



STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2008

OBJECTIVE

To ensure the protection of the environment and heritage of Australia and New Zealand.

VISION

Governments working together with communities and industry to achieve, sustain and enhance a healthy natural and cultural environment in harmony with the social, economic and environmental aspirations of Australia and New Zealand.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Council will:

- promote ecologically sustainable development in all aspects of its work;
- develop policies and strategies for national approaches to the protection of the environment and heritage of Australia and New Zealand, particularly in light of emerging national and international priorities on sustainability and climate change.
- develop comprehensive standards, guidelines and protocols to address priority environment and heritage protection issues including the development of National Environment Protection Measures where appropriate;
- devise innovative policy tools for improved environment and heritage outcomes including, for example, the development of market-based instruments or property covenants;
- strengthen linkages for integrating the results of scientific and economic research with policy development on environment issues;
- monitor, evaluate, audit and report on the outcomes of national approaches and disseminate information about the state of environmental quality, and natural and cultural heritage;
- promote community and industry engagement, understanding and participation in addressing key challenges associated with environment and heritage protection;
- support participation of indigenous peoples in environment and heritage protection;
- develop agreed national approaches to emerging global and international environment and heritage issues;
- maximise regulatory efficiency and avoid unnecessary impacts; and
- liaise with other Ministerial Councils and other bodies on matters relevant to the activities of the Council to ensure environment and heritage protection priorities are addressed across all government sectors.

PRIORITY ISSUES

In implementing its terms of reference the Council has identified the following significant and immediate priorities requiring attention:

Human Settlements

- Identifying a more strategic and integrated approach to addressing urban sustainability issues of national significance.
- Identifying areas of national action to enhance the sustainability of Australian cities.

Climate Change

- Working with other Ministerial Councils to pursue EPHC's policy responsibilities in relation to key climate change issues.

Air Quality

- Developing a strategic national approach to improving air quality, including actions to address air toxics, ozone formation, fine particles and motor vehicle emissions, recognising the need to work with other Councils on matters such as human health and transport.
- Improving inventory development, modeling and monitoring techniques, and considering options for addressing emissions risks.

Waste Management

- Promoting waste avoidance and better waste management through national approaches to encourage the efficient use of resources, product stewardship/extended producer responsibility (EPR) and cleaner production based on better data, economic analysis and sound science.
- Investigating incentives, voluntary and regulatory measures to support industry and community participation in reducing the impacts of waste and promoting efficient use of natural resources within production, consumption and waste management practices.

Water Quality and Aquatic Environments

- In conjunction with the Natural Resources Management Ministerial Council, developing and implementing national approaches to:
 - improving water quality standards;
 - improving water quality monitoring and reporting;
 - the conservation of Australia's urban and rural water resources; and
 - encouraging recycling and re-use of urban water.

Eco-efficiency and Sustainability

- Pursuing eco-efficiency and conservation of natural resources, including energy and water use, through national approaches to sustainable production, consumption and waste management.
- Developing innovative approaches to business sustainability such as working with industry and the financial sector to promote improved outcomes for the environment and heritage of Australia and New Zealand.

Chemicals Policy

- Within a national framework, developing environmentally sound assessment and risk management of chemicals and consistent regulation of chemical use between jurisdictions, across industry sectors, and across the Tasman, for example between agricultural and industrial uses.
- Identifying and responding to emerging developments in international chemical issues.

Support Indigenous Peoples' Participation

- Implementing the Environment Protection and Heritage Council Reconciliation Action Plan to advance the COAG Reconciliation Framework, and encouraging Indigenous Peoples participation in environment and heritage protection.
- Working on specific environmental issues to enhance the sustainability of indigenous communities.

National Heritage Policy

- Developing an integrated national heritage policy to ensure that Australia's historic natural and indigenous heritage is recognised and sustained seamlessly across national, State and Territory, and local systems.
- Working to increase cooperation between governments on heritage matters, including reviewing world heritage governance and working with the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council on national approaches to protected area management.

Innovative Policy Tools and Information

- Developing innovative policy tools, such as economic instruments and identifying efficient, fit-for-purpose instruments to address specific national environmental issues.
- Strengthening the data consistency, focus, reporting and capacity of national environmental data collections.
- Enabling the development of more coherent and sustained reporting frameworks to improve national environment data collections.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council acknowledges the need for governments to work more cooperatively with each other, the community and industry to address many significant issues that span sectoral or portfolio boundaries, such as urban sustainability, greenhouse gas reduction, national air quality, water quality and river health, indigenous participation, biodiversity and natural resource management. The Council is committed to working in partnership with other relevant Ministerial Councils to ensure that environment and heritage issues are adequately considered, and to promote sustainable development across all levels and sectors of government.