



**Environment Protection Authority Victoria**

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# Compliance changes in 2024 for businesses with operations in Victoria: new initiatives and EPA Victoria's expectations of business

## AEBN 2024 National Environmental Compliance for Business Conference



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EPA acknowledges Aboriginal people as the first peoples and Traditional Custodians of the land and water on which we live, work and depend. We pay respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present and recognise the continuing connection to, and aspirations for Country.

## Who we are

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) is Victoria's environmental regulator.

We work with community, industry and business to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of pollution and waste on Victoria's environment and people.

The environment is everyone's business.

[epa.vic.gov.au](http://epa.vic.gov.au)



# Why we do what we do

Everyone has a role in preventing harm to Victoria's environment. Small acts that harm our environment add up and can have a big impact. Like you, we want Victoria's environment to be a liveable, healthy place.

Laws now will require everyone to take reasonable steps to identify and manage their risks to the environment.

EPA is ready to help all business owners and operators understand their obligations under the law.

We are here to help all businesses with guidance on how to meet Victoria's legislation about environmental duties.



# Strategic Plan 2022-27

Environment Protection Authority Victoria

## Our purpose

Protecting the health of our communities and environment

## Our values

Integrity, courage, connection, excellence, tenacity



<b>The outcomes we want to see</b> <small>We've identified the strategic outcomes we want to see by 2027</small>	 <b>Our environment is cleaner and communities are healthier</b>	 <b>All Victorians reduce their environmental risks</b>	 <b>We have impact and influence</b>
<b>The choices we've made</b> <small>We've made strategic choices to set us on the path to the outcomes we want</small>	<small>We focus on air, water, land and noise pollution that causes the greatest harm</small> <hr/> <small>We work to understand and respond to current and emerging issues through science, data and intelligence</small> <hr/> <small>We'll be practical and solution focused to ensure we take the right approach in each circumstance</small>	<small>We embed the environment protection framework ensuring it is widely understood and implemented</small> <hr/> <small>We're consistent, transparent and proportionate in holding polluters to account</small> <hr/> <small>We work with communities, industry and businesses so they act to prevent harm to the environment and human health</small>	<small>We build effective partnerships that amplify our knowledge, reach and presence</small> <hr/> <small>We respect the knowledge and cultural values of Traditional Owners and seek to understand and include those values in our work</small> <hr/> <small>We employ our full range of regulatory capabilities</small>
<b>What we're aiming to achieve</b> <small>To see the outcomes we want, we've defined what we're aiming to achieve</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improved air and water quality</li> <li>✓ Reduced land contamination and noise pollution</li> <li>✓ Businesses have appropriate permissions in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased understanding among communities and businesses of their environmental obligations</li> <li>✓ Increased adoption of environmental and human health risk controls</li> <li>✓ Industrial waste disposed of at a lawful place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reduction in repeat polluters</li> <li>✓ Increased proactive detection of environmental crime</li> <li>✓ Effective internal review and assurance processes that drive continuous improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Our performance measures and targets</b> <small>To monitor our performance against the outcomes we want, we've established measures and targets</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of days that the maximum concentration standards for one or more of nitrogen dioxide, ozone, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> is exceeded - 2027 target: 0 days</li> <li>Percentage of monitoring sites that meet long-term microbial water quality standards - 2027 target: 93 per cent</li> <li>Percentage of high risk contaminated land sites under active management - 2027 target: 95 per cent</li> <li>Number of premises required to take remedial action because of noise - 2027 target: 35 premises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of pollution reports requiring a field response by EPA due to possible human health and/or environmental impacts - 2027 target: 4.5 per cent</li> <li>Percentage of permissioned businesses that have appropriate risk controls implemented at their site or premises - 2027 target: 95 per cent</li> <li>Percentage of the Victorian community that know about the general environmental duty - 2027 target: 80 per cent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of the Victorian community that are aware of EPA - 2027 target: 95 per cent</li> <li>Percentage of the Victorian community that trust EPA - 2027 target: 90 per cent</li> <li>Number of citations of EPA science - 2027 target: 1,275 citations</li> </ul>

## The drivers of our success

Our people are our most valuable asset. We prioritise their safety and wellbeing, creating a positive culture and a great place to work.

