

Environment Protection Authority

STRATEGIC PLAN
2007-2010



The review of the EPA's Strategic Plan has taken place in a context of change. The response to drought, climate change and the strong economic growth agenda of the Government provides significant challenges and opportunities for the EPA. The EPA's ongoing program of organisational improvement is positioning the EPA to be able to respond in a timely and effective manner to the emerging challenges.

The review of South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP) provided further opportunity for the EPA to strengthen its connection and contribution to the State's strategic direction and targets. The diagram below illustrates this connection and the logical framework between SASP and the EPA's strategic and operational plans. It is critical that EPA programs and priorities support the achievement of South Australia's objectives and targets as identified in the SASP. The EPA's strategic plan identifies our organisational vision; describes how the EPA intends to achieve its goals; and describes our functions and strategic priorities for the next 18 months.

As the timeframes for the different levels of plans vary, planning and review cycles ensure that corporate and divisional operational plans, in particular, can be revised in light of changing Government policy objectives.

Contributing to South Australia's Strategic Plan Objectives

The promotion of the principles of sustainability is enshrined as an object under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (the Act) and the EPA is required to take account of these principles in its decision-making and program and service delivery. In using its powers and functions to manage and influence human behaviour so as to achieve more sustainable practices, the EPA contributes to the objectives of the SASP.

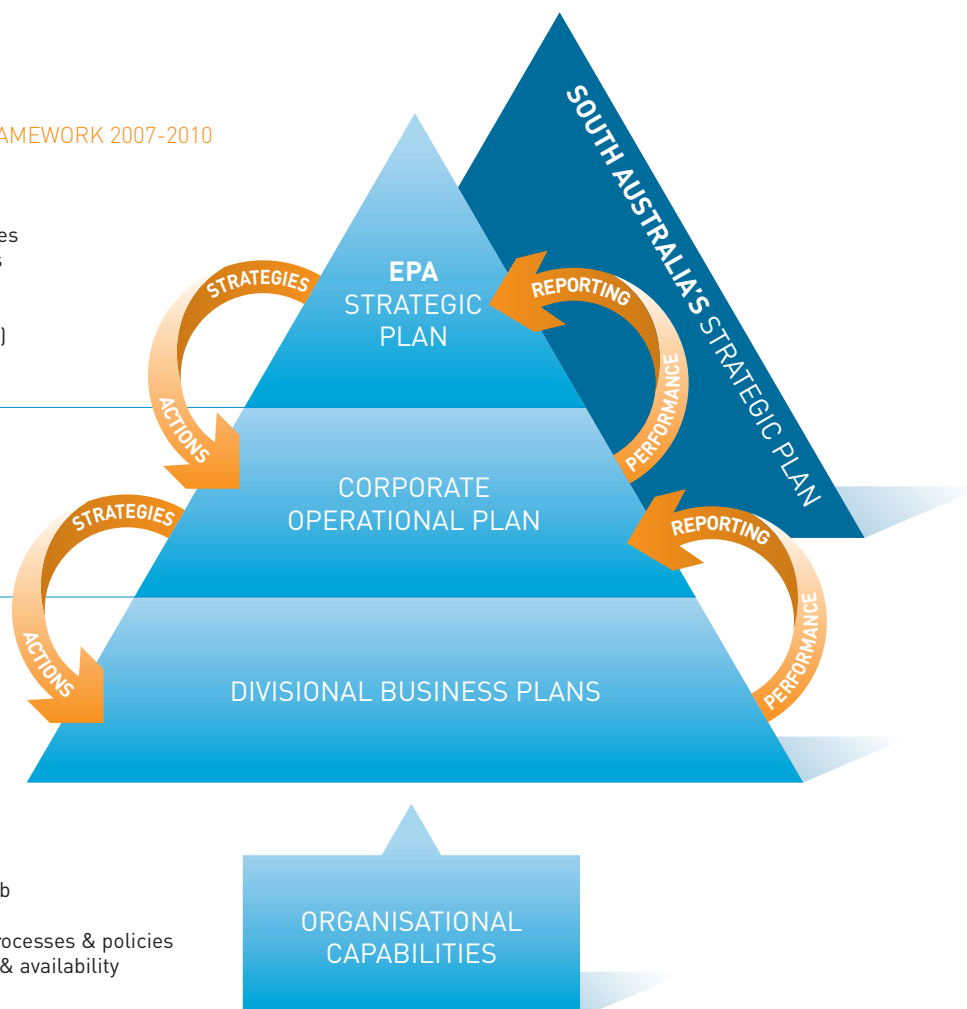
EPA PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2007-2010

