



# Victorian Local Governance Association

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Statutory Policy Review Team  
EPA Victoria  
GPO Box 4395  
**MELBOURNE VIC 3001**

To whom it may concern

## **EPA Statutory Policy review – response to discussion paper**

Please find below a summary of VLGA comments on the review, further to a face-to-face consultation session undertaken recently.

- The VLGA supports the Review and we found the Discussion Paper useful in drawing out the key issues. It appears the EPA and DSE understand the challenges faced by local governments and communities in using Statutory Environment Protection Policies (SEPPs)
- The general principles of environmental protection are understood, but the level of complexity of SEPPs and their relationship to each other is a key challenge
- VLGA local government members especially those in smaller rural councils, see the SEPPs as 'one more issue to be across' and they often do not have the resources to fully implement policies
- The major issues for VLGA members are:
  - number of and level of complexity of the SEPPs
  - the confusion around how the SEPPs relate to / integrate with each other
  - understanding the SEPPs as 'law' as opposed to 'policy'
  - the confusion around which agency is responsible for policy and regulation, e.g. EPA, CMAs, local governments, etc.

Making the SEPPs more accessible through reducing the current number, and clearly communicating their objectives will assist both local governments and the wider community. The use of case studies and a 'tool-kit' for people using SEPPs would also make them more accessible.

There is an opportunity to look at new engagement structures and the possibility of a SEPP Advisory Committee could be explored in this Review. The VLGA recommends the Review considers the model of the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord Committee as an example.

There is also an opportunity to look at reform which can drive local or regional approaches, as indicated in the discussion paper (Model 3). This is consistent with policy themes currently emerging, around place-based solutions and wider regional planning and it would be helpful for the EPA through this Review, to liaise with Victorian Government departments who are undertaking regional planning in other contexts.

As discussed, here is a link to the VLGA's web site with regards presentations from our recent Leading Edge Forum, focused on community engagement  
[http://www.vlga.org.au/Events\\_Training/Leading\\_Edge\\_Forum/Past\\_Leading\\_Edge\\_Forum\\_2011.aspx#Apr](http://www.vlga.org.au/Events_Training/Leading_Edge_Forum/Past_Leading_Edge_Forum_2011.aspx#Apr) You can watch a web cast of the forum from this link.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this review and provide comments.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maree McPherson', written in a cursive style.

**Maree McPherson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**