We're a learning organisation, committed to continuous improvement.

We use science, data and intelligence to inform our actions.

We're agile and responsive, leaning into challenges.

We're clear about our role and accountable for our actions.

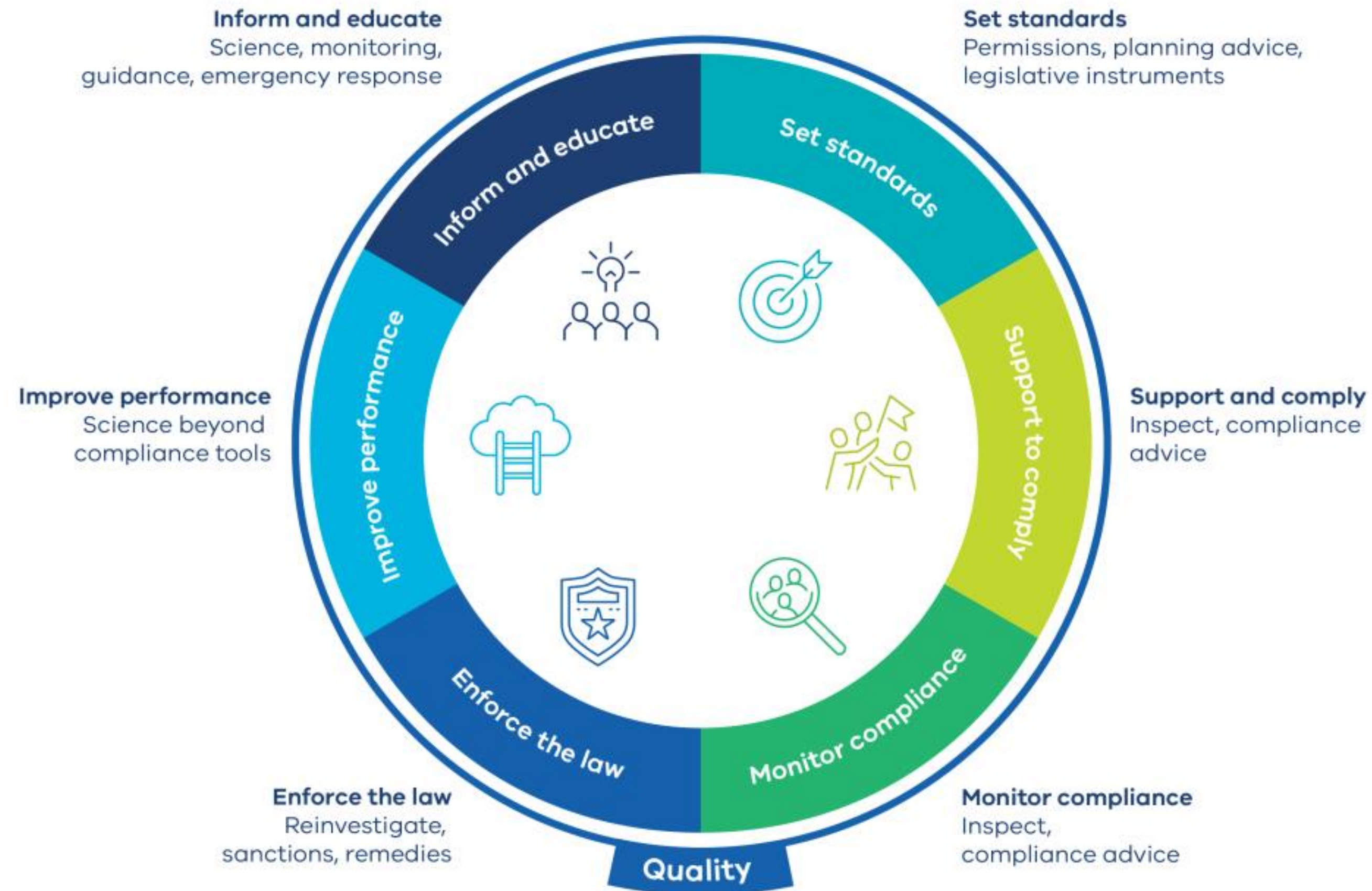
We engage early, often, and respectfully with those affected by our decisions, seeking to understand their aspirations and concerns.

