

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



Friday, 22 June, 2018

TOUGHER LAWS TO PROTECT VICTORIA'S ENVIRONMENT

The Andrews Labor Government is giving Victoria's Environment Protection Authority (EPA) the powers and tools it needs to stop pollution in its tracks.

Minister for Environment Lily D'Ambrosio introduced the *Environment Protection Amendment Bill 2018* into Parliament to deliver on the final stages of the Labor Government's transformation of the EPA.

In an Australian first, the Bill introduces an enforceable General Environmental Duty – to make polluters responsible for eliminating or reducing risks posed to human health or the environment.

Breaches of the General Environmental Duty will result in penalties and sanctions, including criminal charges, with higher maximum penalties to better reflect the seriousness of environmental offences.

The Bill includes a range of measures to help the EPA do its job, including strengthening powers for EPA Authorised Officers to enter premises and investigate suspected breaches of the law.

For the first time, the Bill introduces third-party rights, which will give affected community members the opportunity to seek civil remedies to enforce the Environment Protection Act.

To cut red tape, EPA will be given a more flexible environmental audit system and range of licences, permits, and registrations.

The Labor Government developed the reforms in response to recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into the EPA and has invested over \$180 million to transform the EPA into a modern regulator.

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

"Victorians expect an EPA that can stop polluters and properly enforce the law – that's what this legislation will deliver."

"We're making sure Victoria's EPA has the people, powers and resources it needs to do its job and protect Victoria's environment."