

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 1 November 2024

UPCOMING AEBN EVENTS

[AEBN Workshop Webinar - Interactive]

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

COVERING: Regulatory framework, Changes to laws and requirements, Identification, Safety Data Sheets and more

10.00am to 1.45pm
13 November 2024

[AEBN Workshop Webinar]

[SERIES 2 to Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances/Chemicals – INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP WEBINAR](#)

COVERING: Safe Storage, Handling and Transport

10.00am to 1.45pm
14 November 2024

FEDERAL

The impacts of proposed introduction of new workplace exposure limits for 9 chemicals:

Comment sought

Safe Work Australia is seeking your feedback on the [consultation paper - The Impacts analysis of the proposed workplace exposure limits for 9 chemicals](#) that aims to gather information on the economic, social and health impacts of the proposed exposure limit for each chemical.

The 9 chemicals under consideration are:

1. benzene
2. chlorine
3. copper (fumes, dust and mists)
4. formaldehyde
5. hydrogen cyanide
6. hydrogen sulphide
7. nitrogen dioxide
8. respirable crystalline silica
9. titanium dioxide.

Your feedback may inform the impact analysis that will be provided to WHS ministers for decision.

Until a decision on each proposed change has been made by WHS ministers, the workplace exposure limit for the 9 chemicals will remain the same as those listed in the workplace exposure standards list.

Supporting documentation is currently available.

Feedback is sought via the online survey by 11.59 pm (AEDT), 8 December 2024.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES for businesses

Funding is available for businesses for [trade exposed Safeguard facilities to reduce emissions](#) -

The Powering the Regions Fund – Safeguard Transformation Stream Round 1 grant opportunity will provide up to \$50 million to trade exposed facilities to reduce their emissions and contribute to meeting Australia's emissions reduction targets.

Details are now available.

Organised by: *Powering the Regions Fund Safeguard Transformation Stream Round 1*

Voluntary greenhouse gas (GHS) estimation and reporting standards

The Federal Government has announced the development of [voluntary GHG accounting standards](#) for agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

This is intended to help:

- improve the quality and consistency of accounting methods and tools
- improve GHG accounting at the farm level to support mitigation action and market access
- reduce the reporting burden on farmers and land managers
- ensure farmers and landholders have trusted tools to understand their emissions.

A [Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Estimation and Reporting Standards Reference Group](#) has been established to ensure these standards meet user needs.

Priorities for ACCU Scheme proponent led method development announced

The Federal Government has agreed to prioritise 4 new [proponent led](#) methods for development under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme (ACCU).

[ACCUs](#) play an important role in achieving emissions reductions and meeting Australia's [net zero](#) climate targets.

The proponent led process involves ACCU Scheme methods developed outside of government – a critical step in the ongoing reforms to the ACCU Scheme. This approach was a recommendation in the [Independent Review of ACCUs](#).

The independent Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee (ERAC) assessed 39 Expressions of Interest submissions for new methods and identified [4 methods](#) for prioritisation:

- Improved Native Forest Management in Multiple-use Public Forests
- Extending Savanna Fire Management to the Northern Arid Zone
- Improved Avoided Clearing of Native Regrowth
- Reducing disturbance of coastal and floodplain wetlands by managing ungulates.

Corporate Emissions Reduction Transparency report 2024

Released

The Clean Energy Regulator's (CER) has released its [2024 Corporate Emissions Reduction Transparency](#)

[\(CERT\) report](#) that is a voluntary initiative which allows eligible organisations to present their emissions-related commitments, progress and net emissions position. It presents this information in one place, using a standardised framework.

Twenty-two large companies from the - energy, manufacturing, mining, retail, financial, transport, construction and research sectors participated in the CERT report 2024. These companies presented 63 commitments. Together, they represent 14% of Scope 1 emissions reported under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Scheme for FY2022–23.

The twenty-two companies have shared their data publicly to track against their emissions reduction commitments.

CER Executive General Manager Mark Williamson said that participating companies have taken the opportunity provided by the CERT report to strengthen their emissions and renewable energy use reporting and prepare for mandatory climate-related financial disclosures.

Workbook: Carbon Market Report data for September 2024 quarter:

Released

The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) has released the Workbook of the [Quarterly September 2024 Carbon Market Report \(QCMR\) data](#) ahead of the report.

Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030 updated:

Released

The Federal Government has released an updated version of Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030 that is Australia's national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

It has been updated following Australia's adoption of the landmark

2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024–2030 sets ambitious national targets to tackle the drivers of biodiversity decline, to protect and repair precious places and put nature on a path to recovery.

The Strategy establishes 6 new national targets that prioritise actions to tackle the key drivers of biodiversity decline in Australia.

Helping farmers to prepare for drought:

Comment sought

In an effort to help Australian farmers to prepare for drought, the Future Drought Fund (FDF) is interested in hearing from users of the [My Climate View](#) tool and the Climate Services for Agriculture (CSA) program.

Funded under the FDF, the CSA Program has developed My Climate View, a farmer-focused digital climate information product that addresses the long-term strategic challenges facing farmers and farm advisers.

The tool presents agriculturally relevant past and future climate information in one place so farmers and their advisers can explore climate trends for specific commodities at a local scale.

The insights gained through the survey will be used in an independent evaluation of the CSA program which was delivered by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and CSIRO between 2021 and 2024. The main purpose of the evaluation is to inform the future design and delivery of the CSA program while meeting general program accountability requirements.

Feedback is sought by 11 November 2024 via the [online survey](#) about your perspectives and experiences in using the tool or being involved with the CSA Program.

Clean Energy Regulator 2023-24 annual report

The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) [annual report for 2023-24](#) was recently tabled in Parliament by Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Brown.

It describes the CER's activities and performance against targets set in its Corporate Plan 2023-27 and the Portfolio Budget Statements 2023-24. It provides analysis on how the CER is achieving its purpose: to accelerate carbon abatement for Australia, and outlines its highlights.

VICTORIA

Waste disposal categories: characteristics and thresholds publication:

Released

EPA Victoria has released the [Waste disposal categories: characteristics and thresholds](#) to assist you to –

- assess certain wastes, including total and leachable concentrations; and
- determine the correct waste disposal category.

This Waste disposal categories: characteristics and thresholds publication, as published by EPA Victoria from time to time, is incorporated into the Regulations without modification.

The publication establishes the characteristics and thresholds necessary for complying with the Regulations, specifically, classification of wastes to determine the relevant waste disposal category in accordance with Schedule 6 of the Regulations.

In Victoria, waste must be classified to meet waste duties under Part 6.4 (Duties relating to industrial waste) and 6.5 (Duties and controls relating to priority waste) of the Environment Protection Act 2017.

The Victorian Environment Protection Regulations (the Regulations), Part 4.2

(Industrial Waste and priority waste) specifies the process for classifying waste.

A holder of waste must use the criteria and thresholds in this publication to determine a waste disposal category unless the category is determined by the Regulations.

A classification of priority waste must be consistent with any designation issued by EPA Victoria for that type of priority waste.

New Waste Code publication:

Released

EPA Victoria has released an updated [Waste Codes](#) publication, as a quick guide for anyone who handles reportable priority waste, such as:

- waste producers
- accredited consigners
- waste transporters
- waste receivers.

You are required to inform EPA Victoria when reportable waste changes hands. To help you, this publication provides:

- guidance on industrial wastes
- codes to use in Waste Tracker
- classifications and placarding for different wastes
- class labels and required emergency information panel.

Offshore gas storage: Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2024 passes Victorian Parliament

The *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2024* has passed the Victorian Parliament that supports the development of additional gas storage capability to help maintain secure and reliable gas supply.

This legislative change means gas can now be stored offshore in underground reservoirs deep in rock layers, where it

formed naturally before being extracted.

This additional gas storage will ensure that supply can be made available when and where it is most needed. This will reduce Victoria's exposure to swings in gas prices during periods of high demand and will provide secure supply for gas-powered electricity generators to balance the electricity system when required.

Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio said "We're ensuring a safe and reliable energy supply is maintained as we get on and build the renewable energy of the future and work towards net zero emissions by 2045." "We've just unlocked new offshore gas storage projects that will be critical to helping us keep the lights on, protect consumers from high energy prices and support industry through the transition."

Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan

Recycling Victoria has released the [Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan 2024](#) (VRIP) that provides circular economy investors with a contemporary road map to guide decision-making on waste, recycling and resource recovery infrastructure over the next 30 years.

