

ENVIRONMENT
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC PLAN



2016 - 2019



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

WHO WE ARE

The Environment Protection Authority is Tasmania's independent environmental regulator. It consists of a Board and Director and is supported by staff of EPA Tasmania.

The EPA is established under the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 (EMPCA)*, which is part of Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS). The Board and Director make determinations independently of the Minister and elected Government, while staff of EPA Tasmania provide professional and technical support to the Director and Board.

Board, Environment Protection Authority

The Board's primary functions are to assess environmental impacts and determine appropriate operating conditions for the larger scale developments described in EMPCA. The Board is also responsible for environmental agreements, audits, improvement programs and financial assurances in relation to those developments. Other areas of responsibility include the Environment Protection Fund, the Savage River Rehabilitation Project, fee remissions and policy implementation.

While the Board operates independently of the elected Government, EMPCA requires the responsible Minister to provide the Board with a Statement of Expectation. This sets out the Minister's objectives on matters relating to the role and functions of the Authority. The Board is required to have regard to the Statement of Expectation and respond by providing the Minister with a Statement of Intent.

EPA Board Members

Warren Jones
– Chair



Tony Ferrier
– Deputy Chair



Wes Ford
– Director



Catherine Murdoch
– Board member



Colin Buxton
– Board member



Director, Environment Protection Authority

The Director is responsible for regulatory decision making in relation to larger scale (Level 2) industrial activities, contaminated sites and issues of environmental harm or nuisance. EPA Tasmania provides specialist advice and support services to the Director including regulatory advice, laboratory analysis, scientific advice, policy advice, community engagement services and others. The Director has various powers prescribed in EMPCA and can exercise a number of powers under delegation from the Board. The Director also has responsibilities under the *Litter Act 2007* and the *Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1987*.

EPA Tasmania

EPA Tasmania supports the Board through the preparation of draft assessment reports for its consideration, and the Director in the day-to-day regulation of over 500 Level 2 industrial and municipal activities. Roles include compliance and enforcement, investigating complaints and incidents, assessing and regulating contaminated sites and regulating waste treatment and disposal. Staff provide scientific specialist and technical advice, and perform functions under delegations from the Director or the Board. They also seek to engage with the community on a range of issues to promote sustainability and achieve good environmental outcomes. Staff of EPA Tasmania are employees of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE).

Responsibilities

The Authority's principal statutory responsibility is to administer and enforce the provisions of EMPCA, and in particular, to use its best endeavours to:

- Further the sustainable development and environmental management and pollution control objectives of EMPCA
- Ensure that activities do not cause unacceptable pollution
- Advise the Minister on any matter that may significantly affect the achievement of the objectives of EMPCA, and
- Ensure that economic instruments and issues are considered in policy and program implementation.

The EMPCA integrates with the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA) under a single resource management and planning framework, Tasmania's RMPS. The objectives of the Environmental Management and Pollution Control System, established under the EMPCA, represent the core functions of the EPA which are focused around the prevention of environmental pollution and harm.

What We **Stand For**

Vision

A clean, healthy and sustainable Tasmania.

Purpose

To protect and enhance the quality of the Tasmanian environment in balance with economic and social values, and the needs of future generations.

Goals

Clean Water

Water quality that supports the values and uses that our community, industries and economy require.

Clean Air

Air quality that protects the health and amenity of our community.

Clean Land

Land that is free of contaminants that would prevent its intended use or pollute the environment.

Healthy Noise Environment

An environment in which noise is not unreasonably intrusive and does not compromise community health or amenity.

Sustainable Development

Development that supports a productive community and economy, while sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources to meet the needs of future generations.

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Values

Objectivity

Our work is underpinned by scientific principles, objectivity, professional rigour and the best available information. We use contemporary science and technology to make informed decisions.

Independence

The EPA makes informed decisions based on sound evidence at a distance from Government. We answer to Parliament and the community for our own performance.

Leadership

We make decisions to improve environmental outcomes that also support business and industry and the community. Opinions are expressed on significant issues where appropriate in order to influence Government policy and environmental goals.

Collaboration

We consult with, and listen to, a wide range of interests, views and stakeholders across industry, government and the community. We value working in partnership with other agencies to improve decisions and outcomes.

Transparency

Working with the community and industry requires us to share our directions and achievements openly. It is important for us to show how and why we have made our decisions, and how we have delivered on our commitments.

Professionalism

We strive to perform all our work to relevant professional standards for environmental management and pollution control, and to conduct ourselves in accordance with principles and rules established in the *Tasmanian State Service Act, 2000*.



Our **Functions**

Assessments

- Engage with proponents, providing guidelines and advice in order to generate adequate information for the Board to undertake its assessment of proposals and facilitate public consultation
- Undertake the assessment of relevant developments, providing a rigorous and transparent process
- Impose relevant conditions to limit the risk of environmental harm from relevant activities by ensuring a risk based approach to environmental management

Regulation

- Regulate and manage existing Level 2 industrial activities, minimise pollution and ensure industry conforms to acceptable environmental standards
- Regulate the State's sewage and wastewater treatment industry, and support improvements in compliance through the planning and development of priority infrastructure in sewage treatment at key locations
- Regulate the State's landfill and waste facilities, and promote effective waste management to minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency

Monitoring

- Monitor and analyse elements of environmental quality, including water, air, land and noise, along with waste and contaminated land, and coordinate data collection and interpretation relating to a range of environmental parameters
- Undertake science-based programs to provide a better understanding of environments under stress to inform policy and management responses
- Facilitate the implementation of nationally agreed standards for monitoring

