lue, near Mudgee and the other at Baldry, near Wellington.
- \$1 million for Benchmarking Salinity Control and Carbon Sequestration.
- Research sites are being established to benchmark salinity control and carbon sequestration from tree plantings in low rainfall areas. The major sites are located on the Liverpool Plains.
- \$510,000 for Environmental Management Systems (EMS).

Environmental Management Systems allow landholders to obtain certification for managing their land in an environmentally sustainable way. A pilot is underway in the Liverpool Plains to test likely increases in property valuations and productivity from better stewardship through EMS.

- Development of pilot projects to trial new types of financial incentives for landholders to undertake sustainable farming practices:
- Liverpool Plains Pilot: Developing a tender system for auctioning environmental services, such as tree planting, to support the adoption of sustainable land management.
- TARGET Project in the Central West Region (Lachlan, Macquarie and Castlereagh catchments): Also supported by a series of incentive payments for implementing on-ground works.
- Heartlands Project: A joint New South Wales-Victorian in the Murray and Murrumbidgee, which combines on-ground works with research and development, particularly into the development of measurable indicators of biophysical change.

National Action Plan Initiatives

New South Wales is committed to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) that provides for co-ordinated action across all States and Territories. The NAP Bilateral Agreement provides the basis for \$396 million joint New South Wales-Commonwealth funding over the period to 30 June 2007. The \$52 million committed under the Salinity Strategy is recognised within this amount.

The forward estimate for expenditure under the NAP in 2002-03 is \$33 million (in addition to the Salinity Strategy budget).

Under the NAP, Catchment Blueprints within NAP Priority Regions will be accredited for investment in water quality and salinity activities.

The NAP Priority Regions include the Lower Murray, the Murray, the Lachlan-Murrumbidgee, the Macquarie-Castlereagh, the Balonne-Maranoa, the Namoi-Gwydir and the Border Rivers.

Blueprint accreditation is expected to be completed around July 2002, and investment strategies to underpin the Blueprints will be adopted in late 2002.

BIO-TECHNOLOGY

BioFirst Strategy

The \$68 million BioFirst Strategy is designed to position New South Wales as a leader in biotechnology and maximise the social, environmental and economic benefits of biotechnology. New South Wales is Australia's largest agricultural producer. To stay competitive the State must identify and enhance agricultural traits and transfer them to commercial cultivars. One means by which BioFirst strengthens rural and regional scientific excellence is through supporting the establishment of a multi-site agricultural genomics network across the State. Agricultural biotechnology will continue to improve the nutritional quality of food, minimise the environmental impacts of agriculture, and reduce the cost of production.

This initiative will also enhance New South Wales capability in microbial genomics and its various applications. These include waste treatment and conversion, mine rehabilitation, the production of industrial chemicals, the development of medical and veterinary vaccines and new diagnostic tests for humans, animals and plants.

The BioUnit, a dedicated unit accountable to the Premier, was established in 2001 to drive and co-ordinate the implementation of the BioFirst Strategy.

Agricultural Genomics Centre

- The Government has allocated \$7.25 million over five years to establish an Agricultural Genomics Centre.

The Centre will identify genes for use in Australia's agriculture and protect them through patenting and other intellectual property protection mechanisms. Key crops include wheat, rice, barley, cotton, canola and grain legumes – all crops important for New South Wales prosperity, and of national and international significance.

Research at the Centre also has the potential to positively impact on resource management issues such as water use and efficiency, for example, studying cold tolerance and dwarf growth genes in rice.

The Centre is geographically distributed, with research to be undertaken at:

- The Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute.
- Tamworth Centre for Crop Improvement.
- NSW Agriculture's Yanco Agricultural Institute near Leeton.
- CSIRO's Divisions of Plant Industries and Mathematics and Statistics (Canberra and Sydney respectively).
- The Proteomics Centre at Macquarie University.

Register of Genetic Material

- The Government has allocated \$600,000 over five years to develop a register of genetic material for ongoing research and development, including:
 - Register of NSW Agriculture's Scientific Collections Unit at Orange Agricultural Institute and other regional locations, to record information on the occurrences, identities, host ranges and distributions of pests, mites and insects associated with agricultural activity in New South Wales.
 - DNA fingerprinting of key parts of the Australian Winter Cereals Collection, to simplify research and make wheat breeding programs more effective.

FAMILIES FIRST

Families First is a co-ordinated State Government strategy aimed at families with children aged 0-8. Families First is designed to link early intervention and prevention services and community development programs to form a comprehensive service network providing wide-ranging supports to help families raise healthy well adjusted children, connect with each other for support and to prevent problems before families find themselves in crisis.

Families First is currently operating in 11 of 16 areas across New South Wales, including the following rural and regional areas:

- Far North Coast – \$1.65 million for 2002-03.
- Mid North Coast – \$1.73 million for 2002-03.
- New England – \$1.03 million in 2002-03.
- Southern New South Wales – \$890,000 in 2002-03.
- Central West – \$900,000 in 2002-03.
- Orana Far West – \$1.36 million in 2002-03.

Families First will be rolled out in the remaining five areas, including the rural and regional areas of Riverina/Murray and Illawarra, from 2002.

KEY INITIATIVES

Families First has improved support for families in a variety of ways:

- By providing extra early childhood nurses who are able to contact more families with newborn babies and support them in their home.
- Through volunteers providing practical help and advice to families with very young children.
- By employing Family Workers to help parents increase their parenting skills.
- By providing more playgroups for families, which are run by early childhood-trained staff.
- By improving access to information on parenting.
- Through community projects that enable families to obtain improved access to the services they need and provide more opportunities to be supported by other families.
- By providing services for Aboriginal, non-English speaking and young parents.
- By improving communication between services that support families, particularly families with more complex needs.

ABORIGINAL CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY STRATEGY (CEOS OUTCOMES PROJECT)

The Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy will help meet critical needs of Aboriginal children and young people and their families and carers across New South Wales.

- Statewide, \$1.9 million will be allocated to the strategy in 2002-03, with \$3.8 million allocated each year for the following three years. Around two-thirds of the allocation will be spent in rural and regional areas.

There is a significant gap in health and educational achievement between Aboriginal young people and non-Aboriginal young people. As well, Aboriginal young people continue to have higher rates of involvement in the criminal justice system and Aboriginal families are over-represented in child protection notifications. In some Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal children and young people are at very high risk of harm and neglect.

The strategy will allow Aboriginal community leaders and Government service providers to take action to meet these urgent needs.

- A focus on delivering services to Aboriginal people and achieving better outcomes.
- Better co-ordination of service delivery to Aboriginal communities.
- A focus on prevention and early intervention.
- A focus on Aboriginal culture and heritage.

BETTER FUTURES REGIONAL STRATEGY

In July 2001, the NSW Government launched *Better Futures: An Action Framework for Vulnerable Young People in New South Wales*. Its central messages are that all young people should have the opportunity to lead rewarding and positive lives, and that there are practical things that government, families and communities can do, working together, that can be helpful in minimising risk for vulnerable young people and in building resilience.

Part of this strategy – the *Better Futures Regional Strategy* – will focus on communities where young people are more vulnerable, helping these communities to reduce risk factors for young people and better meet their needs.

Better Futures Regional Strategy

The Strategy will be implemented through joint regional planning by a range of agencies to identify needs, current services and gaps in provision for young people.

- \$8.6 million over four years has been allocated to facilitate this process, with \$1.3 million available in 2002-03.

New funds will be distributed regionally based on young people's population. A significant portion will be spent on disadvantaged communities in rural and regional New South Wales.

Other factors which will be taken into account when determining where to allocate resources include rurality and socio-economic status; schooling issues such as literacy, numeracy and retention rates; and issues such as juvenile justice rates and child protection notifications.

DRUG SUMMIT PLAN OF ACTION

The Government is entering the fourth year of its comprehensive Drug Summit Plan of Action. This plan is being co-ordinate and monitored by the Office of Drug Policy in the Cabinet Office. Programs are being delivered by ten NSW Government agencies.

Continuing Initiatives under the Drug Summit Plan of Action

Drug programs and services reflecting every aspect of the NSW Government's Drug Summit Plan of Action are being implemented in regional areas. The Government's emphasis has been on improving services and treatment options for regional people.

Treatment – Drug and Alcohol Services

- Drug Summit enhancements to regional Area Health Services amount to \$30 million over the four years of the Government Plan of Action from June 1999 to June 2003. All Area Health Services are adopting long-term drug and alcohol plans.
- Thirty additional rehabilitation beds have already been funded in rural and regional areas treating more than 200 patients each year, at a cost of almost \$600,000 per annum.
- A 16-bed detoxification unit has opened at Lismore. This project had a capital cost of \$3.25 million, and has a recurrent budget of approximately \$1.6 million.
- In May 2002, a new 15-bed drug detoxification unit opened at Wyong hospital, providing treatment for up to 900 patients a year. The centre was constructed at a cost of \$3.1 million, and will operate on an annual budget of \$1.3 million.
- Expansion of drug and alcohol services on the Mid North Coast and New England areas has occurred in the form of multi-purpose drug and alcohol treatment services including integrated out-patient services.
- Over \$18 million will be distributed to all NSW Area Health Services to expand and improve drug treatment programs. This includes new methadone treatment places, case management and counselling for clients. Half of the extra methadone treatment places created since the Summit are in rural and regional New South Wales.

- On-line training for methadone and buprenorphine prescribers has commenced. This provides special benefits for rural medical practitioners who cannot easily access metropolitan training courses.
- Eight new clinical drug and alcohol nurse consultants and eight new drug and alcohol counsellors have been employed in rural areas.
- Eight people have been employed in rural areas to assist general practitioners to deal with drug dependent patients.

Drugs and Community Action Strategy

- A total of \$1.33 million has been allocated to rural regions under the Drugs and Community Action Strategy for 2002-03.
- These funds will support the work of six project managers in rural and regional areas and the implementation of projects by 46 community drug action teams.
- Approximately \$30,000 per region has been allocated specifically to enable teams to conduct local drug awareness raising and information projects.
 - In addition to the funds allocated by the NSW Government, a number of the Community Drug Action Teams have been successful in attracting grants from local business, local government, Commonwealth and other funding sources in their communities. These grants range from \$200 to \$80,000.

Services to Help Young People

- Two new youth treatment facilities have opened in Coffs Harbour and Dubbo.

A one-off amount of \$800,000 was allocated for capital funding to locate, purchase and refurbish suitable properties for new youth treatment facilities. Funding is currently \$4 million over two years, with \$2.4 million coming from the NSW Government and \$1.6 million from the Commonwealth under the National Illicit Drug Strategy (NIDS) funding agreement. The recurrent budget for both facilities is \$800,000 per annum.

- Nine new juvenile justice counsellors are working with young offenders in the State.
- \$800,000 allocated in 2002-03 to continue the Pre-Employment Skills Training and Mentor Support Program.

This program provides support for young offenders to improve their employment prospects. It links them with experienced providers of employment, education and training courses. Eleven programs are operating in New South Wales, including five areas of: Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Kempsey, Taree and Newcastle.

- \$1.03 million has been allocated over 3 years (2000-01 to 2002-03) to pilot the One-Stop-Shop service delivery model for young people. The budget for 2002-03 is \$140,000. Two-year trials of three One-Stop-Shop models, have commenced. These are:
 - A Cessnock area school-based model.
 - An Armidale-based community activities model.
 - A Greater Murray Mobile Youth Information Service targeting young people throughout the area with key information on a range of health, social issues and available services: a specially refitted bus travelling through the region provides an access point for young people to gain information about a range of health and social issues.

