

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 14 October 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 Framework for Recycled Content Traceability Released

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) has released the National Framework for Recycled Content Traceability. The Framework provides a national guideline to improve transparency and confidence in recycled materials across Australian supply chains.

The Framework guides businesses to collect, share and verify information about recycled materials, supporting consistent rules for tracing recycled content across federal, state and local governments. It also helps businesses demonstrate compliance with government and market expectations for recycled materials.

The Framework is voluntary and open to all businesses. It applies to all recycled materials and recycled-content products and projects in Australia and allows organisations to choose the most suitable traceability methods for their

operations. Version 2 includes minor updates to improve clarity and alignment with current circular economy programs.

Key features include:

- Nationally consistent guidance for recording recycled content through supply chains.
- Practical advice on achieving traceability capabilities.
- Emphasis on how recycled content traceability helps build customer trust, supports growing markets, and plays a key role in Australia's shift to a circular economy.

A series of six tutorial videos is available on the DCCEEW website, providing step-by-step guidance on how to implement traceability systems within a business.

Further information, including access to the Framework and the video tutorial series, is available at [Recycled Content Traceability - DCCEEW](#) and at [ReMade in Australia](#)

Hydrogen Headstart Round 2

The Australian Government has announced a significant new investment in the [Hydrogen Headstart Program](#), designed to accelerate the development of Australia's large-scale renewable hydrogen industry. Administered by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), Round Two of Hydrogen Headstart is now open for applications, with up to \$2 billion in funding available.

The Hydrogen Headstart Program provides revenue support for major renewable hydrogen projects through competitive hydrogen production contracts. It aims to bridge the commercial gap between the current cost of producing renewable hydrogen and its market price, enabling early projects to become commercially viable and attract private investment.

The program will support projects that produce hydrogen from renewable energy or derivative products such as ammonia or methanol. Successful applicants will receive production credits to offset the cost differential and help make renewable hydrogen competitive in domestic and export markets.

Key objectives of the investment include:

- Accelerating the development of Australia's hydrogen industry.
- Catalysing clean energy industries and new supply chains.
- Unlocking jobs and investment potential across regional Australia.
- Supporting First Nations engagement, with a further \$4 million provided to help communities participate in hydrogen project development.

Further information, including application guidelines and eligibility requirements for Hydrogen Headstart Round Two, is available at [Hydrogen Headstart Round 2 - Australian Renewable Energy Agency \(ARENA\)](#)

Illegal Export of Tyre Waste Stopped by Australian Authorities

The Australian Government has stopped the unlawful export of 10 shipping containers of waste tyres from Sydney to Malaysia, preventing around 280 tonnes of illegal waste, equivalent to 175 passenger cars, from leaving the country.

The Australian Border Force (ABF) detected the shipment during ongoing border monitoring. Compliance and enforcement officers from the DCCEEW inspected the containers and found a mixture of non-compliant baled waste tyres and shredded tyre pieces. The export contravened the Recycling and Waste Reduction (RAWR) Act 2020 and the Recycling and Waste Reduction (Export - Waste Tyres) Rules 2021.

Following inspection, the Melbourne-based exporter was issued a compulsory direction to rectify the non-compliance and required to collect the containers at their own cost. The exporter is liable for container detention, inspection and transport costs, estimated at more than \$30,000, and may also face additional costs to reprocess the tyres to meet legal export standards.

Under the RAWR Act, illegal tyre exports can attract penalties of up to five years' imprisonment and fines of up to \$198,000 for individuals or \$990,000 for companies. Since the introduction of the Tyre Rules, DCCEEW and ABF have intercepted 61 shipping containers of non-compliant waste tyres from 14 export consignments, stopping around 1,700 tonnes of unlawful waste from entering overseas markets.

2025 Report on Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Emissions

CSIRO has released the [2025 Report on Australian and global Synthetic](#)

[Greenhouse Gas emissions 2025 - DCCEEW](#). The report provides updated data on atmospheric concentrations and emissions of synthetic greenhouse gases in Australia and globally.

