

# ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 26 November 2025

## UPCOMING AEBN EVENTS

**[AEBN Interactive Webinar]**  
[2026 AEBN NATIONAL CONFERENCE: ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY: New Laws, Developments & Funding from across Australia for BUSINESS in 2026](#)

10.00am to 4.00pm  
5 March 2026

**[AEBN Workshop Webinar]**  
[ENHANCING YOUR INDUSTRIAL TRADE WASTE TREATMENT PLANT OPERATIONS: Practical Solutions and Troubleshooting](#)

10.00am to 3.00pm  
28 May 2026

## FEDERAL

### Draft National Environmental Standards: Comment sought

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has announced [proposed reforms](#) to Australia's national environmental laws, including the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

Under the proposed changes, the Environment Minister could make National Environmental Standards, a key recommendation from the 2020 Samuel Review.

These standards aim to:

- protect the environment
- provide clear rules for businesses
- ensure decisions are fair and consistent.

The Department has opened consultation on two draft standards:

- Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), and
- Environmental Offsets

The drafts were developed with input from stakeholders and public feedback will help ensure they are fit-for-purpose.

Feedback is sought by **30 January 2026**.

### New laws for entities operating battery energy storage systems: Commence 1 January 2026

The Clean Energy Regulator has announced changes from 1 January 2026 for entities operating battery energy storage systems (BESS).

Amendments to the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000* mean electricity used for energy storage will no longer be considered a relevant acquisition, reducing compliance obligations.

Key changes from 1 January 2026 are as follows:

- Entities acquiring electricity solely for energy storage will no longer need to submit an Energy Acquisition Statement (EAS) or surrender Large Scale Generation Certificates (LGCs) and Small-Scale Technology Certificates (STCs).

- Acquisitions for purposes other than energy storage still require an EAS.
- Some energy storage acquisitions may still attract liability; the RET Liability team can provide guidance at [ret-liability@cer.gov.au](mailto:ret-liability@cer.gov.au).

Transitional arrangements for 2025:

- If all 2025 acquisitions were for energy storage, no EAS submission or certificate surrender is required.
- Acquisitions for other purposes in 2025 must still be reported.

These reforms arise from the [Future Made in Australia \(Guarantee of Origin Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions\) Act 2024](#).

## Outcomes of COP30

The [Outcomes Report](#) of the Global Climate Action Agenda at COP30 has been released by UNFCCC.

COP30 that was held in Belém, Brazil recently concluded with decisions that showed countries want to work together on climate action, but are becoming more divided on how to do it.

This year's COP30 conference, known as the "implementation COP," was expected to focus on *how* to put climate plans into practice, rather than creating new commitments. With many major commitments already agreed to, such as - reducing emissions and preparing for worsening climate impacts, negotiators were expected to resolve the practical details, such as what tools to use, how to measure progress, and how countries should report their outcomes.

However, disagreements over money, trade rules, how fast to reduce

emissions, and other key issues slowed everything down until the final hours. A number of countries had left the conference disappointed, including nations that had wanted the final agreement to clearly outline a path to move away from fossil fuels. Others were concerned that developing countries did not receive stronger financial commitments.

Even so, the conference did result in some positive steps, and many countries signalled they are still committed to working together in the months and years ahead, both inside and outside the official UN climate system.

Patricia Fuller, IISD President and CEO said that although disagreements were obvious, countries showed strong determination to keep working on the shift away from fossil fuels, and that this effort will continue beyond COP30.

Climate adaptation, helping countries prepare for the impacts of climate change, was also a major focus.

Anne Hammill, IISD's Associate Vice President for Resilience said the Mutirão decision keeps funding for adaptation on the agenda and shows that countries still want to support those hit hardest by climate change impacts. She noted that political tensions weakened some of the technical work, however, practical efforts will continue through National Adaptation Plans and other programs.

### COP31 - What's expected

It was announced that COP31 will be hosted in Antalya, Türkiye, with Australia taking on the role of "President of Negotiations."

Türkiye has signed the host country agreement with the UNFCCC, organising the World Leaders Summit, and serving as the COP 31 President-Designate. Türkiye will also appoint the High-Level Champion and Youth Champion and lead the Action Agenda. Australia will put forward a representative to chair the negotiations and will host a pre-COP meeting in the Pacific.

---

## **Best practice for increasing value recovery from end-of-life tyres and conveyor belts**

---

Researchers from the Sustainable Communities and Waste Hub have released a new [report](#) outlining how Australia can improve value recovery from end-of-life tyres and conveyor belts.

