

# ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 11 February 2025

## 2025 AEBN EVENTS

1. [\[Interactive Webinar\] PLAN FOR 2025: 2025 AEBN National Conference on Environment, Climate Change and Energy:](#)

[New laws, developments and funding for business in 2025](#)

This annual AEBN Conference Webinar is designed to assist you to **PLAN FOR 2025**. The Conference Webinar will provide key **changes expected in 2025** on environmental, climate change and carbon management compliance, including funding and grants available to businesses.

This Conference Webinar is designed to assist businesses to remain compliant.

**10.00am to 4.00pm  
7 March 2025**

Register early to secure your place!

2. [\[Interactive Webinar\] SERIES 1: Dangerous Goods, Hazardous Chemicals & GHS](#)

[Covering: Regulatory framework, Identification, Classification, Safety Data Sheets \(SDSs\) and Labelling](#)

**2 APRIL 2025  
9.50am (AEST) for 10.00am (start) to 1.45pm**

Register early to secure your place!

3. [\[Interactive Webinar\] SERIES 2: Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Chemicals](#)

[Covering: Storage, Handling and Transport](#)

**3 APRIL 2025  
9.50am (AEST) for 10.00am (start) to 1.45pm**

Register early to secure your place!

## FEDERAL

### New Guarantee of Origin (GO) legislation

and

### Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin (REGO)

New legislation has passed that is intended to support Australia's transformation to a low carbon economy. It is intended to help producers remain competitive in new domestic and global markets.

The [Future Made in Australia \(Guarantee of Origin\) Act 2024](#), along with its supporting legislation, establishes the framework for the [Guarantee of Origin \(GO\) Scheme](#).

The Guarantee of Origin (GO) is an internationally aligned assurance scheme being developed to track and verify emissions associated with hydrogen and renewable electricity made in Australia. Over time, it could expand to include a range of products such as

- metals,
- low emissions fuels, and
- other products made in Australia.

GO will show where a product has come from, how it was made, and the

emissions throughout its lifecycle.

The scheme will issue Product GO certificates and Renewable Energy GO (REGO) certificates.

It will begin with certification of hydrogen and renewable energy and expand to other products made in Australia over time, including green metals and low carbon liquid fuels.

The GO scheme will have a mechanism to certify renewable electricity, called the [Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin \(REGO\)](#).

The Clean Energy Regulator is supporting the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water who is leading policy development of the GO Scheme. The Clean Energy Regulator will be responsible for administering the scheme, which is anticipated to be in operation by the second half of 2025.

## AEBN

## Comment

Hear the Clean Energy Regulator and experts ERM Energetics present on the opportunities and impacts of the new GO Scheme at the annual [\[Interactive Webinar\] 2025 AEBN National Conference on Environment, Climate Change and Energy: New Laws, Developments and Funding from across Australia for Business](#) – scheduled at 10.00am – 4.00pm, 7 March 2025.

Register early to secure your place.

## First Safeguard Mechanism credit units issued in new Unit and Certificate Registry

The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) has now issued the first [Safeguard Mechanism credit units \(SMCs\)](#) into eligible Australian National Registry of

Emissions Units (ANREU) accounts in the new [Unit and Certificate Registry](#).

The new Unit and Certificate Registry has been developed to respond to Australia's expanding carbon and environmental markets, and to support the 2030 emissions reduction target and net zero by 2050 goal.

It provides a secure and single place to hold and transfer multiple unit and certificate types and will connect with external digital trading platforms.

Account holders with SMCs in their account will now be able to:

- view, filter and sort account holdings by attribute
- transfer SMCs between ANREU accounts
- surrender SMCs to meet the obligations of responsible emitters under the [Safeguard Mechanism](#)
- download holdings data, including attributes.

Holdings of Australian carbon credit units (ACCUs) and Certified Emission Reduction units will continue to be viewed and managed in the current ANREU system. ACCUs will be moved into the new registry later in 2025.

Account holders can access their ANREU account in the new registry through [Online Services](#).

The [Unit and Certificate Registry guidance](#) is designed to assist you with how to access your ANREU account and manage units in the new registry.

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## Transparency changes for Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme

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In mid December 2024, it was announced that the Federal Minister for Climate Change made amendments to the [Carbon Credits \(Carbon Farming Initiative\) Rule 2015](#) (CFI Rule).

This will mean more [Australian Carbon Credit Unit](#) (ACCU) Scheme project data and information will be available on the [Clean Energy Regulator's](#)

(CER) website.