The report presents measurements of SGG concentrations recorded at the Cape Grim Baseline Air Pollution Station in Tasmania up to the end of 2024, with emissions estimated to 2023. It also outlines the modelling and analytical techniques used to derive emission estimates and compares CSIRO findings with data from the Australian National Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

Results show increasing concentrations of all major synthetic greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at Cape Grim, consistent with global trends. Total hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) emissions in Australia have grown at an average annual rate of 6.6% between 2005 and 2023, based on CSIRO's measurements.

Synthetic greenhouse gases, such as HFCs, perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆), are commonly used in refrigeration, air conditioning, foam blowing and electrical equipment. Their rising concentrations contribute to climate warming and highlight the need for continued management under Australia's greenhouse gas and ozone protection frameworks.

Industrial Transformation Stream Round 3 Opens for Applications

ARENA, on behalf of the Australian Government, has opened Round 3 of the \$400 million [Industrial Transformation Scheme](#) under the Powering the Regions Fund. The program supports industrial decarbonisation projects in regional Australia, with \$180 million in funding available in this round.

The Scheme aims to help regional industries reduce greenhouse gas emissions through electrification, energy efficiency, low-emission processing, and fuel switching. Funding is available for projects that demonstrate or deploy clean technologies to cut emissions and improve productivity in manufacturing and processing operations.

Previous funding rounds have supported several major industrial decarbonisation projects, which demonstrate pathways for reducing emissions while lowering energy costs and supporting local jobs.

Further information, including eligibility criteria and application details for Round 3 of the Industrial Transformation Stream, is available on the [ITS website](#).

VICTORIA

New Appointments to Guide Victoria's Water Sector

The Victorian Government has announced more than 130 new board appointments across the state's water corporations and catchment management authorities, strengthening leadership and ensuring greater representation within the sector.

Minister for Water Gayle Tierney confirmed the appointment of 135 new members to Victoria's 18 water corporations, 9 Catchment Management Authorities, and the Birrarung Council. These appointments join 109 continuing members responsible for delivering essential water services and managing Victoria's catchments and waterways.

The selection process, overseen by an independent panel, sought to balance experience with new perspectives to better reflect the diversity of Victorian communities. A strong response was received to the March 2025 call for

expressions of interest, with over 700 applications submitted for board positions.

The appointments are designed to ensure Victoria's water entities continue to deliver sustainable water services and manage the state's water resources in line with community expectations and environmental needs.

Further information about the new appointments is available at this link: [Water entity board appointments](#)

Additional Funding to Strengthen Victoria's Response to Illegal Waste Dumping

EPA Victoria has welcomed the State Government's new funding commitment to intensify efforts against illegal waste dumping across the state. The funding will strengthen enforcement, increase deterrence measures, and support coordinated action with local governments and other agencies.

Illegal dumping continues to be a statewide environmental and community issue, imposing significant cleanup and disposal costs on taxpayers and degrading public land, beaches, parks and reserves. The additional funding will enhance the capacity of the Illegal Dumping Taskforce to detect, investigate and prosecute waste crimes in high-impact areas.

Under the initiative, the Taskforce will:

- Increase enforcement activities and review penalties for illegal dumping.
- Expand waste intelligence systems to better identify and respond to dumping hotspots.
- Pursue stronger court action against offenders and increase

public transparency by naming and shaming repeat violators.

EPA Victoria will continue to work closely with other government agencies, local councils and land managers to protect public spaces and hold illegal dumpers to account. The strengthened response aims to reduce the environmental harm and financial burden caused by waste crime and to maintain safe, clean spaces for the Victorian community.

Victorian Businesses to Benefit from New Solar Installation Discounts

The Victorian Government has expanded its Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program to offer new solar installation discounts for commercial and industrial businesses, as well as community organisations. The initiative aims to help reduce energy costs, lower emissions, and cut demand on the electricity grid.

