



Purpose and role of EPA in land-use planning matters

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The purpose of this document is to clarify EPA's purpose and role in land use planning decisions. The document will provide an understanding of how EPA can support planning and development decisions to prevent impacts to environment, amenity and human health.

Purpose of land-use planning

The purpose of planning is to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians in the use, development and protection of land.

Purpose of EPA

The purpose of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is to act as an effective regulator and influential authority to protect and improve Victoria's environment.

EPA's vision is a healthy environment that supports a liveable and prosperous Victoria, with clean air, healthy waterways, safe land and minimal disturbances from noise and odour.

Role of the planning system in achieving the purpose of EPA

EPA recognises the importance land use planning has in achieving the broader purpose of the *Environment Protection Act 1970*.

Role of EPA in achieving the purpose of the planning system

Because EPA has environmental specialist expertise, it is able to help planning and responsible authorities understand environmental risks associated with certain planning and development decisions.

In particular, EPA can improve the quality of a land use and development decision by:

- highlighting significant environmental impacts likely to occur from the proposed use or development
- recommending or requiring solutions to address environmental risks
- providing information on best practice techniques for environmental protection
- applying our regulatory interventions where appropriate.

Principles of how EPA operates in land use planning

Inclusive

EPA will engage with statutory and strategic planners in government and industry to promote environmental laws and provide opportunities to participate in the development of policies as they relate to planning.

Proportionate

EPA will contribute to land-use and development decisions proportional to the level of risk they present to the environment, amenity and human health.

Consistent

EPA's advice and guidance on planning matters will ensure a consistent state-wide approach across the planning and environment systems.

Accountable

EPA will be forthright about our position on planning matters where there are significant risks to the environment, amenity and human health.

Transparent

EPA's advice and guidance to support planning decisions will be made public and user friendly.

Authoritative

EPA will ensure that planning and responsible authorities understand environmental laws and standards. EPA will take action to address issues where standards are not being met.

Effective

EPA's contribution to planning will seek to prevent environmental harm and impacts to health, and improve the environment.

Targeted

EPA will prioritise effort in planning where our technical knowledge is best applied.

When does EPA get involved?

Planning system reviews

EPA contributes scientific and technical information to whole-of-government investigations into the effectiveness of the planning system and planning controls.

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Strategic planning and precinct structure planning

EPA provides advice and information to support the development of strategic planning, including identifying potential incompatible land use to minimise future impacts.

Planning scheme amendments and re-zoning

EPA assists planning and responsible authorities to determine appropriate separation distances and land use compatibility, in particular between industry and sensitive uses.

Planning permits

EPA contributes to decisions about planning permits for use and development of land - sometimes EPA provides advice and sometimes it directs the responsible authority.

EPA has the power of veto for planning permits where EPA is a referral authority under section 55 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. These planning permits are described in clause 66 of the Victorian Planning Provisions.

EPA has particular specialist expertise that is required to make a better informed decision for planning permits. EPA is given notification under section 52 of *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. These planning permits are described in clause 66 of the Victorian Planning Provisions.

There are many other planning permits where responsible authorities seek EPA's advice and guidance. These planning permits are numerous and diverse. EPA uses its discretion in whether it will respond to these requests. Our discretion will be based on the level of risk the planning permit presents and the principles described above.