We use technology to be more effective and efficient in our work.

We build appropriate partnerships with industry to achieve compliance with the environmental protection framework.



# How we do this



# EPA's Sector Consultation Groups: informing, educating and supporting to comply



Water



Waste & recycling



Small business &  
manufacturing



Resources, energy  
& extraction

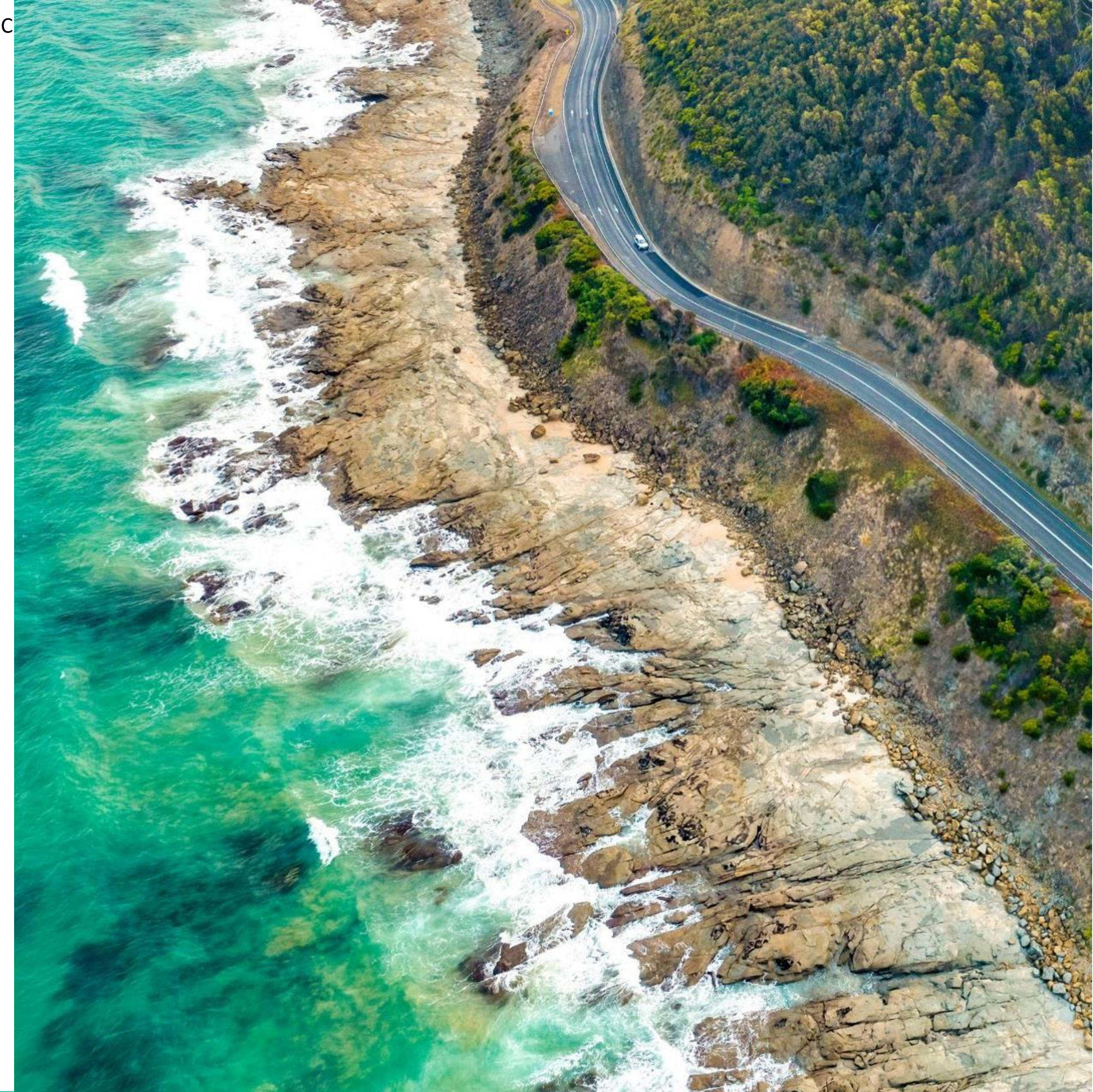


Agriculture  
& extraction

*In its first year, 76 organisations were represented across the five groups.*

# Program objectives

1. Activate the principle of shared responsibility: Protection of human health and the environment is a responsibility shared by all levels of government and industry, business, communities and the people of Victoria.
2. Drive continuous improvement in environmental performance through dialogue and consultation with members' own networks of stakeholders operating within key sectors of the Victorian economy.
3. Bring together stakeholders and peer regulators to maximise the impact of Victoria's Environment Protection Framework and manage strategic risks.
4. Actively support EPA to uplift the knowledge and capability of duty holders to comply with their environmental duties, particularly the GED/state of knowledge.
5. Support EPA in delivering environmental protection for the Victorian community.
6. Enable greater clarity, information and connectivity between EPA and its stakeholders.





# Water

## Focus areas:

- challenges for the water sector in managing risks to the environment and human health emerging from climate change
- planning for and managing growth areas including conflicts between land uses and ongoing encroachment
- impacts to waterways of discharges of waste from water treatments plants
- taking reasonably practicable steps to manage risks of harm to health from contaminants including emerging contaminants.

## Member organisations

- Australian Water Association (Victoria-branch)
- Barwon Water
- Central Highlands Water
- Coliban Water
- Department of Environment, Environment and Climate Action
- East Gippsland Water
- Essential Services Commission
- Gippsland Water Goulburn Valley Water
- Goulburn-Murray Water
- Greater Western Water
- Lower Murray Water
