

EPA Board Communiqué

August 2020

Regular Meeting 140, Tuesday 4 August

Waste levy

Noting that it remains work in progress, the Board reviewed a draft paper *Principles for Waste Governance and Levy in Tasmania* which was provided for discussion and feedback. The Board noted that it should be a priority to direct funds raised into developing projects for the diversion of waste and the portion devoted to administration kept to a minimum.

Environment Protection Fund

The Board received and noted an update on the balance of the Environment Protection Fund and that \$74,420 grant for eagle research will be transferred soon.

Noise limits for wind energy projects

A proposal to set a new noise limit for future wind energy projects was put to the Board in March. The Board requested further clarification on how the proposed new limit would apply to projects currently in the assessment process, which was provided to this meeting.

The Board discussed and agreed to adopt as policy the proposed lower noise limit of 35 dB(A) at residences or land zoned for sensitive uses for new wind energy projects. This level is becoming the accepted standard elsewhere in Australia. The previous criterion for Tasmania was 40 dB(A), based on a New Zealand standard. The 35dB(A) criterion, or background + 5 dB(A), will now be Board policy for the assessment of new wind farm proposals. The Board agreed that the St Patricks Plains wind farm proposal was still in the early development stages and there should be adequate flexibility regarding turbine location to comply with this new limit. The Board requested the Director inform the proponents of the St Patricks Plains development of the new policy limit.

Standard provision of data to the public

The Board noted the *Discretionary Information Disclosure Policy* and Background Paper provided for discussion. The Board discussed the type of information that may be put on the EPA website for public access and how to balance the effort and cost of putting material on the web against the likely demand for some information. The Board noted that information that is unlikely to be of general interest can be made available on request.

Site visits

The Board agreed to make visits to the sites of two proposals coming up for assessment decisions; the Ten Mile Enterprise proposed pig processing facility (abattoir) and the Conhur composting facility; in the last week of August 2020.

Assessment - Huon Aquaculture Group Pty Ltd – Fish Processing Facility, Parramatta Creek – Production Increase

Huon Aquaculture Group (HAG) applied to increase the production limit for its Paramatta Creek processing factory. This was partly to formalise an unauthorised exceedance of the limit set by the pre-existing permit and partly to allow for future growth.

The major environmental issue considered by the Board was the management of wastewater. This has been an ongoing issue at Paramatta Creek where the irrigation of wastewater has led to groundwater and surface water contamination and soil degradation. HAG has negotiated access to an adjoining property to expand the area available for irrigation and contracted expert consultants to prepare a sustainable irrigation plan. A new winter storage dam for treated wastewater is proposed. The Board discussed:

- potential overflow from the winter storage dam and the likely consequences
- the need for a contingency management plan

- frequency of compliance checks and monitoring
- effects of salt in the wastewater and whether the use of refrigerated tankers is practical to reduce the salt load.

The Board considered a number of comments on the draft conditions by HAG and requested several changes to the draft conditions arising from the discussion. The Board approved the application subject to a range of conditions to ensure that the activity becomes more environmentally sustainable.

Technical Guidance for Water Quality Objectives setting for Tasmania

The Board has a number of responsibilities under the State Policy on Water Quality Management including setting or approving water quality objectives. EPA Tasmania provided a presentation on the *Technical Guidance for Water Quality Objectives (WQOs) Setting for Tasmania*. The Board noted the significant effort put in by EPA Tasmania's Water Section in developing the framework and Guidance document. The Board resolved to approve the document for use in setting water quality objectives incorporated into environmental assessments and its publication on the EPA website for public use.

Special Fee Remissions

The Board considered several applications for Special Fee Remissions and agreed to provide a partial remission to the Cornwall Coal Company Ltd, as a result of a rationalisation of its permits.