Under the expanded program, eligible organisations can receive discounts of up to \$25,000 on the upfront cost of installing a 100-kilowatt solar system, and up to \$34,300 for a 200-kilowatt system. Discounts apply to systems ranging from 30 to 200 kilowatts. Businesses may also access Commonwealth Government solar rebates, offering up to an additional \$50,000 off the total installation cost. Combined, the two incentives can reduce installation costs by up to 35%.

These discounts are available to a wide range of facilities including factories, hospitals, aged care facilities, aquatic centres, and local government buildings, all of which stand to benefit from lower energy bills and improved environmental performance.

Further information on eligibility and how to apply for solar discounts is available on the [VEU website](#).

Market Accelerator grants to fast-track recycled-material products

Sustainability Victoria (SV) has opened applications for the Market Accelerator program to help bring technically proven products and processes using recycled materials to market. Grants of \$15,000–\$50,000 (ex GST) are available, with applications closing Wednesday 5 November 2025, 11:59 pm.

The program funds organisations to engage professional advisory services that build capability, validate products/processes and support commercialisation in Victoria. Funding is targeted at projects that improve markets for priority or problematic recycled materials such as organics, plastics, paper/cardboard, tyres, glass, textiles, e-waste (including solar PV), batteries and other emerging streams.

Victorian businesses, social enterprises, charities and sole traders with a valid ABN that hold the rights to commercialise their recycled-material product/process are eligible to apply. Projects must serve Victoria and be completed by 31 May 2026.

Further information and applications can be found on the [Sustainability Victoria](#) website.

Companies Fined Over Banyule Creek Blue Pollution Incident

EPA Victoria has fined four companies \$10,000 each following an investigation into a pollution incident that turned part of Banyule Creek blue earlier this year. All four companies were contractors on the North East Link Project (NELP).

On 16 July 2025, EPA Victoria received multiple reports from the community after sections of Banyule Creek changed colour. A public notice was issued advising residents to avoid

contact with the water while the source of the contamination was investigated.

EPA's investigation confirmed the incident was caused by the release of a large quantity of dust suppressant - a chemical commonly used to control dust on construction sites. The suppressant entered the stormwater system, resulting in the visible blue discolouration of the creek.

EPA North Metropolitan Regional Manager Chloe Bennett said remediation work had successfully returned the creek to normal condition. "The source was eventually confirmed to be a large quantity of suppressant commonly used to keep dust down on construction sites. Stocks of this suppressant had been released resulting in Banyule Creek turning blue. Remediation works have returned the creek to its normal health," Ms Bennett said.

The fines were issued under the Environment Protection Act 2017 for pollution and improper management of industrial materials.

\$60,000 Fine Issued for Failure to Remove Hazardous Waste

A Shepparton Magistrates' Court has issued a \$60,000 fine to a recycling operator for failing to comply with a court order requiring the removal of hazardous lead and aluminium waste from its site. The operator has also been ordered to pay EPA Victoria's \$35,000 in legal costs and must remove the remaining waste by 30 November 2025.

The order followed an April 2024 direction requiring the operator to provide EPA Victoria with documentation detailing the destination of the waste, evidence of contractual arrangements with authorised facilities, and a schedule for its transport. The company failed to meet the original 9 October 2024

deadline for removal to facilities lawfully permitted to accept hazardous materials.

EPA Victoria has taken multiple regulatory actions on the site in recent years. The removal of the remaining lead waste is now expected to proceed, further reducing risks to the local community and environment.

NEW SOUTH WALES
NSW Government Opens Round 2 of High Impact Partnerships Grants

The NSW Government has announced Round 2 of its High Impact Partnerships Grants, providing \$7.5 million in funding to reduce emissions and enhance sustainability across the state's agriculture and land sectors.

Agriculture is NSW's third-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and the program aims to help the sector contribute to the state's net zero target. High Impact Partnerships support projects that reduce or remove emissions while improving land health, strengthening farm businesses, creating jobs, and restoring ecosystems.