A circular economy, where materials are reused, repaired, and recycled instead of discarded, is essential for Australia's long-term sustainability. Tyres are one of the nation's largest hazardous waste streams and used conveyor belts pose similar risks. Without proper management, both can end up in landfill or cause environmental pollution.

The report reviews successful approaches in Australia and overseas and recommends:

- establishing a regulated product stewardship scheme
- banning landfilling and on-site disposal
- strengthening markets for recycled materials
- applying circular economy principles
- engaging with Indigenous communities.

The recommendations in the report are now being considered to inform improvements to waste regulations and support Australia's transition toward a cleaner, more sustainable circular economy.

---

## **Nature Repair Market Scheme – Comment sought on New Method**

---

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is seeking feedback on a new method for the Nature Repair Market, the country's legislated and voluntary biodiversity market.

The Nature Repair Market is intended to encourage investment in nature and support projects that deliver measurable, high-integrity biodiversity

benefits.

The Department is seeking your comment on the design of a **Protect and Conserve** method. The method aims to support projects which will contribute to the target of protecting and conserving 30% of Australia's landmass by 2030. Projects under the method would:

- establish new, or increase the size of existing, protected and conserved areas on land, and/or
- improve biodiversity outcomes for new and existing protected areas by adding or enhancing management activities.

[Feedback](#) is sought by **10:00PM AEDT on 15 December 2025**.

---

## **Fee and Levy relief for offshore wind projects**

---

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has announced temporary fee and levy relief for Australia's emerging offshore wind sector.

[Amendments](#) to the [Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Regulations 2022](#) are expected to provide financial relief for licence holders for two years. Key changes include:

- waiving annual levies for feasibility and research and demonstration licences
- halving annual levies for transmission and infrastructure licences
- reducing the application fee for a research and demonstration licence from \$300,000 to \$20,000
- reducing the application fee for a transmission and infrastructure licence from \$300,000 to \$150,000

These measures aim to ease financial pressures, allowing developers to focus resources on their projects and drive innovation. Environmental assessment and community consultation requirements remain unchanged.

The amendments also clarify which types of infrastructure fall under the [Offshore Electricity Infrastructure](#)

[Act 2021](#).

Further information regarding [levy and application fee relief](#) is now available.

---

## **New International net zero investment guide: Released**

---

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has announced the release of a new guide to attract global investment in Australia's net zero future: the [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\) Investment Blueprint](#).

Climate change is a global challenge, and international collaboration is essential to build the industries and supply chains needed to reach net zero.

The Blueprint provides investors with guidance on:

- opportunities in the [Net Zero Plan](#)
- key technologies across [6 sector emissions reduction plans](#)
- industries under the [Future Made in Australia](#) agenda
- investment settings, support services, public funding, and regulatory frameworks

Exporting clean energy, products, and resources is expected to bring investment, create jobs and grow the economy.

---

## **Draft voluntary emissions estimation and reporting guidelines for agriculture, fisheries and forestry: Comment sought**

---

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is seeking feedback on [draft voluntary emissions estimation and reporting guidelines for agriculture, fisheries, and forestry](#).

Understanding the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile of a business is becoming increasingly important for producers and land managers. The demand for emissions data from farmers is expected to increase.

The guidelines aim to:

- improve the quality and consistency of estimation methods and tools
- enhance greenhouse gas accounting to support mitigation and market access
- reduce reporting burdens
- provide trusted tools for understanding emissions.

[Feedback](#) on the draft guidelines is open until **5.00pm AEDT, Friday 19 December 2025**.

---

## **Advancement in Australian carbon market infrastructure**

---

The Clean Energy Regulator has announced the migration of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) to the new [Unit and Certificate Registry](#), creating a single, modern platform for managing ACCUs and Safeguard Mechanism credit units (SMCs).

This is in an effort to modernise technology and data systems, supporting deeper, more transparent, and accessible carbon markets. The registry will also hold certificates for new schemes, including the Nature Repair Market and Guarantee of Origin.

The blockchain-based platform makes it easier and more secure for account holders to manage units, access detailed information, and transfer ACCUs with multi-factor authentication. It will help emitters meet safeguard obligations and supports Australian businesses in achieving regulatory or voluntary emissions reduction commitments.