As an essential resource for industry, local government, and investors, the VRIP provides:

- in-depth infrastructure needs analysis that considers capacity and capability place-based assessments for each material stream residual waste and waste to energy regional opportunities land use planning.

Code of practice for bushfire management on public land:

Comment sought

The Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is seeking your feedback on draft updates to the [Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land](#).

The *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land 2012* (amended 2022) is a legislative instrument made under the *Conservation Forests and Lands Act 1987* (CFL Act). The code supports DEECA to meet its legislative responsibilities for fire prevention and suppression in State forests, national parks and on protected public land.

The current code is 10 years old and is due to expire in December. Updates to the code will ensure bushfire management on public land in Victoria meets modern needs and expectations and will align the code with current bushfire management policy and practice, including Victoria's Bushfire Management Strategy.

The Bushfire Code only applies to national park, State forest and protected public land. It does not impose responsibilities on individuals. However, your feedback is invaluable by advising how well the code balances the management of things Victorians care about in the delivery of bushfire management on public land.

Please provide your feedback via the [online survey](#) by 11:59pm on 3 November 2024.

Yurringa Energy: First Nations owned retail energy provider starts operating in Victoria

The first of Australia's First Nations-owned retail energy provider has begun operating in Victoria and is expected to power Victoria's largest road project with support from the Victorian Government.

Victorian Minister for Employment Vicki Ward and Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio had visited the North East Link site for the official launch of Yurringa Energy.

Yurringa Energy was established in 2018 to be the first of Australia's First Nations-owned and operated retail energy provider.

Support from the Victorian Government has helped establish Yurringa Energy as an energy retail

business offering supply of energy to commercial and industrial markets.

The First Nations owned company has secured the energy supply contract for the North East Link, and in partnership with Alinta Energy, will deliver 100% renewable power during the construction of the North East Link tunnels.

NEW SOUTH WALES

PFAS and safe drinking water: Information, updates and proposed guidelines

The NSW Government is working to ensure we continue to provide safe drinking water to the people of NSW.

On 21 October 2024, the National Health and Medical Research Centre (NHMRC) released [proposed guidelines](#) that outline new, lower recommended values of PFAS in drinking water.

PFAS chemicals - or per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances - are synthetic chemicals found in many everyday products. They have been widely used in many industrial and consumer applications as they are effective at resisting heat, stains, grease and water.

These substances are highly mobile in water and often referred to as "forever chemicals" because they break down extremely slowly in the environment.

Importantly, the NHMRC has confirmed that while the new proposed guideline values - which are yet to be confirmed or put in place - are lower than the current values, our drinking water remains safe as long as it continues to meet the existing guidelines.

The NHMRC used conservative assumptions in setting these proposed new values to ensure even small risks are addressed. The draft guidelines released by the NHMRC are an interim proposal and may change following further consultation and deliberation.

The NHMRC has said any detections of PFAS higher than the proposed new guideline values (also known as trigger values) should be viewed not as a

pass/fail measure but should be investigated.

The NSW Government [has welcomed the NHMRC release of proposed new drinking water guidelines for public consultation](#).

NSW EPA has released [updates and information](#) on what they are doing in NSW and who sets the standards for safe drinking water in NSW.

Draft action paper on NSW Plastics – the Way Forward:

Comment sought

NSW EPA is seeking feedback on actions and timeframes proposed in the [draft action paper - NSW Plastics: The Way Forward](#). In some cases, using plastic is unavoidable and beneficial, however, the way we produce, consume and dispose of other plastic items is increasingly unsustainable.

The *draft NSW Plastics: The Way Forward action plan* proposes new initiatives including:

- phasing out items like plastic lollipop sticks, pizza savers and food tags for bread, bakery and pantry items
- bringing NSW into line with other states and phasing out the release of lighter-than-air balloons as well as the supply of plastic balloon sticks, clips and ties
- introducing design standards for single-use plastic cups, food containers and their lids to ensure they are easily recyclable
- phasing out the supply of unnecessary plastic barrier bags.

Please provide feedback via the [online survey](#) by 4 November 2024.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY for NSW businesses

The following funding for NSW businesses is now available -

- [Funding for eligible landholders in the Hunter region](#)

This program provides funding to landholders in priority catchments of the Local Land Services Hunter to reduce the risk to drinking water quality in these catchments.