This includes:

- more detail of project activities for all projects under all methods
- description of any suppression mechanisms identified and removals of suppressors relating to the project
- type of estimation approach used
- project crediting period start and end dates
- project permanence start date
- start date for the chosen tool or modelling approach used to calculate abatement for each carbon estimation area (CEA) of a project
- published link in the Project Register to any enforceable undertakings
- the names of all agents authorised or any other person who is significantly involved in a project's registration or administration.

These new amendments aim to build public trust in the ACCU Scheme by improving transparency. This was a recommendation of the 2022 [Independent Review of ACCUs](#).

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## Updated guideline for greenhouse and energy auditors

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The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) has updated the [key risk areas for auditors guideline](#) that provides guidance on what risks the CER expects greenhouse and energy auditors to focus on when conducting audits.

It should be used in conjunction with the compliance and enforcement priorities that the CER publishes annually, and any other guidance CER provides.

Key risks are provided for audits under the following schemes:

- Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme
- National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Scheme
- Renewable Energy Target (RET)
- the Safeguard Mechanism.

CER expects auditors to use their professional judgement in determining which risks to address when conducting audits, and what procedures to undertake to address those risks.

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## ACCU Scheme guidance library

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Participants can now search for any ACCU Scheme-related guidance in one location with the launch of the Clean Energy Regulator's (CER) NACCU Scheme [guidance library](#).

The CER publishes numerous guidance designed to assist participants in understanding various complex aspects of the schemes. This new resource for the ACCU Scheme is expected to improve accessibility and help with overall information transparency.

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## Draft Audit Thresholds Instrument:

### Comment sought

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The Clean Energy Regulator is seeking feedback on the [draft Audit Thresholds Instrument 2025](#) for the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme. The draft instrument was developed based on submissions from an [initial consultation](#) held in late 2024.

The current Audit Thresholds Instrument will sunset and will be repealed on 1 April 2025. Feedback from this consultation will help inform the new Audit Thresholds Instrument 2025.

The Audit Thresholds Instrument is used to set the audit schedule for ACCU Scheme projects. It prescribes thresholds for different types of audits, including scheduled audits and triggered audits. It also sets requirements for alternative assurance projects that may be eligible for a reduced number of audits.

Feedback is sought by **5.00pm (AEDT), 5 February 2025.**

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## Third Annual Climate Change Statement: Released

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The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released the Australian Government's [third Annual Climate Change Statement](#) that reports the progress on climate change and energy initiatives in 2024.

It outlines the amount of work that is currently underway to ensure Australia meets its climate goals.

The statement illustrates continued momentum on the path to 2030, and the importance of staying the course.

Signs of progress include:

- In 2030, Australia's emissions are projected to be 42.6% below 2005 levels in the baseline scenario.
- On an emissions budget basis – that is, the sum of all emissions from 2021 to 2030 – we are projected to beat our 2030 target by 3%. That's over 150 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions avoided in the atmosphere.
- Around 40% of Australia's electricity is expected to be generated from renewable sources in 2024. And almost one quarter of the new transmission lines needed are complete or well under construction.
- \$22.7 billion towards 'a future made in Australia' announced in May 2024 will help unlock investment in net zero industries to secure our energy future and be a net zero global leader.

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## Review of National Electricity Market (NEM) wholesale market settings:

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### Comment sought

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The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water announced a review of the National Electricity Market (NEM) wholesale market settings which will be undertaken by an independent expert panel consisting:

- Assoc Professor Tim Nelson (Chair)
- Ms Paula Conboy
- Ms Ava Hancock
- Mr Phil Hirschhorn

The purpose of the review is to recommend wholesale market settings to promote investment in firmed, renewable generation and storage capacity in the NEM following the closure of Capacity Investment Scheme tenders in 2027.

The expert panel is expected to make recommendations and prepare a roadmap, to support the development and staged implementation of reforms to the NEM wholesale market to support the achievement of Australia's National Electricity Objectives to deliver reliable, competitively priced, safe and secure electricity services, supporting the long-term interests of consumers and prosperity of Australia's economy.

The [Terms of Reference](#) is now available.

[Online feedback](#) is sought by **11.59pm (AEDT), 14 February 2025.**

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## Australia and Korea agree to new Green Economy Partnership Arrangement on climate and energy

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In mid December 2024, the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water announced recent collaboration between [Australia and the Republic of Korea](#) to grow clean energy industries.

Australia and Korea has signed an agreement to work on a new Green Economy Partnership Arrangement on Climate and Energy.