---

## **ACCUs for Carbon Capture and Storage at Moomba Facility in South Australia**

---

The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) has issued Australian carbon credit units (ACCUs) for abatement at a carbon capture and storage (CCS) project in South Australia.

The issuance will be included in the latest monthly update of the [ACCU](#)

[project register](#) published on the CER website.

The register provides the latest data about projects being run in Australia to reduce emissions or store carbon. The Moomba CCS facility is expected to capture up to 1.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e every year over its 25-year crediting period. This is the largest single ACCU issuance since the scheme began in 2012, and the first ACCUs issued under the carbon capture and storage method.

CCS has sometimes been controversial, particularly where projects have not met expected sequestration levels. In the case of the Moomba facility, sequestration levels have met its initial project expectations during commissioning.

The Chair of the CER, David Parker, said the issuance of ACCUs for carbon capture and storage is a significant development.

'These ACCUs represent the capture of greenhouse gases that would otherwise have been released to the atmosphere and instead are permanently stored deep underground.

'Carbon capture and storage is an opportunity to sequester carbon at scale, helping position Australia as a leader in climate action. CCS also demonstrates the effectiveness of Australia's carbon market framework to create incentives and deliver significant industrial decarbonisation outcomes.'

---

## **VICTORIA**

---

---

### **Concrete Company Fined for Allowing Alkaline Wastewater into Stormwater Drain**

---

EPA Victoria has fined a concrete company \$4,070 after EPA officers found highly alkaline wastewater flowing from its Port Melbourne site into a stormwater drain. The company, headquartered in Sydney, operates a facility in Victoria, where EPA officers observed concrete slurry escaping the premises and entering the drainage system.



Testing with pH strips confirmed the wastewater had a pH above 10, making it corrosive and classified as dangerous litter. EPA West Metropolitan Regional Manager Julia Gaitan said the incident posed a risk to the nearby Yarra River, located only 300 metres from the site.

Highly alkaline water can harm aquatic ecosystems, and in humans can irritate skin and eyes. It is also corrosive to appliances and drainage infrastructure.

Ms Gaitan said stormwater drains should only receive rainwater and noted that the fine should serve as a reminder of the company's environmental responsibilities.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### New PFAS monitoring requirements: Comment sought

The NSW EPA is [consulting](#) on proposed PFAS monitoring requirements for licensed landfill and sewage treatment plant (STP) operators and other stakeholders.

The draft Landfill and Sewage Treatment Plant PFAS Monitoring Chemical Control Order (CCO) aims to establish consistent, science-based monitoring of PFAS in landfill leachate, groundwater, and treated effluent from STPs across NSW.

Arminda Ryan, NSW EPA Acting Executive Director of Regulatory Practice and Services, said the data collected will inform future regulatory decisions. "This monitoring will help us understand how much PFAS enters the environment and whether further action is needed to protect it," she said. "Regular monitoring and annual reporting will ensure reliable data for informed decision-making." Landfills and STPs have been identified as secondary sources of PFAS by the *PFAS National Environmental Management Plan 3.0*. PFAS was widely used in products such as textiles, non-stick cookware, and waterproofing agents.

Feedback is sought on the draft CCO by **5.00pm, 10 February 2026**.

## Next step to phase out plastics and harmful chemicals in NSW

The NSW EPA is taking the next step of its [Plastics Plan 2.0](#) to further reduce single-use and problematic plastics, timed ahead of National Recycling Week.

Plastic makes up around 74% of litter in NSW waterways, with less than 16% recycled, and without action, Greater Sydney could run out of landfill space by 2030.

This next stage will target unnecessary and hard-to-recycle plastic products. It gives business and industry time to transition while helping to reduce waste and landfill demand and encourages investment in recycling and reusable products.

In an Australian first, the plan will also develop a 'green' and 'red' list of chemicals which are and are not allowed to be used in plastic items. This list will identify chemicals to phase out which are known to cause problems for human health and the environment, and which have safer alternatives already in use.

The NSW Plastics Plan 2.0 actions include:

- phase out plastic bread tags and pizza savers from late 2027;
- phase out non-compostable plastic fruit and vegetable stickers by 2030;
- introduce tethered lids (meaning the cap or lid on a plastic bottle must remain attached to the bottle itself, even after it's opened) for plastic bottles by 2030;
- require takeaway food service businesses to accept reusable cups by 2028 and large food service businesses to provide reusable cup options by 2030;
- phase out small condiment containers such as soy sauce fish bottles by 2030 and similar single-use packaging that cannot be recycled, in favour of recyclable options;
- require the redesign of takeaway food containers, such as plastic bowls with lids, bento boxes and sushi trays, to ensure they can be recycled safely;

- regulate harmful chemical additives in plastic food and beverage packaging to prevent toxins entering soil, water and the food chain;
- ban lighter-than-air (helium) balloon releases, in line with other states.