Organised by: Four Valleys Program Sustainable Ag Incentives 2023/25 NSW.

- [Funding to support reduction of business food waste](#)

This program provides funding to organisations looking to support businesses and organisations to reduce and source separate food waste.

Organised by: Business Food Waste Partnership Grant NSW

- [Funding for eligible landholders in the Lower Manning River Estuary region](#)

This program provides funding to landholders in priority catchments of the Local Land Services Hunter to reduce the risk to drinking water quality in these catchments.

Organised by: Lower Manning Dairy Nutrient Management Incentives Program 2023-25 NSW

- [Funding for carbon planting projects](#) (Riverina LLS Region) and [Funding for a carbon planting project](#) (Midcoast LGA Region)

This program provides NSW landholders with funding to help them start a carbon planting project.

Organised by: Living Carbon Grants – The Riverina LLS Region and Living Carbon Grants – The MidCoast LGA Region

- [Funding to install, own, operate and maintain kerbside EV charging infrastructure in NSW](#)

This program provides funding to organisations to help them with the costs of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

Organised by: **Electric Vehicle Kerbside Charging Grants NSW**

- [Funding to help high emitting NSW industries shift to net zero](#)

This program provides funding to high emitting NSW industries to help them reduce their emissions and strengthen their resilience into the future.

Organised by: **High Emitting Industries Funding NSW**

QUEENSLAND

Updated Information Sheet for Duty to Restore the Environment – Overview

Released

The QLD Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) has released an [update information sheet](#) on the Duty to Restore the Environment – Overview.

The purpose of the updated sheet is to respond to frequently asked questions regarding the duty to restore the environment that is stated in section 319C of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (EP Act).

NEW GUIDELINES: Compliance under the EP Act

Effective from 18 June 2024, the QLD Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) has released the updated guideline on Compliance under the EP Act that provides an overview of compliance and enforcement by the Department under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (the EP Act).

Updated Information Sheet on General Environmental Duty:

Released

The QLD Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) has released the [updated General Environmental Duty Information Sheet](#) to provide information regarding the general environmental duty that applies under section 319 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (EP Act).

Updated Guideline on Greenhouse gas emissions:

Released

The QLD Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) has released the [updated guideline](#) on Greenhouse gas emissions to provide information to support applications for activities that involve greenhouse gas emissions.

The guideline clarifies existing application requirements under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (EP Act) and provides information about how to meet these requirements in relation to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It does not include any new regulatory provisions.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY for QLD businesses

Funding is available for QLD businesses -

[Grants for QLD exploration businesses](#)

This program provides Queensland based exploration companies with funding to help them undertake critical mineral exploration activities.

Organised by: Collaborative
Exploration Initiative QLD

[Funding for primary producers impacted by south-east Queensland severe storms and rainfall](#)

This program provides funding to primary producers impacted by south-east Queensland severe storms and rainfall, 24 December 2023 to 3 January 2024.

Organised by: Extraordinary Disaster Recovery Grants – SE Queensland Severe Storms and Rainfall (Primary Producer)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Circular Economy Resource Report and Kerbside Waste Performance Report:

Released

Green Industries SA (GISA) has released the [Circular Economy Resource Recovery Report \(CERRR\) 2022–23](#).

Each year, Green Industries SA measures recovery and disposal activity in SA to assess how the state is performing on waste management and resource recovery. The findings are used to track progress against SA's waste targets.

This report represents the results for the 2022–23 financial year.

SA's recovery rate in 2022–23 was an estimated 82.3%, which is slightly higher than the previous year. SA recovered around 4.24 million tonnes of material in 2022–23, which is a 6% increase compared to 2021–22. Around 914 kt of waste was disposed to landfill in 2022–23, and increase of 3% compared to 2021–22.

In addition to the CERRR, GISA has also released [South Australia's Kerbside Waste Performance: State and Regional Report 2021–22](#).

This report presents data on statewide kerbside waste and recycling collection services across the state's 68 council areas.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY for SA businesses

Funding is available for SA businesses -

- [Funding for SA small businesses and not-for-profits to improve their energy use and costs](#)

This program provides funding to small businesses and not-for-profits to invest in energy efficient equipment or improvements.

Organised by: Small Business Energy Efficiency Grants SA