

Water Policy Principles

The Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Stephen Robertson, issued a media release on 11 April, announcing new policy principles for unallocated water. The principles cover:

- (a) *How much of the unallocated water should be released*
- (b) *When a release should occur*
- (c) *The form in which the water should be released*
- (d) *How that water should be released.*

Guidelines for the Safe Use of Recycled Water

The Queensland EPA has issued draft Guidelines for the Safe Use of Recycled Water on 5 April 2004. The EPA describes the purposes of the draft Guidelines as being to encourage and support water recycling that is safe, environmentally sustainable, cost-effective and has the support of local communities. In addition the Guidelines are designed to provide guidance on water recycling that is appropriate to Queensland conditions and to provide a way that other resources can support water recycling. The draft is available on the EPA's website at www.epa.qld.gov.au/register/p01212aa.doc.

VICTORIA

Editor: Jennifer Slatter

Sustainability Fund

The Sustainability Fund (the Fund) has been established to provide a resource to support projects and initiatives that will foster the environmentally sustainable use of our resources and best practices in waste management. The Fund is designed to provide a resource that can be used to help build the capacity of Victorian business, local government, non-government organisations and the broader community to harness opportunities engendered by Victoria's sustainability agenda.

The Fund is jointly administered by the Minister for Environment and the Treasurer and can be accessed for a range of sustainability projects and initiatives. Potential applicants are encouraged to read the [Sustainability Fund Guidelines](#) prior to making a grant application. Expenditure of Fund monies may take the form of grants to a wide range of recipients, including community groups, councils, non-government organisations and businesses. In addition, the Minister and Treasurer may provide funding for strategic projects in line with the purposes of the Fund.

The strategic purposes of the Fund will be defined from time to time by the Minister and Treasurer through a [Priority Statement](#). This statement will provide a targeted focus for fund allocations for the life of the statement and all potential applicants for funding should ensure that their application sits within the boundaries defined by the relevant priority statement.

In addition, an independent advisory panel is being established to make recommendations to the Minister and Treasurer in relation to the application of Fund monies. The Panel will provide advice to the Ministers, ensuring that they have access to appropriate information and independent advice that will enable them to make allocations that will maximise the benefit of the Fund for all Victorians.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Sustainability Fund Guidelines or draft Priority Statement, please contact EPA Victoria on (03) 9695 2813.

For more information about the Sustainability Fund, please contact the Secretariat at:
Secretariat, Sustainability Fund, EPA Victoria, GPO Box 4395QQ, Melbourne VIC 3001
Telephone: (03) 9695 2685, Email: sustainability.fund@epa.vic.gov.au

New domestic ballast water management arrangements for Victoria

On 15 April 2004, Environment Minister John Thwaites announced Victorian ports would be the first in Australia to have a domestic ballast water management system. "Victoria is taking a lead on this issue, because we must stop the spread of existing marine pests and prevent new invasions," Mr Thwaites said.

In making the announcement the Minister said, "Marine pests such as the Northern Pacific Seastar are harming the ecosystems of Port Phillip Bay and Corio Bay and threaten industries that rely on our unique marine environment, as well as affecting recreational fishermen and divers."

The new *Waste Management Policy (Ships' Ballast Water)* (available from Craftsman Press - the Victorian Government Gazette printer) will come into force on 1 July 2004, to be administered by EPA Victoria. From this date, ships must not discharge any high-risk ballast water into Victorian State waters. To avoid discharges of high-risk ballast water, ships must either discharge their ballast safely out at sea or keep high risk ballast water on board. All ships will be required to provide EPA with accurate information on the status and risk of any ballast water contained on their ships.

The development of the Policy included extensive consultation with the ports and shipping industry and this work will continue during implementation of the Policy. During May 2004, EPA will be contacting ships, ships agents and ports to ensure that they have all the necessary information and documentation to enable them to manage the risks of ballast water and to comply with the Policy when it comes into force.

The new Waste management policy will complement the arrangements that Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has in place for international ballast water.

To identify how ships can meet their ballast water obligations set out in the Policy, EPA Victoria developed the *Protocol for Environmental Management - Domestic Ballast Water Management in Victorian State Waters* (available on EPA's website: www.epa.vic.gov.au). The Protocol for Environmental Management (PEM) provides information to assist the shipping industry assess and manage the risks associated with domestic ballast water management.

Victoria, with the cooperation and support of government and industry partners, has already successfully completed a trial of the domestic ballast management system (for both domestic and international ballast) at the Port of Hastings. The domestic ballast aspect of the arrangements trialled at Hastings will now be applied to protect the other Victorian commercial ports, including Port of Melbourne, Port of Portland and Port of Geelong.

For further information about these arrangements, please contact:
Ballast Water Officer, EPA Victoria, GPO Box 4395QQ, Melbourne VIC 3001
Telephone: 03 9695 2547, Email: ballast.water@epa.vic.gov.au

Guideline for Environmental Management: Biosolids Land Application

Biosolids (appropriately treated sewage sludge) can make an important contribution to sustainable environmental management, through the return of organic material, trace elements, moisture and nutrients to our soils. The Guideline for Environmental Management: Biosolids Land Application (available on EPA's website: www.epa.vic.gov.au) enables this beneficial use of biosolids, by providing a management framework that ensures any chemical and microbiological risks are appropriately managed. The drafting of the guideline has been supported by a best practice review of International and Australian biosolids management approaches and broad consultation on proposed guidance in November 2002 and 2000.

Queries and comments on the guideline should be sent to your EPA regional office or:
Project Manager, Biosolids Management Guideline, EPA Victoria, GPO Box 4395QQ, Melbourne, VIC 3001.