Improving Options in the Criminal Justice System

- The Correctional Centre Release Treatment Scheme (CCRTS), also known as the 'Shared Care' program, links former inmates of correctional facilities with drug support services. It commenced in 2001, and has been allocated a budget of \$1.32 million for the 2002-03 financial year. It will operate in a number of areas, including western New South Wales.
- The Children of Prisoners Group provides assistance for rural and regional families to make visits to relatives who are incarcerated. The Group will receive funding of \$50,000 for 2002-03 to continue this program, as well as expanding services aimed at promoting positive parenting and family integration.
- \$1.32 million for 2002-03 to continue and expand services of Detoxification Units at Bathurst, Goulburn and Grafton gaols.
- In August 2000, a 'Healthy Lifestyle Zone', known as the Phoenix Program was established at Cessnock Correctional Centre.
 - Inmates commit to the program by formal written agreement, residing in the zone for up to four months. Those on the program must adhere to a structured and intensive alcohol and other drug program.
 - Healthy Lifestyle Zones have also been established at the Parramatta and Emu Plains Correctional facilities.
 - The Government has allocated a budget of \$177,000 for 2002-03 for the three facilities.

Diversion

- Drug offenders are steered away from the criminal justice system through programs such as the Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment (MERIT) scheme.
 - Under the Commonwealth-State National Illicit Drugs Strategy agreement, a total of \$4.46 million has been budgeted for the MERIT program in rural areas in 2002-03. This will cater for an estimated 1,816 clients.
 - MERIT operates in the Northern Rivers, Illawarra, Mid Western, Hunter, Greater Murray, Macquarie and Central Coast Area Health Services.
 - MERIT sites are scheduled to commence in the Mid North Coast, Far Western, Southern and New England Area Health Services within the next few months.

Training

- Four major staff training and service development projects have commenced, including a Rural Frontline Staff Training Project, which will assist around 500 people this year with training or related support. This is enabling frontline workers to better identify drug and alcohol problems and either assist directly, or provide appropriate referrals.

Regional Development

More than 28,400 full time jobs have been created and \$5.91 billion of private investment secured for regional New South Wales as direct results of assistance from the State Government from April 1995 to March 2002.

There are 18 Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD) offices across regional New South Wales.

MAJOR PROGRAMS IN 2002-03

In 2002-03, \$17.4 million has been specifically allocated to DSRD's Regional Development Assistance budget item. This allocation includes the following programs and initiatives:

- The Regional Economic Transition Scheme (RETS), to assist those regional communities disadvantaged by business closures, industry restructuring and global economic change.
RETS will continue to assist communities like Eden, Broken Hill, Lithgow, Gunnedah, Goulburn and the shires of Blayney, Bogan, Cootamundra, Cobar, Eurobodalla, Kempsey, Nambucca, Rylstone, Scone, Bellingen, Gloucester and Batlow.
- The Meat Processing Industry Restructuring Program (MPIRP) will be continued, helping meat processing firms to maintain a competitive, sustainable industry in the present climate of industry rationalisation.
- Continuation of the Country Lifestyles Program to promote the attraction and benefits of living and working in regional centres.
- Regional Business and Investment Tours, which provide an opportunity for regional businesses to showcase their financing needs to a group of investors.

Since November 1998, these Tours have visited Orange, Dubbo, Grafton, Yamba, Griffith, Tamworth, Armidale, Tweed Heads, Bathurst, Nowra, Murray, Upper Hunter, Lismore, Mudgee, Albury, Narrandera, Leeton, Queanbeyan, Lower Hunter and Coffs Harbour. The next tour will be held in November 2002.

- A new initiative in 2001-02 was the Pilot Regional Film Tour to the Hunter and Broken Hill. The tour highlighted the locations and resources in these regions to producers of television commercials for future filming.
- The Regional Business Development Scheme boosts regional employment and investment by encouraging companies to expand or relocate to country locations.
- The Main Street/Small Towns program helps communities in regional New South Wales to take a strategic and proactive approach to their economic futures. Some 70 projects are expected to be assisted in 2002-03.
- Regional Development Boards continue to have access to a project pool fund each year to develop projects of regional significance with other organisations.
- On-going funding for the New Market Expansion program to support up to 100 firms in 2002-03.
- The Townlife Development program helps regional communities, with populations of 2,500 or less, facing hardship to implement projects that will lead to new economic activity.

- The Developing Regional Resources program will continue in 2002-03 providing assistance to local organisations investigating or pursuing economic opportunities.
- The Country Centres Growth Strategies are intended to overcome obstacles to economic growth and give support to development initiatives for specific regions. An additional three centres are expected to be introduced into the program in 2002-03.

In addition to programs funded through the Regional Development Assistance budget item, other DSRD activities for 2002-03 include:

- The Hunter and Illawarra Advantage Funds will continue to operate in 2002-03. Both funds are designed to attract new industry and commerce into both regions, leading to new jobs and investment.
- The Agribusiness Alternatives program will continue to operate, allowing on-going exploration of opportunities for developing sustainable, value-adding agribusinesses. The program funds ten DSRD Agribusiness Development Managers across New South Wales.
- The Australian Technology Showcase (ATS) will continue in 2002-03. The ATS is a support and development program, which promotes world-leading Australian technologies. Of the 310 member companies in New South Wales, 76 are located outside Sydney. ATS companies have contributed more than \$280 million to the New South Wales economy in new sales and exports.

Health

In 2002-03 NSW Health's operating expenditure in rural and regional areas will exceed \$2 billion for the first time. Total recurrent expenditure in rural and regional New South Wales will amount to \$2.35 billion.

This is an increase of \$211 million or 9.9 per cent more than 2001-02 and over \$480 million since 1999-00 when three-year guaranteed funding for rural and regional health services commenced.

NEW INITIATIVES

New Capital Works

- \$14.5 million to redevelop Bourke Hospital and health service (\$2.9 million allocated in 2002-03).
- \$10.9 million to redevelop Hay Hospital and health service (\$2.9 million allocated in 2002-03).
- \$5 million to co-locate a new hospital and health service with the existing aged care facility at Henty (\$1.9 million allocated in 2002-03).
- \$10.4 million to redevelop Kyogle Hospital and health service (\$1.9 million allocated in 2002-03).
- \$500,000 for the installation of a Picture Archive and Communication System at Bathurst Base Hospital in 2002-03.
- \$5 million for the expansion of Emergency Services at Shellharbour Hospital (\$500,000 allocated in 2002-03).
- \$4.4 million for a major upgrade of Milton Ulladulla Hospital (\$500,000 allocated in 2002-03).

CONTINUING INITIATIVES

Capital Works

- Illawarra Area Health Service Strategy Stage 2, at an estimated cost of \$109.3 million (\$32.1 million in 2002-03).
- Newcastle Strategy, at an estimated cost of \$235 million (\$4.5 million for project construction and a further \$3.5 million in pre-construction and planning costs in 2002-03).
- Central Coast Health Access Plan (Gosford and Wyong) redevelopment at an estimated cost of \$206 million (\$58.4 million in 2002-03).
- Central Coast Area Health Service Strategy, for integrated community health services at Erina and Wyong Central at an estimated cost of \$11.5 million (\$1.7 million in 2002-03).
- Rural Hospital and Health Service Program Phase 1, at an estimated cost of \$57.2 million (\$26.3 million in 2002-03).

- Rural I.T. Infrastructure, at an estimated cost of \$7 million (\$2 million in 2002-03).
- Tweed Heads Hospital Stage 3 Redevelopment, at an estimated cost of \$36.2 million (\$10.1 million in 2002-03).
- Young Hospital and Mercy Health Service Co-location, at an estimated cost of \$16.5 million (\$4.7 million in 2002-03).
- Dubbo Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Unit, at an estimated cost of \$4.1 million (\$2.3 million in 2002-03).
- Dubbo Hospital Redevelopment, at an estimated cost of \$19.7 million with \$300,000 to complete the project in 2002-03.
- Gosford Child & Family Health centre, at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million (\$1 million in 2002-03).
- Hunter Strategy Stage 1, at an estimated cost of \$12.6 million (\$3.3 million in 2002-03).
- John Hunter Hospital, Child/Adolescent Unit, at an estimated cost of \$3.1 million (\$638,000 in 2002-03).
- Kempsey Mental Health Unit, at an estimated cost of \$2.6 million (\$2.3 million in 2002-03).
- Tamworth Emergency Department, at an estimated cost of \$3.7 million (\$1 million in 2002-03).
- Ballina Emergency Department, at an estimated cost of \$500,000 (\$100,000 in 2002-03).
- Mid West Primary Health Care centre, at an estimated cost of \$500,000 (\$200,000 in 2002-03).
- \$2 million in 2002-03 as part of the ongoing commitment to providing funding for minor refurbishment and small redevelopments in rural New South Wales.
- A further \$350,000 in 2002-03 for the planning of Bathurst, Orange, Bloomfield redevelopment and associated community health facilities.
- \$70,000 has been allocated in 2002-03 for the planning of the health service at Cudal.
- \$2.3 million in 2002-03 for a series of projects that will improve or provide accommodation for staff in rural and remote locations.
- Woy Woy dental clinic at a total cost of \$550,000 (\$201,000 in 2002-03).
- \$687,000 in 2002-03 to relocate the Queanbeyan Ambulance Station. Total estimated cost of the project is \$800,000.
- Weilgellie Drug and Alcohol centre at Cowra, at an estimated cost of \$500,000 (\$470,000 in 2002-03).

KEY INITIATIVES

Under the Rural Government Action Plan for Health, in 2002-03 additional new funding of \$35 million will be provided to commence a number of rural health initiatives.

Rural and regional communities will also benefit from a number of major “whole of health” initiatives commencing in 2002-03 including:

- implementation of a Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program across the State utilising new technologies to test the hearing of every baby born in New South Wales from 1 December 2002.
- new and additional funding that will provide for the expansion of mental health services including additional inpatient beds and supported accommodation beds across the whole State including rural and regional areas of need.
- funding of \$922,000 for additional Podiatry Services for those most in need.
- an extra \$1.5 million on top of existing oral health growth funding in 2002-03, which will provide for additional denture services to older persons in rural and regional communities as well as increase the delivery of specialist oral health services and Aboriginal oral health care.

Other initiatives and new funding in 2002-03 include:

- Northern Rivers: An additional \$2.1 million to fully fund a twenty five bed mental health inpatient unit at Tweed Heads and recurrent funding to meet the major redevelopment at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah Hospitals at a cost of \$6.5 million.
- Mid North Coast: \$3.5 million to improve the access and provision of aged care and rehabilitation services.
- Illawarra: \$500,000 to meet the increased demand for dialysis services throughout the area.
- On the Central Coast an additional \$1.5 million for Emergency Departments at Gosford and Wyong Hospitals will be used to manage increasing activity and improve performance, \$1.2 million is to be provided for additional elective surgery procedures in Orthopaedics, Ear Nose and Throat and Ophthalmology.
- \$1.8 million is being provided to increase medical services to Oncology and Renal patients as well as those with chronic conditions.
- Within the Hunter, \$1.2 million is being provided to establish an 8 bed High Dependency Unit at John Hunter Hospital, \$600,000 for additional Diabetes service staff to be appointed to enhance the level of service provided throughout the Area and \$500,000 has been provided to improve Paediatric services at John Hunter Hospital.
- As part of the statewide Intensive Care Service Plan, which incorporates an agreed networking model for optimising use of ICU beds, over \$2 million is to be allocated in 2002-03 to the establishment of two new ICU beds at Wollongong Hospital and an additional one at the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle.
- Funding over four years to complete the development of systems and services to manage lead exposure issues in Broken Hill.
- Motor Accidents Authority: \$87,000 over two years to the North Coast Head Injury service at Coffs Harbour to improve community support for Aboriginal people with brain injuries. \$27,000 to Hunter Brain Injury Service to assist management of brain injured clients who have an associated substance abuse. \$125,000 over two years to the South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service.

Education and Training

The State Government is committed to delivering high quality education and training for country New South Wales. In 2002-03, some \$8 billion will be available in recurrent and capital funding for schools and vocational education and training across the State.

