

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 16 July 2025

UPCOMING AEBN EVENTS

For a list of upcoming AEBN events, please visit [Events](#).

Missed an AEBN event? Some AEBN events are recorded and made available to Members on AEBN's [Webinars On-Demand](#).

FEDERAL

Review of gas market regulation

The Federal Government is undertaking a joint review of gas market regulation.

This joint review includes:

- the Australian Domestic Gas Security Mechanism,
- the Gas Market Code,
- the Heads of Agreement with east coast liquified natural gas exporters.

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water advises that a combined review will ensure that consideration of gas market regulation is effective and efficient, and help to improve outcomes for market participants and minimise regulatory burden.

The review will focus on key gas market issues and will examine:

- the effectiveness of current policies and regulations
- whether the regulatory interventions remain suitable.

- opportunities for streamlining and consolidating the regulatory approach
- alternative approaches to address current challenges.

Amendment to Renewable Energy Regulations to support solar battery installation under Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme

The Clean Energy Regulator announced an amendment to the [Renewable Energy \(Electricity\) Amendment \(Cheaper Home Batteries Program\) Regulations 2025](#) which is now law.

The amendment expands the existing [Renewable Energy \(Electricity\) Regulations 2001](#), confirming solar batteries to be eligible under the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES) from 1 July 2025.

This is expected to support the delivery of the [Cheaper Home Batteries Program](#), a new initiative that may provide approx 30% discount on the cost of installing small-scale batteries connected to new or existing rooftop solar.

The amendment will be consolidated with the existing [Renewable Energy \(Electricity\) Regulations 2001](#) in future. The [amendment](#) is now available.

All stakeholders are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the information available about [solar batteries](#) including the amendment.

Cheaper Home Batteries Program for businesses

Businesses are able to access more affordable, renewable energy through the [Cheaper Home Batteries Program](#) which is part of the existing Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES), and administered by the Clean Energy Regulator (CER).

Work is underway with state and territory electrical safety and fair trading agencies to ensure batteries are bought and installed safely.

As mentioned, eligible solar batteries will attract around a 30% discount, based on the battery's usable capacity.

The discount:

- depends on the size of the battery installed to ensure people can pick an affordable battery that is right for their needs.
- will be funded by the Australian Government. This will ensure no extra costs are passed on to consumers.
- will be reviewed to ensure that support is in line with decreasing battery costs.

Businesses can access independent advice for rooftop solar and batteries, by using the [Solar Consumer Guide](#) and [SunSpot calculator](#) which the Clean Energy Regulator has made available.

Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme methods – 4 methods to sunset:

Comment sought

The Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee (the ERAC) is seeking your feedback on four Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme methods as they will soon sunset.

The methods under review are:

- Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative – Land and Sea Transport) Methodology Determination 2015 (expired 31 March 2025)
 - [Land and sea transport](#)
- Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative – Reforestation and Afforestation 2.0) Methodology Determination 2015 (expiring 30 September 2025)
 - [Reforestation and afforestation](#)
- Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative – Source Separated Organic Waste) Methodology Determination 2016 (expiring 31 March 2026)
 - [Source separated organic waste](#)
- Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative – Beef Cattle Herd Management) Methodology Determination 2015 (expiring 30 September 2025)
 - [Beef cattle herd management](#)

The ERAC is reviewing the merits of remaking the 4 ACCU Scheme methods. When an ACCU scheme method sunsets, new projects cannot be registered against it, however, existing projects can continue to the end of their crediting period.

Your feedback, through the 4 consultations, is expected to help the ERAC provide advice to the Federal Assistant Minister and inform decisions on whether to remake the methods.

Please click on the links above for each method to provide online feedback by 11:59pm AEST on Monday, 4 August 2025.

Changes to ACCUs Animal Effluent Management method:

Comment sought

The Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee (ERAC) is seeking your feedback on a proposed variation to the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme's [Animal Effluent Management \(AEM\) method](#) - the [\(Carbon Credits \(Carbon Farming Initiative—Animal Effluent Management\) Methodology Determination 2019\)](#).

The proposed variation would extend the crediting period for certain non-biomethane projects:

- from 12 to 15 years for those that combust methane using a flare; and
- from 7 to 15 years for those that use an engine to generate electricity.

The method incentivises projects to capture and destroy methane in biogas that would otherwise have been released to the atmosphere from open anaerobic ponds used to treat animal effluent. It also includes activities such as producing biomethane and applying aerobic treatment processes.

The extension is expected to help encourage projects under the method to keep reducing methane emissions. Please provide [online feedback](#) to finalise the method variation by 11.59pm AEST Friday 25 July 2025.