- Melbourne Water
- North East Water
- South East Water
- South Gippsland Water
- Southern Rural Water
- VicCatchments
- VicWater
- Wannon Water
- Westernport Water
- Yarra Valley Water



# Waste and recycling

## Focus areas:

- impacts, for example:
  - review examples such as organics diverted from landfill and single use plastics in NSW
  - consider where industry feels constrained in its ability to comply.
- financial assurances.

## Member organisations

- Australian Council of Recycling
- Australian Landfill Operators Association
- Australian Metal Recycling Industry Association
- Australian Organics Recycling Association
- Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation
- Circular Resources Australia
- Gippsland Water
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- National Waste and Recycling Industry Council
- Recycling Victoria
- Sustainability Victoria
- Tyre Stewardship Australia
- Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Victorian Local Governance Association
- Victorian Waste Management Association
- Waste Industry Alliance (Ai Group)
- Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia



# Small business and manufacturing

## Focus areas:

- explore and share success stories and examples of good compliance.

## Member organisations

- Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Council
- Australian Industry Group
- Australia Retailers Association
- Australian Dairy Products Federation
- Australian Renderers Association
- Dry Cleaning Institute of Australia
- Master Grocers Association
- Music Victoria
- National Retail Association
- Outdoor Power Equipment Association Inc
- Print & Visual Communication Association
- Small Business Association of Australia
- Small Business Victoria (Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions)
- South East Melbourne Manufacturers Alliance
- Victorian Caravan Parks Assoc Inc. (VicParks)
- Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry



# Resources, energy and extraction

## Focus areas:

- climate action
- coal mine rehabilitation
- battery fires
- GED guidance
- high level uses related to mining
- wastewater impact on aquifers
- financial assurance
- definition of waste
- success stories and examples of good compliance.