Major capital works valued at \$300 million for schools and \$72 million for TAFE NSW will be undertaken to improve facilities and buildings across the State.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Additional global funding of \$10 million statewide has been provided in 2002-03.
- Additional recurrent and capital funding of \$56 million statewide to increase Network Bandwidth in schools and TAFE colleges.
- An additional \$15 million statewide for teacher quality and teacher supply initiatives. This includes additional teacher scholarships, retraining and accelerated teacher training programs.
Rural and regional students in Government schools and TAFE colleges will benefit from these new initiatives.
- New capital works initiatives for rural and regional New South Wales with an estimated total cost of more than \$107 million will commence during 2002-03.
 - Redevelopment of Anna Bay Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3 million.
 - Stage 2 upgrade of Blue Haven Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$4 million.
 - Hall, Canteen & Shade Structure at Boambee Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.7 million.
 - Stage 1 upgrade of Brisbane Water Secondary College. Estimated Total Cost: \$5 million.
 - Stage 2 upgrade of Callaghan College. Estimated Total Cost: \$6.3 million.
 - Upgrade of Clarence Town Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$4 million.
 - Hall, Canteen & Shade Structure at Cooma North Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.6 million.
 - Permanent accommodation at Frederickton Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3 million.
 - Upgrade of Glenbrook Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.7 million.
 - Hall, Canteen & Shade Structure at Helensburgh Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.7 million.
 - Stage 1 upgrade of Hunter Performing Arts High School including a new performance space. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.7 million.
 - Stage 2 of Jerrabomberra Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.3 million.
 - Upgrade of Kendall Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.2 million.
 - Stage 3 upgrade of Lightning Ridge Central School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.8 million.
 - Stage 2 upgrade of Merimbula Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.8 million.

- Upgrade of Milton Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.5 million.
- Stage 2 upgrade of Mullumbimby High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$4 million.
- Upgrade of Northlakes High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.5 million.
- Stage 1 upgrade of Soldiers Point Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.7 million.
- Stage 1 upgrade of Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College. Estimated Total Cost: \$5 million.
- Stage 1 upgrade of Tweed River High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3 million.
- New Engineering and Child Studies at Albury TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.9 million.
- Disabled access and refurbishment of Armidale TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.2 million.
- Nursing, Child Care, Welfare, and Food and Beverage Facilities at Cootamundra TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.8 million.
- Information Technology Facilities at Dapto TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$523,000.
- Aboriginal Development Centre at Dubbo TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.8 million.
- Site consolidation for Fitting and Machining at Dubbo TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$500,000.
- Kitchen upgrade at Glendale TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1 million.
- Refurbishment of Library, Administration and Disabilities Facilities at Gosford TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.1 million.
- Business Services, Information Technology, Health and Recreation Facilities at Goulburn TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.4 million.
- Music Centre at Grafton TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.8 million.
- New TAFE facility at Lightning Ridge. Estimated Total Cost: \$950,000.
- Music Industry Centre at Newcastle TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$534,000.
- Multifunctional Complex at Shellharbour TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$9.1 million.
- Fire Detection/Hydraulic Fire Fighting System at Wagga Wagga TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$ 500,000.
- Classrooms, Student Services and Cafeteria at Wyong TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.3 million.

CONTINUING INITIATIVES

- Capital works initiatives with a total estimated cost of over \$168 million will continue in 2002-03.
 - Upgrade of Avoca Beach Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.6 million.
 - Stage 1 upgrade of Bega High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.5 million.
 - New Bogangar Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$5.1 million.
 - Upgrade of Colo Vale Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$2.0 million.
 - Upgrade of Dorrigo High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$2.1 million.
 - Stage 4 upgrade of Dubbo College. Estimated Total Cost: \$5.7 million.

- New Flinders Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$ 5.7 million.
- Stages 1 and 2 new school at Great Lakes College at Tuncurry. Estimated Total Cost: \$23.6 million.
- New multi purpose centre for Hay War Memorial High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.6 million.
- Stage 1 redevelopment of Henry Kendall High School at Gosford. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.9 million.
- Stage 2 upgrade of Hill Top Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$2.4 million.
- Stage 1 of the new Jerrabomberra Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.3 million.
- Stage 1 upgrade of Kiama High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.6 million.
- Stage 2 upgrade of Lightning Ridge Central School. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.2 million.
- Upgrade of Merimbula Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.5 million.
- New Mount Annan High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$20.3 million.
- Stage 1 upgrade of Mullumbimby High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$4.9 million.
- Access improvements at Murwillumbah High School. Estimated Total Cost: \$530,000.
- Stage 1 upgrade of Muswellbrook South Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.4 million.
- New hall at Nowra East Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.5 million.
- New hall at Nowra Public School. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.4 million.
- Stage 1 secondary accommodation at Banora Point in the Tweed area. Estimated Total Cost: \$12.9 million.
- Redevelopment at Woodburn Public School near Evans Head. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.1 million.
- Consolidation of College onto one site at Bathurst TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$7.2 million.
- New building for Access and Equity at Cessnock TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$3.9 million.
- Horticultural and Environmental Protection Facility at Kurri Kurri TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$7.1 million.
- Building and construction work area at Tamworth TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.2 million.
- Rural and Child Studies classrooms at Taree TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$5.4 million.
- New TAFE college on the Great Lakes Education Precinct at Tuncurry. Estimated Total Cost: \$5.7 million.
- Hospitality and Trade Course Facilities at Wollongbar TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$10.3 million.
 - Refurbishment of Electrotechnology and Refrigeration Facilities at Wollongong TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$875,000.
 - Relocation of Manufacturing and Engineering at Wollongong TAFE and Shellharbour TAFE. Estimated Total Cost: \$1.6 million.

SCHOOLS

- The Department's 2002-03 budget will include some \$2.1 billion in core recurrent funding to approximately 363,000 rural students in government pre-schools, primary and secondary schools.
- Over \$101 million for rural schools maintenance programs;
- Over \$59 million to rural students for literacy and numeracy;
- In addition, \$72.4 million is being provided in targeted equity funding to rural students in government schools. This includes:
 - funding to support 11 primary and 8 secondary Distance Education Centres (DEC's), the majority of which are integrated into local schools. Within the DEC's, there are a variety of media support student learning modes assisted by communications technologies including VHF and HF radio, facsimile, teleconferencing and networked personal computers.
 - staffing enhancements in smaller and central schools. Principals have been appointed to the smallest primary schools so as to provide a greater measure of experience and leadership for these generally isolated schools.
 - \$836,000 to rural students in government and non-government schools for the Living Away From Home Allowance. The Allowance for 2002 is \$1,028 per annum.
 - \$1.1 million for Isolated Schools Grants. This program increases the level of discretionary funding available to the most geographically isolated schools.
 - over \$400,000 for Access Scholarships for isolated students. These scholarships assist boarding costs for isolated students eligible for enrolment at special government schools.
 - an additional 30 teaching positions for teacher professional development, curriculum, educational enhancement plans, special school projects and administrative relief.

TAFE

- The recurrent funds allocated to rural and regional Institutes in the 2002-03 financial year will exceed \$260 million.
- A two year special maintenance program commenced in the 2001-02 financial year allocating additional funds to Institutes. Approximately \$1.82 million will be allocated to rural and regional Institutes in the 2002-03 financial year.
- Rural and Regional colleges across New South Wales will enrol 147,500 students in the financial year 2002-03 and deliver approximately \$15.3 million worth of annual student contact hours of training.
- Training opportunities for remote students are also provided through distance education facilities.
- Designated funds are directed towards youth at risk and Aboriginal education programs.
- TAFE NSW Scholarships will be available to rural students providing them with opportunities to study in TAFE. Benefits include:
 - exemption from the TAFE NSW administration charge.

- study assistance of \$200.
- a special allowance of \$200 for students in rural and lower socio-economic areas to help meet travel and other costs associated with study.
- Extensive ranges of courses are offered to increase opportunities for mobility in employment.
- Training aimed to improve the performance and productivity of industry.
- Special attention is given to students disadvantaged through social, geographical and economical circumstances.

Transport and Roads

Roads, rail and public transport are the lifelines to rural and regional New South Wales.

ROADS

More than 60 per cent of the 2002-03 State roads budget, some \$1.3 billion, will be spent in rural and regional New South Wales.

The Budget includes an extra \$60 million to accelerate road maintenance, funded by increases in the Harbour Bridge toll and other user charges announced last year, with the bulk targeted at country areas.

The Budget sustains capital improvements for major rural routes including:

- \$160 million towards the \$1.6 billion Pacific Highway upgrade program, including completion later this year of the \$348 million Yelgun-Chinderah freeway in northern New South Wales, the biggest rural road project in Australia and start of work on the \$123 million Karuah Bypass.
- A total of \$56.5 million towards the \$360 million Great Western Highway upgrade program, including State funding worth \$18.3 million for widening work at Lawson, Leura and between Woodford and Hazelbrook in the Blue Mountains.
- \$32.6 million towards the \$380 million Princes Highway upgrade program including the North Kiama Bypass and Pambula Bridge and planning work for the Northern Distributor and the F6 between Oak Flats and Dunmore.

The \$60 million boost to maintenance spending is in addition to the existing \$100 million annual Rebuilding Country Roads program and the Country Timber Bridges program.

Major maintenance works planned include reconstructing and widening of:

- 49 km of the Gwydir Highway between Moree and Glen Innes.
- 19 km of the Mitchell Highway west of Narromine.
- 24 km of the Kamilaroi Highway west of Narrabri.
- 19 km of the Yass to Forbes Road near Boroowa.
- 8 km of the Mid Western Highway west of West Wyalong.
- 20 km of the Inverell to Yetman Road.
- 15 km of the route between the F3 near Cessnock and the Mulbring to Maitland Road.

Major regional capital works include:

- \$20.2 million towards construction of the \$100 million West Charlestown Bypass project in Newcastle.
- \$13.5 million for planning and construction on the Pacific Highway and other key Central Coast arterial roads including The Entrance Road and Avoca Drive.
- \$11 million around the Bathurst area to realign the Mid Western Highway at Kings Plains west of Bathurst and reconstruct the Castlereagh Highway near Wallerawang.
- \$3.3 million for the Great Western Highway in the Central West, including four lanes of dual carriageway at South Bowenfels and reconstruction and improvements at Little Hartley.
- \$20.4 million in joint Commonwealth and State funding for Murray River crossings at Corowa, Euston and Echuca.
- \$2.5 million to continue planning for the joint funded Main Road 92 from Nowra to Nerriga.
- \$2.5 million to continue the introduction of motorist rest areas along major roads across the State, including new rest areas on the Kings Highway and the Riverina Highway, and upgrades of existing facilities on the Princes, Golden, Gwydir, Olympic and Mitchell Highways and Burley Griffin Way.

State Government funding to rural and regional councils for regional and local roads will total \$128.7 million in 2002-03.

TRANSPORT

A number of transport projects are aimed at maintaining and improving transport services in regional and rural areas, including:

- More than \$290 million has been allocated in 2002-03 to provide maintenance to the country rail infrastructure and to maintain rail freight services in country New South Wales.
- \$72 million to support country rail passenger services, including concession travel for pensioners, students and other beneficiaries on country rail services and maintenance of country rail carriages.
- Re-introduction of a weekly rail service to Broken Hill, with \$1.2 million to be spent in 2002-03 towards the provision of new rail cars for use on the Broken Hill service.
- \$2.3 million for construction of a new rail station at Oak Flats, with an additional \$1.7 million towards a new bus/rail interchange at Oak Flats station.
- \$2 million for railway level crossing improvements in country New South Wales.
- \$1.6 million in Country Public Transport Infrastructure Grants for the development of public transport infrastructure in rural New South Wales.
- \$1.4 million has been allocated in 2002-03 as part of an \$89 million project to provide new rail cars to service the Hunter Valley.
- \$300,000 for the maintenance of passenger and station facilities at Bargo, Mittagong, Wingello and Lithgow stations.
- \$120,000 for the continuation of the Rural Transport Pilot Project centred around Dubbo.
- The continuation of a \$400,000 rolling fund to provide interest free loans for country taxi operators to enable them to provide wheel chair accessible taxis.

