

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

replaced by the new EIPs which have a time limit of 3 years. Some 16 industries and council sewage treatment plants have converted to EIPs.

One of the underlying philosophies behind the planning and environmental management package was to involve local government more in environmental protection, assessment and enforcement. This new Bill therefore makes it quite clear that local government has responsibility for local minor environmental nuisances by granting council officers more precise powers of enforcement, and as an inducement providing that fines recovered by council officers are to be repaid to the relevant council instead of disappearing into consolidated revenue.

Ozone protection provisions are incorporated into this Bill, but contaminated sites have been excluded because the principles on which liability will be grounded are still being assessed at a national level.

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1986 **Department of Environmental Protection** **New Office of Waste Management**

The Office of Waste Management announced by the Government in January is to become a division of the Department of Environmental Protection.

The new division will develop policies and regulations for waste management and co-ordinate recycling and community education schemes, working co-operatively with local government and industry.

It is hoped that bringing together the waste management related functions of the Departments of Health, Commerce and Trade and Environment

will allow better strategic planning for waste management and minimisation.

The initial key areas of focus will be implementation of new liquid waste regulations, market development for use of reprocessed materials, improved landfill management in WA and increasing government use of recycled products.

A waste management board - to report to the Minister for the Environment - is yet to be established, but will include three representatives from local government, two from private industry and a community representative.

The Minister will nominate a chairperson for the board.

Announcing the new approach to waste management in January, Mr Minson said that more than three million dollars over the next three years would be put into the plan to tackle what was becoming one of Western Australia's most important environmental issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GOLDFIELDS RESIDENTIAL AREAS) (SULPHUR DIOXIDE) POLICY 1992 **Exemption Order**

The Minister for the Environment Kevin Minson has announced a strategy to provide a permanent solution to sulphur dioxide problems at the Kalgoorlie Nickel Smelter.

In the past two months the smelter has several times breached sulphur dioxide limits which came into effect in January in the second stage of the Goldfields environmental protection policy.

Mr Minson said he would exempt the Western Mining Corporation smelter from the policy for two years, giving the company the time it needs to develop a way of controlling its sulphur dioxide emissions.

During the exemption the company would have to meet a limit of 1300 micrograms of sulphur dioxide per cubic metre, averaged over three hours as in previous years but would also be required to strive to avoid very high short term

concentrations which are the principal health concern.

Methods to be evaluated include the present practice of using meteorological forecasting to predict when it should shut down to avoid affecting residential areas covered by the policy. During the exemption period the company would have the opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of this method.

In addition the company would be required to start immediately to evaluate and choose a method of reducing sulphur dioxide in its emissions through appropriate technology.

If the Minister is not satisfied that other methods would enable the company to comply with the policy by February 1996 then it would need to install sulphur dioxide removal technology.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (WESTERN SWAMP TORTOISE) POLICY 1994

A draft Environmental Protection Policy has been prepared to protect the habitat of one of Australia's rarest and most endangered vertebrates.

Less than 40 Western Swamp Tortoises exist in the wild in a small reserve on the fringe of the Perth Metropolitan area. A successful captive breeding program has produced more than seventy offspring. It is planned to commence reintroduction of these captive bred animals this coming winter into the only other portion of remnant habitat which is contained in a nearby reserve.

The increase in population of the tortoise is a pain-staking process due to the lack of suitable habitat, complex biology of the animal and its very slow growth rates. It is expected that the species classification of critically endangered (a fifty percent change of the animal becoming extinct over the next 40-50 years) will not be improved for several decades.

The draft Environmental Protection (Western Swamp Tortoise) Policy 1994 seeks to protect the only remaining habitat of the Western Swamp

Tortoise in the two reserves by proposing the prevention and control of inappropriate activities near or in the habitat.

An important feature of the draft Policy is the control of drainage, contamination, ground water use, damage to the protective vermin proof fence and certain activities which may affect the quality of the habitat.

An equally important feature, and one which is unique to Environmental Protection Policies, is the recognition of environmental quality objectives to be achieved and maintained. A mechanism to monitor the progress of achievement of the objectives is also identified in the draft Policy.

The draft Policy, prepared under Part III of the Act, will soon be available for public review.

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and officers of the
WA Department of Environmental Protection**

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND COASTAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Minister of Conservation has released the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (see AELN 2/1993). The purpose of the statement is to promote the sustainable management of New Zealand's Coastal environment. Regional and district councils are required to implement it through regional policy statements, regional coastal plans and district plans which the Act obliges them to prepare. The Statement contains 14 general principles followed by a range of policies to give effect to the principles.

The general principles are:

1. Some uses and developments which depend upon the use of natural and physical resources in the coastal environment and important to 'the social economic and cultural well-being' of 'people and communities'. Functionally, certain