

## **Andrew Severson, postcode not supplied**

### **What do you think are the key environmental challenges which will impact the EPA in the future?**

I think one of the biggest challenges the EPA will face will be the balancing of the expectations of the community and their push towards cleaner and healthier lifestyles against the unfortunate side effects of the services that are required to maintain their desired way of life. There obviously has to be a balance between the two, but I believe that EPA should always fall lean towards the health of the environment / community and always be pushing for improvement - not just 'this is the way we have always done it' or 'we are adhering to best practise - they should always pushing to be better.

### **What aspects of the EPA's work do you value and wish to preserve in the future?**

Whilst I am sure that they do good things, my interactions with the EPA over the last few years have left me with little respect for them. They seem to put more effort into trying to stop complaints rather than trying to address issues.

### **How can the EPA effectively work in partnership with other government agencies to meet the environmental challenges of the future?**

I don't know about effectively working in partnership, but I believe that they need to be actively involved in any and all projects that impact the environment - if not a driving force. They can't be seen to just be signing off on things because it will either result in a lack of trust (which I currently have in them) and future problems that will end up impacting the environment and communities. One way or another we will end up paying.

### **How can the EPA's role in safeguarding the community against the health impacts of pollution be clarified or strengthened?**

I think that they need to be given more power to go after people / companies who put communities and the environment at risk, even retroactively. I think the rules that they currently abide by need to be strengthened and any loop holes closed over time to phase out unsafe behaviour. I think that anyone working for the EPA should probably be barred from taking for a lengthy time for taking up employment from any company that may have be linked to dealings with the EPA. I think that anyone who has had to interact with the EPA currently feels like they don't give a shit and that they hide behind their current charter saying "look, we've done enough" then dust their hands.

### **How could statutory frameworks more effectively prevent future environmental risks and land use conflicts?**

I think for starters that any frameworks need to have some common sense and a bit of fore site applied - not just for the next 3-5 years or for how ever long the project they are dealing with is planned to last, but 30~50 years after that. Then you need to have the power to actually enforce and update these policies as time and technology advances. I think it is ludicrous that after all these years Brooklyn is still so polluted. I also think that it is just plain stupid that in 2015 it is considered a good idea to be building Australia's largest landfill - in a

growth corridor no doubt. We always learn that communities and industries like this don't mix. They should be kept smaller and spread out, or forced to improve as technology advances.

**What role should the EPA play in emergency management?**

No Answer

**How can the EPA better identify and, where necessary, address problems that are the result of past activity?**

I think they need to review what is 'best practice' and invest in technology. I think they also need to be quicker to investigate complaints from communities - I believe that they may be understaffed at the moment

**What can the EPA do to avoid potential future problems?**

As stated above - common sense. Look to the past and learn from it. I think that there needs to be some way to force industry to adhere to better practises and technology advances. If this already exists then it should be improved. I've heard many times that the EPA adheres to 'world best practises' but a simple google search shows that they are outdated. Perhaps the we should be aiming for 'The Best'

**What role should the EPA play in improving environmental outcomes beyond those necessary to safeguard human health?**

No Answer

**What role should the EPA play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions?**

No Answer

**How do you see environmental justice being applied to the work of the EPA?**

I think they need to hold offenders accountable and to a degree that would discourage environmental abuse. Force them to pay for clean ups, systems upgrades to prevent future problems as well as fines. Scale it based on the industry. For example, the land fill near my house had a fence blow over and litter escaped. They were slow to respond and litter was found km's away. From what I understand they were fined \$7k which is nothing when they are pulling in Millions.

**What can we adopt from other regulators and regulatory models to implement best-practice approaches and ensure that the EPA can rise to key future challenges?**

No Answer

**Are there any other issues relevant to the Terms of Reference that you would like to raise?**

I understand that the call centre at the EPA probably has to deal with a lot being that they are at the front line. That being said, they are infuriating to deal with and seem to only want to get you to not report offences. I spent 15min having one operator try and tell me how my

report was no good because I couldn't provide enough information (because I was in a car - despite knowing exactly where the odour was coming from, wind direction, etc.). After this time he asked me to describe the odour - something I had already done in the report he was calling me account. After describing it he said 'oh yes, we are well aware of that odour and we are investigating it'. When I said 'good, so you will want me to keep reporting it so that you can build a case' he told me not to bother. It was clear that he just wanted me to not put in reports. On a similar point, I think it is kinda stupid that a complaint about an odour holds more weight when it affects a place of business than a commute. I have been told numerous times nothing can be done about the odour I have to breathe in when I am stuck in traffic next to a polluting factory, but if I pull into the McDonalds or the service station it suddenly means something. Sorry about the rant.