

HEADS OF EPA AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2021

DECEMBER 2018



HEPA

Message from the Chair

Throughout the world, Australia and New Zealand are admired for our diverse and thriving environments.

From sandy beaches and deserts to rainforests and alpine regions teeming with life, our countries are proud of our natural resources. We recognise the long-term prosperity and public health benefits that our environments provide to Australians and New Zealanders.

It's a great honour to serve as Chair of Heads of EPA Australia and New Zealand (HEPA), and I commend the agencies involved for their work on this strategic plan and delivering greater protection of our precious environments.

Our Strategic Plan sets out how we are striving for outcomes that benefit the environments and peoples of Australia and New Zealand. This is what drives the work of HEPA. As well as explaining our vision,

purpose and role, our strategic plan confirms our strategic goals and focus areas – and how we aim to achieve them. We can do this by influencing policy and practice, sharing scientific expertise, driving strategic interventions to prevent harm and deliver real results.

Above all, our strategic plan is about working together in strong collaboration. We know that by sharing our knowledge, experience and intelligence, we can make a greater, collective difference.



Cheryl Batagol PSM

Chairperson, Environment Protection Authority Victoria

Chair, Heads of EPA Australia and New Zealand

ABOUT US

The Heads of EPA Australia and New Zealand (HEPA) is a self-authorising, informal alliance based on influence and leadership for the heads of environment protection regulators in Australia and New Zealand.

HEPA was established in September 2014 as an informal collegiate forum for networking and information sharing by Australian and New Zealand Commonwealth and State environmental regulators. It will pursue the environmental regulatory policy and practice outcomes identified in this Strategic Plan through the collaborative efforts of its member agencies.

HEPA comprises the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and chairs of the Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory environmental agencies as well as New Zealand.

WE ARE INFLUENTIAL because we are a trusted source of science and intelligence-based advice and deliver sound outcomes

WE PREVENT HARM by using our science, intelligence and capability to analyse, develop and consider actions to manage critical and emerging environment protection issues

WE LEVERAGE OUR RESOURCES by sharing and building capacity and technical support in member agencies and having strong relationships and effective engagement with stakeholders

Principal members

- Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Vic) – Chair and Secretariat
- Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE)
- Environment Protection Authority South Australia (EPA SA)
- NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA NSW)
- Environmental Protection Authority New Zealand (EPA NZ)
- Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES Qld)
- Western Australian Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Western Australian (DWER WA)
- Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA WA)
- Environment Protection Authority Tasmania (EPA Tas)
- Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (EPA NT)
- Environment Protection Authority ACT (EPA ACT)

Vision

Working together to provide greater protection of the environment for public health and the long-term prosperity of Australians and New Zealanders.

Purpose

All the agencies represented on HEPA have similar mandates to achieve outcomes that benefit the people of Australia and New Zealand and the environments in which we live. This is what drives the work of HEPA. By sharing our knowledge, experience and intelligence, we can make a greater, collective difference. We can drive strategic interventions that deliver real results.

Role

Our role is to work together across all jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand to prevent harm, influence policy and practice and to share scientific expertise.

We will deliver because:

We are influential because we are a trusted source of regulatory expertise, science- and intelligence-based advice and deliver sound outcomes

We prevent harm by using our regulatory expertise, science, intelligence and capability to analyse, develop and consider actions to manage critical and emerging environment protection issues

We leverage our resources by sharing and building capacity and technical support between all member agencies and having strong relationships and effective engagement with stakeholders

Strategic goals 2018–2021

- 1 Improving practices in waste management and resource recovery
- 2 Ensuring chemical wastes are safely managed and preventing legacy impacts
- 3 Addressing legacy contamination issues
- 4 Identifying emerging issues for potential collaboration
- 5 Delivering a trusted source of science and intelligence-based advice
- 6 Delivering cross-agency organisational and regulatory excellence

