

matters relating the role and functions of the EPA for the period up to 31 March 2010. The statement of intent takes effect from the date of the Minister's approval (subsection 15B(6) of EMPCA), which approval was dated 13 February 2009. EMPCA enables the statement of intent to be amended by the Board from time to time.

Further details regarding the EPA, including copies of the statements of expectation and intent, are available at <<http://www.epa.tas.gov.au>>.

Gunns pulp mill approval delayed - see Federal above.

VICTORIA

Leonie Goodwin

Most restricted Victorian duck season ever

On 4 February, Environment and Climate Change Minister announced the shortest, most restricted duck season ever in Victoria. The 49 day season runs from Saturday March 21 to Friday May 8. Recreational shooters will be restricted to a maximum bag limit of five game ducks of which at least three must be Wood Duck, with a total ban on the taking of Blue Wing Shoveller, Pink Ear and Hard Head. In addition, duck hunters will be subject to a range of strong penalties up to \$2685 for breaching any one of the conditions.

Port Phillip and Westernport EcoTender

In early February the government reported that landholders in the east of the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment area are responding well to the \$1.5 million EcoTender. EcoTender aims to improve the State's environment by paying private rural landholders for environmentally beneficial work on their property and in the surrounding area. Under EcoTender, landholders and groups of landholders competitively bid for funds. Successful bids are those that offer the best environmental value for money. Selected landholders get regular income over a five year period for work such as fencing, planting native vegetation or removing grazing stock from part of the property. More information is available at www.dse.vic.gov.au/ecomarkets

Draft hazardous waste regulations

On 3 March draft regulations providing guidance for the safe and efficient management of hazardous waste were released for public consultation by EPA Victoria. *Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Resource) Regulations 2009* are intended to take effect from 1 July 2009. The regulations aim to provide practical assistance to industry to avoid generating waste and maximise the reuse and recycling of industrial waste resources. The release of the draft regulations began the formal consultation phase which closed on Friday 3 April 2009. Further information is available at <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/waste>

Changes to water carryover rules

On 19 February, the Minister for Water announced the government would be allowing water users in northern Victoria to carryover more water into the 2009/10 season. Irrigators and urban water corporations would be able to carry over any unused water up to 50 per cent of their water entitlement – an increase from the current limit of 30 per cent. The new change means irrigators can carry over water up to 50 per cent of their entitlement in to 2009/10. Water carried over plus next season's allocations must not exceed 100 per cent of the customer's entitlement. The government is considering further changes in advance of the 2010/11 irrigation season. Further information on carryover rules is available at www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/programs/sws/northern

NELR recent developments

Bushfires Royal Commission

A Royal Commission into Victoria's devastating February bushfires will make recommendations on fire preparation and land use planning and management systems as part of its wide-ranging review of the fires. The Commission's terms of reference are broad and include inquiring and making recommendations into the bushfire preparation and planning by governments, emergency services and other bodies including current laws, policies, practices, resources and strategies for the prevention, identification, evaluation and management of bushfire threats and risks. The interim report is scheduled for 17 August with the final report due 31 July 2010.

Retired Victorian Supreme Court judge, Justice Bernard Teague, will chair the Royal Commission. He will be assisted by former Commonwealth Ombudsman, Ron McLeod, and State Services Authority Commissioner, Susan Pascoe.

Victorian desalination plant approval - see Federal above.

Melbourne – Metropolitan Waste and Resource Strategic Plan

On 27 February, the government released the *Metropolitan Waste and Resource Strategic Plan*. The plan examines Melbourne's waste and resource recovery needs for the next two decades and beyond, and has identified municipal waste, particularly food and garden waste, as priorities. It also highlights a need for the local government sector to change its approach to waste management in order to meet a target to recover and reuse 65% of municipal waste by 2014 that is contained in the state's 'Towards Zero Waste Strategy'.

In order to meet the target, the strategic plan identifies the potential establishment in Melbourne of up to eight new resource recovery facilities that use new technologies to recover municipal organic waste and use it to produce energy or marketable products such as compost.

The strategic plan proposes that the State Government partners with councils to ensure that local governments obtain the quantities of waste required for these alternative waste technology (AWT) facilities to be viable.

Other elements of the plan include the 'Municipal Solid Waste Infrastructure Schedule' - which sets out a schedule of existing and required infrastructure for municipal solid waste - and the 'Metropolitan Landfill Schedule', which identifies potential future landfill sites.

The Metropolitan Resource Recovery Strategic Plan is available at www.sustainability.vic.gov.au