

Anonymous, 3945

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

Actually following through on issues & complaints that impact people & the environment. From my experience EPA have avoided undertaking proper due diligence and or any action at all which has been the complete opposite action to what EPA printed guidelines are (on the EPA website). ie EPA actions are at odds with your printed version.

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

From my dealings with EPA Traralgon office & the Hotline to report several issues, I find it difficult to value or preserve any EPA work that I witnessed.

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

EPA need to be Engaged & Willing to improve their communication skills. In desperation I contacted Melbourne Water Representatives to help me liaise with EPA, but unfortunately it made no difference. EPA also failed to return basic Phone calls / emails to Melbourne Water! The poor communication I witnessed & experienced by EPA provided no confidence to establishing any working relationship with Government agencies.

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

Statutory Frameworks are needed. Actually have EPA officers willing & compelled contractually to observe their own EPA written guidelines as per their website. The EPA website is excellent, but their officers let the EPA down when they fail to follow through on their own written guidelines. From my experience they don't wish to hear about pollution or protect the community. EPA takes far too long to respond to reports of pollution & registering details via the EPA hotline has been a disaster when they fail to pass on the recorded complaint!! EPA staff on the ground are needed to respond to reports of pollution promptly.

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

Hopefully they would remove EPA Staff personal opinions of a pollution situation & adhere to a framework to resolve the problem.

What role should the EPA play in emergency management?

They should be present & visible with Police, & other emergency services.

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

Have an independent organization review a complaint handling procedure. Increase staff training & how to better deal with the Community & other Government organizations. Epa needs to be accountable for their lack lustre actions.

What can the EPA do to avoid potential future problems?

Get rid of the Hotline reporting procedure! People answering the phone need to be trained & understand the importance of someone making a report & ensure it gets to the right person for immediate action. Once this occurs a point of contact should be established & maintained! Epa should actually read & follow their own Charter - that would be a great start.

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

EPA should be at the forefront of driving environmental outcomes. Epa should have a positive presence in the community that will take action & resolve pollution issues. Unfortunately EPA is known as the "toothless tiger" in the community.

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

No Answer

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

From my experience EPA have not been concerned about environmental justice. Polluted waterways from raw dairy effluent have not been considered a real problem. In fact they have hidden behind "worlds best practice" so its then "easy" & for them to then say ... all is ok & not delve just a little bit deeper & undertake proper & thorough investigations.

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?

The culture of the EPA & its staff appears to be a real problem. New management & an overhaul of what is expected from the EPA needs to be addressed, so as EPA starts to meet community expectations & they can be relied upon to resolve problems for 2015 & beyond. The EPA brand is not strong in the community. From past experience I would not waste my time to call EPA & report an issue as I know it will be "fluffed over" with some lame excuse. This is assuming the report ever got past the hotline reporting stage!

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

The disappointing Culture of EPA & its Staff to the community. The relevance of the EPA in the Community & its desire to engage & work with other Government agencies. Staff Training from the (frontline) hotline reporting phone contacts through to Staff on the ground ie how to properly engage with people & the community. Lets work together to achieve results, instead of standing back & hiding behind lack of staff, your township is too far away, world best practice (when its suits them), return phone calls/ emails, stop advising polluters to pollute late in the week so EPA would then not have sufficient time to get a water sample, be willing to spend money wisely so polluters are actually prosecuted....actually do something - anything!!!! The Epa brand needs an overhaul as it currently is not a an Agency that appears

to have a solid foot in the community that can be relied upon with any confidence when they are truly needed.