- \$227 million has been allocated for school student travel subsidies in rural and regional areas of the State, to ensure that regional and rural school students have access to educational facilities, including geographically isolated full time students attending mini schools.

In addition, people in regional and rural areas of New South Wales will benefit from Statewide programs for people with limited access to mainstream services, including:

- \$2.3 million for the Community Transport Program, to assist people who have limited or no access to private transport and who have difficulty in gaining access to conventional transport services and systems, for frail older people, younger people with disabilities and their carers.
- \$400,000 for the Area Assistance Scheme (AAS). The purpose of the AAS is to support community development and the integrated provision of services in regions experiencing social stress or undergoing rapid change.

PORTS AND WATERWAYS

- \$3 million is being provided towards the development of a cargo storage area and multi-purpose berth at Twofold Bay in the Port of Eden.
- Funds have also been set aside for the Port of Yamba for renewal of existing navigation beacons and markers along the Clarence River to the Goodwood Island Wharf.

Police

The total New South Wales Police Budget for 2002-03 increases from \$1.6 billion last year to almost \$1.8 billion. This represents the eighth consecutive record police budget. (Excluding the one-off budget increase for the Olympics).

New South Wales Police will have an increased focus on visible front-line policing. This will be assisted by the restructure of New South Wales Police, which will see every officer perform rostered street policing and redeploy up to 1,000 police to Local Area Commands.

In 2002-03, 32 Rural Crime Investigator positions will be created at non-metropolitan Local Area Commands. These officers provide a contact point for primary producers, give police an improved understanding of the problems facing rural communities and provide them with the tools they need to fight pastoral and agricultural crime.

Policing in country New South Wales will be improved by plans being drafted to address long term sick leave problems, which particularly affect small towns.

The Government also plans to:

- Create an offence of hunting, without a firearm, on any land without the permission of the occupier.
- Provide for the issuing of penalty notices for trespass.
- Prohibit the destruction of goats that are ear marked or wearing ear tags.
- Provide for the carrying of accredited documentation by drivers transporting farm livestock.
- Provide that police may stop vehicles carrying livestock for the purpose of inspecting that accredited documentation.

KEY INITIATIVES

Supporting Rural and Regional Communities

- **New Police Facilities.** New police stations are planned in 2002-03 for Muswellbrook, Griffith and Thirroul at a cost of \$2.8 million, and \$600,000 has been allocated for the purchase of land and design of a new police station at Armidale. There are also cell improvements expected at various locations across rural and regional New South Wales in the financial year.
- **Rural Crime Package.** A rural crime package is being implemented at all 32 non-metropolitan Local Area Commands. The package will see Rural Crime Investigators in each of those Commands trained in specialist techniques to better investigate the theft of livestock, machinery, pesticides and fuels. They will also be trained to provide safety and security advice to businesses and families in regional communities.

Legislation will also be introduced to enable on-the-spot fines for unauthorised hunting and trespass, on private land.

- **Police and Community Youth Clubs (PCYCs)** are undergoing a major revitalisation program with a greater focus placed on homework, computer and literacy programs.

Funding has been provided to trial civilian managers in a number of clubs to help police at the

PCYCs to play a more effective role in developing relationships with young people.

An amount of \$5 million has also been provided to improve PCYC facilities and to support a high-tech mobile PCYC service for remote country areas.

Providing Safer Communities

- Radio Communications Network Project. \$6 million is allocated for continued improvements to the Police Country Radio Communications Network. This includes equipment upgrades across rural and regional areas at a cost of almost \$2.4 million and works to improve radio coverage of more than \$3.3 million. Improved technology in this area leads to better public and officer safety.

Improving Access to the Justice System

- Technology. \$6.3 million for DNA testing and ongoing maintenance and operational support for the Livescan (fingerprints) and IBIS (ballistics) forensic systems.
- Workplace Training Program. Provides innovative and customised learning opportunities to facilitate culturally appropriate policing services. The Workplace Training Program is funded to \$224,000.

Minor Works

- The Minor Works allocation of \$16 million will be used to improve police accommodation, for site acquisitions, and for the acquisition of minor new facilities and the upgrading of existing accommodation.
- Minor Works to progress in 2002-03 include the provision of improved accommodation at Gunnedah, Inverell, Deniliquin, Goulburn and Young Police Stations.

OTHER CONTINUING INITIATIVES

- \$4.5 million is allocated to upgrade Infringement Processing Bureau technology and complete the Bureau's relocation to Maitland.
- \$500,000 is allocated to provide police housing at remote locations across New South Wales including Moree and Boggabilla.

Corrective Services

The Department of Corrective Services has been provided with \$612 million in 2002-03 to run the prison system.

The Department will spend a further \$117 million building and upgrading prisons. Major projects in rural and regional areas include:

NEW WORKS

Western Regional Correctional Centre

- A 500-bed multi-classification facility, including components for female inmates and remandees, expected to cost \$115 million, including \$8.3 million in 2002-03. The prison is expected to be completed 2006-07.

Additional Inmate Accommodation relating to Bail Reform

- More than \$10 million will be spent in 2002-03 for additional inmate accommodation following the Government's decision to tighten bail conditions for repeat offenders.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Kempsey Correctional Centre

- This project will provide for a 350-bed multi-classification facility in the mid north coast, including components for female inmates and remandees.

Estimated total cost of the project is \$81.6 million (\$27.7 million in 2002-03), with completion anticipated in 2005-06.

Dillwynia Women's Correctional Centre

- This project involves the construction of new purpose-built correctional centre for female inmates that will provide 200 new beds and will operate as a multi-classification centre.

Estimated total cost of the project is \$53.7 million (\$25 million in 2002-03) and is expected to be completed in 2003-04.

Goulburn Redevelopment – Stages One and Two

- The redevelopment relates to the newly commissioned intensive case management facility for seventy-five inmates. The redevelopment also includes a new visiting facility, new gatehouse, control room, administration building and accommodation for the new Emergency Unit.

The 2002-03 capital allocation for this project is \$4.5 million.

Inmate Escort Vehicles

- Additional vehicles for regional inmate transport activities taken over from the Police Service.

Estimated total cost is \$1.1 million with \$500,000 allocated in 2001-02 and the balance of \$600,000 in 2002-03.

Agriculture

NSW Agriculture's primary mission is to lead the State's \$8 billion a year agricultural industries to a profitable and environmentally sustainable future. The beneficiaries of the Department's research, advisory, education and regulatory services are farmers, rural and regional communities and the entire New South Wales economy.

This year, NSW Agriculture's operating expenditure in rural and regional New South Wales is \$228.5 million.

NEW INITIATIVES

Capital Works

NSW Agriculture has received \$12.8 million for Capital Works in 2002-03.

The major items in the program include:

- \$2.6 million to enhance and upgrade information technology infrastructure.
- \$650,000 to correct occupational health and safety and environmentally related issues at various locations.
- \$2.6 million for the purchase of plant and equipment.
- \$650,000 for industry funded annual provisions.
- \$400,000 for construction of a new Genetic Plant Research Laboratory at Wagga Wagga.
- \$300,000 for progressive implementation of a Laboratory Information Management System.
- \$1 million to complete a Sustainable Education Centre at Tamworth.
- \$195,000 to upgrade farm and domestic water supply system.
- \$360,000 to extend video surveillance for cattle tick at Numinbah.
- \$250,000 for a new glasshouse at Wagga Wagga.
- \$200,000 New Insectary at Narrabri.
- \$310,000 for a new Vocational Education Training Facility at Orange.
- \$1.5 million for an Anthrax Laboratory at Menangle.
- \$1.9 million for miscellaneous minor works.

KEY INITIATIVES

- North Coast: \$2 million in 2002-03 to continue initiatives to combat the problem of soil acidity, including acid sulfate soils.
- Statewide: \$954,000 for the third year of the Government's initial four year Salinity Strategy to address agricultural issues involving salinity. A total allocation of \$2.8 million has been provided to the Department of Agriculture for the initial four year program that commenced in 2000-01.

- Sydney Basin: \$1.7 million for the fifth year of the Government's initial five year Water Reform program involving both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Land and Water Conservation.
- Sydney Basin: \$1.1 million to cover the Department of Agriculture's implementation expenses in respect of the Government's Water Management Act.
- Statewide: \$7 million to improve the delivery of Noxious Weed Control programs across New South Wales through local government authorities. Weeds have been estimated to cost New South Wales more than \$600 million annually in lost agricultural production and control costs.
- Central and Southern Tablelands: \$1.4 million to assist the New South Wales sheep industry to combat Ovine Johne's disease.
- Southern and Western New South Wales: The Aboriginal Rural Training Program conducted by the Department of Agriculture's Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture, Yanco, delivers training that meets the educational needs of Aboriginal people and their communities.
- Wagga Wagga: \$1.9 million has been provided for Biotechnology Projects to be administered by the Department of Agriculture in 2002-03, including the establishment of an Agricultural Genomics Centre at Wagga Wagga and the preservation of biological assets.

Hunter Water Corporation

Hunter Water's operating budget this year will be \$56 million.

NEW INITIATIVES CONTINUING

Capital works to be undertaken by the Hunter Water Corporation this year include:

- \$9.5 million to upgrade a wastewater treatment plant at Kurri Kurri.
- \$4.8 million for a water pipeline from Tomago to Tomaree.
- \$2.5 million to complete the Hunter Sewerage Project.
- \$2 million on the construction of the Medowie South wastewater transport scheme.
- A \$1.5 million upgrade of the Belmont outfall diffusers.
- The \$1 million augmentation of the Williamtown to Medowie water supply.
- Chichester Dam remedial works worth \$3 million.
- \$2 million to be spent on inflow/infiltration works in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.
- A \$2 million upgrade to the Warners Bay-Valentine wastewater transport system.
- \$2 million on upgrading the inlet works at Belmont wastewater treatment works.

Energy

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

The New South Wales Government will invest \$1.22 billion in 2002-03 to maintain and upgrade the State's electricity supply infrastructure. This is an increase of over 16 per cent or \$173 million on 2001-02 expenditure.

The electricity sector's investment will maintain reliability as well as underpinning growth in the New South Wales economy.

In addition, the NSW Government will distribute over \$34 million in energy rebates in regional and rural areas to more than 308,000 pensioners and other disadvantaged members of the community. Each will receive an energy rebate of \$112 annually to assist them in paying their energy bills.

KEY INITIATIVES

- \$188.1 million by Country Energy on network growth and renewal including the Central West \$14.3 million; Far North Coast \$28.8 million; Northern \$20 million; North West \$10.3 million; Riverina \$17.2 million; South Eastern \$20.4 million; Mid North Coast \$29 million; and South Western \$11.5 million.
- \$49.6 million by EnergyAustralia to upgrade existing networks and improve supply reliability in the Hunter \$25.6 million, Central Coast \$15 million, Maitland \$7.2 million and Newcastle CBD \$1.8 million.
- \$31.6 million to maintain and upgrade generating and related infrastructure. This includes \$16.1 million for Wallerawang, \$13 million for Liddell and \$2.5 million for Mount Piper Power Stations. Based on predicted production levels, the investment at Liddell Power Station will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 300,000 tonnes per year by 2005.
- \$40 million over four years by Integral Energy to ensure the ongoing reliability of electricity supply to Wollongong and the Port Kembla industrial area.
- \$27 million by Transgrid to improve transmission reliability in rural centres including Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Nambucca, Port Macquarie, Central Coast, Albury, Manildra, Koolkhan, Yass and Wagga.
- \$11.2 million to connect the South Australian and New South Wales electricity grids, ensuring a more competitive National Electricity Market and a more efficient operation of the electricity grid for New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.
- \$9.4 million by Australian Inland Energy and Water as part of ongoing work to augment the network for the Broken Hill, Wentworth and Balranald regions.
- \$2.2 million by Integral Energy to improve supply reliability to Robertson and speed recovery from electricity supply interruptions.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

This year, SEDA's operating expenditure in rural and regional areas will be more than \$3.9 million.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

- \$15,000 will be spent on regional seminars in Griffith, Coffs Harbour and Katoomba to discuss developments and opportunities in the sustainable energy industry.
- SEDA's solar hot water rebate program, worth \$530,000, is being implemented across New South Wales and is augmented by a Federal Government grant.
- The \$1 million Urban Biomass Program, which encompasses Landfill Gas renewable energy generation, a Municipal Solid Waste to Energy plant and Sewage Treatment Plant generation is being put in place in the Hunter Region, Coffs Harbour and Tweed Heads.
- The SEDA Hydro Program will be a \$500,000 investment in rural and regional areas.
- \$120,000 has been spent on eight cogeneration feasibility studies throughout regional New South Wales.
- The Waste Coal Mine Gas Feasibility Studies, to take place in the Central West Area, represents a commitment of \$200,000. A \$700,000 Waste Coal Mine Gas demonstration plant will be developed in either the Southern Highlands or the Hunter Valley.