Vision, Mission, Values
Environmental Goals
EPA Functions and business principles
(3-5 year time frame)

Organisational priorities and initiatives
(2-3 year time frame)

Divisional strategies
Focus on delivery
(1 year timeframe)

Right people/right job
Adequate resources
Effective systems, processes & policies
Information sharing & availability



South Australia's Strategic Plan: Key Objectives

GROWING PROSPERITY

Good environmental regulation can enhance business competitiveness and reduce business risk. The EPA will support economic development through cost-effective environmental regulation and reducing the administrative burden on business while promoting the efficient use of environmental resources to deliver both cost savings to business and reduced impact on the environment.

IMPROVING WELLBEING

Through its regulatory and non-regulatory programs and services, the EPA will identify environments or communities under threat or pressure from unacceptable pollution and waste impacts and develop strategies to mitigate identified risks.

ATTAINING SUSTAINABILITY

In managing the impacts of pollution and waste, the EPA considers the principles of sustainability in decision making, developing and implementing policy and delivering regulatory and non-regulatory programs. It will use a risk-based and outcome-focussed approach to support the transition to more sustainable practices by business, government and the community.

FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Better environmental regulation has a vital role to play in correcting market failure, promoting fairness and stimulating innovation in meeting environmental standards. The EPA will consider all innovative approaches to achieving required environmental standards.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

The EPA will continue to strengthen its engagement with regional and local communities, business and governments so as to share information and deliver high quality programs and services that contribute to strong and vibrant communities. In so doing, the EPA seeks to ensure that it remains a relevant and credible organisation, and that its services are accessible to all its stakeholders and the wider community.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY

The EPA will continue to seek opportunities to improve the environmental and economic sustainability of business and to better inform the community and business of the EPA's roles and responsibilities. It will also continue to support its staff through appropriate workforce planning and development strategies.

EPA's key environment protection functions

The key day-to-day operational functions that contribute towards achieving our environmental goals are:

LICENSING

Prescribed activities deemed to be of environmental significance under the Act are authorised, predominantly through a system of licensing, in order to control and minimise pollution and waste. Activities scheduled under the *Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982* (RPC Act), also require authorisation through a licence. Licensing is a fundamental function that enables the EPA to set risk-based, outcome-focused conditions to manage the actual or potential environmental risks associated with the activity. Mixes of performance-based, process-based or prescriptive conditions may be set depending on the activity and its scale.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Assessing, monitoring and managing compliance with legislation, licence conditions and statutory policies through inspections, audits and responding to complaints, is an important sustainability tool. The EPA will be guided by its Compliance and Enforcement Guidelines in bringing companies back into compliance, educating the community and enforcing the law where necessary.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The EPA coordinates emergency response on pollution incidents to ensure that they are managed in an effective and timely manner to ensure protection of human health and the environment. Depending on the type of incident, the EPA may respond as part of a broader State Government incident response system.

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

Certain proposed activities, which pose potential environmental risk, are referred under the *Development Act 1993*, and *Aquaculture Act 2001*, to the EPA for assessment of adverse impacts and mitigating actions. To meet environmental objectives, the EPA may advise of conditions to be attached to the development approval and, in certain circumstances, may direct conditions be attached or that the development is refused.