The partnership is expected to boost climate change and energy cooperation between Australia and Korea. This is to lead more opportunities for the renewable energy sector. It is expected it will increase new industries, jobs and opportunities for Australia.

The partnership focuses on areas such as:

- renewable hydrogen
- critical minerals
- green metals.

Managing climate change and energy security is a shared challenge. It requires collaboration with key international partners, including Korea.

Australia currently has partnerships in place with:

- [China](#)
- [Germany](#)
- [India](#)
- [Japan](#)
- [The Republic of Korea](#)
- [Singapore](#)
- [The United Kingdom](#)
- [The United States](#)
- [The Netherlands.](#)

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## Australia's first Biennial Transparency Report: Released

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The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released [Australia's first Biennial Transparency Report](#) that provides the actions Australia is taking to meet its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. It also reaffirms Australia's longstanding commitment

to transparency in how Australia reports its progress.

The report includes:

- National Inventory Report of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases
- Information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving Nationally Determined Contributions under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement
- Information related to climate change impacts and adaptation under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement
- Information on financial, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support provided and mobilised under Articles 9–11 of the Paris Agreement.

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## Finance program for Industry and farmers

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The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) has confirmed a new asset finance commitment with backing for a \$300 million co-finance program with National Australia Bank (NAB).

Under this commitment, manufacturers, businesses and farmers may be eligible for [discounted loans](#) to help roll out a range of long-term cost savings initiatives. The initiative will help us reach [net zero](#) by 2050.

The announcement took place with the launch of [Towards Net Zero Agriculture Pathfinder \(Pathfinder\)](#) developed by CEFC and CSIRO.

Pathfinder includes information on a range of emissions reduction activities, including those which may be eligible for discounted CEFC finance.

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## Australia's Circular Economy Framework: Released

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The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released [Australia's Circular Economy Framework: Doubling our circularity rate](#) – a blueprint for Australia's circular economy transition.

A circular economy is one where products are designed to be reused, repaired, and recycled, minimising waste and maximising resource efficiency. It aims to create a closed-loop system where materials are continuously circulated and repurposed rather than being discarded as waste.

The framework defines a circular economy for Australia and outlines its benefits. The framework provides businesses with:

- clear guidance
- priorities
- examples on reducing emissions and waste.

It also highlights opportunities to innovate, capture new markets and organise operations.

The framework is intended to help Australia's circular economy transition under a new national ambition and targets.

*Priorities:* Its immediate priority is to focus on 4 sectors where action is needed most, and where Australia has unique advantages:

- industry
- the built environment
- agriculture and food
- resources.

The Framework looks at –

- Australia's targets: Australia's ambition is to double the circularity of our economy by 2035
- Reasons to go circular
- Australia's advantages: Australia has unique advantages that will

inform and guide our transition

- Australia's sectoral priorities
- Built environment
- Food and agriculture
- Resources
- Australia's cross-cutting objectives
- Implementing the framework: Action needed by governments, industry, investors, and communities to bring the circular economy framework to life.

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## Review of Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020:

### Comment sought

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The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is undertaking a [statutory review](#) of the *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act (2020)* that is intended to examine:

- a. the operation of the Act, and
- b. the extent to which the objectives of the Act have been achieved.

The Act supports action to [regulate the export](#) of certain waste materials from Australia. It also establishes a framework for [product stewardship](#), including for voluntary, co-regulatory and mandatory approaches.

The review should provide recommendations to improve the efficiency and impact of the Act in addressing current and future circular economy needs, resource recovery and waste challenges.

This includes consideration of:

- a. limitations of current approaches to product stewardship, including concerns around the viability, integrity and impact of stewardship schemes supported by the Act;
- b. whether waste export regulations are fit for purpose, including what process, decision making, and evidence would be needed to

regulate the export of waste representing existing and emerging harms;

- c. improving the mechanisms by which the Australian Government can take action to respond to the needs of developing circular economy markets;
- d. how the Act operates with relevant international and domestic obligations; and
- e. any matters relevant and worthy of consideration.

The review will provide a report to the Minister for the Environment and Water within 6 months of commencement.

[Online feedback](#) is sought by **5.00pm AEDT, 27 February 2025**

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## CSIRO assisting SMEs to grow in recycling and circular economy:

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### Applications sought

CSIRO is supporting small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that work in the recycling and circular economy to advance their research goals and help develop greener supply chains.

SMEs are invited to apply for **CSIRO's Innovate to Grow: Recycling and Circular Economy program** delivered in partnership with Deakin University's Recycling and Clean Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH).

