

Kimberley wilderness park in Liberal \$44m green package

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The Liberal Party will today unveil a long-term plan to create a Kimberley wilderness park as part of a \$44 million package for managing the environment and water supplies.

Liberal leader Colin Barnett said the park boundaries would be drawn up on the back of strong scientific evidence, with \$9 million to be spent over the next four years for urgent research into the areas which should be set aside for conservation, tourism, industry, agriculture and horticulture.

Emphasising that the long-term wilderness park would not "lock up" the Kimberley and also committing to urgently

identifying a site for an onshore LNG processing plant, Mr Barnett said the strategy could become a reality in five years.

The broader policy, which has excluded Mr Barnett's 2005 vision of building a canal to bring water from the Kimberley to Perth, also commits a Liberal government to following through with Labor's plan for a second desalination plant at Binningup, but promises an independent study into using Wellington Dam as Perth's next major supply of drinking water.

Mr Barnett said the Liberals would not jeopardise the second desalination plant or its timeline, but wanted to investigate the site

of the \$1 billion facility after strong opposition from local residents. He said he would not support the privatisation of existing water assets but envisaged a role for new private sector projects to capitalise on expertise in areas such as recycling and treatment plants.

The policy also includes \$3.8 million for protecting the Great Western Woodlands in WA's south-east, \$13.5 million to encourage households to generate renewable energy and \$4 million to boost environmental monitoring and compliance programs.