

Mount Alexander Shire Council

- Planning/planning enforcement have few examples of where we have worked well together with the EPA. The relationship is that the EPA are not willing to come to the party, by either enforcement or providing advice. Example was an illegal dumping in Barfold, which contained asbestos – seemed to take some agitation to get the EPA to act, wanted Council to deal with it, even though it was more an EPA scale issue.
- We feel that the regulation of small rural landfills far out ways the environmental risk they pose.
- We find it difficult to get consistent advice and information from EPA officers on landfill matters, both within the region and between the regional office and the Melbourne office.
- Buffers around landfills for rezoning purposes are problematic. The buffers seems to be inconsistent, not clear and change even after a rezoning proponent has undertaken extensive site investigation. Clearer policy and practice around buffer zones, as well as the expectation of a proponent/Council around buffer from landfill when rezoning would save initial costs (no unnecessary work undertaken), make the process transparent and reduce argument at Panel (where the EPA does not always represent it's views). The same comments apply to the issue of planning permits on land that is already appropriately zoned.
- What became of the Illegal dumping taskforce? How can Councils use this resource or learnings? What else is being done?
- The landfill financial assurance is unresolved. Councils will benefit from clarity here for long-term financial planning.
- It would be good to get a sense from the EPA of their plans for compelling councils to remediate closed landfills / legacy landfills as this cost could be extreme and will require long term financial planning.
- DWMPs have become overly responsive to the open potable water guidelines and in some councils are essentially being used as a planning document, at the expense of the important emphasis on existing system compliance and risk. The EPA moving out of this space (i.e. with no longer approving systems) may add to this problem. Would the EPA retain an advocacy role in domestic wastewater management even if not a 'systems approval' role?