CAPITAL WORKS

\$500,000 through Solar in Schools, including \$26,000 to Narromine, Bowral, Riverina Environmental Education Centre, Warrawong and Walcha.

NEW INITIATIVES

In 2002-03, the SEDA Hydro Program's operating expenditure in rural and regional areas will be \$500,000 to provide new hydro generation funding.

Land and Water Conservation

Regional communities will receive significant benefits from the Department of Land and Water Conservation's \$559 million budget.

State Government spending on land and water conservation is regionally focused and provides strong socio-economic boosts to rural New South Wales, as well as directly delivering services in natural resource management.

NEW INITIATIVES

- \$1.3 million as part of a \$3.9 million enhanced package towards the remediation of Lake Macquarie and the employment of a Lake Coordinator.
- \$1.3 million towards the development of online communications with regional communities.
- \$600,000 as part of \$2.6 million over three years, towards the development of E-business systems to deliver services to Crown Estate clients.

MAJOR CONTINUING INITIATIVES

- \$56.4 million has been allocated for the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program. This is in addition to \$20 million in funding that was brought forward in 2001-02 to accelerate the program. This will result in an average yearly expenditure of \$72.4 million over the two years to 2002-03.
- \$11.7 million in funding towards the implementation of the New South Wales Salinity Strategy as part of a \$52 million inter-agency program over four years. Expenditure on the Salinity Strategy is recognised as part of the New South Wales contribution to the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality. The National Action Plan, which is scheduled for completion in 2007, will provide \$396 million as a joint State/ Commonwealth contribution to address New South Wales' most pressing salinity and water quality problems.
- Continuation of safety upgrading works for Sooley Dam at Goulburn, Spring Creek at Orange and Redbank Creek Dam at Mudgee.
- Continuation of new or improved water treatment facilities for Brungle, Gulgong, Lake Cargelligo, Mudgee, Sunset Strip, Tibooburra, Tottenham and commencement of new or improved water treatment facilities for Adaminaby, Dalgety, Darby Falls, Euston, Manning, Mendooran, Wakool.
- Major upgrades of water resources for Hastings and Lower Clarence (servings Coffs Harbour/Grafton region).
- Major augmentation of regional sewerage services for Ashley, Barellan, Bendalong, Boggabilla, Brungle, Clarence Town, Collingullie, Coopernook, Cudal, Cumnock, Cunjurong, Fishermans Paradise, Hat Head, Lake Conjola, Lansdowne, Lawrence, Manildra, Manning Point, Manyana, Millthorpe, New Brighton, North Karuah, Tingha, Uki, Wakool, Wyangala, Yeoval and Yerong.
- Continuation or commencement of augmentations to existing sewerage systems at Byron Bay, Dubbo, Forbes, Glen Innes, Goulburn, Maclean, Milton, Narromine, Shoalhaven and Ulladulla.

- Continuation of investigations, community consultations, environmental assessments and designs for over 300 other water and sewerage projects including Bowral, Brunswick, Geurie, Lake Tabourie, Mudgee, Robertson, Wellington, Wilcannia and Yass.
- \$20 million over five years to bring forward projects in the Sydney Water Catchment area.

OTHER KEY PROGRAMS

- \$42.8 million for Natural Heritage Trust programs and projects administered by the Department.
- \$39.8 million for maintaining dams, water storages, buildings and systems across the State, including flood security and upgrade works at Chaffey, Burrendong, Copeton, Keepit, Wellington, Bethungra, Wyangla and Blowering Dams.
- \$26.7 million towards local government programs in the areas of flood mitigation, estuary, coastal and waterways management.
- \$21.7 million New South Wales contribution to the Murray Darling Basin Commission.
- \$3 million, as part of \$12 million over four years, to undertake native vegetation mapping initiatives.
- \$2.5 million towards the Cap and Pipe the Bores program.
- \$2.5 million for incentive payments under the Native Vegetation Management Fund.

Sport and Recreation

The State Government is committed to providing regional and rural New South Wales with access to the best possible sporting facilities and assistance for country athletes. Since 1995-96, 55 per cent of facility development grants have been allocated to rural and regional communities in New South Wales.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

- \$4 million under the Capital Assistance Program to help provide better sporting and recreational facilities throughout New South Wales.
- \$3 million to the Regional Sports Facility Program. In the last two rounds of this program, over 80 per cent of projects that received grants were in communities outside the Sydney metropolitan area.
- \$500,000 for the Shooting Club Development Program to improve facilities for shooting sports clubs in New South Wales.
- \$260,000 for the Country Athletes Scheme to provide much needed assistance to athletes under 19 years of age from rural areas. This program helps budding champions with travel, accommodation and other expenses associated with training and competition.
- \$100,000 for the Remote Area Travel Assistance Scheme. This scheme provides grants to organisations and individuals in remote areas of New South Wales that often have great distances to travel to be able to compete in sporting competitions or attend coaching or education courses.
- \$700,000 for independent Regional Academies of Sport in the Illawarra, Western, Riverina, Hunter/Central Coast, North Coast, Northern Inland and South East regions. These academies provide essential services for athletes of rural and regional New South Wales closer to their local communities.
- Funding assistance to the Far West Academy of Sport, based at Cobar, to provide services for isolated communities in the west of the State.
- \$300,000 for the Youth in Sport Program with Police and Community Youth Clubs. More than 3,000 young people are participants in the program at Police and Community Youth Clubs across the State. The program aims to help prevent crime through providing recreational opportunities and positive role models for young people.
- \$350,000 for the Active Communities Grant Scheme to support initiatives that encourage greater participation in physical activity, particularly by under-represented and targeted populations.
- \$100,000 for the Women's Sports Administration and Travel Scholarship Scheme to enable women across the State to gain the skills and experience to become sports managers and administrators.
- \$2.7 million for the Sports Development Program. This program provides grants to State sporting organisations to help develop sport and recreation across New South Wales.

- \$1.06 million for Safety and Rescue Services grants for the New South Wales Ski Patrol Association, Surf Life Saving New South Wales, The Royal Life Saving Society New South Wales and Austswim New South Wales. Surf Life Saving New South Wales conducts the *Beach to Bush* tours to promote beach and water safety to rural communities – approximately 9,000 school children and teachers from 90 schools have participated in the tours over the last year.
- \$415,000 has been allocated to *Swimsafe*, a program designed to teach children and adults water safety. The program is operating throughout the State including in the North West, Western, Riverina and North Coast regions.
- \$165,000 for *Water Safety* education programs in 2002-03 to support water safety education initiatives across New South Wales.
- \$500,000 for the *SafeWaters* public education campaign. The campaign includes commercials across regional television networks.
- Under the *It's Your Business* resource and training program, volunteer directors of sport and recreation organisations will be provided with training on risk management, insurance issues, corporate governance, legal issues, financial management and social responsibilities.

Fair Trading

The Department of Fair Trading provides a wide range of services to consumers and traders in New South Wales. Regional and rural communities across New South Wales will benefit from a range of programs and initiatives to be funded in 2002/2003.

Highlights of this year's budget include:

- \$10.7 million to run 16 of the Department's 22 Fair Trading Centres in regional New South Wales. These Fair Trading Centres operate outreach and regional access programs so that rural and remote areas of New South Wales have better access to the Department's services.
- To provide access for even more regional and rural communities, \$85,000 is allocated to fair trading services provided through a network of Government Access Centres located in country New South Wales.
- \$924,000 is allocated to run a Regional Aboriginal Customer Service Program providing specialist advice to Aboriginal communities and employing 10 Aboriginal Customer Service Officers in Fair Trading Centres outside Sydney.
- The operating budget of the Registry of Co-operatives in Bathurst has been increased by \$510,000 to \$3.32 million following the transfer of the administration of incorporated associations. Of this, \$300,000 is allocated to fund the Australian Centre for Co-operative Research and Development. This Centre is a joint venture between the Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, the University of Technology, Sydney, and the Department of Fair Trading.
- In 2002/2003 the Department will administer funding to 26 financial counselling services and 10 tenancy advisory services in regional areas. It is estimated that these community-based organisations will receive \$3.2 million in tenancy advisory grants and \$705,700 in financial counselling grants. In addition, a service which provides Statewide access, Credit Helpline, will receive \$236,995.
- To assist consumers across the State, especially those in rural and regional areas, \$411,000 is allocated to develop an online enquiry and problem solving service. This service will enable consumers and traders to establish their rights and responsibilities online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Local Government

New State Government initiatives will strengthen local government and create partnerships to boost job creation and economic growth, particularly in regional New South Wales.

- With the Department of Local Government moving to Nowra at the end of 2002 the Department will add over \$6 million in operating expenditure and nearly \$1 million in capital expenditure to the Shoalhaven economy this financial year.

CONTINUING INITIATIVES

- \$50 million for payments under the pensioner council rate rebate scheme in rural and regional areas.
- \$300,000 to the *Septic Safe* program to help councils particularly in sensitive catchment regions to monitor septic systems in local areas.

Citizenship/Community Relations

KEY INITIATIVES

- By 30 June 2002, the Community Relations Commission (CRC) will have established ten new Regional Advisory Councils in regional and rural New South Wales, they include: Central West, Hunter, New England, Hornsby-Wyong, North Coast, Nepean-Blacktown, Illawarra, Macarthur-Liverpool, Griffith and Albury regions.

The Advisory Councils give regional communities a say on solving local problems and promoting new initiatives.

- Around \$350,000 is allocated by the CRC each year to employ regional coordinators to serve culturally diverse communities in the Illawarra and Hunter regions, and other rural and regional areas of New South Wales. The coordinators also service the ten Regional Advisory Councils.
- The CRC provides \$1.5 million for grants and subsidies. Rural and regional New South Wales share in that funding.
- The CRC organises an annual community relations forum, which includes participation from regional and rural New South Wales. Over 70 people from rural and regional areas participated in the 2002 Forum.
- The CRC will contribute \$9,000 to the Regional Coordination Program administered by the Premier's Department.
- In 2002-03 the CRC will contribute \$100,000 for the Migration Heritage Centre, preserving, recording and displaying the State's fixed and living migration heritage.

Continuing projects in rural and regional New South Wales by the Migration Heritage Centre include: the Industrial Migration Heritage Project and the Migration Heritage Toolkit.

Attorney-General

NEW INITIATIVES

- \$300,000 in 2002-03 for the construction of a new District Court (Criminal) and associated infrastructure at Nowra. This will replace a small Local Court, provide modern support facilities and better service the population of Kiama and South Coast districts. The estimated total cost of the project is \$4.8 million.
- \$422,000 per annum has been provided to increase graffiti prevention activities. Across New South Wales up to 250 additional projects will be funded in high priority areas.