Under Round 2, organisations can apply for grants between \$500,000 and \$2 million, covering up to 50% of total project costs. Eligible projects may include:

- Increasing soil carbon and improving soil management practices.
- Managing animal waste to reduce methane emissions.
- Reforesting with native species or establishing plantation forestry.
- Restoring tidal flows to wetlands and enhancing blue carbon opportunities.

The grants form part of the Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement

Program (PIPAP), designed to build capacity in the agriculture and land sector, generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs), and expand the supply of carbon offsets to support hard-to-abate industries.

Applications for Round 2 of the High Impact Partnerships Grants are now open and close on 1 December 2025. Further information is available on the NSW Government [High Impact Partnerships Grants Round 2 website](#)

QUEENSLAND
QLD Investment Corporation to lead new QLD energy investment gateway

The Queensland Government has announced that Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) will lead a new investor gateway aimed at attracting and coordinating private capital investment in the QLD's energy sector.

In partnership with Government Owned Corporations (GOCs), QIC is expected to help deliver large-scale transmission, generation, and storage projects.

QIC is an Australian institutional investment manager partnering with global pension and superannuation funds, insurers and sovereign wealth funds to build resilient portfolios across infrastructure, real estate, private equity, private debt and liquid markets.

Backed by the newly established Queensland Energy Investment Fund, QIC will leverage government capital and its global market expertise to connect investors with high-priority, state-backed energy opportunities. The initiative forms part of Queensland's Energy Roadmap and includes matching private investment with GOC needs and developing innovative financing models.

QIC CEO Kylie Rampa said the program provides a credible pathway for investors seeking strong, risk-adjusted returns in Australia's energy transition. The initiative

includes oversight of major pumped hydro projects and the accelerated delivery of CopperString and other strategic transmission links.

QIC's Head of Global Infrastructure, Ross Israel, said the model offers alignment of interests and delivery assurance, unlocking investment at the scale needed for energy resilience and decarbonisation.

With \$8 billion in energy transition assets under management, QIC will now play a central role in delivering Queensland's clean energy future, ensuring long-term investment outcomes for both the state and institutional investors.

Kerosene and Bitumen Spill Contained at Smiths Creek, Cairns

On 29 September, approximately 10,000 litres of kerosene and bitumen spilled into Smiths Creek in Cairns QLD, near Trinity Inlet, after a release from an asphalt plant at Portsmith.

QLD's environment regulator acknowledges that the company has self-reported this issue and is working collaboratively with QLD authorities on the clean up and response.

QLD's environment regulator is now working closely with Government agencies and stakeholders including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Maritime Safety QLD, QLD Health, Department of Primary Industries and the asphalt company responsible for the spill to contain and clean the area, deploying on-water booms to capture the spill. The source has been stopped, and a large portion of the product has been recovered for disposal. The spill, made up of bitumen mixed with a light kerosene solvent, has since hardened and become less mobile and toxic.

Given the spill's proximity to the Great Barrier Reef, preventing further spread was the immediate priority. Monitoring shows no signs of contamination beyond the containment area, and local wildlife, including fish and crabs, appear unaffected.

The remaining residue along the mangroves and rock walls will be left to naturally weather, as expert advice indicates that removal could cause greater harm to the sensitive environment.

The QLD environment regulator will continue with their investigation, including water quality monitoring and sampling, and will determine what compliance action is necessary.

\$2.1 Million Enforceable Undertaking for Albert River Sewage Spill

QLD's Department of Environment has concluded one of its largest environmental enforcement actions, following a major sewage spill into the Albert River.

A South East QLD Council has entered into a \$2.1 million Enforceable Undertaking to address the environmental damage and prevent future incidents.

The Undertaking follows an investigation into a sewage pipe failure in Yatala that led to the unlawful release of over 450 million litres of sewage between January and April 2024. Compliance officers conducted water sampling across multiple sites to assess the impact.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Enforceable Undertaking requires the Council to take comprehensive action, including environmental restoration across the Albert and Logan River estuaries and upgrades to the city's aging sewerage infrastructure.

