

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 29 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

National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebooks:

Comment sought

As part of the [National Hydrogen Regulatory Review](#), the Commonwealth, state and territory energy and climate change ministers have developed the National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebooks for hydrogen production facilities and hydrogen refuelling facilities. This project supersedes what was known as the 'National Hydrogen Codes of Best Practice'.

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is now seeking your input to the two new regulatory guidance documents for the hydrogen industry:

- National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Hydrogen Production,
- National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Hydrogen Refuelling.

The National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebooks, aim to:

- Provide industry participants with a basic level of knowledge, regarding the properties of

hydrogen, as well as an overview of hydrogen production facilities and hydrogen refuelling facilities, hazards and associated mitigations.

- Identify existing regulatory obligations at the Commonwealth, state and territory level for hydrogen production facilities and hydrogen refuelling facilities.
- Provides guidance on satisfying regulatory obligations, in respect of hydrogen production facilities and hydrogen refuelling facilities.

The Department seeks your feedback on whether the Guidebooks are:

- Accurate and correct
- Comprehensive
- Usable.

Please read the following Guidebooks prior to providing feedback:

National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Production Facility

- [National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Production Facility](#)
- [Annexure 1 to 4 - National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Production Facility](#)
- [Annexure 5 - National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook - Production Facility – Legislation](#)

National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Refuelling Facility

- [National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Refuelling Facility](#)
- [Annexure 1 to 4 - National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Refuelling Facility](#)
- [Annexure 5 - National Hydrogen Regulatory Guidebook: Refuelling Facility – Legislation Summaries](#).

[Online submission](#) is sought by **11:59 AEST, Tuesday, 19 August 2025**.

Gas Market Review Consultation Paper:

Comment sought

The Federal Government has released a [Consultation Paper](#) as part of the joint review of the 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 review is expected to examine the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms and identify possible improvements. The review will also consider long-term policy settings and reforms for Australia's gas markets to support investment and energy security for Australia.

Your views are sought on the [Consultation Paper](#), in particular on:

- issues within the gas market based on the key themes of supply, security and trade, contracting and bargaining, market transparency, pricing and efficient wholesale markets,
- the effectiveness of current policies and regulatory framework,
- proposed options for reform.

[Online feedback](#) is sought by **5.00pm AEST, Friday, 15 August 2025**.

New government EV platform

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has launched ev.gov.au that provides a guide to electric vehicles (EVs).

The platform, ev.gov.au, includes what you need to know about buying, owning, and maintaining an EV, including:

- EV basics, such as - types of vehicles, benefits, and EVs and the environment
- charging from the office and at home and on the road
- installing EV chargers at businesses, in homes and in strata buildings
- government assistance for buying an EV
- getting the most from your EV including long trip planning.

For industry, the platform includes the national [Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Mapping Tool \(EVCI Mapping Tool\)](#). The tool provides data points to guide investment in EV charging infrastructure across Australia. The dataset can be turned on or off and includes:

- existing and planned public EV fast chargers
- traffic flows
- population demographics
- electricity grid capacity
- local amenities (like fuel stations, fast food outlets, and tourist attractions)
- mobile coverage.

VICTORIA

Service station operator cautioned over underground fuel storage practice

EPA Victoria officers undertook an unannounced inspection of a service

station in Melbourne's northern suburbs, that revealed serious compliance issues related to its underground petroleum storage system (UPSS). The operator has failed to follow required risk assessment guidelines, prompting regulatory action.

Underground fuel tanks can pose a significant environmental hazard if not properly maintained. EPA Victoria has prioritised ensuring operators comply with standards designed to prevent leaks and contamination.

Following the inspection, EPA Victoria issued improvement notices requiring the operator to hire qualified professionals to evaluate the UPSS's potential environmental impacts and determine whether further assessment is necessary.

Chloe Bennett, EPA Victoria's Northern Metropolitan Regional Manager, noted the site's sensitivity due to nearby water bodies, shallow groundwater, potential vapor risks, and permeable geology. A second notice was issued mandating the installation of groundwater monitoring wells and integrity testing of all UPSS components.