Focus areas 2018–19

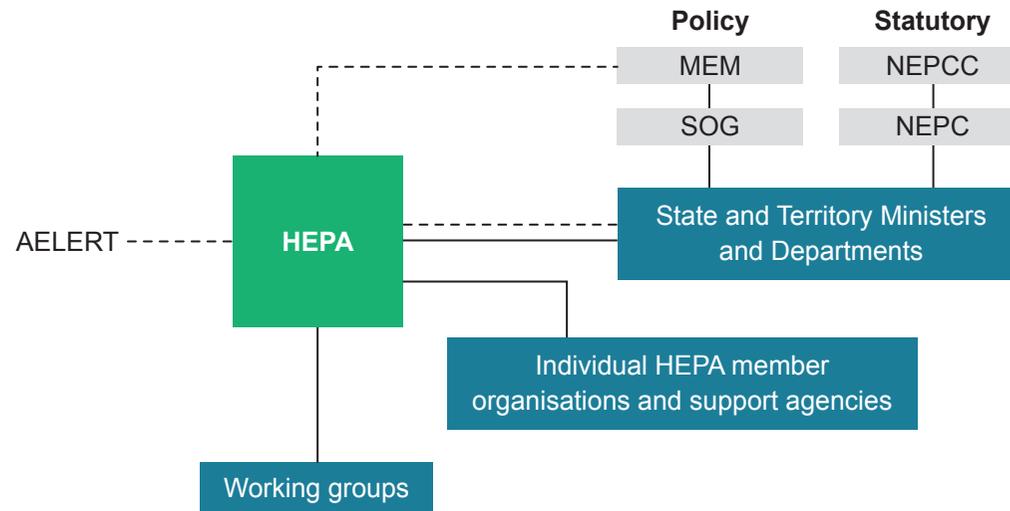
1. Using our networks to build strategies to deal with emerging issues, particularly in the waste and resource recovery sector
2. Implementing the per- and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) 1.0
3. Reviewing and finalising PFAS NEMP 2.0 while maintaining a watching brief on emerging chemical legacy issues
4. Identifying financial assurance practices and regulatory application of financial assurances across jurisdictions
5. Better harnessing our strategic working groups' capacity and identifying where they can best allocate resources to better support HEPA on emerging issues.
6. Review HEPA's Terms of Reference and governance structure, including:
 - Terms of tenure for Chair and Secretariat
 - Appropriately resourcing the Secretariat
 - Develop a new equitable funding model
 - Review HEPA branding and communication/ media strategy

Who we work with

Delivering on this Strategic Plan also involves a wider network of stakeholders, including peer networks, science and academic institutions to support environment protection best practice.

The figure shows how HEPA connects with the following primary stakeholder organisations:

- » Meeting of Environment Ministers (MEM)
- » Senior Officials Group (SOG)
- » National Environment Protection Council (NEPC) and NEPC Committee (NEPCC)
- » Australasian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators network (AELERT)



Delivering our Strategic Goals

This section identifies the actions that HEPA will undertake to deliver its Strategic Goals. Delivering these goals is based on the collaborative effort of member agencies and external partners, primarily through HEPA Working Groups. By June 2019, we will provide a clear summary of how the HEPA has progressed its Focus Areas for 2018/2019.



Strategic Goal 1:

Better practices in waste management and resource recovery

Working Group: National Waste Working Group (NWWG) | **Chair:** EPA SA

Relevant Focus Areas:

- Using our networks to build strategies to deal with emerging issues, particularly in the waste and resource recovery sector
- Better harnessing our strategic working groups' capacity and identifying where they can best allocate resources to better support HEPA on emerging issues

Current Priorities

We recognise that through the Senior Officials Group, national waste policies may sometimes be developed by HEPA member agencies, but in some jurisdictions with aligned portfolio agencies, HEPA will focus on the regulatory underpinning required to ensure that these policies can be successfully implemented. HEPA members will share data and lessons learned in order to prevent duplication of policy and regulatory processes.

1. Regulatory:

- a. Share best practice stockpiling guidelines across all jurisdictions.
- b. Develop guidance containing principles for approval of Waste to Energy (including biofuels) projects and facilities that can be used across all jurisdictions (drawing on work already underway in some States).
- c. Develop guidance containing principles to underpin beneficial land application of waste that can be used across all jurisdictions.
- d. Develop template for regulatory matters that need to accompany product stewardship schemes (e.g. illegal dumping at end-of-life, need for financial assurances).
- e. Identify an appropriate regulatory audit and enforcement regime to underpin the Australian Packaging Covenant.