Under the Enforceable Undertaking, key projects will include:

- A \$1.1 million wetland restoration at August Burrow Park, Alberton
- A \$120,000 revegetation project at Halls Road Nature Reserve, Luscombe
- Over \$1 million for an enhanced sewer monitoring system to reduce future spill risks

- Delivery of scientific data to inform environmental management
- Major improvements in infrastructure condition assessments and monitoring

The Department chose this approach over prosecution to ensure ratepayer funds are reinvested locally in environmental recovery.

This Enforceable Undertaking is expected to deliver long-term benefits to water quality, biodiversity, and the resilience of local ecosystems, while strengthening the city's sewage management systems.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Over \$13K fine for illegally disposing of chemicals into stormwater

A Fullarton man has been fined \$13,500 after admitting to illegally disposing of chemicals into a street gutter, causing significant environmental harm.

On 29 November 2022, the man was seen emptying multiple drums of liquid, later identified as containing volatile hydrocarbons similar to paint thinners, into a gutter. EPA SA's testing had confirmed the chemicals entered the stormwater system.

Judge Alexandrides noted the serious health risks posed to nearby residents, one of whom suffered nausea for several days due to the fumes. The judge also imposed a Victims of Crime levy in addition to the fine.

EPA SA Director Steven Sergi emphasised the danger such pollutants pose to both human health and aquatic ecosystems. Mr Sergi urged the public to use the free chemical drop-off facilities available across the state.

"Solvents are classified as a Class 1 pollutant and must never enter stormwater systems," Mr Sergi said. "This fine should serve as a clear warning against illegal chemical disposal."

The case highlights the importance of proper chemical waste management to protect both communities and the environment.

New team established to support Whyalla Steelworks Transition

The SA Government has established the Whyalla Steelworks Industrial Transformation Unit to lead a coordinated response to the steelworks' administration and support Whyalla's broader economic transition.

The Unit will work with the steelworks administrator, partner with the Federal Government on funding programs, and ensure the SA's interests are protected during the shift to new ownership. It will also align government initiatives across Whyalla to bring structure and accountability.

[Support programs for affected businesses and workers](#) have been launched and details are now available.

Under this program the Environmental Regulation of Whyalla Steelworks is under review:

The Whyalla Steelworks is currently regulated under an environmental authorisation granted to OneSteel Manufacturing Pty Ltd (OneSteel) through the Whyalla Steelworks Indenture 1958. With the existing authorisation set to expire on 3 November 2025, a review process is underway to ensure ongoing best practice regulation and strong environmental outcomes.

As part of this transition, OneSteel has submitted an application for a new environmental authorisation under the *Environment Protection Act 1993*. This would allow OneSteel to continue current operations at the site, while aligning with updated regulatory frameworks outside the Indenture.

EPA SA is now assessing the application and inviting public comment from interested stakeholders. [Online submissions](#) can be made by 5:00pm on 20 October 2025.

SA Government is working closely with OneSteel to ensure continued compliance and that environmental standards are upheld during this period of industrial transformation in Whyalla. Updates to the Indenture may also follow to reflect any new authorisation conditions as part of the broader effort to modernise and future-proof the steelworks.

Celebrating Women Leading Circular Economy Innovation

Green Industries SA (GISA) has awarded the 2024–25 Women in Circular Economy Leadership Scholarship to Ms Angelina Russo for her project, *The Circular Textile Hub: A Design-Led Model for Textile Circularity on the Fleurieu Peninsula*.

Ms Russo will explore international models of design-led circular textile hubs and assess how these could be adapted for regional SA. Her work will produce a research report on global best practices, an implementation framework for a hub in the Fleurieu region, and a toolkit to help local councils and communities evaluate and plan similar initiatives.

