

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION POLICY REVIEW

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

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While the *Environment Protection Act 1997* (the Act) does not provide a statutory timeframe for the review of environment protection policies, recent developments at the national and international level mean that it is timely to review the 2010 Hazardous Materials Environment Protection Policy (the EPP) to ensure it remains an effective document in providing guidance in the management of hazardous materials in the ACT.

An extensive review of the 2010 EPP has been undertaken, resulting in the EPP being revised to align with current best practice management of hazardous materials to minimise the risk of adverse impacts they may have on the environment and human health. The draft EPP was released for public consultation on 4 November 2021 on the YourSay website.

Businesses and individuals involved in the manufacture, storage, transport, use and disposal of hazardous materials use the EPP to guide their activities in an environmentally responsible manner. The EPP sets out how to meet both the general environmental duty, and the requirements of an environmental authorisation under the Act, to ensure that activities involving hazardous materials do not cause environmental harm. Causing environmental harm is an offence under the Act.



THE CONVERSATION

The ACT community was engaged through various channels.

The draft EPP was available on the YourSay website for an eight-week period from 4 November 2021 to 4 January 2022. The community were invited to submit their views through open feedback submissions available on the YourSay page.

Key stakeholders, including environmental, relevant statutory position holders, government agencies and hazardous material generation, collection, transportation and disposal businesses, were directly invited to comment on the draft EPP. The community were also prompted to engage through social media posts on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate Facebook page.

WHO ENGAGED

Throughout the eight-week consultation, five submissions were received via both email and the YourSay page.

One submission was received via YourSay and four were received via email. Comments received via email were from Icon Water, Housing ACT, Work Safe ACT and a rural lease holder. The one contribution through YourSay was from a waste service provider. However, the YourSay page did receive 267 views from 237 visits.



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Key insights from the community

Alignment with WorkSafe ACT legislation

1. Updates to and relationships with WorkSafe ACT legislation (*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, *Dangerous Substances Act 2004*, *Dangerous Goods (Road Transport) Act 2009*) were suggested.

Hazardous material disposal

2. It was suggested that the hazardous material PFAS should be addressed at the sale/use stage, as well as at the disposal stage.
3. It was suggested that greater clarification should be provided that hazardous liquid wastes are not to be disposed through drains, sewer or stormwater systems.

Rural lease holders

4. It was suggested that rural lease holders would appreciate a brochure explaining their responsibilities in relation to chemicals and medicines commonly used in agricultural activities.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The comments have been key to further reviewing and updating the EPP. The ideas and actions that emerged from this consultation will inform the finalisation of the revised EPP.

The ACT Government will now consider the outcomes from this community engagement along with outcomes of other key government consultations. A full community engagement report will be released in coming months.

To find out more about the Hazardous Materials Environment Protection Policy review and other initiatives, policies and projects in Canberra visit www.yoursay.act.gov.au or <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/>.

Key Timings

4 November 2021 – Draft EPP released for public comment

4 January 2022 – Public consultation closed

March 2022 – Your Say report released

April 2022 – Revised EPP released as a finalised document



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

267

People reached via YourSay

237

People visited the
YourSay page

1

Submission made via
YourSay

200

Key stakeholders were
invited to provide comments

84

People were reached via
social media