CONTINUING INITIATIVES

- \$1.5 million in 2002-03 for the continued construction of a new Children's court in the Hunter district at Worimi.
- \$1 million to continue the delivery of the Indigenous Justice Strategy. This strategy includes \$300,000 for Circle Sentencing, the alternative sentencing program for Aboriginal defendants which started at Nowra in February 2002. The Program will be expanded to include Dubbo, Walgett and Brewarinna.
- \$1.2 million from the Safer Community Development Fund to financially support activities to prevent crime and the endorsement of regional crime prevention plans. A proportion of the fund supports projects to help Aboriginal communities, young people and other communities in rural and regional areas.
- \$2.2 million for the ongoing promotion of initiatives in the area of preventing violence against women. A proportion of the fund supports projects in rural and regional areas.
- The Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment program has been trialed at various regional locations throughout New South Wales since July 2000. This program aims to reduce the rate of re-offending and to reduce substance abuse amongst participants while they are on bail as well as enhance their rehabilitation in the longer term.

ONGOING CAPITAL WORKS

- \$8 million to be spent on the backlog maintenance program for court premises, including a number in regional New South Wales such as specific works at Moree, Narooma, Glen Innes, Bombala, Byron Bay and Cooma.
- \$7.5 million in 2002-03 for minor works to upgrade courts, replace equipment and computers and address accommodation issues. A proportion of these funds will be spent in areas such as at Moruya, Kempsey and Grafton.

Forestry

The State Government is committed to developing new opportunities in forestry, supporting timber workers and ensuring the New South Wales timber industry continues to operate on a sustainable, economically viable footing.

Between 1995 and 2004, the State's publicly managed hardwood plantations are planned to increase by about 35,000 hectares. Public softwood plantations will have increased by a net 20,000 hectares during that period, after accounting for replanting of harvested areas.

Twenty-year wood supply agreements have provided a sustainable future for the State's native timber industry. The Forest Industry Structural Adjustment package is providing a further catalyst for more industry investment in value-adding than ever before.

The NSW Government has led the development of greenhouse and forest policy, including re-forestation to combat dryland salinity and enhance biodiversity. The Government's initiatives have created a conducive climate and a new interest in investing in forests in New South Wales.

New environmental services have the potential to attract over \$120 million of new private sector investment in forestry.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

- Between 1994-95 and 2002-03, the State Government has committed over \$86 million in grants to expand and manage New South Wales hardwood plantations to ensure long-term timber supplies to old and new industries, create new carbon sinks and support regional jobs and communities.
- In 1998, following the signing of the Forest Agreement for the North East Region, the Government announced funding of \$30 million over five years to expand hardwood plantations by 2,000 hectares each year. To date, \$21 million has been spent and a further \$9 million is committed over the next two years by way of Government grants to State Forests.
- Since 1995, the Government has invested \$52.5 million to establish 17,700 hectares of new softwood plantations. State Forests is planning to establish or replant 6,000 hectares of softwood plantations this year.
- In 2002-03, State Forests plans to spend \$22.8 million establishing and replanting softwood plantations, \$9.3million establishing hardwood plantations (including associated roadworks and land purchase) and \$4.1 million on other roads, bridges and buildings in regional areas.
- Since 1995, the Government has provided approximately \$80 million of funds under the Forest Industry Structural Adjustment Package (FISAP) to support timber workers and help the native timber industry manage changes.
- In this time, \$44.5 million has been approved for 47 industry development initiatives, leading to more than \$124.5 million in private sector investment in rural and regional New South Wales. This will create more than 300 new jobs in rural New South Wales.

- Additionally, \$30 million has been approved in worker assistance, including \$4.5 million in training initiatives under the Forest Industry Training Strategy to help workers manage changes in the native timber industry.
- \$9.6 million was committed over the five years from 2000-01 to implement the Southern Forest Agreement. This funding is available for purchase of supplementary timber from private properties, improving the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage, enhancing sawlog production, managing conservation reserves and additional pest and weed control in State Forests.
- More than 80 percent of State Forests workforce of 1,130 people is employed in rural New South Wales.

NEW MARKETS

- The Government is developing new markets and investment in forestry to address greenhouse issues, salinity control, land repair and mine site rehabilitation issues. This will involve local councils, the private sector (including international investors), and landholders.
- State Forests is positioned to take commercial advantage of new business opportunities arising from:
 - carbon storage and management in planted forests.
 - sale of services to manage tree farms funded by third party investments.
 - use of wood to produce renewable energy, liquid fuels and metallurgical carbon products.
 - revitalising degraded rural, mining or industrial landscapes with planted forests.
 - delivery of integrated natural resource management systems to address such issues as dryland salinity.
 - better grading, segregation and marketing of logs to industry.
 - export opportunities for wood products and forest based management services.
- In the Government's mid-term statement, the Premier announced support for the development of an Environmental Services Exchange (ESX).
- An ESX – a “green stock exchange” – will provide a market-based mechanism for the trading of environmental services derivatives which could include carbon credits and carbon sequestration credits, with potential to eventually incorporate salinity credits and biodiversity credits when market based instruments emerge. Electricity generators will be better able to trade in carbon credits to complement their efforts to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
- The Government will offer for sale 250,000 tonnes of carbon credits, carbon dioxide equivalent stored in existing plantation forests. This trade will test the potential of a New South Wales carbon trading market and tap into the estimated \$US100 billion international market for environmental services. Proceeds from sales are planned to be used to plant more plantations in regional New South Wales.
- As part of the NSW Salinity Strategy, 400 hectares of new hardwood plantation will be established in the Gunnedah region to demonstrate the potential for commercial and environmental returns including salinity, carbon sequestration and biomass for charcoal, liquid fuels and the generation of energy.

- Working in partnership with the Federal Government, New South Wales plans to start a seven-year reforestation program worth up to \$100 million.
- This builds on the 50 trial plantings established between Narrandera and Wagga Wagga in the south and Inverell and Moree in the north to determine the most suitable tree species to be grown in lower rainfall areas to address dryland salinity. The NSW Government has committed \$2 million to the salinity trial plantings and the associated research projects.
- 2,500 hectares of new plantations have been established and are managed by State Forests under an agreement with the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) to establish carbon sinks in New South Wales. TEPCO is committed to establishing between 10,000 and 40,000 hectares of new plantations over a ten year period, resulting in further jobs and investment in rural New South Wales.

Environment

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) operates and supports a number of programs of particular significance to rural and regional New South Wales. The Agency also maintains a network of branch offices in regional centres at an annual direct cost of some \$8.3 million.

EPA programs of particular significance to rural and regional areas for 2002-03 include:

- More than \$5 million for stormwater management improvement grants in rural and regional council areas.
- More than \$600,000 in 2002-03 for the woodsmoke reduction program. The program concentrates on Lithgow, Cooma, Orange, Armidale and Tumut and the Blue Mountains, with funds being paid to local councils to provide education and enforcement activities on clean use of solid fuel home heaters, as well as cash incentives for residents who want to switch to cleaner forms of heating.
- More than \$300,000 in 2002-03 for payments from the Waste Fund for waste minimisation and management projects in rural and regional areas.
- More than \$2.4 million in 2002-03 for grants to rural and regional schools, councils and other bodies from the Environmental Trust for environmental education, rehabilitation and restoration.
- Around \$600,000 in 2002-03 for the 'ChemCollect' program to collect and destroy unwanted farm chemicals and pesticides.
- \$600,000 to be spent on monitoring air quality in regional centres.
- \$200,000 will be spent on research and development initiatives for assessing river health.

In addition to these specific programs, the EPA spends around \$750,000 annually in guiding safe use of pesticides on farms.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) makes a significant contribution to regional economies in New South Wales, through direct employment and capital works programs.

It also helps to create many jobs in the private sector through the development of major tourism infrastructure.

In 2002-03 the NPWS will receive an allocation totalling \$224.8 million, which represents a 128 per cent increase since the 1994-95 Budget.

It will spend around \$52.5 million on continuing and new capital works programs in regional areas.

NEW INITIATIVES

- \$2.5 million of a \$10 million program for the North-East Regional Forest Agreement (plus recurrent funding of \$3.1 million increasing to \$5.2 million per annum from 2005-06).
- \$1.5 million for establishment costs associated with lands purchased during 2001-02.
- An estimated \$5.3 million to purchase lands for parks and reserves predominantly in western New South Wales, funded from Environmental Trust funds and Natural Heritage Trust funds.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

- \$8.3 million will be spent on Perisher Infrastructure works.
- \$1.8 million of a \$5 million program to upgrade roads and bridges in Kosciuszko National Park.
- \$1.2 million for remediation works in Kosciuszko National Park under the Snowy Mountains Corporatisation program.
- \$1 million for the Southern Comprehensive Regional Assessment and the associated Regional Forest Agreement.
- \$1.2 million to relocate a wader bird habitat on Koorangang Island in Newcastle.
- \$1.9 million of a \$4 million program to convert Vacant Crown Lands into National Parks under the Upper and Lower North-East Regional Forest Agreement.
- \$5 million for sewerage upgrade programs in regional National Parks.
- \$4.4 million for other land acquisitions associated with specific Government programs.

WESTERN PLAINS ZOO

Capital Works

- Capital works projects totalling \$4.5 million will commence in the 2002-03 financial year as part of the \$35 million Master Plan developments at Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo, to be staged over the next 12 years.

Projects include a new African Safari Precinct and Asian (Indian Rhinoceros) Precinct, as well as a Veterinary and Quarantine Centre.

A further \$430,000 will be spent on facilities and road upgrades at the Zoo in 2002-03.

Fisheries

NSW Fisheries' operating expenditure in rural and regional areas will be almost \$32 million in 2002-03.

NEW INITIATIVES

Recurrent Funded Enhancements

The budget includes funding for the following new strategies:

- \$923,000 for the management of aquatic pests including the weed *Caulerpa taxifolia*.
- \$1.6 million over two years for the Indigenous Fishing Strategy which primarily directed toward benefiting Indigenous communities in regional areas.
- \$3 million for the buy-out of commercial fishers from the Jervis Bay Marine Park.

CAPITAL WORKS

Regional projects included within the Department's 2002-03 budget include:

- \$290,000 to upgrade the NSW Fisheries Office at Ballina.
- \$300,000 to complete the upgrade of ponds and facilities at the Port Stephens Fisheries Centre.
- The replacement of marine craft and plant and equipment in accordance with the NSW Fisheries replacement program.

KEY INITIATIVES

- Developing regional sustainable aquaculture strategies.
- Continuing with the development of management strategies and environmental impact statements for each of the State's significant fisheries.
- Progressing zone and operational plans for the Lord Howe Island marine park.
- Progressing recovery plans for threatened species, populations and ecological communities.
- Development of the emerging aquaculture industry – part of the \$3 million three year aquaculture initiative.

Mineral Resources

The Department of Mineral Resources' total expenditure of \$52.5 million is primarily targeted towards facilitating the exploration and mining of mineral resources in regional and rural New South Wales.

MINE SAFETY

- A further \$3 million in funding, which includes an extra \$1 million in new funding, has been allocated in 2002-03 to the implementation of the Government's Mine Safety Reform initiative. By the end of 2002-03 the Government will have spent close to \$15 million over five years to implement safety reforms.

ENVIRONMENT

- The Government will spend about \$1.7 million in 2002-03 to ensure that mining and exploration across New South Wales meet best practice standards of environmental management.
- \$1.6 million has been allocated to the Derelict Mined Lands Rehabilitation Program to undertake remedial work to ameliorate environmental and safety hazards at derelict mine sites. The annual funding for the program was enhanced in 2001-02 by an Environmental Trust grant of \$2.8 million over three years. The grant will fund rehabilitation work near Inverell, Cobar, in the Blue Mountains and near Barraba.
- \$125,000 will be spent on the rehabilitation of the Aberdare derelict mine site in the Hunter Region in 2002-03.
- A further \$380,000 will be spent in 2002-03 on the rehabilitation of South Bellambi and Oakdale derelict mine sites in the Illawarra region.

EXPLORATION NSW

- Exploration NSW is a \$30 million, seven-year initiative to promote mineral and petroleum exploration and investment in the State by providing advanced regional geological and geophysical data.
- \$5 million is allocated for work programs in 2002-03 focusing on Broken Hill, the Murray Basin, the Central West and northern regions of the State.

