

# Frank Sartor MP

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)



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4 March, 2011

## NSW Government Announces Protection of Mt Airly

More than 3,600 hectares of land with spectacular cliffs and threatened vegetation in the greater Blue Mountains will now be protected forever in the NSW national park system, Minister for Climate Change and the Environment Frank Sartor announced today.

Mr Sartor said the NSW Government this year had also given almost 63,000 hectares of bushland in national parks across NSW the ultimate protection by declaring them wilderness.

“The NSW Government’s commitment to create an extensive and enviable national park system is further realised by the declaration of the Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area (SCA) near Lithgow,” Mr Sartor said.

“The new reserve at Mt Airly creates a critical link between the Gardens of Stone National Park and the recently-established Capertee National Park.

“Named after a highly respected local Aboriginal Elder, Charlie Riley, whose Wiradjuri people have used this area for thousands of years, the new SCA supports a diverse wealth of flora and fauna, including many endangered and threatened species.”

*Mugii* is Charlie Riley’s Wiradjuri name meaning a mopoke owl and *Murum-ban* meaning eldest son in Wiradjuri.

The southern-brown bandicoot, tiger quoll, powerful owl and the *Pultenaea Genowlan Point Shrub* endangered ecological community are just some of the threatened species in the region.

Over 340 plant species have been recorded in the area.

The SCA is extremely scenic, sitting on top of a high plateau which contains a concentration of beehive shaped stone ‘pagoda’ formations, edged by high cliff faces.

It is an area rich in mining history containing valuable mineral and coal resources including oil shale, gold and diamonds.

Oil shale was mined beneath the reserve between 1895 and 1912 and today there are a range of historic ruins in the reserve associated with past mining activities including cableways, tunnels, railway lines, buildings and ventilation chimneys.

As a state conservation area, Mugii Murum-ban will be managed for conservation while permitting approved mining and exploration activities.

Mr Sartor said since 1995 the NSW Labor Government has added over three million hectares to the NSW parks system taking it from four million hectares in 1995 to over seven million today.

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“Recent wilderness declarations mean more than 2.08 million hectares are now declared wilderness throughout NSW,” Mr Sartor said.

“Declarations include some properties purchased under the Dunphy Wilderness Fund – a government and community partnership which the Government supported with \$11 million over ten years.

“Wilderness protects the most rugged and remote areas of bushland – the last of our really wild landscapes, those most unaffected by modern human touch.

“This year we have delivered over 63,000 hectares of wilderness which provides these undisturbed landscapes with the highest level of protection.

“Recent declarations include the State’s newest wilderness area, the 34,000 hectare Curracabundi Wilderness, located on the north coast between Gloucester and Walcha.”

Other additions to existing wilderness areas include:

- Guy Fawkes Wilderness (Guy Fawkes River National Park) - 13,752 ha
- Nandewar and Rusden Wilderness areas (Mount Kaputar National Park) – 9580 ha
- Bindery Mann Wilderness (Nymboida National Park) - 1454 ha
- Washpool Wilderness (Washpool National Park) - 1320 ha
- Yengo Wilderness (Yengo National Park) – 780 ha
- Tuross Wilderness (Wadbilliga National Park) - 620 ha
- Genoa Wilderness (South East Forest National Park) - 550 ha
- Nattai Wilderness (Nattai National Park) – 500 ha
- Byadbo Wilderness (Koscisuzko National Park) – 160 ha

Wilderness areas help provide NSW residents with clean air and water - helping to reduce the impacts of climate change on our plants and animals.

The most recent declarations include large connected areas of forest and include habitat for many threatened species including the brush-tailed rock wallaby, spotted tail quoll, koala, parma wallaby, yellow-bellied glider, large forest owls and rainforest pigeons.

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