

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 12 September 2023

AEBN Upcoming Events

Please click on title for details and to Register -

- **[Workshop Webinar]**
[SERIES 1 to Dangerous Goods, Hazardous Substances and GHS](#)
Covering Regulator Framework, Classification, Labelling, Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) and more
10.00am – 1.45pm
25 October 2023
- **[Workshop Webinar]**
[SERIES 2 to Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances](#)
Covering Storage, Handling and Transport
10.00am – 1.45pm
26 October 2023

FEDERAL

Safeguard Mechanism: Facilities with excess emissions in 2022-23 maybe eligible for multi-year monitoring period (MYMP)

The Clean Energy Regulator has announced that under the reformed Safeguard Mechanism, facilities with excess emissions in the 2022-23 reporting year may be eligible for a [multi-year monitoring period](#) (MYMP) of up to 5 years.

The new MYMP application form is now available in [Online Services](#). Facilities seeking a MYMP to manage their excess emissions in the 2022-23 reporting year, must complete this form by **15 November 2023**.

For enquiries, please contact 1300 553 542
or enquiries@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au.

Review into Carbon Leakage

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) has announced that a [review on carbon leakage](#) will be undertaken as part of the Safeguard Mechanism reforms that commenced on 1 July 2023.

The Federal Government has appointed Prof Frank Jotzo to lead the Review to consider additional policy options to address carbon leakage. The [Terms of Reference](#) are released.

Countries around the world have varying greenhouse gas emissions policies to help limit climate change, with some stricter than others. Carbon leakage refers to a situation where a company decides to move their production from a country with stringent policies, to a country that is more lenient with climate policies, leading to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Review will include 2 consultations with businesses, employee groups, the research sector, and community groups, including calls for written submissions.

The final report of the Review will be provided to the Federal Government by 30 September 2024.

Detailed design of any agreed policy options is expected to take place after the Review and could be part of the Federal Government's net zero 2050 plan.

Further information is available by contacting the Carbon Leakage Team

on carbonleakagereview@dcceew.gov.au

Safe Work Australia says Asbestos Registers are a **must** for workplaces:

New guide released

Have the buildings, structures or plant equipment at your workplace been built or installed before 2004, or if in Queensland before 1990?

If you are the person with management or control of the workplace, you **must** ensure an asbestos register is prepared, maintained and readily accessible to other persons at your workplace.

Safe Work Australia has released a [new guide - Asbestos registers at the workplace](#) to assist you to:

- understand what an asbestos register is and if your workplace needs one,
- develop and maintain a comprehensive asbestos register that identifies asbestos at your workplace, and
- understand who are considered "competent persons" in relation to identifying asbestos and collecting information for asbestos registers.

Hazardous Chemical Information System (HCIS):

Updated by Safe Work Australia

The Hazardous [Chemical Information System](#) (HCIS) has been updated by Safe Work Australia with 301 entries of new or amended data.

To access the data updates:

1. Go to the "[Search Hazardous Chemicals](#)" page of the HCIS.
2. Click on "Show Advanced Search" and change the "From date" to 09/08/2023 to see the new chemical entries or updated classifications of existing entries.

For more information, see [Chemicals | Safe Work Australia](#) or if you are unable to access HCIS, please contact chemicals@swa.gov.au.

Waste export summary for January – March 2023

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released the latest [Waste export summary for January – March 2023](#).

Blue Environment was commissioned by the Department to collate and analyse data on national exports of waste.

This summary contains Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from January to March 2023. It does not include written analysis of the data, unlike previous monthly summaries. The Department is reassessing the need for such analysis in light of positive feedback about the [waste export data viewer](#).

New Fuel Efficiency Standard (FES) for cars

The Federal Government is [introducing a Fuel Efficiency \(CO₂\) Standard](#) and the new draft FES will be released by the end of 2023.

The FES will only apply to new vehicles sold in Australia.

Fuel efficiency standards are common around the world to encourage vehicle suppliers to sell cleaner cars. Fuel efficiency standards help by:

- reducing transport emissions, improving the air that you and your family breathe
- giving you more choice about the cars that you can buy
- saving you money at the petrol pump.

Most developed countries around the world have introduced fuel efficiency standards.

The recent FES consultation submissions are now informing an impact analysis.

Regulator encourages battery storage information in small-scale technology certificates (STCs) claims

Small-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) systems with battery storage are becoming increasingly popular as businesses and households try to lower energy costs.

When installed, [battery storage](#) systems form a critical part of a complete solar PV installation. These devices and all other distributed energy resource (DER) devices connected to the National Electricity Market must be updated in the Australian Market Energy Operator's (AEMO) [DER Register](#).