If tests reveal contamination or faulty infrastructure, additional enforcement will follow, Ms Bennett said.

Service stations are among the leading sources of soil and groundwater pollution in urban settings due to the potential for fuel leaks.

EPA Victoria expects operators to proactively identify and manage such risks, complying with all relevant Victorian, interstate, and national standards and legislation.

NEW GUIDANCE to Farmers Protect Waterways and Farm Health:

Released

EPA Victoria and Agriculture Victoria have released a practical guide to help farmers protect waterways and improve farm sustainability. The guidance, [Reducing the impacts of grazing on water quality](#), offers proven

strategies to manage stock and land without disrupting day-to-day farm operations.

Jessica Bandiera, EPA Director of Operations for Regional Victoria, said the guide is especially useful for properties near creeks, streams, or other water bodies.

This resource supports farmers in making long-term decisions that safeguard both the environment and their business. It focuses on managing stock, land, and vegetation to protect.

The risks to riparian land can include:

- Overgrazing, especially during winter or drought
- Feeding stock too close to waterways
- Allowing animals with calves or lambs onto riparian land
- Allowing stock to directly access waterways
- Allowing runoff with sediment, nutrients and contaminants to flow into waterways.

The practical tips include:

- Fencing to keep stock away from river or creek banks
- Installing off-stream watering
- Revegetation to stabilise banks and fight erosion
- Carefully managing grazing rates
- Keeping stock feed, fertiliser and manure away from waterways.

The guidance also explains the signs to watch out for, so you can protect the waterway, native plants and wildlife, and your land, before the problem becomes critical.

The guidance was produced to support farmers and build their understanding of how to comply with the Environment Protection legislation, and minimise their environmental risk so far as reasonably practicable.

Criminal charges for environmental offenders

In June 2025, EPA Victoria had charged eight individuals, companies, and company directors for failing to comply with regulatory notices, reinforcing its zero-tolerance approach to non-compliance. These were criminal charges.

These cases send a clear message, said EPA Chief Investigator Dan Hunt. He added, if EPA issues a regulatory notice, we expect compliance. Failure to do so will result in court action.

The offenders had been instructed to clean up waste, manage fire risks in stockpiles, prove lawful waste disposal, or undergo independent environmental assessments. Despite multiple opportunities, they failed to act.

EPA regulatory notices can require clean-ups, pollution control upgrades, or even halt operations until identified issues are resolved. Non-compliance can result in fines of up to \$2,000 for individuals, and approx. \$10,000 for companies. However, when offenders ignore these orders, the EPA escalates to criminal prosecution.

Upholding the integrity of our notices is essential, Mr Hunt said. Prosecution can be costly, and failure to meet court orders may lead to severe penalties, including imprisonment, he added.

Cases span across metropolitan Melbourne, the northeast, southwest, and Gippsland. Some investigations began with routine checks; others were triggered by public reports.

The 2025 Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge:

Open for Submissions

The [2025 Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge](#) is now open for submissions.

The Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge is an annual initiative delivered in partnership with the Victorian Department of Energy,

Environment and Climate Action (DEECA, the Intelligent Water Networks (IWN) and the Victorian Minister for Water, that funds innovative projects to deliver real climate action.

The annual Challenge aims to –

- Promote and recognise innovation within the water sector.
- Increase the resilience of the water cycle by supporting the water sector to harness new opportunities that may arise through effective climate action while delivering essential water services to the environment and the Victorian community.
- Reduce barriers for the Victorian water sector to explore and implement innovative solutions to climate change challenges.
- Support collaboration and capacity building within the water sector.
- Share key learnings and generate sector-wide transformational outcomes while inspiring climate action within the Victorian water sector and beyond.

The challenge enables the water sector to collectively accelerate climate action opportunities.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Regulation of PFAS) Regulation 2025:

Commenced 4 July 2025

NSW EPA has announced changes to regulations relating to PFAS.

From 4 July 2025, the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Regulation of PFAS) Regulation 2025* commenced. It amends the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022* to remove existing bans on PFAS firefighting foam to allow the new bans under the Industrial Chemicals Environmental

Management Standard (IChEMS) framework to apply.