The 8-week program is led by experienced researchers and will help participants to:

- examine technical challenges
- explore research and development (R&D) opportunities
- develop actionable business and funding plans for their R&D idea.

The program is open to SMEs working in the following sub-sectors:

- organic and inorganic recycling

- sustainable manufacturing
- clean energy production and storage
- supply chain waste reduction
- waste to energy (bioenergy)
- fibre and textiles waste
- sustainable construction materials.

Applications for the [Innovate to Grow: Recycling and Circular Economy](#) program are open until **16 February 2025**.

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## Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group:

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### Final report

The Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group (CEMAG) released its final report and recommendations – [The Circular Advantage](#) - to the Federal Minister for Environment and Water.

CEMAG was established in February 2023 to advise the Federal Government on the opportunities and challenges for Australia's transition to a more circular economy.

CEMAG's recommendations are based on 2 years of evidence gathered that involved engaging with over 250 groups.

The report makes 14 core recommendations and 12 supporting sector-specific recommendations for:

- the built environment
- food and agriculture
- resources
- water.

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## National Waste and Resource Recovery report for 2024:

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### Released

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has announced the release of

the [updated National Waste and Resource Recovery report 2024](#).

The report provides a comprehensive overview of waste and resource recovery in Australia up to 2022–23. Resource recovery includes waste reuse, recycling and energy recovery.

Some trends show - since the 2020–21 report:|

- Nationally, we are producing less waste per person and recovering more.
  - Total waste generated has increased by 0.9% to 76 mega tonnes, however waste generation per capita has reduced by 1.8%.
  - The total amount of waste recycled and reused has increased by 5.6%, and waste recycled and reused per capita has increased by 2.8%.
- We are producing less organic waste and recovering more.
  - The recovery rate of organics has risen to 62%, an increase of 1.4 percentage points.
  - Organic waste generation per capita has decreased by 7.4%.
- We are producing more plastic waste and recovering less.
  - The recovery rate of plastics was 12.5%, a decrease of 0.4%.
  - Plastic waste generated has increased 14.5% in total tonnes and has increased 11.6% per capita.

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## Waste export data – January to June 2024:

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### Released

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released the [Australian Bureau of Statistics \(ABS\) waste export data collation for January to June 2024](#).

The [waste export data viewer](#) is designed to make waste export data more accessible for industry, governments and the public. It provides Australia's waste exports by - jurisdiction, material type and tonnages.

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## New Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS):

### New product nominations sought

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The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is seeking to expand the range of products regulated under the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme.

Expanding the scheme will enable manufacturers and suppliers to show consumers that their products are water efficient using the WELS label. It will assist consumers to make informed decisions that save water, and help householders and businesses to save water and costs.

[Nominate a product](#) to be considered for regulation and mandatory labelling under the WELS scheme to see if it is suitable for inclusion.

Please avoid those [products that were nominated in previous years](#).

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## Refrigerant and Extinguishing Agent Permit Scheme:

### Comment sought

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The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is seeking feedback to [improvement on the implementation of two permit schemes](#):

- Refrigeration and air conditioning permit scheme
- Fire protection permit scheme.

These permit schemes control how ozone depleting and synthetic greenhouse gases regulated under

the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995* are handled and traded.

The department seeks feedback in the following areas:

- Licence application process and conditions
- Permit condition checks and departmental compliance approach
- Communications with permit holders and equipment owners/consumers
- Permit holder training and qualifications.

Please provide feedback via the [online survey](#) by **5.00pm, 28 February 2025**.

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITY: For Automotive sector as it transitions to selling and repairing more EVs

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Automotive dealerships and electric vehicle (EV) repairers can apply for the [Dealership and Repairer Initiative for Vehicle Electrification Nationally \(DRIVEN\)](#) program rebate stream.

This program supports the automotive sector to sell, service, and repair more EVs, helping to accelerate Australia's transition to electric vehicles.

The rebate stream offers include - rebates for dealerships and EV repairers to purchase and install smart EV chargers at eligible sites.

Applications close at **5.00pm (AEST), 30 April 2028**.

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## VICTORIA

### NEW GUIDELINES:

## New Wind Energy Facility Turbine Noise Technical Guidelines

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New [Wind Energy Facility \(WEF\) Turbine Noise Technical Guidelines](#) have been released by EPA Victoria to

assist with measuring and controlling noise made by wind turbines.

The guideline is to be used by those involved in building and operating a WEF, including:

- planners
- consultants
- noise experts
- government authorities
- environmental auditors, and
- anyone who is concerned about wind turbine noise.