The Clean Energy Regulator is encouraging participants to supply battery storage data when applying for small-scale technology certificates (STCs).

While batteries are not eligible for STCs, battery data informs safety, grid management and product recalls. Electrical incidents with solar PV and battery storage systems while rare, are serious. System location and make-up is important for emergency services to manage electrical incidents and the

security and operation of the electricity grid.

STC claims submitted with battery storage information also contributes to the [postcode data](#) collected under the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES). This data is a key source of information for solar PV and battery storage installations across Australia, its completeness and availability are valued by industry. It is also used by AEMO and other industry bodies to understand PV and battery uptake.

Review on how renewable energy projects are engaging with communities

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is seeking feedback on a [discussion paper](#) on how renewable energy projects are engaging with communities.

The review is intended to provide advice to:

- maximise community engagement with renewable energy infrastructure projects; and
- plan, develop and operate energy infrastructure to benefit communities.

The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) Andrew Dyer is leading the Community Engagement Review and the [Terms of Reference](#) is now available.

The Final Report is expected to be delivered to the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy by 31 December 2023.

Please provide [feedback](#) by 5.00pm (AEST) on 1 October 2023.

Clean Energy Regulator's Corporate Plan for 2023-27:

Released

The Clean Energy Regulator's has released their [2023-27 Corporate Plan](#).

The Plan serves as the agency's primary planning document and outlines whether they are meeting their purpose to accelerate carbon abatement for Australia.

The Plan states that within the next 4 years they will continue to focus on managing the statutory requirements of their schemes, including the Safeguard Mechanism, progressing the Australian Carbon Exchange and Guarantee of Origin, and strengthening stakeholder engagement.

Their performance against the Plan will be reported in the Annual Performance Statement of the Clean Energy Regulator Annual Report 2023–24.

New chair appointed to Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee

The Federal Government has appointed Professor Karen Hussey as Chair of the Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee (ERAC).

The [ERAC](#) provides independent advice to ensure the integrity of the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme (ACCU).

One of the recommendations from the [Independent Review](#) into the ACCU scheme was to re-establish ERAC and to:

- give the committee updated terms of reference and functions;
- ensure a skill mix of committee members; and
- for at least 1 member to be a First Nations person.

Prof Hussey's experience in climate policy and stakeholder management

will help restore confidence in the ACCU scheme and help to ensure the ACCU scheme delivers on actions to reduce Australia's emissions, to help reach net zero by 2050.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY for Cement, Lime, Alumina and Aluminium sectors

The Federal Government's \$200 million [Powering the Regions Fund \(PRF\) Critical Inputs to Clean Energy Industries – Cement, Lime, Alumina and Aluminium Sector \(CICEI – CLAAS\) grant program](#) is now open for.

The grant program is expected to provide support to help Australian producers in the Cement, Lime, Alumina and Aluminium Sectors to reduce their emissions and maintain domestic manufacturing capacity.

This will reduce risks to our clean energy transformation which relies on these materials.

The PRF is part of [Powering Australia](#) plan for Australia to become a renewable energy superpower and reduce our emissions to net zero by 2050.

The CICEI – CLAAS grant program closes on 2 November 2023.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY for renewable energy in First Nations communities

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has announced funding for solar infrastructure in remote communities. The [Regional Microgrids Program](#) will allocate \$75 million for projects in First Nations communities.

The program also incorporates ARENA's former \$50 million Regional Australia Microgrid Pilots Program (RAMPP), bringing the total of the Regional Microgrids Program funding pool to \$125 million.

Electricity provision in remote First Nations communities is often

dependent on diesel. The First Nations Community Microgrids Stream aims to deliver cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy. It will empower First Nations communities to participate in their electricity supply arrangements and the development of energy infrastructure.

Projects under the First Nations Community Microgrids Stream will be developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, First Nations renewable energy experts and the state and territory governments.

Applications are now open, with the program to run until December 2025 or until funds are exhausted.

VICTORIA

Four Regulators undertake blitz of construction worksites

A construction safety blitz was recently undertaken by EPA Victoria, VBA, Energy Safe and WorkSafe to inspect, as part of the Build Aware Initiative, construction sites in Warrnambool to ensure safety for their employees, the environment and community.

Build Aware Initiative aims to ensure workers are meeting their safety, environmental, building and plumbing compliance obligations.

The 4 regulators, under the Build Aware Initiative have previously visited regional areas including - Mildura, Bass Coast, Shepparton, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Wodonga, Geelong and Bendigo.