The amendments allow Transport for NSW and seven high fire risk facilities to continue to use PFAS firefighting foams until 1 December 2027 while they transition to PFAS-free firefighting systems.

NSW Parliament passes Water Management Legislation Amendment (Stronger Enforcement and Penalties) Bill 2025

The NSW Parliament has passed the [Water Management Legislation Amendment \(Stronger Enforcement and Penalties\) Bill 2025](#), introducing tougher compliance measures and higher penalties to strengthen the NSW's approach to water resource management.

The legislation is designed to crack down on illegal water extraction and improve accountability through enhanced regulatory oversight. It grants the **Natural Resources Access Regulator** expanded enforcement powers, including mandatory metering, attestation of water volumes, and the authority to prosecute offences.

The legislation will impact water-dependent industries—including agriculture, mining, and manufacturing—by increasing compliance obligations. Businesses may face new costs related to monitoring, enforcement, and potential operational disruptions if found non-compliant.

Key changes include:

- Penalties of up to five times the value of illegally extracted water,
- Mandatory certification of metering equipment accuracy,
- Cost recovery from businesses for compliance and enforcement activities,
- Suspension or cancellation of water access licences for non-compliance,
- New civil penalty provisions and expanded jurisdiction for the Land and Environment Court.

These reforms reflect the NSW Government's commitment to ensuring sustainable and lawful water use.

Waste company to pay \$300K for dodging weighbridge practices

The Parramatta Local Court has ordered a Western Sydney waste company to pay nearly \$300,000, that included \$30,000 towards NSW EPA's legal costs, after being prosecuted by NSW EPA for 18 waste offences.

The charges relate to the operation of a resource recovery facility, including failing to record vehicles in the weighbridge software system and providing false and misleading information about the amount of waste entering and leaving the site through its Waste Contribution Monthly Report. A weighbridge is a large-scale vehicle weighing device that is used to accurately record waste movements.

In June 2023, the EPA used covert security cameras to capture more than 100 truck movements in and out of the premises over the course of a week, many of which were carrying waste. None of these trips were recorded in the weighbridge system nor were the quantities of waste reported to NSW EPA.

NSW EPA Executive Director Regulatory Practice & Services, Steve Beaman, said the accuracy of weighbridge records are a vital part of ensuring the integrity of the Waste Levy Framework is upheld.

The Waste Levy Framework requires scheduled waste facilities to record the quantity of waste received and transported at their facility and report those quantities to NSW EPA each month.

Battery processing company to pay \$30K fine for unsafe storage of lead waste

A used battery processing company has been issued with a \$30,000 fine for storing toxic lead waste outside approved areas at its facility.

NSW EPA officers carried out unannounced inspections in November and December 2024 after receiving a complaint about the transport of dangerous goods.

They found approximately 140 tonnes of stored concentrated waste – more than double the 55-tonne limit allowed under its environment protection licence. A large proportion of this waste was also kept outside required bunded areas.

The hazardous waste included pallets, bulka bags and shipping containers containing used lead-acid batteries, lead paste, and shredded plastic. Sampling from a nearby on-site stormwater drain, which collects runoff from these areas, confirmed water pollution with extremely high concentrations of lead, nickel, and zinc.

In August 2023, NSW EPA issued the company a \$15,000 penalty notice and an official caution for unlawfully using a neighbouring property to store lead waste. In December 2022, it received another \$15,000 fine for the same offence.

NSW EPA has directed the company to immediately reduce waste volumes, store all material safely, and demonstrate full compliance with its licence.

High volume of plastics diverted from landfill as Coles and Woolworths meet EPA Clean-up orders

NSW EPA has confirmed that Coles and Woolworths have met the requirements of their Clean-Up Notices by successfully removing over 4,000 tonnes of soft plastic stockpiles across NSW.

The Clean-Up Notices were issued following the 2023 collapse of REDcycle, which left thousands of tonnes of soft plastics improperly stored at 15 sites across the state—posing serious fire and pollution risks. NSW EPA granted the supermarkets additional time to find long-term, sustainable storage and recycling solutions.

This action primarily affects the retail sector and related waste management and recycling industries, reinforcing the expectation that companies offering public recycling programs must ensure full end-to-end responsibility for the material collected.

