



\$200 million drinking water and sewerage services

9 February, 2010

Twenty one Aboriginal communities will benefit from a \$200 million water and sewerage joint initiative between the NSW State Government and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council.

The initiative will drastically improve the water and sewerage standards in 60 discrete Aboriginal communities - most of them former missions or Aboriginal Reserves.

The NSW Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Paul Lynch said the program was now forging ahead.

“In larger cities and towns we often take water and sewerage for granted, but in many discrete Aboriginal communities residents rely on tank, creek or bore water and on-site septic sewerage systems that regularly break down,” said Minister Lynch.

“This is a 25 year program that will bring better water and/or sewerage systems - or both - to 60 discrete Aboriginal communities.

“50 of the 60 communities have now been visited.”

Upgrade work and repairs to the drinking water and sewerage services has already been carried out in the following Aboriginal communities.

Baryulgil Square, in the Clarence Valley;
Bellbrook, near Kempsey;
Corindi Beach, Coffs Harbour;
Cummeragunja, within the Murray Shire;
Jubullum Village, near Tenterfield;
Karuah, near Port Stephens;
Malabugilmah, in the Clarence Valley;
Mehi Crescent, near Moree;
Stanley Village, near Moree ;

Summervale, Walcha Shire Council;
Toomelah, Moree Shire near Boggabilla;
Walhallow Reserve, near Quirindi and
Wongala, Coffs Harbour;
Willow Bend, Lachlan Shire Council,
Nanima Reserve, Wellington
Murrin Bridge, Cobar Shire
Enngonia, near Bourke
Erambie, near Cowra
Warrali Mission, near Wilcannia
Wallaga Lake, NSW South Coast
Wamba Wamba, Wakool Shire

NSW Minister for Water, Phillip Costa congratulated his Department on its overall management of the program's delivery.

“In these discrete Aboriginal communities having adequate and safe water and sewage treatment systems can and does have a major impact on the health of all in those communities.

“I want to emphasise that Local Aboriginal Land Councils and local councils – or local water utilities - have been wonderfully co-operative. Clearly, everyone wants this program to work”, Minister Costa said.

NSWALC Chairperson Bev Manton said that the initiative will see improved health outcomes for many thousands of Aboriginal families across NSW.

“Well over 2,000 people live in the communities that have already received upgraded and improved facilities,” Chairperson Manton said.

“It's simple. To ‘Close the Gap’, the water and sewerage infrastructure in our communities must be brought up to acceptable levels for the sake of our families.”

“By spending \$100 million of our own money NSWALC is signaling the depth of our commitment to deliver vital outcomes for NSW Aboriginal families and our children.”

“It is investing in our future.”

President of the NSW Shires Association, Councillor Bruce Miller said a considerable number of Councils across the State were involved in the program.

“They have been prepared to go that extra mile to ensure these Aboriginal communities are provided with adequate water supplies and sewerage services. They are firmly committed to playing their part to ensure this initiative succeeds.”

Chairperson Manton emphasized that the joint initiative was a targeted program that will deliver not just upgraded and repaired facilities, but also regular, ongoing maintenance.”

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