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## Victoria's Renewable Gas Directions Paper:

### Comment sought

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The Victorian Government held a [consultation](#) on how renewable gas will form part of Victoria's low-emissions future.

Renewable gas opportunities are being supported as part of Victoria's transition to a sustainable, low-emissions future.

The [Renewable Gas Directions Paper](#) was released for comment that outlined how Victoria will decarbonise sectors that rely on gas, including high-heat industrial applications and gas-powered electricity generation.

The [Renewable Gas Directions Paper](#) responds to stakeholder feedback and assesses the key policy options to establish a renewable gas market in Victoria.

Comment was sought on details including cost recovery and initial production targets.

The feedback gathered is intended to inform the next steps for the Industrial Renewable Gas Guarantee.

A legislative framework is anticipated in 2025 to support scheme implementation in 2027.

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## Grid Impact Assessment consultation paper:

### Comment sought

VicGrid has released for comment the [Grid Impact Assessment Consultation Paper](#). The Victorian Government is changing the way energy infrastructure is planned and delivered, to support Victoria's transition to renewable energy.

VicGrid is developing new network access arrangements to manage how renewable energy projects connect to the Victoria's electricity transmission network – known as the Victorian Declared Shared Network (DSN). This new approach is called the Victorian Access Regime.

The regime is designed to support efficient investment in renewable energy generation and improve certainty for investors. It will also coordinate how generators – such as wind and solar projects – connect to the DSN to reduce impacts on communities and the environment.

VicGrid is considering what the assessment should cover to provide greater assurance to investors that generation projects within REZs will not face excessive curtailment. Curtailment happens when the power system operator limits the output of certain generators because the network, or parts of it, reach capacity.

VicGrid is also considering how the assessment will ensure new renewable generation and storage projects across the state meet a range of expectations including those related to community and Traditional Owners engagement and benefits.

Comment is sought by **14 February 2025**.

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## Environmental, Social and Governance statement 2024 to 2027

EPA Victoria has released its inaugural [Environmental, Social and Governance statement](#) (ESG) for 2024 to 2027 and states that it aims to hold

itself to the same standard they expect of those they regulate.

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### NEW SOUTH WALES

## Proposed new drinking water guidelines has lower recommended value of PFAS

The NSW Government has welcomed the National Health and Medical Research Centre (NHMRC) release of [proposed new drinking water guidelines](#) for public consultation.

The state's water authorities, in conjunction with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and NSW Health, are reviewing what the new proposed guidelines mean for the monitoring, testing and treatment of drinking water across NSW.

In October 2024, the 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.

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## NSW Guide for Large Emitters:

### Updated

NSW EPA has released its updated [NSW Guide for Large Emitters](#) that sets new expectations for large-emitting industries to align with NSW net zero targets and drive meaningful climate action.

The guide supports proponents to consider climate change within the NSW planning process.

The guide requires proponents of proposals with large projected greenhouse gas emissions to assess their development's emissions and mitigation opportunities. This will ensure NSW EPA and planning authorities receive robust and consistent information about a proposed development. This is to support a full assessment of proposed development's greenhouse gas emissions and implications for NSW's emission reduction trajectories.

### When to apply the guide -

The guide normally applies if a project proposal:

- requires development assessment and approval, or a change to an approval, under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and
- involves one or more scheduled activities under *Schedule 1 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* and/or will be carried out at an existing licensed premises, and
- is likely to emit 25,000 tonnes or more of scope 1 and 2 emissions of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>-e) in any financial year during the operational life of the project (based on planned operational throughput and as designed). For modifications, this threshold applies to additional emissions, that are likely to be released.

The above criteria is a guide only and is not intended in any way to limit NSW EPA's regulatory discretion when applying the guide.

[Further details](#) are now available.

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## Establishing a monitoring and reporting framework for carbon impacts and recycled materials in public infrastructure projects:

### Comment sought

NSW EPA is seeking feedback on the establishment of a monitoring and reporting framework for carbon impacts and recycled materials use in public infrastructure projects.

NSW EPA is consulting on the first ever Protection of the Environment Policy (PEP) for NSW.

The Sustainable Construction PEP aims to promote decarbonisation of the infrastructure delivery sector and a circular economy in NSW.

The PEP will require NSW government agencies delivering public infrastructure to consider upfront carbon emissions throughout the project lifecycle and report information to NSW EPA to demonstrate those considerations, in line with NSW Government Decarbonising Infrastructure Delivery Policy. It also requires agencies to preference the use of recycled materials in public infrastructure projects and report on recycled materials used.

