

Friends of Murrumbidgee

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What do you think are the key environmental challenges which will impact the EPA in the future?

Climate change Population pressures Coal seam gas and the effects of coal mining
Renewable energy Freedom of information - right to know and access to information
Commercial in confidence restrictions on government contracts Environmental Impact assessments and ensuring follow up by government authorities including restoration work and compensation where appropriate

What aspects of the EPA's work do you value and wish to preserve in the future?

The EPA's role as an independent authority which can be approached by the public, including citizens and local environmental groups, when local government authorities and government departments are not responsive to environmental hazards and damage.

How can the EPA effectively work in partnership with other government agencies to meet the environmental challenges of the future?

Legislation to ensure that the EPA is represented on governmental decision-making bodies. EPA to take a stronger role in planning issues such as zoning and permit decisions.

How can the EPA's role in safeguarding the community against the health impacts of pollution be clarified or strengthened?

Through legislation and increased funding.

How could statutory frameworks more effectively prevent future environmental risks and land use conflicts?

Through legislation and government support. Embed environmental justice in the law relating to pollution regulation. VCAT should be compelled to give more weight to EPA recommendations and expertise.

What role should the EPA play in emergency management?

Critical role as a primary referral agency.

How can the EPA better identify and, where necessary, address problems that are the result of past activity?

Information being made available by companies and government on pollutants and mining activity so that the EPA can better identify problems and follow up environmental damage. EPA should play a critical role in assessing and directing rehabilitation efforts at mine sites and at fuel and chemical sites.

What role should the EPA play in improving environmental outcomes beyond those necessary to safeguard human health?

Flora and fauna should be a major consideration alongside human wellbeing.

What role should the EPA play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

By raising the EPA powers within the statutory framework and on government and regulatory bodies. Increased government funding. Increased staffing to address greenhouse gas emission issues. Planning powers to address energy efficiency in buildings and transport.

How do you see environmental justice being applied to the work of the EPA?

Environmental justice should be embedded in the law and the EPA would play a crucial role in defining and implementing this. Introducing into environmental law an obligation to avoid causing pollution.

What can we adopt from other regulators and regulatory models to implement best-practice approaches and ensure that the EPA can rise to key future challenges?

No Answer

Are there any other issues relevant to the Terms of Reference that you would like to raise?

No Answer

What can the EPA do to avoid potential future problems?

The EPA cannot address future problems unless it has sufficient funding and staff and is backed by strong government legislation to protect the environment and address climate change.