The joint activities delivered by the regulators include industry trade breakfasts, joint inspections and educational presentations to local TAFE students.

Each regulator targeted different areas relevant to their organisation's safety and compliance remit.

- The VBA focused on inspections on construction in alignment with the bushfire assessment levels, fire rating and waterproofing for building and roofing, as well as gasfitting compliance for plumbing.
- Energy Safe focused on obligations for individuals and companies when working near overhead powerlines and underground energy assets.
- WorkSafe focused on raising awareness of employers' obligations around risks associated with crystalline silica dust, including the preparation of hazard control statements for high-risk silica work.
- EPA focused on increasing awareness of the General Environmental Duty (GED) and environmental laws that apply to the construction and demolition industry, to prevent harm to human health and the environment.

EPA Victoria says poor environmental compliance by some Gippsland dairy farms

EPA Victoria warns the dairy sector that they will continue to inspect the industry and will take strong regulatory action if they find non-compliance.

EPA Victoria's recent inspections of Gippsland dairy farms has found high levels of non-compliance on how dairy effluent is managed.

EPA Victoria and other agencies such as Agriculture Victoria provide [guidance and advice links including assistance schemes](#) to assist farmers to make the necessary improvements, retain valuable nutrients on their farms, and importantly for businesses, save them costs while protecting the environment.

EPA officers visited 19 farms in the Poowong North, Hallora, Nyora, Ripplebrook and Athlone areas.

Despite ongoing communications with the industry, 85% were non-compliant.

"EPA has consistently communicated with dairy farmers about the requirements regarding on farm management of dairy effluent. To find that just 15% of the farms visited were compliant is surprising and disappointing," Jessica Bandiera EPA Gippsland Regional Manager said.

"There are many actions that farmers can take to prevent harm to the environment. Maintaining a dairy effluent management system is vital. Cleaning out the dairy effluent ponds regularly and ensuring appropriate irrigation systems are in place will capture valuable resources and save thousands in fertilizer costs".

"We gave compliance advice and issued nine notices requiring non-compliant farms to install controls, or complete works to better manage their risks. We have also issued seven fines totalling more than \$20,000 with more likely to come.

"Dairy effluent cannot be allowed to be discharged to waterways. It is high in substances that may be toxic and pose a risk to the environment and human health.

"The majority of non-compliance issues concerned dairy effluent ponds that were full or overflowing into paddocks and down into waterways, broken or ineffective equipment like pumps and irrigation systems and not having an effluent management plan in place. Some farms even had pipes directly discharging into waterways."

line with the Public Service Wage Price Index.

Effective from 1 September 2023, the new fee rates are outlined in the table below:

- Cost recovery fees rates - \$104 per hour
- Application fee for accreditation as a site auditor - \$1,234
- Fee for accreditation as a site auditor (for a period one year or less) - \$8,620

Information on [Paying for EPA cost recovery](#) and [Contaminated land site auditor accreditation process](#) is now available.

Sampling requirements for contaminate service station sites

NSW EPA has published new guidelines to assist consultants, site auditors, regulators and planning authorities who undertake or review contamination assessments of service station sites.

The *Contamination assessment of service station sites – Minimum sampling requirements [guidelines](#)* provide guidance on the assessment process, the role of sampling within that process, and details of where samples should be collected, the minimum number to collect and why.

Stakeholder feedback was incorporated into the final guidelines from an early 2023 consultation.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Contaminated Land Management: New NSW EPA cost recovery and site auditor fee changes

NSW EPA will be able to recover administrative costs for certain activities outlined in the *Contaminated Land Management Act 1997*. This cost is prescribed in the Contaminated Land Management Regulation 2022 and is adjusted each year from 2023 in

QUEENSLAND

More single-use plastics bans commence 1 September 2023

Effective 1 September 2023, Queensland has now banned on additional single-use plastic items, therefore, businesses in Queensland are no longer able to supply:

- Plastic shopping bags which do not meet new requirement
- Expanded polystyrene loose-fill packaging
- Cotton buds with plastic stems
- Plastic microbeads
- The release of a lighter-than-air balloon will also be banned.

The QLD Department of Environment and Science (DES) has released a [5-year roadmap for action on single-use plastic items](#) to assist businesses. The roadmap provides a list of the banned items and the date of when the ban takes effective.

Additional information is available on banned [single-use plastic items](#) in QLD. For further assistance, please contact the National Retail Association Hotline on **1800 844 946**.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

New commercial and industrial noise policy for SA

On 31 October 2023, a new SA noise policy will come into effect.

