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MEDIA RELEASE

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****Photos and vision available [here](#)****

NSW NATIONAL PARKS PARTNER WITH ABORIGINAL RANGERS

For the first time in NSW, an Aboriginal ranger organisation has been officially appointed as honorary National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) rangers.

Minister for Environment James Griffin said the Gamay Rangers now have the same operational authority as NPWS rangers and field officers in Kamay Botany Bay National Park and Towra Point Nature Reserve.

“Appointing the Gamay Rangers from La Perouse as honorary NPWS rangers is an important recognition of their expertise and knowledge in caring for Country,” Mr Griffin said.

“As honorary national park rangers, the Gamay crew will work alongside the NPWS team on park to share traditional knowledge and techniques, and be involved in the operations of the national parks on their Country.

“This is a momentous partnership and another step towards reconciliation. As the site of first contact in 1770 between the Gweagal and Bidjigal people and Europeans, Kamay Botany Bay National Park is one of the most significant reserves in Australia.”

NPWS will continue managing Kamay Botany Bay National Park and Towra Point Nature Reserve, and the Gamay Rangers will support NPWS with conservation and compliance work, including in the protection of marine mammals.

NPWS recently trained the Gamay rangers in how to safely attempt the dangerous and delicate job of rescuing whales entangled off the coast.

La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council CEO Chris Ingrey said they are excited to work in partnership with the NPWS to contribute to the protection of sea Country around Botany Bay.

“As saltwater people, the protection and enhancement of our sea country is vital as it has sustained our people for thousands of years and today it still provides for cultural fishing activities within our community,” Mr Ingrey said.

“The whales, in particular the humpback whale, is a significant ancestor being (totem) of our people and to have our people trained and ready to participate in dangerous

operations that aim to save our totems was one of our goals.

“We are keen and ready to work with the NSW Government to protect our sea country into the future for our future generations.”

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Ben Franklin said the work of Aboriginal rangers is important for improving social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes.

“Aboriginal people have a long, enduring connection with the area known as Kamay Botany Bay National Park and maintain a vibrant and active association with this land and sea,” Mr Franklin said.

“This partnership recognises the role of the Gamay Rangers and helps ensure their cultural practices and knowledge is included in the management of national parks on their Country.”

Member for Cronulla Mark Speakman said Kamay Botany Bay National Park and Towra Point Nature Reserve are important sites for the Aboriginal community.

“The La Perouse Aboriginal Land Council and the Gamay Rangers are passionate about sharing their knowledge and protecting the sea country around Botany Bay and this partnership is a natural step in managing the area,” Mr Speakman said.

“It is fitting that the cultural knowledge, which has been held and safeguarded by Aboriginal people, will now be shared with park staff, the community and visitors.

“I am delighted that Kamay and Towra Point will be the first places in NSW where honorary Aboriginal rangers are working alongside our dedicated parks staff.”

In addition to the honorary ranger program, NPWS has an Aboriginal ranger program which employs trainees in Narooma and Merimbula.

The trainee rangers work for NPWS while studying for a tertiary degree, and once the program is finished, they receive a full-time ongoing ranger role within NPWS.

About 12 per cent of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife workforce is Aboriginal, which is significantly higher than most other public sector agencies.

The NSW Government recently commenced consultation on the development of a groundbreaking new model for Aboriginal joint management of NSW national parks, which could see title to the entire estate transferred to Aboriginal owners over time.

For more information on the consultation process and existing joint management arrangements in NSW national parks, visit <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/aboriginal-joint-management-model-consultation>

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