

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 2 August 2024

UPCOMING AEBN EVENTS

[AEBN Interactive Workshop Webinar]

[SERIES 1 to Dangerous Goods, Hazardous Substances/Chemicals and GHS](#)

Covering: Regulatory framework, Changes to laws and requirements, Identification, Classification, Safety Data Sheets and more...

10.00am to 1.45pm
18 Sept 2024

[AEBN Interactive Workshop Webinar]

[SERIES 2 to Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances/Chemicals](#)

Covering: Safe Storage, Handling and Transport

10.00am to 1.45pm
19 Sept 2024

FEDERAL

Tender Opportunity – under the Nature Repair method development initiative:

Opens

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) will be launching soon the Nature Repair Market and will ensure there is a pipeline of methods in development.

The Nature Repair Market is a priority initiative under the Nature Positive Plan.

Methods are required for landholders to conduct different types of project under the Nature Repair Market. Methods are expected to make it easier for businesses to invest in activities that repair and protect nature.

The [tender](#) is now open and has approx. \$3 million in funding for 2024-25.

Tenders are invited to develop methods that enhance and protect existing environments as well as establish or restore habitat.

The Department is looking to partner with experts including:

- university sector and academia
- specialist consulting firms
- First Nations organisations
- conservation and natural resource management organisations
- professional services companies

The successful supplier(s) will need to provide technical and scientific expertise to ensure methods are evidence-based and will enhance or protect biodiversity.

Applications close **5 September 2024**.

Commercial Building Disclosure (CBD) Expansion Consultation:

Comment sought

The Federal Government is considering changes to the Commercial Building Disclosure (CBD) Program and is seeking your comment.

The CBD Program currently requires energy efficiency information to be provided, in most cases, when commercial office space of 1000 square metres or more is offered for sale or lease.

The potential expansion of the CBD Program is part of the 2019 Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings (the Trajectory). The Trajectory is the joint strategy of the Commonwealth and the States and Territories that aims to achieve zero energy and carbon-ready buildings in Australia.

Successive reviews of the CBD Program in 2016 and 2019, suggest that expanding the program to cover new building and ownership types will reduce energy consumption, reduce energy bills, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

KPMG, on behalf of Government, had completed a feasibility report on Expanding the Commercial Building Disclosure Program (feasibility report).

This analysis of the CBD Program suggests it is performing well when compared internationally and, if expanded to other building types, could be a powerful tool in transitioning Australia's commercial buildings to net zero.

To provide feedback, please read -

- [CBD Program expansion consultation discussion paper](#)
- [KPMG report 'Expanding the Commercial Building Disclosure \(CBD\) Program'](#)
- [High level CBD Program expansion road map \(from KPMG Report\)](#)

[Online feedback](#) is sought by 13 September 2024.

Clean Energy Regulator nominates Clean Energy Council as body to solar panel and product listing body:

Comment sought

The Clean Energy Regulator seeking feedback on their proposal to nominate the Clean Energy Council as the solar panel and inverter product listing body.

The nomination follows [industry consultation in 2022](#) on whether the Clean Energy Regulator should nominate a person or organisation to publish solar product lists under the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES). It's also a part of broader changes to the SRES as part of the [rooftop solar sector reforms](#).

Product listing under the SRES only covers panels and inverters, it does not cover batteries.

Please provide [comment](#) by 5.00pm AEST on 11 August 2024.

Home Energy Ratings Disclosure Framework Version 2:

Comment sought

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is seeking comment on the [Draft Home Energy Rating Disclosure Framework - Version 2](#).

The Disclosure Framework Version 2 expands on the 2019 commitment by Australian energy ministers to deliver a national framework for energy efficiency disclosure. It follows Version 1 of the Disclosure Framework, which was agreed by energy ministers and released on 19 July 2024.

The Disclosure Framework sets out a national approach to assessing the energy performance of homes and providing energy performance ratings and certificates to consumers at point of sale or lease. It outlines policy parameters for disclosure schemes, which can be adapted and implemented by governments, and gives guidance on the development of a supportive market environment.

The Disclosure Framework Version 2 has been expanded to include apartment buildings (defined as National Construction Code Class 2), and other parameters not included in the Disclosure Framework Version 1 (communication, validity periods and phasing).