Key outcomes include:

- 4,102 tonnes of soft plastics removed from 15 sites across NSW
- 3,739 tonnes (over 90%) already sent to recycling processors
- All stockpiles cleared and compliance obligations fulfilled
- EPA continues to support national coordination on soft plastic recycling solutions

Draft Work Near Overhead and Underground Electric Lines Code of Practice:

Comment sought

SafeWork NSW has released the [draft Work near overhead and underground electric lines code of practice](#) for public consultation. This new draft is proposed to replace the current 2006 Work near overhead power lines Code of practice.

The draft Code has been developed in consultation with stakeholders to align with modern safety standards and contemporary work practices. It provides updated guidance on managing risks when working near overhead and underground electric lines in line with current Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws.

This draft Code is relevant to a range of industries and sectors, including construction, utilities, transport, and any operations involving outdoor or excavation work near electrical infrastructure. It aims to support employers, contractors, and workers by offering clear safety procedures and obligations.

Key features of the draft Code include:

- Broader scope to include underground electric lines,

- Clearer, more practical guidance on hazard identification and risk control,
- Updates to reflect modern technologies and working methods.

SafeWork NSW is seeking feedback to ensure the code is clear, relevant, and reflective of current and emerging work practices.

Submissions are via the [online survey](#) by Sunday 27 July 2025.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Business Sustainability Program

Green Industries SA (GISA) has allocated more than \$850,000 in funding through its Business Sustainability Program to support SA businesses to advance in sustainability. The funding is expected to help drive innovative circular economy practices and improve environmental performance across a range of sectors.

One important funding stream is –

The **AIM program** that focuses on improving individual business sustainability performance by funding expert advisory services. These services provide tailored assessments and business cases for more resource-efficient and circular practices.

In 2024–25, eight AIM grants were awarded, amounting to \$155,000 in total. This funding unlocked a combined project value of \$334,263.

The program represents a step in supporting SA’s transition to a circular economy and more sustainable business operations. By helping businesses assess their environmental impacts and implement strategic improvements, GISA’s Business Sustainability Program is playing a critical role in fostering long-term, systemic change across the state’s economy.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:
Circular Infrastructure and Recycling Grants

SA businesses and local governments can now apply for **Circular Infrastructure Grants** to invest in equipment, technology, and processes that improve recycling and resource recovery.

These grants support the purchase and installation of infrastructure to increase the volume, range, and quality of materials kept in circulation, helping reduce waste sent to landfill.

The program seeks projects that deliver clear economic, environmental, and social benefits to SA.

Up to **\$300,000** is available per project, with applicants required to match the funding amount.

Interested parties are encouraged to review the grant guidelines and submit an application.

Recycling Modernisation Fund

In addition, the [Recycling Modernisation Fund \(RMF\)](#) —a \$200 million national initiative led by the Federal Government—is now accepting applications.

The RMF supports large-scale projects that enhance Australia’s recycling capacity, particularly for materials affected by the COAG export bans: plastic, glass, tyres, paper, and cardboard.

Eligible applicants include private sector organisations and local governments. Green Industries SA is administering the RMF in SA.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY for
Local Wind Energy Manufacturing

The WA Government is backing WA manufacturers to capitalise on WA’s growing wind energy sector through an \$8 million [Wind Energy Manufacturing Co-Investment Program](#).

The first funding recipient, Bayswater-based **Australian Winders**, will receive **\$488,204** in co-investment funding to support a **\$976,408** project aimed at scaling up its operations.

Delivered in partnership with the *Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC)*, the program supports local companies in becoming key players in the wind energy supply chain.

Australian Winders—currently the only Australian manufacturer of large coil components—will use the funding to improve automation, implement training, and enhance quality systems. Initially focused on providing local repair and maintenance for wind turbine coils, the company plans to expand into full-scale coil manufacturing, replacing what is currently an imported product. The project is expected to generate **\$17.8 million** in revenue over the next five years.

The co-investment program offers up to 50% of eligible project costs, with matched contributions required from industry partners. It includes support for manufacturers entering the market or scaling existing capabilities.