## Member organisations

- Australian Energy Council
- Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia
- Chemistry Australia
- Construction Material Processors Association
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Earth Resources Policy and Programs, Resources, Forestry Resources & Climate Change)
- Minerals Council of Australia



# Agriculture

## Focus areas:

- success stories and examples of good compliance
- definition of waste.

## Member organisations

- Agriculture Victoria
- Australian Lot Feeders Association
- Australian Meat Industry Council
- Australian Pork Ltd
- AusVEG
- Birchip Cropping Group
- Dairy Australia
- Fruit Growers Victoria
- Nursery and Gardening Industry Victoria
- Seafood Industry Victoria
- Victorian Forest Products Association
- Wine Victoria



## So far, SCGs have discussed:

- EPA's regulatory priorities for 2023/24
- priority risks of harm
- forthcoming EPA statement of regulatory intent on the causes and consequences of climate change
- wastewater treatment plants
- disposal pathways for e-waste with embedded batteries
- biosecurity
- financial assurance
- biochar reuse and disposal options
- wind farms
- classifying digestates.





# EPA's Planned Engagement Noticeboard

Public Affairs Branch

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# EPA engagement, events and releases, March-May 2024

## March 2024

### Engagement

- EPA's statement of regulatory intent on the causes and consequences of climate change
- Noise pollution preventative communication campaign to supermarkets

- Odour pollution preventative inspections focusing on known industries at risk of creating odour pollution
- Guidance on Emerging contaminants in recycled water and uptake to crops
- Guidance: Reducing the impacts of grazing on water quality

### Events

- Build-a-ware 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> March in Bairnsdale

### Releases

- Reducing regulatory burden for black coal fly ash
- Decommissioning guideline for licences
- Onsite wastewater management reform

## April 2024

### Engagement

- Release for comment for: Review of publ. 1588: Designing, Constructing Operating Composting Facilities

### Events

- VWMA Conference 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April

### Releases

- Update to Soil Sampling guidance (Spoil Management Strategy 6.1)
- Obligations of Managers of Land or Infrastructure (OMLI) TBC

## May 2024

### Engagement

### Events

- Build-a-ware 27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> May in Shepparton

### Releases

- Guideline – Buffer and separation distances (TBC)



## Publications released so far in 2023-24

Title	Timing
Waste to energy reuse pathways (incinerator bottom ash)	Webinar held July 2023
Civil construction, building and demolition guide (Publ 1834)	Guidance update published Sept 2023
Amending EPA transitioned permits – “Wastewater supply and use (A24)” and “Biosolids supply or use (A15)” to align with the EP Act framework	June 2023
Guidance for environmental and human health risk assessment of wastewater discharges to surface waters	Published mid 2023
Safe use of low risk digestate	Published in January 2024
Recycled water use in surface waters (Publication 3005)	Released Feb 2024

## Publications to come in 2023-24

Title	Timing
Black coal fly ash (BCFA) – consultation on proposed regulatory approach and instruments	For release in March 2024
Draft planning guidelines – Landfill Buffers and Separation Distances	Guidelines expected to be published in March 2024.
Onsite wastewater management systems (owms) reforms	Guideline publication expected March 2024
OMLI/Saved clauses from SEPP Waters	Instrument expected to be made in April 2024
Soil Sampling Guidance – Update to EPA’s Guidance for sampling waste soils	Expected release in April 2024
Draft planning guidelines – Buffers and Separation distances	Guideline planned for release in May 2024
Wind Energy Facility Technical and Auditor Guidelines	Final guidance planned release in June 2024
PFAS environmental sampling project (FIRS 1bli)	Expected release in June 2024
Changes to how EPA regulated PFAS in wastes and waste soil	Expected release in June 2024
New method for determining Financial Assurance for Contaminated Land	Final methodology and guidance expected in June 2024
Guidance: Reducing the impacts of grazing on water quality	Expected to be published in June 2024
Responsibly operating organic waste processing facilities (publ 1588.1)	Final guidance planned release Aug 2024