You can now provide your feedback on the Disclosure Framework Version 2. Your views will help inform the future development of home energy rating disclosure schemes and the improvement of the energy performance of Australian homes. This will support Australia's residential building sector to transition to a net zero future.

Please provide your [online feedback](#) by **5pm Friday, 23 August 2024**.

Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards (GEMS) scheme to expand

The Energy and Climate Change Ministers have agreed to further expand and modernise the Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards (GEMS) scheme to help Australians make informed decisions when choosing appliances.

The recommendations were put forward to Energy and Climate Change Ministers at a meeting of the [Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council](#) on Friday, 19 July 2024.

This includes developing an E3 Program strategy that includes creating a forward plan and prioritising projects for the next 10 years.

It will continue to enable consumers and businesses to make more informed decisions on:

- purchasing appliances and equipment
- promoting energy efficiency
- reducing emissions.

The Ministers agreed to:

- increase the minimum energy performance standards that apply to televisions and computer monitors
- introduce energy efficiency requirements for digital signage displays.

Ministers agreed to updated minimum energy performance standards for the following products:

- mains voltage halogen lamps – which will effectively phase out this lighting technology
- dishwashers
- washing machines
- rotary clothes dryers.

In 2022–23, the GEMS scheme in Australia reduced electricity consumption by between 5.5 and 8.5 gigawatt hours. This saved Australian households and businesses between \$1.3 and \$2.1 billion.

The E3 Program is a joint initiative of the Australian, state and territory and New Zealand Governments. It has been in operation for over 20 years.

The *Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards Act 2012* (GEMS Act) is the underpinning legislation for the E3 Program in Australia.

The GEMS Act regulates the energy efficiency of certain appliances and equipment in Australia. New Zealand implements this work through a separate national legislative framework.

Expanding the home energy rating to existing homes:

Comment sought

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is consulting on the expansion of the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) to include energy assessments and ratings for existing homes.

NatHERS assesses new homes and major renovations to ensure they meet the [energy efficiency standards](#) of the [National Construction Code](#) (NCC). NatHERS also promotes sustainable building practices.

Led by the Federal Government on behalf of states and territories, the expansion aims to:

- boost energy efficiency
- reduce carbon footprints
- reduce household energy costs
- improve comfort for Australians in their homes.

The expansion of NatHERS is intended to extend these benefits to millions of existing homes nationwide, from mid-2025.

The consultation seeks feedback on:

- program objectives and design principles
- proposed delivery model for NatHERS for existing homes

- assessor training, accreditation and audit processes
- the rating certificate and upgrade advice
- energy rating tools.

Comment is sought on the [NatHERS for existing homes consultation paper](#). Please provide feedback by **11:59pm, 30 August 2024**.

Board appointments for ARENA

Board members to [Australian Renewable Energy Agency \(ARENA\)](#) have been announced by Federal Government.

Its purpose is to support improvements in the competitiveness and supply of renewable energy and the uptake of energy efficiency and electrification by providing financial assistance and sharing knowledge, to accelerate innovation that benefits all Australians, and facilitates the achievement of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions targets.

Capacity Investment Scheme (CIS) Tender 2 – WEM Dispatchable Capacity:

Open for bids

The [Capacity Investment Scheme \(CIS\) Tender 2 – Wholesale Electricity Market \(WEM\) Dispatchable Capacity \(Tender 2\)](#) is open for bids. Tender documents including tender guidelines are now available to help proponents submit their bids.

Projects that meet the Eligibility Criteria across the WEM as outlined in the Tender Guidelines are encouraged to bid.

Tender 2 will seek to deliver a target of 2,000 MWh of clean dispatchable capacity across the WEM.

Projects in Tender 2 must be located in Western Australia and connect to the South West Interconnected System (SWIS) as defined by the Electricity

Industry Act 2004 (WA).

Registration for Tender 2 will close on Monday 12 August 2024 at 5:00pm AWST (7:00pm AEST). Project Bids will be accepted until Monday 19 August 2024 5:00pm AWST (7:00pm AEST).

Final decision on state of Great Barrier Reef by UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has released the final decision on the state of conservation of the Great Barrier Reef.

The 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (46COM) was held on 21-31 July 2024 in India. The Committee agreed to adopt the draft decision from UNESCO released in June 2024.

