



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for the Environment



**The Hon Robyn Parker MP**  
Minister for Environment and Heritage

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Australia to host the World Parks Congress in 2014**

Australia will welcome thousands of environment leaders from across the globe after securing the right to host the prestigious IUCN World Parks Congress at Sydney Olympic Park.

Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt and New South Wales Environment Minister Robyn Parker announced today that NSW and Australia had been chosen by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to co-host the landmark environmental congress from 12-19 November 2014.

“Australia is proud to host this once in a decade event, which sets the international agenda for managing some of the most valuable places on earth,” Mr Hunt said

“We’re expecting more than 3,000 delegates from over 160 countries to gather in Sydney - not just protected area experts and park rangers, but doctors, businessmen, young people – all working together to share ideas on how we can sustain and protect the planet.

“National parks have been the cornerstone of protecting our environment ever since 1879, when Sydney’s Royal National Park – only the second national park in the world - gave birth to Australia’s conservation movement.

“From today, we’ll be showcasing Australia’s parks on land and sea, not just as beautiful places delegates will visit, but also for their enormous contribution to biodiversity conservation, scientific research and protecting threatened species.

“Our protected areas are also huge economic and social assets. Nature-based tourism is worth more than \$30 billion a year to the Australian economy, and countless studies have documented the health benefits from time spent in natural places.

“One particular area of focus for Australia at the World Parks Congress will be rainforest protection.

“As Nelson Mandela said when launching the last congress in Durban 10 years ago - help us shape the future. Let’s start the global conversation now - you can contribute to the IUCN World Parks Congress and its legacy for the planet by sharing your ideas through the congress website, Facebook and Twitter.”

New South Wales Environment Minister Robyn Parker said Sydney was the ideal place to explore the conference theme of *Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions*.

“For Sydney, our parks and protected areas set our city apart on an international stage. We’re literally ringed by beaches, wilderness and World Heritage Areas,” Ms Parker said.

“In New South Wales alone, we’re home to more than 860 national parks, welcoming more than 35 million domestic and three million international visitors each year.

“We’re delighted to promote Australia's work in these environments, preserving threatened plants and animals from the critically endangered corroboree frog in the Snowy Mountains to the prehistoric Wollemi pine in the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park.

“One of the easiest ways to get involved is to enter our global photography competition, *Saved!* Send us your photos of fantastic protected areas or the threatened species they protect. We’ll build an exhibition that showcases the world’s diverse protected areas, from Kruger to Kakadu and everything in between.

The exhibition will form part of our planned Festival of Nature which will be open to the public as part of the congress.”

Registration for the seven day congress is now open with everyone encouraged to attend and help shape the future for the world's parks.

Further details can be found at: [www.worldparkscongress.org](http://www.worldparkscongress.org)  
[www.facebook.com/WorldParksCongressSydney2014](https://www.facebook.com/WorldParksCongressSydney2014)  
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