

## EPA UPGRADES ITS COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT ACTION

**Tuesday, 28 June 2011**

The second oldest environment protection authority in the world, EPA Victoria, has unveiled a new way of operating which will provide more predictable compliance and enforcement, or 'policing', functions.

EPA's new Compliance and Enforcement Policy (C&E Policy) was developed in consultation with leading regulatory experts and benchmarked against world's best practice, including US EPA, the UK Environment Agency and British Columbia Environment Ministry.

Chief Executive Officer John Merritt said all effective regulators were backed by clear cut policies regarding the two basic functions of compliance and enforcement.

"The new policy provides a framework for us to be able to say to business and the community when we will and won't do things – it is essentially a rule book on how we exercise our discretion when enforcing the law," he said.

"Not unlike the way the Australian Tax Office has a set of rules to govern how it informs and educates the community, EPA needs to be clear on how it will use its powers and where it will put its effort to protect and improve the environment."

The policy follows a number of critical external reports and a comprehensive review of EPA's compliance and enforcement functions late last year which all pointed to inconsistent and ineffective systems, processes and regulation.

For instance there was criticism EPA enforcement action was either 'too hard or too soft'. The new policy introduces a predictable and easy to understand system, which will give business greater certainty, and better protect the environment.

Mr Merritt said in practical terms the policy provides a consistent approach to the way EPA discharges its compliance and enforcement function.

"As an example, under the new policy, we will always issue a notice to an individual or a site where works or actions are required if they are unable to fix the problem in the presence of our officer," he said.

"Where there is a problem, we will also provide advice to help people comply. Obviously if it is not acted on we will enforce the law and punish those who don't comply as deterrence."

Implementation of the new C&E Policy will lead to improved levels of compliance with the law.

For a copy of the policy visit [www.epa.vic.gov.au](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au)

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