The decision:

- recognises the increased action Australia is taking to protect the Reef;
- requests Australia to report back to the Committee next year, with an update on progress on its actions to protect and manage the Reef;
- requests Australia to provide a State of Conservation report by 1 February 2026.

Australia is committed to protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

Climate change is the biggest threat for reefs worldwide. Most World Heritage properties are also vulnerable to climate change.

VICTORIA

EPA's drone secures evidence on landfill operator's inadequate operations

Landfill operator faces approx. \$20,000 in fines after EPA Victoria's drone reveals inadequate cover on waste in the operator's landfill cells.

Two fines of \$9,616 each are for the company's failure to report each of the breaches of its licence conditions to EPA Victoria.

Landfills are strictly regulated, even long after they cease to operate, with conditions designed to prevent problems with odour, leachate leakage and greenhouse gas emissions.

EPA Southern Metropolitan Regional Manager Viranga Abeywickrema says leaving that kind of waste uncovered after hours can allow odour and litter to escape the property.

"The EPA licence for any landfill requires all waste to be covered at closing time each day," Mr Abeywickrema said.

"It must be under a solid layer of soil, 15cm thick if it is solid inert waste or 30cm thick for other waste such as household garbage," he said.

"Our officers used a drone to conduct routine inspections of the landfill after hours on a weekday in March and later on a Saturday in June and found waste exposed to the air."

Under the Environment Protection Act 2017 and the Infringements Act 2006, the operator has the right to have the infringement notice reviewed or be considered by a court.

Indoor air quality research for Victoria's public spaces

Victoria's Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll has announced that the Burnet Institute will deliver the Pathway to Clean Indoor Air in Victoria project.

The two-year project will engage a multi-disciplinary research consortium to evaluate indoor air quality in community spaces around Victoria, with a range of practical measures to improve indoor air quality set to be piloted in settings including schools, workplaces and public spaces.

Studies from the US Environmental Protection Agency have shown that poor indoor air quality is linked to lower productivity and has significant detrimental impacts on health and

wellbeing, with an increase in respiratory viruses including influenza, measles, COVID-19 and whooping cough also driving the need for improved indoor air quality.

This project will help establish feasible indoor air quality performance standards and will inform government policy and public health guidance, with long-term solutions including integrating indoor air quality standards into building codes and promoting healthier indoor environments. The research project is set to be completed in 2026.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Allegations environmental consultant falsified sample results in numerous environmental reports in NSW

NSW EPA is investigating an environmental consultant in relation to allegations of falsified sampling results in a number of environmental reports across NSW.

NSW EPA advises that no immediate risk to public health and safety have been identified.

NSW EPA understands that part the Director's role of the consultancy company was to test potential development sites and then make environmental assessments for clients as part of development applications to local councils.

NSW EPA has seized more than 10,000 pieces of data and have finalised reviewing 2,460 files and are investigating alleged falsified samples.

Following a review of all available data, NSW EPA confirms that there are no immediate risks to public health and safety. NSW EPA states that analysis revealed no history of contamination or exposure pathways that could affect the communities health.

From this review, NSW EPA have identified 135 different sites that have been the subject of alleged falsified reports. These include:

- 24 early childhood education and care services

- 18 residential properties
- 8 industrial/commercial sites
- 1 school
- 84 sites yet to be developed.

As a priority, NSW EPA has begun visiting the 24 childcare centres to discuss the issues with the operators.

NSW EPA is notifying all councils that may have relied on reports produced by the environmental consultancy in approving development applications, and NSW EPA will continue to provide advice and support as they review their records for these sites.

NSW EPA has stated that anyone who has engaged the [consultancy](#) to undertake environmental assessments as part of a development application is encouraged to contact NSW EPA or their relevant local council for advice.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: Plastic pollution solutions

NSW EPA is calling on industry innovators to help fight plastic pollution by developing bold and creative solutions to tackle the issue.

Universities and government research institutions across NSW are invited to apply for grants under the [Plastics Research Program \(PRP\)](#), aimed at driving scientific studies and filling knowledge gaps.