Heritage Office

\$2.4 million is to be allocated under the Heritage Assistance Grants Program in 2002-03.

Funding available through the Program will be spent in rural and regional areas on the following:

- Local government heritage management \$600,000.
- Conservation work projects \$800,000.
- Study and promotion projects \$150,000.
- Recommendations for the allocation of \$200,000 for Aboriginal projects will be made following meetings of the Aboriginal Heritage Committee during the year.
- A significant proportion of the \$40,000 available on call for conservation management plans and the \$50,000 for emergency small grants will be allocated to rural and regional projects in the next financial year.

Planning

The Department of Planning will continue to support key initiatives for sustainable growth, community renewal and long-term environmental management in regional and rural New South Wales.

KEY INITIATIVES

- In 2002-03 The Department will spend \$17 million on regional planning, the Living Centres Program and the Area Assistance Scheme in rural and regional New South Wales.
- The Department is preparing a Regional Environmental Plan that will provide an appropriate planning framework and detailed development controls for the ski resorts in the Kosciuszko National Park.
- Sustaining the Catchments, a draft Regional Environmental Plan with the aim of delivering healthy catchments and high water quality for Sydney, is being re-drafted to address community concerns and will be re-exhibited for public comment in the second half of 2002.
- The Department is finalising a Coastal Protection State Environmental Planning Policy to facilitate better coastal planning and management as part of the Government's \$11.7 million Coastal Protection Package.
- The State Government will continue to support key initiatives for sustainable growth, community renewal and long term environmental management in regional and rural New South Wales.
- Through the Living Centres Program the Department is working with Councils and communities to rejuvenate local areas across the State. Some \$2.5 million is set aside to continue planning in the far South-East, Western Riverina and Northern Rivers regions, including \$1.1 million for community partnership grants.

AREA ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The State Government will provide \$3.8 million to support the North Coast, Hunter and Illawarra regions through the Area Assistance Schemes.

Aboriginal Affairs

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – ACDP

The Aboriginal Communities Development Program (ACDP) is a capital construction and upgrade program to raise the health and living standards of selected communities with urgent environmental health needs.

It was launched in 1998 as a \$200 million program to improve housing, water, sewerage, roads, services, recreational and cultural facilities in Aboriginal communities.

In 2002-03, the program expenditure is predicted to be \$32.6 million.

Selected Priority Communities

- Twenty-two priority communities in rural and regional New South Wales have been identified as having priority for this program. They are:

Armidale, Boggabilla/Toomelah, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cabbage Tree Island, Collarenebri, Condobolin, Coonamble, Dareton, Ennogonia, Goodooga, Gulargambone, Kempsey, Lightning Ridge, Mendinee, Moree, Muli Muli, Murrin Bridge, Tabulam, Walgett, Welmoringle and Wilcannia.

An estimated 14,900 Aboriginal people live in these regional and remote communities.

During 2002-03 an additional six communities will receive service improvements, including four receiving water and sewerage works, one project for sewerage only and another for water only.

WORKS COMPLETED IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Water and Sewerage

- Water and Sewerage Works have been completed in:

Armidale, Bennelong Haven, Kempsey, Brewarrina – Barwon and Bre West, Brungle, Cabbage Tree Island, Coffs Harbour – Corindi Beach, Cumeragunja, Dareton – Namatjira, Eramble – Cowra, Figtree Estate – Kempsey, Green Hills – Warwick, Grong Grong, Karuah, Loftus Road – Kempsey, Moree – Mehi Crescent, Murray's Flat, New Burnt Bridge – Kempsey, Old Burnt Bridge – Kempsey, Nanima (Wellington), Pillaga, Stuarts Point – Kempsey, Tingha – Value Management Study, Walhollow – Tamworth, Wallaga Lake and Wanaaring.

- Thirteen new projects will deliver water and/or sewerage improvements in 2002-03.

Housing

- A total of 61 home refurbishments have been completed in Coonamble, Dareton, Wilcannia, Bourke, Walgett, Gulargambone, Bourke, Cabbage Tree Island, Brewarrina and Goodooga.
- It is estimated that 3,000 people living in more than 450 homes will directly benefit through health and safety improvements conducted by the ACDP.

- A total of ten homes have been purchased for the Program in Walgett, Wilcannia and Coonamble.
- Five homes have been built in Dareton, Walgett and Gulargambone.
- In 2002-03, 461 homes in 13 communities will be constructed under the Housing for Health component of the ACDP.

The 461 homes will be constructed in the following communities in regional and remote New South Wales:

Boggabilla, Bowraville, Box Ridge/Coraki, Coffs Harbour, Collarenebri, Coomaditchie, Cummeragunja, Lightning Ridge, Macksville, Mungindi, Orient Point, Toomelah and Walcha/Summervale

The projected budget for Housing for Health for 2002-03 is approximately \$1.5 million.

Apprenticeships

- A total of 58 carpenters and joiners have been trained and employed in Armidale, Brewarrina, Bourke and Goodooga.
- A total of six landscapers have been trained and employed in Goodooga.
- A planned 150 apprenticeships or traineeships will be provided throughout the duration of the program in carpentry/joinery and landscaping trades.
- Employment and training will commence in an additional nine communities during 2002-03. The additional communities include Boggabilla/Toomelah, Cabbage Tree Island, Enngonia, Gulargambone, Kempsey, Moree, Muli Muli, Tabulam and Weilmoringle.
- This will involve an estimated 90 apprenticeship or traineeship places for a total of \$1.8 million.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES PROJECT

- Over the next four years, \$1 million has been allocated for each year to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) for the Improving Outcomes Project to give communities greater control over the planning, design and delivery of government services.

GRANTS PROGRAM

- \$800,000 has been allocated to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' Grants Program to assist indigenous communities.

Housing

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY HOUSING

- In 2002-03, the Government will spend about \$120 million on public housing in rural and regional New South Wales.
- More than 9,000 extra families or individuals will be assisted into public and community housing in regional New South Wales in 2002-03.
- In 2002-03 the Government will spend \$30.7 to build or buy 257 new public and community housing homes for people in regional New South Wales.
- A further \$11.3 million has been allocated to complete houses commenced in 2001-02, and \$614,000 has been allocated for 263 new leased homes in public and community housing.
- Nearly \$77.5 million will be spent to improve around 14,500 existing public and community housing properties in regional New South Wales.
- Around 27,000 families across regional New South Wales will receive financial help to start up a private rental lease. Ongoing private rental subsidies will be provided to about 525 households that include a person living with a disability or with HIV/AIDS.
- Community renewal, intensive tenancy management and accelerated improvement initiatives are planned to continue across regional New South Wales, including in Inverell, Moree, West Dubbo, Casino, Goonellabah, Kempsey, Taree, Booragul, Windale and Nowra. These initiatives involve a range of approaches to improving public housing estates including planned upgrading, modifications for people with disabilities, infrastructure improvements and intensive tenancy support.
- Over \$3 million will be allocated to build or buy crisis accommodation:
 - \$16,000 will be allocated to lease five new crisis accommodation properties.
 - \$45,000 will be allocated towards dwellings to complete the Government's Boarding House Tenants Relocation Program.

ABORIGINAL HOUSING

In 2002-03, \$12.4 million has been allocated for capital acquisitions and construction of 99 dwellings in the South East, Many Rivers, Kamilaroi, Binaal Billa and Murdi Paaki regions.

Community repairs and maintenance

- In 2002-03, \$3.5 million has been allocated under the Aboriginal Housing Program for community repairs and maintenance of dwellings in the South East, Many Rivers, Kamilaroi, Binaal Billa and Murdi Paaki regions.

Community and Organisational Development

- In 2002-03, \$619,000 will be spent to help communities in the South East, Many Rivers, Kamilaroi, Binaal Billa and Murdi Paaki regions better plan and provide housing.

Infrastructure Projects

- In 2002-03, \$300,000 has been allocated to improve sewerage, water and lighting in the South East, Many Rivers and Murdi Paaki regions.

Emergency Services

Record funding for the New South Wales Emergency services will ensure that the NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service will be even better equipped to protect and help the community during emergencies.

Next year the State Government will spend a record \$564.6 million on emergency services. For regional New South Wales, this means better services and better equipment.

NEW INITIATIVES

The NSW Fire Brigades' budget includes allocations for:

- \$2.2 million for information technology projects that include the provision of computer based communications with all regional and rural fire stations.

The NSW Rural Fire Service budget includes:

- \$120.7 million for rural firefighting in 2002-03.
- \$4.5 million a year for hazard reduction and fire control services.

The State Emergency Service budget includes:

- \$778,000 to assist volunteer units meet day to day operating expenses.
- \$272,000 to undertake an immunisation program for volunteers against Hepatitis B.
- \$950,000 to construct purpose built divisional headquarters for the Macquarie Division at Dubbo and the Illawarra/South Coast Division at Wollongong.

CONTINUING INITIATIVES

The NSW Fire Brigades budget includes allocations to:

- Complete new fire stations at Kincumber, Tingira Heights, Wallsend, Kotara, Stockton and West Wallsend.
- Continue the \$42 million four-year program, including \$10.5 million in 2002-03, to replace fire engines in regional areas.

The NSW Rural Fire Service budget includes allocations to:

- A total of \$32 million for the purchase of new and used tankers and associated equipment.
- An additional \$250,000 for grants to Volunteer Rescue units in country areas.

The State Emergency Service budget includes allocations to:

- \$2.6 million for protective clothing and safety equipment.
- \$250,000 for community flood awareness programs.
- \$2.4 million to provide new radio systems for the Lachlan, Lower Hunter, Murrumbidgee and Richmond/Tweed Divisions.
- \$250,000 to complete the provision of computers for SES units.

Juvenile Justice

The State Government is committed to reducing re-offending by helping young offenders obtain skills which can lead to employment after their release from detention, or while they are serving community service orders.

To that end:

- \$800,000 will fund training to help young offenders obtain employment while under supervision in the community in Dubbo, Kempsey, Newcastle, Taree, and Wagga Wagga (as well as four Sydney locations).
- \$420,000 will fund the Government's expanded post-release support scheme in rural and regional areas.
- In addition, \$800,000 in funding will allow the Department of Juvenile Justice to take over transportation of juvenile offenders in the Hunter region.

Tourism

The State Government's Regional Tourism Action Plan includes support for tourism initiatives throughout the state. Each region has a Regional Tourism Organisation providing an umbrella for cooperative tourism marketing and development programs.

PROGRAMS

The Government is committed to providing a minimum of \$8 million to the Regional Tourism Plan for the development of viable tourism products and destinations. The plan includes:

- More than \$2.4 million to Regional Tourism Organisations to support marketing and development plans, including the Regional Flagship Events program.
- More than \$4 million for the Drive NSW Program, Touring by Car, Short Breaks and other innovative advertising and promotional campaigns highlighting the holiday experiences available in regional New South Wales.
- \$1.2 million to fund international marketing and advertising campaigns to promote regional New South Wales to overseas markets.
- Over \$400,000 for the development of regional visitor centres, including the new "i" signs for accredited visitor information centres.
- \$150,000 to the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau to continue the Regional Conferencing Strategy to promote meetings and conventions in regional New South Wales.
- \$150,000 as part of a \$600,000 four year commitment to support regional tourism attraction development.

OTHER INITIATIVES

- More than \$500,000 as part of a four year commitment to allocate funds to the establishment of Gateway Centres at Tweed Heads, Eden, Bulli, Tenterfield, Gosford and Lithgow.
- Over \$550,000 as part of the Tourism New South Wales e-business strategy to provide regional tourism organisations and operators with access to the latest web publishing and database technology to capitalise on the commercial and promotional opportunities of the Internet.