2. Focusing on the regulatory context of waste and resource recovery:

- a. Work through the Government Coordination Group to update the 2009 National Waste Policy (which will include Circular Economy Principles) and appropriate agencies in other jurisdictions as they develop or refresh waste strategies and plans to include common regulatory underpinnings.
- b. Support the Government Coordination Group by:
 - i. Providing advice to ensure coherency between the National Waste Policy, HEPA strategic plan and NWWG regulatory roles.
 - ii. Identifying roles HEPA and the NWWG could play in the implementation of the policy, including identification of priority areas for further work.

Strategic Goal 2:

Ensuring chemicals and associated wastes are safely managed and prevent legacy impacts

Working Group: National Chemicals Working Group (NCWG)

Chair: EPA Vic /Commonwealth DoEE

Relevant Focus Areas:

- Implementing the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) 1.0, reviewing and finalising PFAS NEMP 2.0 while maintaining a watching brief on emerging chemical legacy issues
- Better harnessing our strategic working groups' capacity and identifying where they can best allocate resources to better support HEPA on emerging issues

Current Priorities

- Develop and release the PFAS NEMP 2.0 (Commonwealth DoEE)
- Develop and implement the National Standards for (Industrial) Chemicals (Commonwealth DoEE)
- Run an international summit on emerging contaminants and report back to HEPA (EPA Vic)
- Progress work to consider options for possible mutual recognition of hazardous substances, industrial chemicals and dangerous goods under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTMRA) (EPA NZ)

Strategic Goal 3:

Addressing legacy contamination issues

Working Group: National Contaminated Environments

Network/other groups as needed | **Chair:** EPA Vic

Relevant Focus Areas:

- Identifying financial assurance practices and regulatory application of financial assurances across jurisdictions
- Better harnessing our strategic working groups' capacity and identifying where they can best allocate resources to better support HEPA on emerging issues.

Current Priorities

- Environmental liabilities of legacy industrial activity, including mining
- National regulators summit on financial assurance mechanisms (including case studies and current practices)
- Review of CRC CARE National Remediation Framework
- Systems to record legacy and potentially contaminated sites

Strategic Goal 4:

Identifying emerging issues for potential collaboration

Working Group: n/a – will be an item on HEPA meeting agendas

Lead Agencies: EPA NSW and DWER WA

Relevant Focus Areas:

- Better harnessing our strategic working groups' capacity and identifying where they can best allocate resources to better support HEPA on emerging issues

Current Priorities

- EPA NSW to lead the development of a paper on emerging issues for regulators
- Secretariat to lead a workshop for all HEPA agencies to share their current digital transformation and data collection strategies.
- All HEPA members are working on responding to the rapidly changing ICT area and would benefit from sharing the thinking in each jurisdiction.
- DWER WA to lead a digital transformation/real time data paper.

Strategic Goal 5:

Delivering a trusted source of science and intelligence-based advice

Working Group: TBD | **Chair:** EPA NZ and EPA Vic

Relevant Focus Areas:

- Jurisdictions across Australia and New Zealand benefiting from shared scientific and technical collaboration

Current Priorities

1. Develop a Scientific Rigour Position Statement for HEPA. The Statement will consider:

- approaches to ensure scientific rigour used in all jurisdictions

- 'practising scientific method' vs 'doing science'
- how science involves communities
- relationships with other potential partners in science and intelligence
- leveraging of effort and avoidance of duplication

2. Develop a capability matrix to assist in optimising resources and sharing capacity.

Strategic Goal 6:

Delivering across-agency organisational and regulatory excellence

Working Group: HEPA Secretariat / AELERT | **Chair:** EPA Vic (supported by NSW EPA)

Relevant Focus Areas:

- Better harnessing our strategic working groups' capacity and identifying where they can best allocate resources to better support HEPA on emerging issues.
- Review HEPA's Terms of Reference and governance structure, including:
- Terms of tenure for Chair and Secretariat
- Appropriately resourcing the Secretariat
- Develop a new equitable funding model
- Review HEPA branding and communication/ media strategy

Current Priorities

- Review of HEPA Terms of Reference
- Map member organisations' capability and capacity across technical focus areas ranking each High, Medium, Low or n/a
- Ensure Working Groups have resources allocated to best support HEPA
- Alignment with AELERT Clusters