The NSW Government will continue consultation with industry, small businesses, manufacturers, retailers and councils to support a smooth transition to safer, recyclable alternatives.

## QUEENSLAND

### Queensland Energy Roadmap: Released

The QLD Government has released the [QLD Energy Roadmap](#) 2025 that sets out a practical and forward-looking plan to secure affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for QLD.

By strengthening existing generation assets while building the infrastructure needed for the future, the QLD Government is putting downward pressure on energy prices, encouraging private sector participation in new energy projects.

Central to the Roadmap is a balanced approach that provides certainty on the role of coal and gas, while accelerating private investment in renewable energy. Key initiatives include a \$400 million Queensland Energy Investment Fund and the Queensland Investment Corporation's Investor Gateway, designed to boost new generation and storage projects. A \$1.6 billion Electricity Maintenance Guarantee will enhance the performance and resilience of existing electricity assets across the state.

The plan introduces a framework for operating state-owned coal assets, ensuring system stability and economic viability. It also calls for a 400-megawatt gas-fired generation tender in Central Queensland and places future pumped hydro proposals under consolidated management to streamline assessment and investment.

## Environmental Protection Amendment Bill 2025 introduced to Parliament

The QLD Government has introduced to Parliament on 20 November 2025 the [Environmental Protection \(Efficiency and Streamlining\) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025](#) to modernise and simplify the state's environmental regulatory framework.

The Bill is now under review by the Health and Environment Committee, which will report back by 30 January 2026.

A key feature of the Bill is the streamlining of the Environmental Protection Act 1994, replacing environmental authorities for certain lower-risk activities with regulatory codes.

Resources industry activities are a priority area for this reform.

The Bill also consolidates significant environmental values into a single schedule, enabling regulatory oversight to better reflect risk. These reforms will be implemented in stages, supported by further stakeholder consultation to ensure practical application.

Additional amendments aim to improve the efficiency and clarity of the EP Act, including updates to the progressive rehabilitation and closure plan (PRCP) framework in response to industry concerns.

The Bill also proposes changes to related legislation, such as introducing a single integrated permission for tourism activities under Destination 2045, streamlining underground water impact processes in the Water Act 2000, and clarifying definitions and officer powers under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and Planning Act 2016.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### EPA SA reminds Waste Transport Drivers to 'Cover Up'

The SA EPA is urging licensed waste transport operators to "Cover Up" and ensure all waste loads are properly secured in line with the Environment Protection Act 1993 and Waste to Resources Policy 2010.

*Operation Cover Up*, held in partnership with SA Police, SafeWork SA and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, targets drivers who fail to cover loads, behaviour that poses environmental and road safety risks.

Drivers and businesses face fines of up to \$1,000 plus a victims of crime levy for breaches. Since the operation began in September 2025, SA EPA has issued eight expiations, with more expected following checks on 30 October 2025. SA EPA is also sending letters to licensees who use subcontractors.

The operation highlights the need for all waste loads to be secured to protect road users and the community.

### Circular Business and Market Development Grants available for SA businesses

Green Industries SA has announced the [SA Circular Business and Market Development Grant program](#) that 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.

The grants program is designed to support the transition toward a more sustainable, circular economy. The program encourages innovative approaches that keep resources in use for longer, minimise waste and stimulate new market opportunities.

Each project may receive up to \$100,000 (GST exclusive), providing financial support to scale up circular initiatives.

Applications close on 28 November 2025.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### EPA WA welcomes new Deputy Chair Jane Bennett

The WA Environment Minister Matthew Swinbourn has appointed Jane Bennett to the role of Deputy Chair of WA EPA.

Ms Bennett, an WA EPA member since 2024, will serve until June 2027 and brings more than two decades of expertise in major urban development, planning policy and legislative reform.

A respected leader in the WA planning sector, Ms Bennett serves on the WA Planning Commission, is a WA councillor for the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) and is a past UDIA Women in Leadership Award recipient.

The EPA says her appointment strengthens its commitment to delivering rigorous, transparent environmental advice.