The new policy, which will operate under the [Environment Protection Act 1993](#), has been developed after extensive review by SA EPA and will replace the *Environment Protection (Noise) Policy 2007*.

The [Environment Protection \(Commercial and Industrial Noise\) Policy 2023](#) will continue to protect human health from the impacts of commercial and industrial noise by providing an updated legal framework for the assessment of a wide range of commercial and industrial noise issues.

SA EPA working on dairy industry guidelines

SA EPA has begun a review of the [Code of practice for milking shed effluent](#) and has undertaken early consultation with the SA dairy industry.

SA EPA is in the early stages of this work. It is anticipated that the documents will be completed in early 2024.

Proposed groundwater prohibition area at Woodville North, SA

SA EPA is proposing to establish a groundwater prohibition area (GPA) in parts of Woodville North and surrounding suburbs. The area covers portions of Woodville North, Pennington and Athol Park.

These suburbs have historically been areas where significant industrial and manufacturing activities such as the production of ammunitions, whitegoods and vehicles have been undertaken.

Chemicals identified in the groundwater include chlorinated hydrocarbons such as trichloroethene (TCE) and tetrachloroethene (PCE) and their breakdown products and metals.

The most recent EPA assessments have shown that groundwater in the upper three aquifers in the area are contaminated with a range of chemicals above drinking water guidelines.

The EPA establishes GPAs to prevent exposure to contaminated groundwater and protect public health. Before establishing the GPA, the EPA is undertaking a 60-day consultation period and wants to hear from residents and bore users.

Further [details](#) are now available.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Increasing access to renewable energy by modernising electricity grids

The Federal and WA Government are working together to increase access to renewable energy by modernising electricity grids in the South West and North West regions of WA.

This new agreement is the fourth under the [Rewiring the Nation](#) plan.

The investment will connect wind and solar resources to homes, businesses and industry.

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation will approve loans and equity investments for:

- North West Interconnected System transmission projects
- South West Interconnected System transmission projects

WA contributes 35% of emissions covered by the national Safeguard Mechanism. Pilbara facilities account for two-thirds of WA's emissions.

This agreement is expected to assist:

- The Pilbara lowering emissions;
- Australia to meet its emissions reduction targets.

This follows Rewiring the Nation agreements with NSW, TAS and VIC.

Stage 2 ban on additional single-plastics:

Commenced 1 September 2023

WA's Plan for Plastics Stage 2 came into effect on 27 February 2023.

Stage 2 items are in the process of being phased out, with different transition periods for compliance and enforcement, depending on the item.

Transition periods for the phase-out of Stage 2 items will allow businesses to run down supplies and make plans for alternative processes and packaging. Stage 2 includes a second set of

single-use or disposable plastic items and materials that will be phased out between 1 September 2023 and 1 July 2025.

Please refer to the [transition period for each item](#):

From 1 September 2023, the following items are now banned in WA:

- loose and moulded expanded polystyrene packaging
- cotton buds with plastic stems
- microbeads
- expanded polystyrene cups and food trays for raw meat and seafood
- degradable plastics (plastics designed to break up more rapidly into fragments under certain conditions).

The WA Government says it will continue to use a common-sense, education-first approach to enforcing the bans. Retailers and suppliers not making any plans or effort to transition, and deliberately continuing to supply banned items, could face fines up to \$5,000 for an individual, or up to \$25,000 for a body corporate.

The National Retail Association offers support programs for retailers, suppliers and community groups. The Boomerang Alliance, in partnership with the Government, is also supporting the hospitality industry, and local governments to adapt through the WA Plastic Free Places program.

infrastructure. This aims to address gaps in WA's waste recycling, reprocessing and remanufacturing capacity to handle the COAG waste export bans.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:

WasteSorted Infrastructure Grants 2023-24

The Waste Authority is providing funding under the [WasteSorted Infrastructure Grants program](#) to support investment in recycling and processing infrastructure in WA.

This grants program is administered by the Waste Authority and funded through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account.

Priority will be given to infrastructure projects that support recovery and reprocessing of focus materials prioritised for the 2023–24 funding round.

The [WasteSorted Infrastructure Grants guidelines 2023–24](#) provide further guidance on eligibility and how to apply for funding.

Applications close at 12.00 noon (WST) on Monday 2 October 2023.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: Round 2 of the Recycling Modernisation Fund – General Stream:

Guidelines released

The WA Government has released [guidelines](#) for Round 2 of the Recycling Modernisation Fund (RMF) General stream.

The RMF General stream provides grant funding support to build, expand or upgrade plastics, tyre and paper and cardboard waste processing