POLICY ADVICE

On a reactive and proactive basis, the EPA provides macro and micro policy advice to the Minister for Environment and Conservation and the EPA Board on a diverse range of matters covering the EPA's statutory and non-statutory functions and responsibilities. The EPA also contributes to the development of national environment and radiation protection policy and programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND SCIENCE

The EPA regularly monitors the condition of the environment in relation to air and water quality. With respect to radiation and noise, monitoring is conducted on a priority basis and where environmental risk may be significant. In conjunction with ZeroWaste SA, the EPA also monitors and tracks waste disposed to landfill and efforts to recover waste materials. Science-based research programs are undertaken to provide a better understanding of environments under stress to inform policy and management responses. The EPA also coordinates broader State of the Environment reporting on a five-yearly basis, and based on its findings provides policy advice to Government on trends, emerging issues and recommendations for action.

POLLUTION COMPLAINT AND INFORMATION DESK

The EPA responds to numerous calls from the public. Calls relate to complaints on pollution and waste that are referred to the EPA for appropriate action, as well as calls seeking advice or information on environmental issues.

INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

The EPA promotes innovative programs and approaches with industry, business and the community sectors, with the aims of encouraging participation, conserving resources, and enhancing the environment. Such programs often demonstrate opportunities to reduce operating costs, enhance reputation and build business competitive advantage.

Our Business Principles

“...the better regulation agenda should be about creating a regulatory environment where businesses can thrive and innovate, while at the same time safeguarding the environmental resources on which growth is based, and the rights of citizens to live and work in a healthy environment.”
(Aldersgate Group Report May 2006)²

WORKING TOGETHER

The EPA will work in partnership with business, community and governments to identify and implement innovative and cost-effective means to reduce human impacts on the environment and improve our quality of life.

REDUCING HUMAN IMPACTS

For existing activities that pose a risk to the environment or human health, the EPA will use its regulatory tools and policies to set standards and criteria and ensure compliance through regimes that are fair, consistent, predictable, transparent and proportional. New developments will continue to be assessed for environmental impacts in a timely manner to ensure that sustainability objectives and principles are met.

RISK-BASED AND OUTCOME-FOCUSSED

The EPA focuses its attention on those activities that present a significant risk to the environment or human health, including cumulative risk. Our regulatory, policy and business systems are being reformed to remove unnecessary regulatory burdens on business while ensuring that environmental risks are reduced and environmental outcomes achieved.

SOUND REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

We will ensure that environmental regulation and policy is based on sound science and evidence and remains relevant, effective and efficient by developing and applying innovative and appropriate regulatory and policy tools to support the transition to more sustainable practices.

EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

Through cooperative industry partnership programs and its regulatory programs, the EPA can help industry save money, improve productivity and competitiveness and reduce environmental impacts by using fewer resources.

The EPA's business principles will be supported by the development of:

Organisational Capabilities

The EPA will continue its program of systematically developing its organisational capabilities to ensure that we are able to deliver the strategy outlined in this plan. The focus will be on staff development and the continuous improvement of our systems, processes and policies.

² http://www.betterregwaste.org/Friends_of_the_Earth_Green_.pdf

Our five Environmental Goals

The achievement of our five environmental goals will require a sustained effort and significant behaviour changes by all elements of society—therefore these goals have long time horizons. It is not merely a matter for Government to mandate and the EPA to enforce.

The achievement of our goals will be made even more difficult by the threat of climate change. It increases environmental risks and makes the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect natural resources more pressing. The EPA has several critical responsibilities under *Tackling Climate Change, South Australia's Greenhouse Strategy*. The EPA also has tools, skills, relationships and resources that can contribute to the success of schemes for the reduction of greenhouse gases as Australia moves towards the adoption of a carbon emissions trading.