Compliance

- Facilitate compliance with EMPCA through monitoring, education, community engagement and enforcement actions
- Undertake activities such as inspections, monitoring and auditing to ensure industry compliance and employ a range of enforcement options
- Undertake investigations and prosecutions for prescribed offences to provide deterrence and ensure environmental protection

Remediation

- Remediate historical environmental damage and avoid the creation of new legacy sites through the application of appropriate conditions and, where necessary, financial assurances
- Manage and regulate the remediation of degraded land and water resources

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Policy

- Provide environmental policy advice and information to Government, particularly in relation to the achievement of the objectives of the Environmental Management And Pollution Control System in Tasmania
- Develop and implement Government policy initiatives and strategies for the protection of the environment in relation to air, water, noise and land
- Participate in national environmental policy development and implementation

Incident Response

- Respond to, and investigate, significant pollution incidents that may cause or threaten environmental harm
- Respond to public concerns and complaints relating to pollution incidents and, where appropriate, refer complaints to other authorities where they fall within their jurisdiction
- Plan and prepare for emergency management, including response and recovery, for major pollution incidents

Communication

- Engage and consult with the community and stakeholders on emerging and strategic environmental management issues to inform environmental policy development
- Develop strategies for public education and community engagement about key environmental issues
- Provide publicly available information relevant to environmental management in Tasmania

Partnerships

- Work with other regulators to support appropriate industry development
- Develop co-regulation partnerships with Local Government, and other State and Commonwealth agencies

Analytical Services

- Provide a range of scientific and analytical services for industry and government
- Develop business strategies to ensure sustainable operation, maximising income and reducing costs



Our **Priorities**

Assessment

Ensure that the process for assessing Level 2 activities is as efficient and effective as possible and that the requirements for applicants in terms of time, cost and information are proportional to the level of environmental risk

- Review the assessment process including the current assessment categories, rationale for assigning developments to a certain level of risk, information required from applicants for each category, the process and time frames for each category
- Ensure that the Board's assessment processes integrate smoothly with the new Statewide Planning Scheme

Regulation

Ensure that the regulation of Level 2 activities is transparent and effective in reducing environmental impacts, and proportionate to the environmental risk posed by these activities

- Develop business planning tools and IT systems to create an annual schedule of audits and standardised internal procedures to in order to achieve consistency and objectivity in the determination of regulatory requirements and effort
- Investigate the introduction of an environmental licence instrument which integrates with the planning system but is implemented by the EPA
- Develop systems to improve public access to information about the regulation of Level 2 activities
- Include salmon farming as a regulated activity

- Review the effectiveness of the fee remission scheme in encouraging better management of environmental risks and improved environmental performance of regulated activities
- Review and formalise the regulatory approach to wastewater activities

Monitoring

Coordinate the collection and reporting of data sets for environmental quality to facilitate the identification of important environmental issues and broader trends

- Review data management systems to ensure compliance with national environmental standards and the Tasmanian Government's Open Data Policy
- Develop a contemporary monitoring strategy

Compliance

Employ a strategic approach to enforcement across the full spectrum of industry compliance, encouraging self-regulation while also ensuring successful prosecution to resolve environmental pollution issues

- Review existing compliance tools, and review and update the Compliance Policy
- Develop and implement a strategic approach to pollution prevention, through the provision of information and advice, support and engagement

Remediation

Coordinate and support the remediation of pollution and rehabilitation of Savage River

- Ensure Savage River Rehabilitation Project funds are expended to achieve the best long-term environmental result for Tasmania

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Policy

Maintain and update the policies that guide the EPA's approach to the regulation of pollution

- Develop a draft Environment Protection Policy (Water Quality) for consideration by the Government
- Initiate a review of the Tasmanian Air Quality Strategy 2006-11 with a view to developing a new five year strategy for consideration by the Government
- Integrate the environmental regulation of salmonid aquaculture into the EPA's regulatory framework
- Develop a contemporary strategy for the management of waste tyres
- Replace *Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1987* with a new Marine Pollution Act.

Incident Response

Maintain and enhance emergency response capacity and preparedness for pollution events, including marine oil spills

- Improve incident response preparedness and capability
- Provide incident and emergency response training

Communications

Develop and implement communication and engagement strategies to support key priorities for environmental management, promote the goals of the EPA and meet the community's expectations

- Provide information, education and engagement about key and emerging environmental issues
- Develop systems to improve public access to information about the regulation of Level 2 activities

Partnership

Improve the cooperation and relationship with Local Government as co-regulators of environmentally relevant activities under EMPCA

- Engage with Local Government to clarify the responsibilities for incident response for Level 1 and Level 2 activities
- Engage with Local Government to develop a coordinated approach to waste management
- Investigate the potential for better collaboration and mutual support for incident and emergency environmental response

Analytical Services

Provide sound advice and quality assured chemical and biological testing services to Government and industry

- Maintain NATA accreditation
- Review services to internal clients

People

Ensure that staff of EPA Tasmania have relevant competencies and contemporary understanding related to their relevant environmental disciplines

- Promote strategies to ensure that technical skills amongst staff are maintained and that relevant training is used to enable contemporary understandings
- Develop cross-disciplinary project teams to generate broader understanding of environmental management roles across the regulatory spectrum

Our Relationships

The EPA interacts with a number of other bodies engaged in environmental regulation, planning or policy development. This typically occurs in areas in which the EPA may have an interest but does not have a mandate or

legal jurisdiction, and where the role and jurisdiction of the EPA abuts against or even overlaps with those of other bodies.



EPA **STRATEGIC PLAN**



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*EPA Tasmania is the Division of DPIPW E that supports Tasmania's independent
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