

NLC welcome much needed investment in National Parks

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The Commonwealth Government's announcement in the 2023-24 Budget of \$262.3 million additional funding for Australia's national parks has been warmly welcomed by the Northern Land Council.

"We really need this extra funding, especially in Kakadu in the NLC region," said Chair of the Northern Land Council Dr Samuel Bush-Blanasi following the announcement.

"If you go there you see will how many improvements can be made now that the Government is providing this investment," said Dr Bush-Blanasi.

The Government has said the investment will address critical infrastructure needs, including updating unsafe equipment, fixing inadequate signage, providing essential ranger housing, and refurbishing rundown facilities like the Kakadu Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

Matthew Ryan, Mayor for West Arnhem Regional Council and Chair of NLC's West Arnhem Regional Council, applauded the Government and Minister Plibersek for this much needed support.

"We have been asking for more funding for years. I want to thank Prime Minister Albanese and Minister Plibersek for making this happen," said Mayor Ryan.

Part of the funding will go to repairing the roof at Jim Jim Rangers station at Kakadu, which is peeling off, and improving crocodile warning signs, important for visitor safety, which in some places are broken or missing.

Importantly, the funding will also be used to boost conservation activities and cultural heritage management.

Dr Bush-Blanasi and Mayor Ryan agreed it is vital that local Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Rangers continue to care for country and protect their ancient cultural heritage.

"Kakadu belongs to all Australians but it also belongs to the local Traditional Owners who have been caring for their country through ceremony and culture for 60,000 years," said Mayor Ryan.

"I am excited about the benefit for Traditional Owners, for local Aboriginal businesses, jobs and Aboriginal tourism. Thank you Prime Minister Albanese and Minister Plibersek for

creating these opportunities. It means we can all look forward to the future with pride in our hearts,” said Dr Bush-Blanasi.