OUR VISION

A clean, healthy and valued environment supporting social and economic prosperity for all South Australians now and in the future.

OUR MISSION

We manage and influence human activities to protect, restore and enhance the environment and to support human, social and economic, well-being.

OUR VALUES

EMPATHY Listening to the needs of our stakeholders and responding, in a timely way, with understanding, sensitivity and respect.

SOUND JUDGMENT Practical and balanced judgment guided by sound science, analysis, evidence and the law.

COOPERATION Achieving results through open communications and working in partnership with each other and our stakeholders.

INNOVATION Using lateral thinking and initiative for creative and innovative problem solving.

INTEGRITY Honesty, transparency and taking responsibility for all we say and do as the foundation for being accountable.

1

CLEAN AND HEALTHY AIR

Citizens expect that the air they breathe is clean and healthy. Maintaining and improving air quality is important, for although the air quality in South Australia is generally good, even current levels of air pollution have significant health impacts and costs. Air quality is expected to decline with climate change. Furthermore, there remain important regional air quality problems that require resolution as well as reducing emissions from motor vehicles.

2

WATER QUALITY THAT MEETS AGREED ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Environmental values reflect community views and aspirations for our water resources. These values, including healthy ecosystems and beneficial uses, need to be protected from the adverse impacts of pollution and waste discharges so that the widest possible range of uses can be sustained for current and future generations. The expected reduction in available water in South Australia as a result of climate change will increase challenges in this area.

3

COMMUNITIES PROTECTED FROM UNACCEPTABLE NOISE

Virtually all human activity generates noise. As the population grows and land use intensifies, so can the level of noise in communities. Continued exposure to unacceptable noise levels can have adverse affects on human health.

4

SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES¹

Waste and pollution are often the result of the unsustainable and inefficient use of environmental resources such as water, energy and raw materials. Costs to business and environmental impacts can be reduced, if resources are used efficiently and waste minimised. Sustainable resource use will also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce pressure on our natural resource stocks. The remediation of contaminated land resources (and associated groundwater resources) to productive and sustainable uses will ensure that land is fit for its intended purpose.

5

COMMUNITIES PROTECTED FROM UNACCEPTABLE RADIATION

The community is exposed to ionising and non-ionising radiation, in addition to background radiation. Hospitals, imaging centres and industry use radiation and radioactive materials in a manner beneficial to the community. However, radiation can be a health risk and the community needs to be protected from unacceptable levels of radiation.

EPA's Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities reflect the areas to which we will be giving particular attention over the next 12–18 months; the specific actions, and key performance indicators, for each of the priorities will be detailed in the Corporate Operational Plan. The strategic priorities do not replace the time and effort we will put into moving towards achievement of our core environmental goals; rather the strategic priorities will contribute to the way in which we move towards our goals.

BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

We will develop—in dialogue with our stakeholders— effective environmental regulation that incorporates a mix of policy tools and a risk-based approach; regulatory services will be delivered promptly, consistently and transparently.

INFORMED BUSINESSES BEHAVING SUSTAINABLY

We will contribute to a sustainable South Australia through our influence on government programs and delivering educational and behavioural change programs, in partnership with our stakeholders.

FURTHERING A SERVICE-ORIENTED CULTURE

In keeping with the Government's priority to improve customer service and satisfaction, we are committed to developing a service-oriented culture in our organisation.

RECRUITING AND RETAINING GOOD PEOPLE

To meet the challenge of recruiting and retaining people with the relevant skills and experience we will develop innovative and appropriate recruitment and retention strategies.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Good performance measurement will assist us to understand the contribution that our programs/activities are making to the achievement of our strategic goals; will underpin a stronger culture of accountability; and provide the means to evaluate and improve our programs and activities.

¹ The concept of 'resource efficiency' includes: consuming fewer resources and producing less waste whilst delivering the same end services and products. (Resource Efficiency: Position Paper, UK Environment Agency)

