



Accreditation/Certification of environmental practitioners

Considerations

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What we'll cover today

- DWER
- Drivers
- Factors
- Potential benefits
- Potential complexities
- Moving Forward



Our vision

A healthy environment and secure water resources, valued by all, to support a liveable and prosperous Western Australia.

Our mission

To lead and excel in the sustainable management and protection of Western Australia's water and environment.





DWER'S Regulatory Objective

To be a trusted and credible regulator delivering a one stop shop service for industry and opportunities for streamlining and simplifying regulation. DWER aims to be clear, fair and consistent in our decisions, advice and interactions helping to deliver certainty for industry and a level playing field

Be a responsive and credible regulator	Our focus for the next four years
We will streamline our approach to regulatory assessments and advice, to provide consistency and certainty for stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt a streamlined one-stop-shop regulatory framework for industry and developers
Our internal practices, online systems and resources will deliver good customer service, and we will apply regulatory best practice principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate the phases of the regulatory cycle by aligning our assessment, decision-making, compliance and enforcement activities
We will ensure regulated stakeholders meet their commitments and we will undertake appropriate compliance and enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standardise and apply a risk-based approach to regulation focused on outcomes



Building DWER's Regulatory Capability

Regulatory Capability can be defined as the measure of the ability of the Department to achieve its regulatory objectives, specifically in relation to its overall mission.





Accreditation -Drivers

The Report of the Independent Review of the [Commonwealth] Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), published in October 2009, considered the issue of quality and objectivity of information provided by some proponents in environmental impact assessment processes. The review recommended that:

“the Australian Government, in consultation with the environment and planning consulting industry, develop an industry Code of Conduct for consultants supplying information for the purposes of the environmental impact assessment and approval regime under the Act.”



Accreditation -Drivers

In its report, *Streamlining environmental legislation: Inquiry into streamlining environmental regulation, 'green tape', and one stop shops* (December 2014), the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment recommended that:

“the Department of the Environment investigate methods of accreditation – including the relevant standards for accreditation – for environmental practitioners and contractors to enable the establishment of a professional standards body.”



Poor quality reports and submissions

- Accuracy
- Scientific rigour & sufficiency
- Accountability
- Not in accordance with guidance material or required standard



Potential factors that can contribute to poor quality reports and submissions

- a lack of experience, knowledge and skills of the practitioners;
- practitioners working outside their area of technical speciality;
- practitioners working outside their area of geographical experience;
- practitioners working outside their area of jurisdictional experience (and hence knowledge of applicable laws, regulations and guidelines);
- practitioners not adhering to an acceptable code of ethical and professional conduct;
- Lack of clarity on regulatory requirements or expectations



HEPA

Established a working group:

to develop a common set of criteria and proposed process for non-statutory recognition of non-government professional bodies that certify persons as environmental practitioners.



Existing Accreditation/Certification Schemes

- Contaminated sites auditing – most Australian states and territories have legislative schemes to accredit site contamination auditors.
- (EIANZ), Site Contamination Practitioners Australia (SCPA), and Soil Science Australia.
- Certified Environmental Practitioner (CEnvP) scheme.
- International
- Other professions – Legal, Engineering, Building surveyors etc.



Potential benefits to certified environmental practitioners

- Potential to increase payment for services due to market demand for certified practitioners;
- improved ease of movement between jurisdictions and mutual recognition of skills and qualifications in Australia and New Zealand as well as other countries;
- improved recognition by industry and the community;
- improved employment opportunities; and
- ability to demonstrate commitment to excellence and continual improvement of the profession.



Potential benefits to government and private sector employers

- harmonisation of standards for environmental practitioners across states and territories, Australia and New Zealand;
- simplification of the assessment and identification of 'suitably qualified' practitioners and contractors;
- improved assurance in the quality of work expected from a contracted practitioner;
- reduced risk associated with the potential to receive poor quality advice and hence reduced liability resulting from unidentified environmental impacts;



Potential benefits to government and private sector employers.... cont.

- higher quality environmental reports and documentation leading to time and cost savings by reducing the rejection rate and requirement for revision of poorly prepared consultant reports and assessments;
- ability to promote the use of certified practitioners for particular tasks and activities to demonstrate commitment to a high standard of work in that area; and
- economic benefit from the streamlining of approvals processes.



Potential benefits to the community

- improved trust in environmental practitioners, consultants and environmental practitioner professional bodies;
- improved confidence in impact assessment for development proposals and other approvals processes that involve advice provided by environmental practitioners;
- increased awareness of how to source ethical and competent environmental practitioners; and
- ability to initiate actions if work fails to meet acceptable standards.



Potential complexities

- What do we mean by the term environmental practitioner?
- Complexity
- Cost
- Balance
- Suitably qualified persons
- Ongoing management and maintenance
- Perceptions



Moving Forward

- Principles to guide environmental practitioner certification organisations endorsed by HEPA in April 2017:
 - general conformity to AS/NZS 17024: General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons;
 - competencies for specialist areas;
 - recertification; and
 - ethical and professional conduct.
- Regulatory Stewardship



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**

Questions