The scholarship program, delivered by GISA since 2016–17 supports emerging and established female leaders in circular economy fields such as waste reduction, resource recovery, and remanufacturing.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Stage 1 of review of State Environmental (Cockburn Sound) Policy 2015 (SEP): Comment sought

The WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) is seeking feedback on Stage 1 of the review of the State Environmental (Cockburn Sound) Policy 2015 (SEP).

The DWER received funding for three years to review the State Environmental (Cockburn Sound) Policy (SEP). The review is expected to assess whether the policy is still fit for purpose and still provides adequate protection for Cockburn

Sound's environmental values including whether it sufficiently addresses cumulative impacts expected in the coming decades. This is the first stage of public consultation planned during the review.

First introduced in 2005, the SEP created a framework for environmental regulation, water quality improvement and annual monitoring through the Cockburn Sound Management Council (CSMC). The policy was updated in 2015 to include cultural and spiritual values and revise the CSMC's terms of reference.

Cockburn Sound is one of the few natural embayments on WA's west coast and supports important marine species, seagrass meadows and recreational use. While the SEP has contributed to significant water quality improvements, future pressures from climate change, development and population growth highlight the need for an updated policy framework.

[Online feedback](#) is sought by 31 October 2025 the stakeholders and organisations.

Progress report on State Electric Vehicle Strategy for WA: Released

The WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has released a progress report on [State Electric Vehicle Strategy for WA](#) that details the work completed to support the uptake of electric vehicles (EV) and to update the regulatory and policy environment to accommodate changes.

The State Electric Vehicle Strategy for Western Australia is expected to play a key role in achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

The progress report details the actions the WA Government is taking to enable a greater supply of affordable and accessible EVs in WA, establish the necessary infrastructure to charge them, and stimulate wider adoption.

It includes actions from the original strategy, as well as measures announced as part of the Clean Energy Car Fund (May 2022) and

additional commitments for EVs outlined in the Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy (SERS) for WA (Dec 2023) and subsequent State Budgets. Collectively, these investments total more than \$525 million and are supporting the electrification of cars and buses in WA.

Water source project milestone

WA's largest steel water pipeline is now being installed as part of the \$2.8 billion Alkimos Seawater Desalination Plant (ASDP) project. The 1.6-metre diameter pipes, manufactured in Kwinana from Pilbara iron ore and Cockburn cement, form the bulk of a 33.5 kilometre underground trunk main connecting the plant to the Wanneroo Reservoir.

Each 12-metre section weighs nearly nine tonnes and is designed to last about 120 years. More than 700 sections are already on site, with a further 2,300 to follow.

Previously sourced from Victoria, the pipes are now produced locally under a \$58 million contract with Steel Mains, supporting WA jobs and manufacturing. Construction is being delivered by the Alkimos Pipeline Alliance, including Water Corporation, Georgiou Group and DM Civil.

Once operational in 2027, it is expected that the ASDP will supply 50 billion litres of water annually and enable a 30 billion-litre reduction in groundwater use. The project is expected to create more than 1,500 jobs and inject \$1.1 billion into the WA economy.

Biofuels strategy to help WA capitalise on industry opportunities

The WA Government has committed \$1.2 million to develop an Advanced Biofuels Strategy aimed at positioning WA to capture emerging market opportunities and cut carbon emissions.

The strategy, part of the Made in WA Plan and aligned with the WA's net zero by 2050 target, will focus on expanding local production of renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel.

WA has access to strong biomass feedstocks, including oat, wheat and barley stubble, canola, and woody biomass from mallees and blue gums. Churchill Capital Consulting (trading as SIA) will lead the strategy, with GHD Pty Ltd conducting economic analysis on feedstocks, supply chains and technologies. Stakeholder consultation is expected to commence soon.

Advanced biofuels are expected to support fuel security, decarbonise hard-to-abate sectors such as mining, agriculture, transport and aviation, and boost regional development.

The initiative is designed to attract investment, create skilled local jobs and reduce reliance on imports.