

North East Water Sustainability Covenant



NORTH EAST WATER



Sustainability covenant

This sustainability covenant is a voluntary agreement between the Environment Protection Authority (EPA Victoria) and North East Region Water Corporation (North East Water) to work together to protect the environment and to contribute to a more sustainable Victoria.

This voluntary SUSTAINABILITY COVENANT is a statutory agreement under section 49AA of the *Environment Protection Act 1970* made on the 28th day of November 2007.

Between:

Environment Protection Authority ('EPA Victoria'), a body corporate incorporated pursuant to the *Environment Protection Act 1970* (Victoria), of 40 City Road, Southbank in the State of Victoria;

-and-

North East Region Water Corporation Corporation ('North East Water'), ABN: 97364605415, of Level 1, Hovell Street, Wodonga in the State of Victoria;

in which:

The parties agree to work together to realise environmental sustainability and encourage others to follow the leadership being shown by North East Water and EPA Victoria.

EPA believes that this sustainability covenant assists the partners in increasing the efficiency of resource use and reducing the ecological impact of the parties and their stakeholders. As such, it is a signatory to this sustainability covenant.

Objectives of the covenant

Climate change is widely recognised as an issue that has a direct impact on water corporations. Predictions of reduced security of water supply due to climate change, and subsequently the flow on implications of water corporations' ability to provide water, particularly in the context of a growing population, are key considerations. The management of all aspects of water (from use as freshwater to reuse of wastewater and trade waste) are factors that must be recognised in our actions to ensure the economic and environmental sustainability of the state.

This sustainability covenant is a public commitment by EPA Victoria and North East Water to work in partnership to deliver improvements for the environment and help others to do the same. The covenant describes how both organisations will work together towards the common goal of sustainability.

The success of this partnership will help make Victoria the first place in the world where environmental improvements are routinely viewed as a business opportunity and not as a business cost.

Background

The 2007 estimate of Victoria's ecological footprint indicates that if everyone in the world lived in the way Victorians currently do, we would need four planets to sustain the global community. We only have one planet, thus everyone has a responsibility to reduce their impact on it. EPA Victoria and North East Water recognise this fact and have come together to provide leadership in reducing Victoria's ecological footprint.

The covenant brings together the strengths of both organisations to work towards a sustainable state in partnership.

Parties to the Covenant

North East Water

North East Water provides water, sewerage and trade waste services to a population of approximately 95,000 people, in 38 cities and towns, villages and cities, over an area of approximately 20,000 square kilometers in North East Victoria

North East Water's vision: Deliver exceptional water services, be an environmental champion, and encourage regional growth.

Our Customers: North East Water will deliver valued water services to our customers

Our Sustainable Approach: We balance the needs of our business to serve current and future generations within the capacity of our natural environment

Our Business Process, Infrastructure and Finance: We are an agile organisation that scans our operating environment to effectively predict change and embrace challenges, technologies and other business opportunities

Our People: Our highly skilled and motivated people continue to build our organisation and relationships

EPA Victoria

EPA is a statutory body that was established under an Act of the Victorian Parliament, the *Environment Protection Act 1970*, in response to community concern about pollution.

EPA's vision is *The Victorian community living sustainably.*

A community living sustainably knows the impacts of the decisions it makes and the actions it takes on the environment and:

Efficiently uses and renews resources.

Understands how what is good for the environment is good for the economy and society.

Lives in a healthy environment that provides clean air, water and land.

Meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

EPA's purpose is to protect, care for and improve our environment.

EPA's values are collaboration, innovation, integrity and respect.

EPA's objectives are to increase resource efficiency, reduce emissions impact, enhance our reputation and benefit the economy.

Commitments of the covenant

The covenant commitments are broken into two parts. The first part is a commitment to the implementation of a major project to be undertaken over the first six months. The second part, to be implemented concurrently with, and continue beyond, the implementation of the major project, aims to realise the objectives of the covenant and the vision's of EPA Victoria and North East Water.

General commitments	Specific commitments
Wangaratta reuse optimisation project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEW and EPA will work with Cleanaway, Bruck Textiles, Australian Country Spinners and Nuplex in Wangaratta to promote resource efficiency, avoidance of waste, optimisation of the Wangaratta Trade Waste Treatment plant and enhanced wastewater management within the Wangaratta region.

The following commitments are intended to achieve the overall objective of this covenant. The specific commitments provide an illustration of the types of activities that will be undertaken. It is expected that other actions may evolve over the life of the covenant.

General commitments	Specific commitments
Working together to deliver exceptional water services, be an environmental champion and encourage regional growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEW and EPA will investigate projects that go beyond regulatory compliance with service and environmental standards. NEW and EPA will investigate projects that recognise and enhance opportunities to work in harmony with the environment.
Working together to reduce the impacts of trade waste on wastewater reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEW and EPA will investigate opportunities for resource efficiency/cleaner production, in partnership with industry, to reduce trade waste flows and loads. NEW and EPA will investigate opportunities with potential to improve trade waste quality and reduce volume, in partnership with service providers and customers as appropriate.
Working together to promote resource efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEW will commit a minimum of \$25,000 (excl. GST) per annum to support agreed resource efficiency activities. EPA will commit to match (as a minimum) NEWs financial contribution to agreed resource efficiency projects (funding support may not be used to meet regulatory changes or compliance based activities). EPA will assist NEW to promote resource efficiency within the business, with external service providers, and customers. This may include international resource efficiency experts to speak with NEW and others (as appropriate). NEW will ensure that its R&D activities reflect the goals of this covenant.
Working together to reduce NEW's footprint across the supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA and NEW will work together to draft a corporate licence by 30 June 2008 to enable more efficient application of the EPA licence and the reporting requirements, maximising environmental and economic advantages across the business. EPA will assist NEW to strengthen relationships, with supply chain service providers and customers. This will be achieved by implementing incentives to: reduce water use, improve quality of trade waste discharges and drive reductions in volume of trade waste discharged, as appropriate. NEW will continue its commitments under the VicWater/Sustainability Victoria greenhouse gas reduction initiative. NEW will reduce its footprint through purchasing more environmentally sustainable products and services. NEW will maintain its externally accredited (ISO 14001) Environmental Management System, and use this to inform business decision making and promote continuous improvement. NEW will continually investigate its impact on biodiversity and address these through its biodiversity action plan.

Life of the covenant

The life of this sustainability covenant will be three years from the date of signing.

Management of the covenant

The parties to the covenant will jointly be responsible for the management of the overarching performance of the covenant. The parties will jointly liaise to agree any actions relevant to the achievement of the commitments of the covenant.

Reporting

The progress of actions under the covenant will be reviewed on an annual basis, by EPA and NEW, and reported publicly on the Internet.

More information

In accordance with section 49AC(b) of the Act, the parties will ensure that this covenant is readily accessible to the public and that it is published on the Internet.

In accordance with section 49AC(c) of the Act, the parties authorise the copying of all or any part of the covenant by any person who wishes to do so. The parties also authorise the use by such a person of any copies made by the person.

Contact Information



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