The PEP is proposed to apply to major public infrastructure projects undertaken by, or on behalf of a NSW Government agency with a cost of -

- over \$50 million for building sector projects
- over \$100 million for all other infrastructure types.

NSW EPA is consulting with NSW Government agencies, industry and the broader community before finalising the PEP and reporting guidelines. NSW EPA will also issue further technical guidance and

reporting templates ahead of the commencement of the PEP.

NSW EPA has prepared a PEP Impact Statement to inform public consultation. The Impact Statement sets out in detail the rationale for the proposed PEP and its estimated benefits and costs.

To assist with finalising the PEP and Reporting Guidelines, please read the [draft Sustainable Construction Protection of the Environment Policy](#) (draft for public exhibition) and [reporting guidance](#) and provide feedback **by 5.00pm, 2 April 2025** to email [sustainableconstructionpep@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sustainableconstructionpep@epa.nsw.gov.au)

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## Determine current use of Biosolids as a fertilizer in agriculture: NSW EPA campaign

NSW EPA has commenced a compliance campaign to determine current use of biosolids as a fertilizer in agriculture. This campaign will look at compliance with existing requirements and will also look at the impact of PFAS and will advise in the development of PFAS requirements for use of biosolids. This campaign will run until September.

Steve Beaman, Executive Director Regulatory Practice & Services said the campaign will review compliance with EPA Biosolids Guidelines and will also provide important information to inform future regulatory settings aligned to the new requirements in the revised PFAS National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) 3.0, expected to be published by the Commonwealth Government in the coming weeks.

"Biosolids are a nutrient and carbon rich organic waste product generated at sewage treatment plants that can improve soil fertility, however there are strict limits around what can be included in that material and how the material is used for agriculture," Mr Beaman said.

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## No Waste Levy for storm affected areas

No waste levy will apply to certain storm affected areas in NSW for a 6 week period to support communities impacted by recent storms. The items that can be disposed of under the 'no waste levy' will include damaged items and storm debris caused by the recent storms.

The waste levy exemption will remain until 28 February 2025.

The Natural Disaster Waste Levy Exemption now applies to the following additional Local Government Areas:

- Upper Hunter
- MidCoast
- Muswellbrook
- Dungog
- Singleton

Cessnock, Maitland, Port Stephens and Newcastle have already received waivers.

NSW EPA will continue to reach out to other affected councils for a potential exemption.

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## NSW environmental name and shame register

Reminder that NSW EPA has implemented its [new name and shame register of pollution offenders](#).

The register is designed to warn and protect the public and lists directors, related business names and aliases - due to ongoing concerns about their business practices.

These new powers were introduced by the NSW Government in April 2024 under changes to the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act)*. The changes also doubled penalties for environmental offenders and increased powers to deter repeat offenders to make polluters pay.



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## Changes to coal mine licences in NSW

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NSW EPA is strengthening environmental protection on coal mine licenses and will work with coal mine licence holders across the Hunter, Central West and Illawarra to ensure best practice operations, and to reduce environmental impact.

This is part of NSW EPA's statutory five yearly review as it is an important tool to continually review effective regulation of coal mining impacts.

Proposed changes to the regulations include:

- improving standards for non-road diesel equipment
- reviewing and improving dust monitoring conditions
- improving public access to information and additional reporting on greenhouse gas emissions
- administrative changes to the licences to increase readability and achieve consistency across the sector where appropriate.

Mr Chappel said climate change is also an important consideration for NSW EPA and licences across NSW will be proactively updated to align with the NSW EPA's Climate Change Policy and Action Plan 2023-26.

Engagement with coal mine licensees is expected to commence in early 2025.

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### QUEENSLAND

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## QLD environment department's name change

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The QLD Department for Environment and Science (DEA) has had a name change to QLD Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI). The QLD Minister is The Hon. Andrew Powell.

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## Applying for a Temporary Emissions Licence (TEL)

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The QLD Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) has announced that environmental authority (EAs) holders can apply for a [temporary emissions licence \(TEL\)](#) to change the conditions of an environmental authority, for a short period, in response to an event, such as - a natural disaster.

Some examples of when a TEL could be used are:

- For water discharges when flooding is expected;
- For changes to monitoring requirements due to restricted access;
- For changes to acceptable volumes of materials/waste;
- For changes to operating hours.