Small Business

NEW INITIATIVES

- Aboriginal business development will be enhanced to implement the Budyari Ngalaya program, including the engagement of Aboriginal business development managers and the establishment of partnerships between Aboriginal enterprises and the corporate sector. Regional companies will be included in the partnerships program, recognising the close relationship between Aboriginal people and rural communities.
- Network formation assistance will be expanded to create a demonstration model for New South Wales industry and will include both regional and metropolitan businesses. This internationally recognised form of business growth builds critical mass amongst small companies to win larger contracts in both domestic and overseas markets.
- Technology seminars in regional New South Wales will be held to create wider awareness of opportunities for businesses to grow by adopting relevant new technologies, systems and management knowledge; these seminars will aim to attract at least 30 regional firms and will seek to involve the local universities.

CONTINUING PROJECTS

- Following on from the Lake Macquarie Home Based Business Project, an additional regional project will be offered for home-based businesses during 2002-03 at a cost of \$25,000.
- The network of Regional Export Advisers will be maintained, delivering services to 300 new and established exporters in regional areas.
- Up to \$40,000 to support Innovation Advisory Centres in the Hunter and the Illawarra that provide advice, referrals and limited funding to more than 400 inventors and small business innovators every year.
- Up to \$40,000 to support Technology Awareness Groups in Newcastle and Central Coast, involving over 150 companies in regular half-day workshops and site visits.
- Up to \$250,000 to financially support 50 regional small and medium firms to undertake business and export development projects.
- \$3 million for business advice to start-up and newly established small businesses, provided by an outsourced network of 39 regional Small Business Advisory Centres.
- Up to \$100,000 for Women in Business mentoring projects and growth strategies workshops to be delivered in regional New South Wales, and a project supporting networking and the group needs of regional businesswomen.

Information Technology

The State Government recognises the important role information technology plays in the lives of the people of New South Wales.

The Government will continue to improve access to information technology for rural and regional New South Wales. The Government will also continue to use technology to improve the delivery of Government Services.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

- \$1.4 million to continue the establishment of Community Technology Centres in regional NSW – to facilitate community access to online information and services, to improve IT skills and training, and to implement a regional videoconferencing network.
- Over \$31 million to fund projects that use technology to improve access to government services including:
 - \$12 million for the *connect.nsw* program to fund innovative electronic service delivery projects across New South Wales.
 - \$8 million to establish the first online entry point for the renewal of business names and selected business licenses.
 - \$6.4 million to enhance communication and client referral between Government Human Services agencies and non-government organisations.

Arts

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Funding arrangements for 2002-03 include:

- An extra \$700,000 for regional arts, bringing total funding for the Community Cultural Development Program in 2002-03 to \$2.7 million. From 2003-04 this extra funding will be \$800,000 per annum. The new funds will provide:
 - Improved support for 10 existing Regional Arts Development Officers (RADOs).
 - Two new RADOs, one of whom will work on the North Coast.
 - More training for RADOs and Regional Arts Boards.
 - An extra \$100,000 for the Community Arts Support Program (CASP), administered by Regional Arts NSW. This will double existing funding to CASP.
- An extra \$300,000 for the network of regional museums in New South Wales, on top of current funding of \$1.5 million for museum programs. Around 90% of total museums program funding will be spent in regional and rural areas.
- \$311,000 to the NSW Film and Television Office to bring its Industry and Audience Development Program to \$650,000. This extra funding will increase services to regional New South Wales and Western Sydney through support for local film festivals, travelling industry programs and specialised training.
- An increase in general grants to public libraries of \$1.5 million to \$18.92 million. \$2 million will also be available for NSW.net. Both these categories of grants will significantly benefit public libraries in rural and regional New South Wales.

Community Services

CONTINUING INITIATIVES

- Community, disability and home care services in regional New South Wales will continue to benefit from record levels of state-wide funding. Recurrent funding levels have been maintained for out-of-home care services, children's services, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program and the Community Services Grants program.
- *Families First* is a coordinated State Government strategy to increase the effectiveness of early intervention in, and prevention of, difficult family problems. It will continue to be developed in country New South Wales, along with maintenance of existing services.
- The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) aims to provide transitional supports to assist people who are homeless, or are at risk of becoming homeless, including women with or without children escaping domestic violence, to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Recurrent funding of \$22.4 million for SAAP will also be maintained in country New South Wales.

FAR NORTH COAST

- \$3.4 million recurrent funding for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services and over \$3.4 million for Community Services Grants Program services.

MID NORTH COAST

- In 2002-03, \$1.73 million of recurrent funding has been provided for *Families First* initiatives.
- The Budget provides recurrent funding of \$2.8 million for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services and nearly \$3 million for Community Services Grants Program services.
- \$70,000 per annum was provided to develop a Youth Support Worker service to assist vulnerable people between the ages of 12 and 17, who are at risk of homelessness, experiencing violence or drug and alcohol dependent.
- Under the Drug Summit package of initiatives, a total of \$150,000 has been allocated over three years to assist families and communities in Kempsey to provide strengthened and coordinated support for children during the transition from Primary to High School. The transition from primary school to high school has been identified as a key time to provide support to young people. This project has been developed in collaboration with the Department of Education.

NEW ENGLAND

- In 2002-03, \$1.03 million of recurrent funding has been provided for *Families First* initiatives.
- The Budget provides recurrent funding of \$3.5 million for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services and over \$1.6 million for Community Services Grants services.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- In 2002-03, \$890,000 of recurrent funding has been provided for *Families First* initiatives.
- The Budget provides recurrent funding of \$3.4 million for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services and over \$1.4 million for Community Services Grants Program services.

HUNTER

- In 2001/2002, under the Drug Summit package of initiatives, \$15,000 was allocated for a pilot project, to develop strategies to improve the case management of abused and neglected children in out-of-home care. Drug testing of parents with substance abuse problems, before parental responsibility is restored, is a component of this approach. The pilot will be conducted from DoCS' Cardiff, Muswellbrook, Charlestown and Raymond Terrace Community Services Centres.

CENTRAL WEST

- In 2002-03, \$900,000 of recurrent funding has been provided for *Families First* initiatives.
- The Budget provides recurrent funding of \$2.4 million for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services and for nearly \$1.3 million Community Services Grants Program services.

ORANA FAR WEST

- In 2002-03, \$1.36 million of recurrent funding has been provided for *Families First* initiatives.
- \$120,000 over three years was provided for the development of a pilot Aboriginal Volunteer Resource Service, to enhance the volunteering experiences for Aboriginal volunteers.
- The Budget provides recurrent funding of \$3.4 million for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services and over \$1.8 million for Community Services Grants Program services.
- Under the Drug Summit package of initiatives, \$120,000 per annum was allocated over three years to establish a trial service model for case management and brokerage in Broken Hill/Wilcannia. The Getting It Together scheme (GIT) is aimed at helping young people address the underlying factors contributing to their drug use, in particular, solvent abuse.

RIVERINA/MURRAY

- In 2002-03, \$430,000 in recurrent funding has been provided for *Families First* initiatives.
- The Budget provides recurrent funding of \$3.5 million for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services and \$1.7 million for Community Services Grants Program services.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care

The State Government's plan for older people, people with a disability and their carers provides rural and regional people with a share of almost \$1.2 billion for ageing, disability and related community support programs in 2002-03 - an increase of \$52 million in expenditure compared to the previous year.

Some \$470 million, or 40 per cent, of this \$1.2 billion budget is expected to be spent outside Sydney.

OLDER PEOPLE

The Budget increases supports for older people and their carers through:

- A funding boost of more than \$28 million for the Home and Community Care program (HACC) taking the New South Wales total contribution to \$141 million.
- Funding of more than \$3 million for the next phase in the dementia program as part of an \$11 million program over four years.
- Just over \$570,000 for the second year of the Seniors the Seniors IT Strategy – \$1.7 million program over three years designed to help older people access the benefits of information technology and the Internet.

DISABILITY PROGRAMS

The Budget increases supports for people with a disability and their carers through:

- A total of \$828.2m for community living and accommodation support services for people with a disability through government and non-government services (allocated in part through the jointly funded Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement – the New South Wales contribution is more than \$657 million, nearly 80 per cent of total funding).
- An extra \$17 million, bringing total funding to \$54 million, for the Adult Training and Learning System (ATLAS) review and reform – a program designed to help school leavers with a disability to move from school to employment or vocational education and training.
- An additional \$1.5 million in recurrent funding and \$2 million in capital funding to help people with a disability affected by boarding house closures to relocate to funded community accommodation. This brings the funding for the State Government's Boarding Reform Extension Project to \$15 million recurrent and \$8 million in capital funding over four years.
- \$5.5 million for one-off funding for immediate assistance to people with a disability to help them find appropriate accommodation and support.
- \$8.3 million for respite services which provide support for families caring for a person with a disability.
- \$2 million for new equipment for children with a disability through the Provision of Aid for the Disabled Program (PADP) administered by the Department of Health.
- \$3.5 million for the attendant care program which provides personal care for people with a physical disability to help them stay longer in their own homes.
- \$5 million for early intervention and prevention assistance to support families with young children with a disability.

BUILDING ON PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS

The 2002-03 Budget builds on last year's expenditure on services across rural and regional New South Wales – including day activity programs for people with a disability, domestic assistance, community transport and respite.

Recurrent expenditure for rural and regional NSW in 2001-02 included:

- more than \$23 million in the Central Coast.
- more than \$39 Million in the Central West.
- more than \$30 million in the Far North Coast.
- almost \$36 million in the Far West.
- more than \$154 million in the Hunter.
- almost \$54 million in the Illawarra.
- more than \$27 million in the Mid North Coast.
- more than \$23 million in New England.
- more than \$46 million in the Riverina Murray area.
- more than \$33 million in the Southern Highlands.

From 1995-2001, disability service outlets in NSW expanded by:

- 330 supported accommodation service outlets – 180 of these in rural and regional New South Wales.
- 47 community support service outlets – 13 in of these in rural and regional New South Wales.
- 127 community access service outlets – 84 in of these in rural and regional New South Wales.
- 34 respite service outlets – 28 in of these in rural and regional New South Wales.

The Department will undertake a planned approach to the rollout of rural and regional services funded by the 2002-03 Budget. Funding will be based on community need.

Women

ONGOING INITIATIVES

- The completion of a pilot project targeting older women in the Gosford Wyong area. The Council on the Ageing (COTA) received \$50,000 for a Central Coast Women's IT Pilot Project which provides basic computer literacy and Internet courses to older women.
- \$50,000 has been allocated for workshops designed to assist young women, building partnerships with business and community organisations to improve opportunities for girls in regional, rural and remote New South Wales.
- \$5,000 to assist Koori women in Kempsey.
- \$10,000 towards the publication and distribution of an information kit – “Hands Up for Women In Council” – to support women councillors.
- \$100,000 over two years to support women in the Lower Clarence to create and maintain a sustainable future for the Clarence valley.

NSW GRANTS PROGRAM

Seven projects worth \$246,000 are ongoing in regional New South Wales, including:

- \$30,000 to the Bourke Shire Council and Bourke Women's Gathering Organisation Committee.
- \$12,607 to the Hunter Community Program.
- \$29,154 to the Mudgee Shire Council Volunteers Committee.
- \$20,000 to the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre.
- \$30,000 to the AIDS Council of NSW (Lismore).
- \$62,150 Clarence Valley Community Programs (Grafton).
- \$61,983 to the Northern Star Aboriginal Corporation (Brewarrina).
- \$80,000 to provide isolated women access to information and knowledge about New South Wales Government and community services.
- Premier's Council for Women has been allocated \$40,000 for ongoing work including holding a number of meetings in regional centres throughout New South Wales. The proposed locations will be Nowra, Tweed Heads, Queanbeyan, Cobar, Maitland, and another location yet to be decided.
- More than \$300,000 has been allocated for the continuation of the Women's Information and Referral Service. This service operates an 1800 Freecall number.
- An allocation of \$200,000 for the ongoing operation and enhancement of The Women's Gateway. This site provides a wealth of online information and resources on a range of topics.
- \$60,000 for the continuing operation of the Department for Women Website.