Sea Dumping Carbon Capture and Sequestration:

Comment sought

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is seeking ideas on [three](#)

[guidance documents to help protect marine environments](#) -

1. Offshore Carbon Capture and Sequestration National Action List under the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981.
2. National Assessment Guidelines for Offshore Carbon Capture Sequestration under the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981.
3. Updated Application form for a permit under the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 for dumping of carbon dioxide streams by carbon capture sequestration at sea.

Managing waste from industry is crucial in protecting Australia's marine environment. While the Department is making progress, some industrial emissions are more challenging.

Offshore carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) can reduce emissions from hard-to-abate industrial sectors. This process provides secure, long-term underground storage for carbon dioxide.

Australia's environmental laws are designed to protect ocean waters from waste and pollution. The Sea Dumping Act regulates what waste can be disposed of in the ocean and the sub-seabed. The Department uses it as a guide for how to store carbon dioxide under the seabed in a way that protects the marine environment.

Your [online feedback](#) is sought on the National Action List, National Guidelines and the application form by 12 September 2025.

Australia to bid to host COP31 with Pacific in 2026

The Australian Government will bid to host the next United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties, or COP with the Pacific. COP is the world's annual climate change summit that brings together global leaders to discuss and negotiate fair

climate change solutions and track progress against agreed goals.

Australia's bid has received great support from Pacific leaders, as well as international and Australia's partners.

ARENA provides funding to South32 to explore emission reductions options in alumina refining

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) is providing \$4.4 million in funding to South32 Worsley Alumina Pty Ltd (South32) to support the development of steam electrification pathways at the Worsley Alumina Refinery in Western Australia.

The alumina refining industry is Australia's largest user of industrial process heat. Approximately 70% of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced in alumina refining arises from steam production, currently powered by fossil fuels such as coal or natural gas.

The study, funded under the \$400 million Industrial Transformation Stream (ITS) program, will allow South32 to undertake a pre-feasibility study of four investment options for partial steam electrification.

The options include - electric boilers, which generate steam directly using an electrode, and mechanical vapour recompression, which involves capturing low-pressure waste vapour from the refining process for recompression to create pressurised steam for reuse. These technologies have the potential to improve efficiency, reduce operating costs and GHG emissions, through the use of renewable electricity.

ARENA CEO, Darren Miller said the study was a significant step towards making low emissions alumina, and decarbonising Australian metals production.

"Meeting Australia's emissions reduction targets will require businesses in the most energy intensive industries to incorporate renewables in their operations," Mr Miller said.

"Funding from ARENA will help South32 investigate innovative electrification options for steam generation that enable the use of renewable energy."

Further [details](#) are now available.

VICTORIA

EPA's Waste Tracker must be used when moving Reportable Priority Waste

EPA Victoria is warning businesses that they must use the electronic EPA Waste Tracker to properly record movement of Reportable Priority Waste (RPW) in Victoria.

A waste tyre recycler has been fined for failing to properly record movements of tyres.

Waste tyres are considered a Reportable Priority Waste (RPW), the category of waste that requires disposal at licensed sites and must be recorded in the EPA Waste Tracker system.

Waste Tracker is an electronic system that tracks [reportable priority waste](#) in Victoria.

EPA Victoria's Manager of Compliance Programs Alison McRae had advised "For some time now, EPA has been telling businesses they must use Waste Tracker when they move their waste. It's the system that tracks RPW from the time it is generated to its ultimate disposal and ensures that the process is compliant".

"We're not suggesting the company meant to dispose of tyres illegally, but when they move them or accept them, the process must be captured in Waste tracker and as they didn't, they face a \$9,880 fine."

Ms McRae says EPA has given a high priority to enforcing waste disposal as illegal waste dumping has increased in recent times. Waste tyres are a particular issue and one that will stay high on the regulator's agenda.

Construction sites warned about the impact of sediment run-off

EPA Victoria warns farms and construction businesses of the impact of sediment run-off after rain. Rain after prolonged dry periods increases the risk of exposed soil being washed off farms and construction sites potentially causing environmental issues for waterways.

Construction sites, in particular, should take preventative measures to contain sediment and stop it escaping.

EPA Executive Director Operations Rachel Gualano said EPA has guidance on how to reduce the risk of sediment run-off and we actively enforce regulations, even issuing fines where we felt that more should reasonably have been done to manage the risk of pollution."

Sediment is a type of [stormwater pollution](#). It can come from:

- atmospheric deposition
- building and construction sites
- car washing
- illegal spills and discharges
- land surface erosion
- organic matter such as leaf litter, grass clippings or animal poo
- pavement and vehicle wear
- weathering of buildings and structures.

