



You make a difference



Government Media Statement

4 September 2009

MICHELLE O'BYRNE **Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage**

Exciting New Conservation Program

The State Government today announced the first stage of an exciting new conservation partnership known as the Islands Project.

First announced by the Premier in his 2009 State of the State Address, the Islands Project is a partnership between the Tasmanian Government, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA), Natural Resource Management North, The University of Tasmania, and the Bookend Trust.

Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Michelle O'Byrne said the partners have jointly committed \$350,000 as the first stage in a joint commitment to fund volunteer conservation works across the Tasmanian archipelago.

"The partnership will engage international and local volunteers, students and the philanthropic and corporate sectors in long term, practical and research-based conservation activities in Tasmania and the off-shore islands," Ms O'Byrne said.

"The first conservation activities will occur across a range of sites in northern Tasmania, including the Furneaux Islands, Bay of Fires, Cape Portland, and Waterhouse Conservation Area. They will be practical onground works such as revegetation, fencing, trackwork, and site monitoring."

Sue Campbell, past Chair and current Board Member of Conservation Volunteers Australia said CVA is delighted to be working with the Government and NRM North on this project.

"On over 330 offshore islands and across Tasmania itself, we will be working in what is truly a state of islands," said Mrs. Campbell

“The Tasmanian archipelago is one of a handful of global biodiversity hotspots, the home to species that are not, or are no longer, found elsewhere in Australia and the world. This project gives young people from around the world, and locally, a real chance to make a lasting difference.”

The Chief Executive Officer of NRM North, James McKee, said this exciting partnership will bring significant people power to protecting and enhancing some of the best undeveloped areas in Tasmania.

“This program will not only raise awareness of these unique and spectacular natural assets, but will also inspire more people to become involved in crucial conservation projects,” Mr McKee said.

“One of the difficult aspects of the management of our natural resources in more remote areas, is getting the volunteers and support for locals in sufficient numbers to really make a difference. This partnership will make that difference,” Mr McKee said.

Mr McKee said NRM North’s contribution is made possible through the Australian Government Caring for Our Country Program.

Ms O’Byrne said the Islands Project is part of the Tasmanian Government’s commitment to ensuring our volunteers are getting the same support they are giving us.

“Through it we hope to encourage the next generation of volunteers to get involved and give a little of their time for the greater good,” said Ms O’Byrne.

“It is also part of promoting Tasmania as an international hub for learning and exchange, at the forefront of the emerging environmental economy. We already have a reputation as an island of innovation and are well placed to capitalise on the economy of the future, with our established expertise in renewable energies and advantages in natural resources such as water, wind and geothermal energy.”

“This conservation partnership is yet another example of Tasmanian innovation that we can export to the world with great enthusiasm and pride.”