A temporary emissions licence (TEL) is a permit that temporarily allows the release of a contaminant into the environment in response to an event, either natural or caused by sabotage, that was not foreseen (or did not have conditions applied because there was a low probability of it occurring) when particular conditions were imposed on an environmental authority or transitional environmental program (an applicable event).

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## Submissions sought for proposed new End of Waste codes

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On an annual basis, the QLD Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation seeks submissions on the development of new End of Waste (EOW) codes under the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*.

A person may make a submission about any [particular waste](#) for which an EOW code should be prepared.

The submission period closes at **5pm, Monday 10 February 2025**. Submissions received will help inform the development of future EOW

codes where there is strong industry demand.

To provide feedback, complete the [submission for proposed end of waste code form](#) by **5.00pm, 10 February 2025**. For queries, please email [RRS.Consultation@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:RRS.Consultation@des.qld.gov.au).

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## Annual Returns required by holders of certain resource environmental authorities

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A reminder by the QLD Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation that holders of certain resource Environmental Authorities (EAs) are required to complete an Annual Return.

The purpose of the Annual Return is to describe the activities undertaken by an operator throughout the calendar year, including changes that may affect estimated rehabilitation cost (ERC) decisions.

In 2025, the QLD Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) is intending to focus on Site Specific Resource EAs - other operators will not be required to submit a return for the 2024 calendar year. The Department will commence sending annual returns for the 2024 calendar year (1 January – 31 December) in mid January 2025, that will be required to be returned by 1 April 2025. The Department will also send further information to resource EA holder's in early January 2025.

It is an offence under the Environment Protection Act 1994, for failing to submit a completed annual return.

Enquiries can be made to [palm@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:palm@des.qld.gov.au) or call 1300 130 372 (option 4).

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### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: Circular grant funding announced

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Green Industries SA has announced 2 grant funding programs that are focused on transitioning SA to a more

## • Circular Infrastructure Grants

[Circular Infrastructure Grants](#) are available to SA businesses and local governments that recover, handle and process recyclable materials with the opportunity to invest in equipment, technology and processes to respond to the prevailing market conditions.

These grants will assist companies, local authorities and organisations to purchase and install infrastructure and provide innovative approaches to increase the types, quantities and quality of resources that are kept circulating in the SA economy for as long as possible, at their higher possible value, and to recover resources and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill each year.

## • Circular Business and Market Development Grants

The Circular Business and Market Development Grant program aims to assist businesses, local authorities, industry groups, not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises and research institutions to accelerate transition to a more circular economy.

Eligible projects must support at least one of the 3 focus areas:

- Focus area 1: Circular economy business models, solutions and practices that prioritise circular design, waste avoidance and reduction, reuse, repair and repurposing
- Focus area 2: Refurbished/repaired and/or recycled content products
- Focus area 3: Market development

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### WA Government in caretaker role

The WA Government has assumed a caretaker role in advance of the State General Election on 8 March 2025.

### MOU collaboration between two Departments

A [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) between the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is in place that sets out how the two departments will interact with each other in relation to their respective regulatory approvals processes and services.

The primary intent of the MOU is to:

- ensure that when the two agencies interact with each other, their respective legislative and procedural responsibilities are carried out in an efficient, effective, transparent, and consistent manner;
- ensure timely delivery of efficient, effective, and consistent expert advice; and
- facilitate DWER's early engagement in Western Australian Planning Commission-led strategic planning processes, including providing advice on strategic planning instruments (regional and sub-regional strategies, district structure plans and State-led precinct plans), and statutory planning instruments (region schemes and amendments, and improvement schemes and amendments).

### NEW GUIDELINE: Identification, reporting and classification of contaminated sites in WA

The WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has released an updated [Guideline on](#)

[Identification, Reporting and Classification of Contaminated Sites in WA](#) that has been prepared to assist site contamination practitioners and the wider community in understanding the operation of the Contaminated Sites Act and Contaminated Sites Regulations.

The guideline may be used by current and potential owners and occupiers, public authorities, industry, environmental practitioners, and other interested parties.

The guideline provides information on:

- identifying and reporting known or suspected contaminated sites
- classification of contaminated sites and action required
- how to access information on known or suspected contaminated sites
- disclosure requirements during land transactions
- regulatory notices
- certificates of contamination audit
- transfer of responsibility for remediation.

### Plan for Plastics exemption: Information sheet

The WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) has released an [information sheet](#) that provides clearer information on the exemption criteria that must be met to pause compliance with the Environment Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulation 2018.