Erosion and sediment can pollute waterways, impact [water quality](#) and harm the environment, animals and plants that live there.

Recycling Victoria releases Circular Economy Market Report

Recycling Victoria has released the latest [Circular Economy Market Report](#) that shows Victoria's circular economy performance is strong compared with national data. Victoria is the first state to report against new circular economy measures under Australia's Circular

Economy Framework. The report will be updated and released annually.

The preparation of an annual Circular Economy Market Report is a legislative requirement under the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 (CE Act).

The report is informed by Victorian market sector data collected for the 2022–23 financial year and provides best available information about performance relating to the generation, collection, sorting, re-processing or re-manufacturing of waste within Victoria’s circular economy market.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Ban on 3 PFAS chemicals welcomed by NSW EPA

EPA NSW has welcomed the agreed national ban on three per and poly fluoroalkyl substances – PFOA, PFOS and PFHxS – that came into effect on 1 July 2025.

States and territories will now implement these IChEMS rules in their own jurisdictions.

Under the new chemical scheduling as part of Australia’s Industrial Chemicals Environmental Management Standard (IChEMS), the three PFAS chemicals will be banned from future import, export and manufacture, and new limits have been set for disposal.

This is in addition to several other high-risk chemicals that are listed in international conventions, such as - the Stockholm Convention or designated as the highest risk rating by the Commonwealth.

IChEMS is an important piece of federal and state legislation that will support the continuing reduction of PFAS and other environmentally hazardous chemicals being used in Australia, reducing exposure pathways and environmental levels over time.

How NSW will implement this change:

In NSW, IChEMS and the chemical register is administered under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act. The EPA’s

Environment Protection Licenses will authorise the use and manufacture of high-risk chemicals so that controls are in place to protect people and the environment.

NSW EPA will work with the Commonwealth and state counterparts, and will take a staged approach in the coming weeks and months to ensure that stakeholders are aware of their obligations and consulted on any changes.

This includes working with industry, such as retailers, to phase-in the rules across NSW.

NSW EPA will also consider licensing requirements on facilities such as landfills and Sewage Treatment Plants for the management of PFAS-impacted leachate and waste.

Since 2017, the NSW PFAS Investigation Program has assessed more than 1,110 sites where significant quantities of PFAS had been used in the past.

2024 State of the Environment report highlights new trends in the environment

The NSW [2024 State of the Environment report](#) was tabled in Parliament on 26 June 2025 that provides a snapshot of the NSW environment, as well as a picture of long-term environmental trends.

The report is published every 3 years and this is NSW EPA’s 12th report. New data from this report states that waste generation in NSW is rising faster than population growth, exacerbating the landfill crisis.

The 2024 NSW State of the Environment 2024 also outlines that -

- Climate change is already a major factor impacting many environmental trends. In 2021-22, greenhouse gas emissions in NSW were 111 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year, which is 27% lower than the annual rate back in 2005.

- In NSW, sea level rose by 12cm between 1991 and 2021, and may rise by up to one metre by the end of the 21st century.
- Severe fire weather days and hot days (35°C or more) are projected to increase. Average temperatures across the State have already risen 1.4 °C since 1910 and sea surface temperatures in the Sydney area have increased by about 0.14 0.2°C per decade since the 1950s.
- The extent of native vegetation cover has declined over the past three years. The ability of remaining habitats in NSW to support native plants, animals and ecosystems has dropped to 29% of their original capacity since pre-industrialisation.
- The number of threatened species listings in NSW has increased by 36 since December 2020. In 2024, more than 600 plant species and 300 animal species in NSW are threatened and risk extinction.
- NSW air quality meets national standards most of the time. In the past three years air quality has been negatively affected during extreme weather events, such as storms and bushfires.
- River condition remains poor or very poor for many areas of the Murray-Darling Basin. Coastal rivers are generally in better condition, particularly on the southern coasts.
- Most soils in NSW are in a moderate condition, although much of the State’s agricultural land is becoming slightly more acidic, with soil pH changing by at least 0.15 in 2006-20.

- Good rainfall in the past three years has helped improve water quality in some areas, but may also have been associated with significant fish kill events during that time.
- Coastal vegetation and habitats such as saltmarsh, mangroves and seagrass continue to be threatened by development and climate change.
- Invasive species continue to exert pressure on native plants and animals. New threats, such as fire ants, will continue to pose a significant biodiversity risk if not eradicated

Study on the impact of coal ash repositories on Lake Macquarie

NSW EPA has advised of a comprehensive [study](#) that has been conducted on Lake Macquarie to assess its environmental health at nearby power stations with coal ash repositories.