NSW EPA is seeking cutting-edge research projects that target at least one of the following goals:

- Investigate and identify potentially harmful chemicals in plastic products
- Improve understanding of factors that impact the quality and circularity of plastics
- Boost the capacity to measure microplastics in the environment

NSW EPA Executive Director of Programs and Innovation, Alexandra Geddes, is encouraging creative minds to rise to the challenge.

“We’re inviting innovators far and wide to think outside the box and help us combat plastic pollution by pitching a project that matches our criteria”. “This is your opportunity to make a lasting impact on our environment because addressing the problem is a shared responsibility, particularly when our state generates around 800,000 tonnes of plastic waste each year, of which only 12% is recycled”, Ms Geddes said.

Successful applicants will receive between \$250,000 and \$500,000 to help bring their pioneering ideas to life. The projects must be completed by 31 May 2027 and will be instrumental in shaping future policy and regulatory decisions, informing strategies, and implementing actions.

Further [details](#) are now available. Applications close on 5 September 2024.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: Essential public EV fast charging and kerbside charging infrastructure

The NSW Government has announced \$73.5 million of grants to support the rollout of essential public electric vehicle (EV) fast charging and kerbside charging infrastructure and to encourage businesses to embrace electric fleets.

In comparison to other first world countries, Australia is significantly lagging behind in the fast charging of EV’s in public areas.

The 3 grant programs currently open are -

EV fast charging grant – round 3

- Round 3 offers \$54 million to co-fund up to 140 more public EV fast-charging stations across NSW.
- Further funding is available in this round for regional NSW applications, including those that offer pull-through charging bays, to cater to EV drivers towing caravans, boats and trailers. This ensures everyone benefits from the EV transition and further

enables long journeys across the state.

- The \$54 million funding is part of a larger \$149 million program that will add approximately 280 fast and ultra-fast charging stations across New South Wales once complete.
- [Information is now available.](#) Applications for Round 3 close on 3 October 2024.

EV kerbside charging grant – round 2

- Round 2 offers \$4.5 million to co-fund EV chargers on kerbsides across areas of New South Wales that have limited access to off-street parking.
- Kerbside chargers provide a convenient charging option for drivers without off-street parking such as those in apartments, semi-detached dwellings, and high-density areas.
- [Information is now available.](#) Applications for Round 2 close on 9 December 2024.

EV fleets incentive – round 4

- Round 4 offers \$15 million in co-funding for businesses and local government to purchase EVs, helping to reduce emissions from their fleets.
- The incentive has been updated and now has multiple funding options that support fleet managers across all stages of their journey, from piloting EVs in their fleets through to large-scale roll-out.
- Over 3,400 battery electric vehicles (BEVs) have been incentivised in the previous 3 rounds of the program, accounting for 5% of all BEV registrations in New South Wales.
- [Information is now available.](#) Applications for Round 4 will close on 17 September 2024.

Drone secures footage for 2nd conviction of illegal asbestos dumping

An offender has been fined \$200,000 by Liverpool Local Court, after a [covert surveillance operation](#) conducted by NSW EPA captured trucks illegally dumping building waste at a Rossmore property.

A second person has been convicted and fined in relation to illegal dumping at the property after the occupier [was fined \\$180,000](#) in 2021 following a NSW EPA investigation into illegal dumping.

The second offender told EPA officers he organised trucks to transport topsoil to the property from a construction site in Campsie.

The second offender was also convicted and fined \$30,000 for [lying to the EPA in 2022](#) while they were carrying out their investigation.

NSW EPA Executive Director Regulatory Operations Jason Gordon said the EPA’s extensive investigation, launched in 2019, has been a success with two individuals now held to account for illegal activities at the property.

“Following reports from Liverpool City Council and the community, we started a covert operation in 2019 and our drones caught the trucks dumping construction waste at the site which was then spread across the property with an excavator.

“Officers carried out a search of the property and collected samples from the waste, which was found to contain asbestos, which is completely unacceptable.”

The second person “was convicted for transporting waste to a place not permitted to be used as a waste facility and the unlawful disposal of asbestos waste.

“The complete disregard for the environment and the community displayed here cannot be tolerated and it is pleasing to see that all parties involved in this investigation have now been before the Court.

The Court also ordered the second person to pay NSW EPA's legal costs of \$60,000 and investigation costs of \$600.