Exemptions are granted under certain circumstances. This information sheet provides guidance on understanding exemptions including eligibility criteria.

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## Regional and remote locations to obtain support with e-waste transport costs

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The WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) is providing up to \$766,000 to assist regional and remote local governments with the transportation costs of electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) for recycling.

This support is part of the WA Government's commitment to the environment and successful implementation of the e-waste disposal ban to landfill.

From 1 July 2024, a statewide ban on the disposal of e-waste to landfill was introduced, marking a significant step in reducing environmental harm in WA. The [E-waste Regional Transportation Support Scheme \(ERTSS\)](#) has now been established to support regional and remote local governments during this transition period.

Eligible local governments can apply for a rebate of up to half of the costs incurred for transporting eligible e-waste to an appropriately licensed e-waste recycler or aggregation hub.

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## Latest waste and recycling data and trends for WA published

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WA's Waste Authority released latest [Waste and recycling in Western Australia 2022-23 – Data and trends report](#) that shows [data and trends](#) in waste recovery and disposal for WA - based on the 2022-23 financial year.

It assesses WA's progress against targets set out in the [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030](#).

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008 requires liable persons, including local governments, recyclers and large non-metropolitan landfills, to report waste and recycling data annually to the WA Department of Water and Environmental.

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## Progress on WA's e-waste ban to landfill

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The Waste Authority received an update on the progress and implementation on [e-waste ban to landfill](#) in WA, that came into effect on 1 July 2024.

An E-waste Exemption Framework is currently being developed with an education focused approach during the first year of the regulations, and it is expected that businesses and public entities will demonstrate reasonable efforts to comply with the ban.

The WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) had published a series of [fact sheets](#) and a [FAQ](#) to support local government authorities and others, with further information regarding responsibilities of e-waste service providers and significant entities, reporting requirements and how to estimate the weight of e-waste.

The E-waste Infrastructure Grants (EIG) program was established to support the e-waste ban as part of the WA Government's commitment to reduce the number of electronics and electrical items going to landfill.

The most recent round of the EIG saw [\\$5.4 million allocated to 15 projects](#) to increase e-waste storage, collection, recycling and processing throughout WA. The WA Government has previously provided \$4.5 million in grants to WA local governments, small businesses and not-for-profits, bringing the WA Government's total investment in e-waste recycling to nearly \$10 million.

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## Safe disposal of lithium-ion batteries

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There are concerns that lithium-ion batteries that are not disposed of correctly, may place people and facilities at risk.

Incorrectly disposing of lithium-ion batteries can place people who pick up waste, people who sort waste, and facilities at risk.

Lithium battery fires can start during the various stages of waste management — from landfills to recycling centres.

Lithium-ion batteries can be found in toys, phones and other electronic items and can pose a risk when incorrectly discarded.

Batteries are the source of at least three fires a week in WA and the dangers they pose to workers in the industry, waste processing infrastructure and the community are a nationwide concern.

The solution is simple — take unwanted batteries and items with batteries inside, like mobile phones and laptops, to a dedicated drop-off location. In WA, there are more than 700 battery drop-off locations, located at some supermarkets, hardware stores and council facilities. Find your local drop-off points at [Recycle Right](#)

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## Water security in the Pilbara

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A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the WA Government and Rio Tinto to strengthen water security in the Pilbara, WA.

The West Pilbara Water Supply Scheme (WPWSS) supplies the towns of Karratha, Wickham, Dampier, Roebourne, Point Samson and the industrial areas of Cape Lambert and the Burrup Peninsula.

Over the past five years the West Pilbara has frequently experienced annual rainfall and streamflow below the long-term average. This has reduced important groundwater recharge at Millstream and Bungaroo borefields, as well as surface water runoff at Harding Dam, which supply the WPWSS. Abstraction from these sources is of significant concern to Traditional Owner groups such as the Yindjibarndi and Robe River Kuruma People.

Rio Tinto's delivery of Stage 1 of the Dampier Seawater Desalination Plant, at its existing Parker Point operations, will provide 4GL of water per year. This will significantly reduce abstraction

from the Bungaroo borefield and is expected to be operational in 2026.

Negotiations between Water Corporation and Rio Tinto will assess, and if feasible, consider options to deliver Stage 2 which is expected to be operational in 2027. This will add a further 4GL of water per year to shore up a short-term supply of drinking water through the West Pilbara scheme and will also reduce pressure on the Millstream Aquifer.

Beyond this, the Water Corporation is committed to developing further water sources through the planning and construction of an additional large-scale desalination plant by 2030.

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