

# Victorian Waste Management Association AGM - Independent Inquiry into EPA Government Response



Environment  
Protection  
Authority Victoria







# ANDREWS LABOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY



# EPA Inquiry: Recap

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Terms of Reference for the Inquiry focused on:

- Role in relation to public health issues
- Community and industry expectations
- Role in environmental protection
- Environmental justice
- Governance and funding
- Powers and tools

# Government Response

- Government response embraces a vision for a stronger, more capable EPA
- Significantly, the Government has committed to an overhaul of the Environment Protection Act
- \$45.5 million investment over the next 18 months





# The Government Response

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Delivers an EPA that:

- is focused on prevention
- gives industry clarity, certainty and support
- holds polluters to account
- is modern, with fit-for-purpose legislation
- is more responsive to local and regional issues
- has strengthened governance
- is a trusted, authoritative source of science

# Government Response

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- Support 40 recommendations
- Support 'in principle' seven recommendations
  - 7.1 EP (Integration and Coordination) Act : option for non-legislative approach
  - 7.4 3<sup>rd</sup> party standing for review of decisions (VCAT) : investigate whether/how this can be done
  - 7.5 Strengthen 3<sup>rd</sup> party rights : commitment to investigate
  - 10.2 Referrals to EPA to be pursued through Planning system
  - 12.2 Expanded cohort of licensed premises : legislative reform includes review of permissioning
  - 17.1 EPA determine environmental conditions on Mining work plans + high risk rehab bonds advice + ERR continue to have compliance & enforcement role
  - 21.2 Municipal Industrial Waste Levy redesign : general commitment
- Support 'in part' one recommendation
  - 19.2 Legislation of CEO skills : no need to legislate, good governance determined by Board

# The Government Response

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The Government is investing:

- \$6.5 million to fund more investigators, environmental protection officers and legal staff to hold polluters to account
- \$3.3 million to deliver improvements in how EPA uses technology to communicate, including the development of a new digital strategy and \$2.4 million to develop a database of legacy contamination risks.
- \$4.8 million to pilot network of local government environment protection officers
- \$4.8 million to provide an expanded, specialist environmental public health team within EPA



# Key reforms: interim board

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## Appointment of **interim board**.

- Chaired by Cheryl Batagol
- Interim board includes: Dr John Stocker, Professor Rebekah Brown, Ross Pilling, Monique Conheady, Debra Russell, Robert Hogarth and Professor Arie Frieberg

# Key reforms: Legislative Reform

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Significant legislative reform for environment protection in Victoria

Strengthened governance and improved independence for EPA

A new general duty to protect the environment and human health, and a focus on the prevention of harm

The reforms will:

- Improve the integration of environment protection and land use planning systems
- Improve the regulation of high risk mining sites

# Key reforms: legislative reform

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**Legislative reform** to be delivered in two stages:

- A Bill updating the *Environment Protection Act 1970* to establish an interim board.
- A Bill to give effect to an overhaul of the Act in 2018 to provide modern, fit-for-purpose legislation, with a focus on preventing environmental harm

# Environmental Public Health

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- Consolidated and enhanced environmental public health function related to pollution and waste located at EPA
- 6 DHHS environmental public health officers moved to EPA in December 2016
- New environmental public health unit established
- MOU signed and working protocols in place with more in development
- Further recruitment underway



# Local Government Pilot

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- Establish a new statewide network of local gov't environmental protection officers to address localised pollution and waste complaints, appropriately authorized under the EP Act (eg. Litter, noise, septic tanks)
- Pilot funded for approx. 10 councils in 17/18
- Currently designing scope of pilot with DELWP and stakeholders

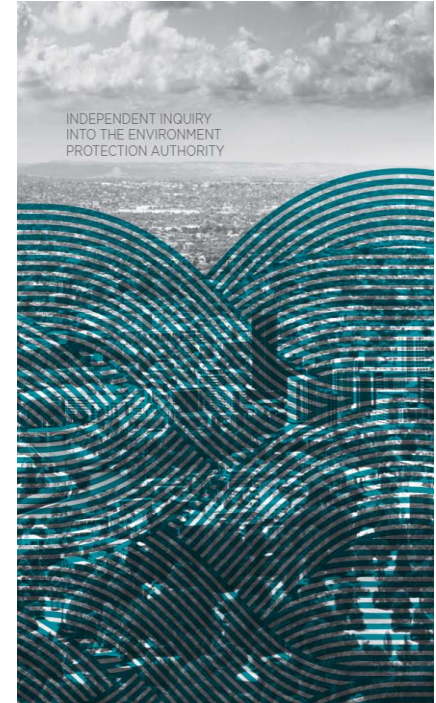
# Opportunity

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*'We are optimistic for the future of EPA. It is staffed by capable people with a strong sense of purpose and commitment to achieve the EPA's mission.'*

*It is now... for EPA itself to act decisively to bring this vision to life in order to realise the potential of EPA and to build on the desire and momentum for change that was so evident during this inquiry'*

**Excerpt from the Forward of the  
Ministerial Advisory Committee Independent Inquiry into  
the EPA Report**



# EPA's Approach

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- Committed to delivering a next generation EPA for Victorians
- Focused on
  - Outcome delivery
  - Engaging with diversity of stakeholders
  - Ongoing service delivery + ambitious reform agenda

# Priority external engagement

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## **Overhaul of the Environment Protection Act**

- Targeted engagement on key themes
- Proposed new legislation in Parliament in 2018

## **Preparing for local government pilot of environment protection officers**

- Approximately 10 local government areas to be involved and there will be consultation to determine who is involved
- Engagement with local government and other key stakeholders will occur soon

## **EPA's Organisational Strategy**

- Engagement will commence in April 2017



# Questions

