



Engagement Charter



The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is South Australia's independent environment protection regulator. We protect, restore and enhance the environment through the risk-based regulation of pollution, waste, noise and radiation.

We work closely with the community, industry and government to protect our unique natural environment while supporting economic growth and improving wellbeing.

Purpose of the charter

The EPA Strategic Directions 2018–2022 sets out five objectives to deliver our vision of a better environment for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of all South Australians. One of those objectives is to work with communities and industry to manage environmental challenges, and to engage and listen to communities to better understand those challenges.

The Engagement Charter sets out the EPA's commitment to engagement, to listening to communities and involving them in decisions that affect them. It sets out our engagement values and principles, outlines when and in what circumstances we will engage, and how the community can be involved.



Our engagement values

When undertaking engagement, the EPA will be guided by the following values

Residents first	When we have information which affects individual residents and householders, we will engage with, and listen to, those people first before informing the wider community.
Listening	We will listen to you genuinely and seek to understand your perspective and views.
Purposeful and outcome-focused	We will set out a clear purpose for why we are engaging and ensure a common understanding exists of the level of influence stakeholders have in decision-making processes.
Inclusive	We will acknowledge diversity and enable people from diverse backgrounds to participate in our engagement processes.
Accessible and transparent	We will provide relevant and easily accessible information. We will outline the level of influence you can expect to have, and we will tell you the outcome and reasons for our decisions.
Timely	We will plan carefully and engage early, to ensure you are given an appropriate and fair amount of time to participate in engagement processes.
Tailored and targeted	We will tailor each engagement process to take into account the specific needs of the communities and stakeholders we are engaging with. We will ensure that our engagements are targeted to the communities and stakeholders who are most directly affected.
Progressive	We will strive to continually improve our engagement processes and will seek and listen to your feedback.
Fair	We will listen to you and have regard to community feedback in our decision-making and day-to-day work. We will let you know how we have listened and engaged and the outcomes of our engagement processes.

When the EPA will engage

Licensed activities

The EPA regulates thousands of industrial sites across South Australia. We actively encourage those companies to work with and involve their local community and advise them of any incidents at their sites. EPA staff may attend community forums and meetings at the invitation of industry or the community. Where there is a high level of community interest in a particular facility, the EPA may engage directly with the local community through consultative forums, community information sessions or individual interactions.

When a company or person applies for an environmental authorisation, or an existing company applies to relax its licence conditions, the EPA will advise the adjoining neighbours and seek comment on the application. We have regard to that feedback when developing conditions to attach to the authorisation.

Environmental incidents

The EPA notifies the community of environmental incidents which have an environmental or health impact, applying the principles of 'resident first' and targeting communication to those most directly affected. Where multiple government agencies and any other parties are involved, we work with others to support the accurate provision of information that meets community needs. This is done through social media, media, stakeholder networks and direct contact, depending on the nature of the incident. The EPA strongly encourages licensed industries to be proactive in notifying their communities of incidents.

Land and groundwater contamination

When an area is being assessed for possible contamination, or where contamination has already been identified, the EPA will require that the local community be informed. This may be done by the current owner of the site or the original polluter, or consultants working on their behalf. When a liable party does not exist or is unable to carry out this work, the EPA will inform the local community if there is a potential public health risk. Under the 'resident first' principle, this may include door knocking, letters, fact sheets, email and telephone contact, and community information sessions.

Policy and program development

When the EPA is developing or reviewing policies and legislation, or developing new programs, we will engage with a wide range of stakeholders. This can include industries and businesses, peak associations, environmental groups and householders. To do this we use a range of engagement activities including forums and meetings, direct mail, emails, social media and website updates.

Science and monitoring programs

When we are developing scientific and monitoring programs, we work with a range of stakeholders. Depending on the program, this can include other state government agencies, local government, industry, environmental groups and communities. We let you know about programs in which you can become involved through direct contact such as emails, letterbox drops and meetings, as well as advertisements in local media and via the EPA website 'Have your say' page.

The engagement processes for some legislative and regulatory policies are set out in the *Environment Protection Act 1993*. These may include public advertising and minimum consultation periods. These requirements set a minimum standard and we will undertake wider and longer engagements when it is needed.

EPA Incident Notification Commitment Statement

The EPA notifies the community of environmental incidents which have a community impact or high level of community interest, consistent with the following principles:

- Where residents are directly impacted, we will focus on informing those residents first, except where there is an immediate public health risk that requires urgent notification of the broader community. If no environmental or health impact is considered to be identified, the EPA will assess whether it is warranted in the circumstances, particularly where there is potential for community concern.
- We will target our communication to those communities most affected, through local media and local stakeholder networks, and through direct contact.
- Where multiple agencies are involved in managing an incident we will work with other agencies to provide accurate information that meets community needs.
- We will work with industry to encourage timely transparency regarding environmental incidents.
- There will be circumstances where we may only be able to provide limited information on the progress of our incident response to not jeopardise an investigation or prosecution or breach the privacy of individuals or third parties. Where this happens, we will provide as much information as we can to enable the community to be aware that an incident has occurred, and make them aware of any risks.

How you can engage with us

- Find out how you can become involved through the 'Have your say' section of our website.
- Visit the 'Industry updates' section of our website for updates on EPA-licensed sites.
- Contact our pollution reporting and customer support phone line on 8204 2004.
- Speak direct with EPA staff – if you receive a letter from us, we will include details of how you can contact us.

When we are engaging, we ask that you:

- Be respectful of EPA staff and other community members and stakeholders.
- Provide us with feedback on our engagement so that we can seek to continually improve our processes.

How we engage

Stakeholder	How we will engage
The South Australian public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide open, transparent and accessible information via publications, fact sheets, website, social media, the EPA public register, customer call centre, and traditional media (print, radio and television)• Community events and forums• Direct mail and email• Face-to-face meetings
Community groups and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attending community group meetings• Assisting with and forming community reference groups• Partnering with community organisations on projects• Roadshows and meetings to consult on legislative changes• Inviting and considering written public submissions on legislative changes• Providing information on current EPA activities that may be of interest to members• Publishing online reports summarising feedback and outcomes from community engagement sessions• Annual program of EPA Board engagement activities
Industry – EPA licensed and unlicensed industries and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to support the Statement of Agreement, a partnering agreement between business, industry and the EPA on a collective commitment to work together to promote better environmental outcomes• Meetings with industry and business groups• Participate in industry forums• Targeted consultation on the development and revision of guidelines• Guidelines to assist industry to undertake community engagement

How we engage

Stakeholder	How we will engage
Associations, professional organisations and peak bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EPA Board engagement program• Consultation with prescribed bodies, under the <i>Environment Protection Act 1993</i>• Regular meetings between EPA and peak bodies
Federal and state government departments and agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross-agency working groups• Memoranda of understanding
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular meetings between the EPA and local government compliance staff• Regular meetings with the Local Government Association as the peak representative body• Provide information and training programs via a local government liaison officer
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep media informed through media releases and direct contact• Provide 24/7 service to respond to enquiries from the media





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