Tyre recycling company cops fine of \$225K for improper storage of waste tyres

A tyre recycling company in NSW has been ordered by the NSW Land and Environment Court to pay over \$160,000 for 10 offences relating to the improper storage of waste tyres.

Approx 320 tonnes of tyres were being stored by the company - twice the number of tyres allowed on premises. Tyres on the premises were also stored in locations not allowed under its licence which could create potential obstructions in emergency situations.

Compliance at the premises has improved since these charges were filed but NSW EPA is continuing to monitor activities at the site to ensure that appropriate standards of operation and site management are in place.

In addition to the fine, the tyre recycling company was ordered to pay NSW EPA's legal costs of \$45,000 and publish notices summarising its offending in The Daily Telegraph and Inside Waste Magazine.

Earlier this year, a Director of the company, when the offences took place, was prosecuted by NSW EPA for four offences relating to the same conduct. He was fined \$65,000 for the offences, ordered to pay NSW EPA's legal costs, and ordered to publish notices summarising his offending.

QUEENSLAND

NEW GUIDELINE: Compliance under EPA Act

As QLD's environment regulator, the QLD Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) has released an updated [guideline](#) that provides an overview of compliance and enforcement under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (the EP Act). The guideline takes effect from 18 June 2024.

DESI is responsible for managing and monitoring environmental risk through a range of assessment, compliance, investigation and enforcement programs.

\$26 Billion commitment to renewable energy for QLD

As part of the [2024-25 Queensland Budget](#), \$26 billion has been committed to renewable energy over the next four years. As part of this investment, Queenslanders should see:

- \$16.5 billion towards renewable energy and storage projects
- \$8.5 billion to build the SuperGrid, including Copperstring and renewable energy zones
- \$500 million for network batteries and support of local grid solutions
- \$192 million for the Transmission and Training Hubs in Townsville and Gladstone.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Review of Code of Practice for Milking Shed Effluent to protect SA's water resources

EPA SA is currently reviewing the [Code of practice for Milking Shed Effluent](#) (originally published in 2003) to ensure it aligns with the [national guidelines](#).

EPA SA is supportive of sustainable practices and industry development in SA and is seeking to work with the industry to achieve the most effective approaches that protect the state's water resources.

Dairy farm operators need to adhere to the Code of practice for Milking Shed Effluent and ensure that they have an effectively operating wastewater management system, in accordance with the Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy, to prevent risk of polluting the environment.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Review of WA's waste strategy:

Comment sought

Just a reminder that WA's waste strategy is under review and your feedback is sought by the Waste Authority who is leading the review.

The review provides an opportunity to reflect on how WA is performing, what is working, and what we could do differently.

The WA Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 (waste strategy) sets out objectives and strategies for transitioning the state towards a circular economy.

Released in 2019, the strategy contains a vision for WA to become a sustainable, low-waste, circular economy in which public health and the environment are protected from the impacts of waste.

Please provide feedback by **5 pm on 21 August 2024** via the [online consultation survey](#) or email wastestrategyreview@dwer.wa.gov.au

State Waste Infrastructure Plan for WA:

Released

The WA Department of Water and Environment Regulation has released the [State Waste Infrastructure Plan for WA](#) – a key deliverable of the WA Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 (WA's waste strategy) that provides a comprehensive approach to meet the waste and recycling challenges of today and transition toward a more circular economy.

The report provides a long-term information framework to guide decision making for the planning and development of waste and resource recovery infrastructure in WA, with an outlook to 2050.

The plan is the first step in providing a high-level analysis of infrastructure

needs for the state, using the available data to project future needs, risks and priority areas.

Update on Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy (SERS)

The Waste Authority received an update from the WA Department's Climate Change team on the [Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy for Western Australia](#). The Strategy outlines pathways and priority actions for the state's transition to net zero emissions by 2050.

The SERS builds on significant work already underway to decarbonise our economy with 40 new actions that will be implemented by 14 state government agencies and trading enterprises, through the development of sectoral plans.

Circular economy principles are key to reducing emissions across sectors.

The [Climate Change Bill 2023](#), introduced into the WA Parliament in November 2023 will establish a target of net zero emissions by 2050; the setting of interim targets to be achieved by specified dates; the development of emission reduction strategies; and the development of climate adaption strategies and sector adaptation plans.