The research that is led by NSW EPA and involves other government agencies, had multiple samples taken of water and sediment from various locations within the southern side of the Lake. It was reported that scientists found low levels of contaminants in water and sediment samples and no evidence of significant environmental impact from power stations. Water and sediment samples were independently tested and analysed by DCCEEW scientists for 20 metals including lead and cadmium, as well as nutrients in the water, helping to understand the impacts to marine life and the lake's ecological health.

NSW EPA Executive Director of Regulatory Practice and Services, Steve Beaman said coal ash requires strict management to protect the environment and surrounding communities, and the latest results demonstrate current regulations are delivering effective safeguards.

"Results will help strengthen future monitoring, remediation activities and

inform how we can further protect and safeguard Lake Macquarie and other waterways."

Winding Down Wineries Waste

NSW EPA is providing funding to Go Circular who is delivering the '[Winding Down Wineries Foods Waste](#)' initiative, that focuses on reducing food and organic waste in the Hunter Valley wine region. The project aims to create a replicable model for waste reduction that can be applied across wine regions throughout Australia.

NSW EPA Acting Director Circular Economy Programs, Sam Lewis said "NSW generates 1.7 million tonnes of food waste per year. To help tackle the landfill crisis, we need to seriously combat food waste and invest in local solutions.

"That's why the NSW Government has introduced **new laws where from 1 July 2026 certain businesses must separate food waste from their general waste.**

He said, through this initiative, we're fostering a local community of practice and collaboration and developing a detailed Wine Region food waste management plan. The plan will feature local best practice case studies and will serve as a blueprint for other wine regions across Australia.

Mr Lewis said, "The project champions new and practical strategies to better manage food waste like using in-season locally grown produce, turning vegetable off cuts into hearty stocks and recycling food waste into nutrient rich soil for vineyards".

QUEENSLAND

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY for waste and resource recovery programs

The QLD Government is providing funding through the following waste and resource recovery programs and seeks applications:

- [Local Government Battery Collection Program](#)
- [Household Waste Payment Scheme](#)
- [Let's Get it Sorted \(LGIS\) Partnership Program](#)
- [Growing the Recovery of Organic Waste via Food Organic and Garden Organic \(GROW FOGO\) Fund](#)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

More single plastic products banned from 1 September 2025

From 1 September 2025, SA will ban the following plastic items:

- Ban on pre-filled plastic soy sauce containers (including soy sauce fish containers)
- Removal of exclusion for straws and cutlery attached to or contained in a food or beverage product
- Removal of exclusion for expanded polystyrene (EPS) cup and bowl packaging

The banned products cannot be sold or supplied from 1 September 2025.

[Details](#) are now available.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA ban on expanded plastics commences

In WA, it's Plastic Free July which commenced with a new ban on [moulded expanded plastic packaging](#). The ban, introduced under Stage 2 of WA's Plan for Plastics, targets problematic plastics and promotes the use of sustainable packaging.

The new regulations mean products with moulded packaging made from expanded plastics, such as expanded polystyrene (EPS) or that are cut to shape, can no longer be sold or supplied by businesses, manufacturers, retailers or distributors

in WA.

The ban applies to all WA businesses, manufacturers, retailers and distributors.

The ban aligns with the national EPS phase-out roadmap, developed by the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation, and goes a step further by capturing other expanded plastics that are difficult to recycle and often end up as litter.

EPS materials are lightweight and easily scattered by wind and water. They pose a serious threat to wildlife and are not suitable for kerbside recycling.

Exemptions will apply for specific medical, fresh food delivery, and business-to-business uses, and for proven fragile products that have no viable alternative.
Exemptions: please note that additional exemptions and amendments to the regulations can occur.

- Waste recovery: Recycling and recovering waste from energy
- Waste disposal: Diverting waste from landfill
- Waste stockpiles
- Waste collected by local governments
- Methodology.

2023-24 Waste and Recycling in WA report

The WA Government has released the [2023-24 Waste and recycling in Western Australia report](#) that consists of data primarily derived from annual returns lodged by liable persons, including local governments, recyclers and non-metropolitan landfills. Data about waste recycling, recovery, disposal and generation in Western Australia is reported annually. The data also details the progress made towards the targets set out in the waste strategy.

The most recent data presented relates to the 2023-24 reporting period and was primarily sourced from 256 annual returns. The report outlines -

- Key findings from key data from 2023-24
- Waste strategy targets
- Waste generation