

**Media Statement**

**16 April 2020**

## **EPA releases greenhouse gas emissions guidance**

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has published its greenhouse gas emissions guidance, following more than 20 weeks of consultation and almost 7,000 submissions from the community and industry.

The EPA completed a 12-week consultation period from June last year, before releasing its greenhouse gas emissions guidance as a draft in December. The EPA's Stakeholder Reference Group were given a further eight weeks to consider the draft guidance and provide feedback directly to the EPA.

A key foundation of the guidance is the requirement that proponents of projects emitting large volumes of greenhouse gases will need to articulate and publish their greenhouse gas emission reduction targets over time, demonstrating their contribution to delivering net zero emissions by 2050.

EPA Chair Dr Tom Hatton said feedback from the consultation had helped refine the guidance, including amending the definition of a greenhouse gas to be consistent with Commonwealth measures, and providing further guidance around the offsets that the EPA will recognise.

"The EPA would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide input on how greenhouse gas emissions can be better managed in Western Australia," Dr Hatton said.

"Over the past year, the serious consequences of greenhouse gas emissions to our state and nation have become more real to many of us, but entirely in line with our scientific understanding of how greenhouse gas emissions can impact our climate and environment.

"The level of public interest and concern has grown, but so has the response from industry. Many of the companies operating or proposing to operate in Western Australia have recently made public commitments to reduce emissions to net zero by 2050.

"The EPA welcomes these initiatives and anticipates these commitments will be reflected in the emissions reductions targets and timetables for new proposals.

"This guidance will help align the management of greenhouse gases in Western Australia with both the science that says we need to get to net zero by 2050 to avoid the most serious of consequences, and the international and state policy that has endorsed this conclusion.

“It is also intended that the guidance provides industry and community with certainty and a clear framework for the management of greenhouse gas emissions from future proposals.”

The EPA gives independent environmental advice to the State Government and has provided advice on greenhouse gas emissions on more than 40 significant projects for more than two decades. The EPA will have regard to the greenhouse gas emissions guideline in all future decision-making on the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions.

Read the Environmental Factor Guideline – Greenhouse Gas Emissions here: <http://www.epa.wa.gov.au/>.

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### **Summary of key changes to the draft guidance released in December 2019**

As a result of consultation with the Stakeholder Reference Group, the EPA has made some minor changes to the *Environmental Factor Guideline – Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. Irrespective of these changes, the intent and application of the guidance remains unchanged. Specifically:

- Proponents of projects emitting large volumes of greenhouse gases will be required to articulate and publish their greenhouse gas emission reduction targets over time, demonstrating their contribution to delivering net zero emissions by 2050.
- The EPA will continue to assess proposals on a case-by-case basis and recognises that a flexible approach is important in driving innovation and improvement in best practice technologies.

Minor changes to the December 2019 guidance include:

- The reference of NF<sub>3</sub> (nitrogen trifluoride) as a greenhouse gas that requires reporting has been removed because of inconsistencies in this regard between the reporting requirements of the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Clarification regarding the jurisdiction of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) beyond the Western Australian border. Legalities regarding the jurisdiction of the EP Act beyond the Western Australian border are complex and likely require, for example, consideration of Commonwealth legislation.
- The guidance is now clearer regarding the basis for the net zero by 2050 target. Specifically, the guidance now more clearly references the science and

recommendations of the Paris Agreement and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 1.5 Report, both of which concluded that net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 would limit global warming and improve our ability to manage its environmental impacts.

- The guidance now indicates that abatement and offsets information can be required of proponents as part of the EPA's assessment of a future proposal. This information will help build the understanding between proponents, the EPA and the community regarding the feasibility and availability of any additional abatement and offsets.
- The guidance provides further clarity around the types of offsets the EPA will recognise. Specifically, the final guidance now states that compliance offsets under the Safeguard Mechanism, as well as voluntary offsets purchased to reduce residual emissions, may contribute to a proponent's greenhouse gas management plan and will be recognised by the EPA.

### **Next steps**

The EPA will have regard to this guideline in all future decision-making on the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions.