

Media Release



Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Suburban Development

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HELPING COUNCILS DELIVER A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT

The Andrews Labor Government has announced 13 Victorian councils that will take part in a pilot program designed to improve local responses to pollution and waste issues.

The \$4.8 million Officers for the Protection of the Local Environment pilot program is part of the Labor Government's response to the Independent Inquiry into the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

The successful councils are Port Phillip, Casey, Greater Dandenong, Wyndham, Surf Coast, Mildura, Greater Shepparton, Wodonga, Loddon, Buloke, Central Goldfields, Brimbank and Hobsons Bay.

The pilot will embed ten officers in local councils for a period of 15 months commencing in September this year.

Ms D'Ambrosio said the new officers will work closely with the EPA and the council to respond to smaller-scale and lower risk waste and pollution complaints such as small to medium scale illegal dumping, litter, noise, dust and odour arising from small business and industry.

Duties of the officers will also include responding to complaints, providing information and education activities to support prevention of pollution, and proactive inspections of premises to support compliance.

EPA based environment protection officers will continue to take the lead and respond to high risk pollution and waste issues such as the stockpiling of recyclable material, while also delivering quicker responses to local pollution issues.

The *Victorian Budget 2017/18* provided \$162.5 million over five years to implement the Labor Government's response to the Independent Inquiry into the EPA - the first comprehensive examination of the authority since 1971.

The reforms will provide Victoria with a strong and modern environmental regulator that is fit for purpose and capable of delivering the services we need.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"This is about delivering practical support to councils to help deliver a healthier and more liveable environment for Victorians."

"The new officers will complement the role of existing EPA based environment protection officers meaning more officers on the ground, more support and expert advice, and more investigations into compliance."