SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS, CHALLENGES AND SDG TARGETS FOR FUTURE REPORTING

Dr. Gillian Sparkes,
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability
March 2019
Cultural Landscape Health and Management

1. That the Victorian Government, in consultation with Traditional Owners and relevant agencies, develop contemporary cultural indicators to inform future environmental reporting. These indicators must reflect the priorities of Traditional Owners, have practical and cost-effective data-collection methods, be meaningful, and demonstrate change within a five-year reporting period.

UN SDG targets - 1.5 / 4.7 / 11.4
Climate Change Impacts

2. That DELWP, in coordination with research partners, conduct further analysis to improve localised climate projections (particularly in agricultural regions). These projections would aim to reduce the uncertainties associated with rainfall projections as a minimum.

UN SDG targets – 2.4 / 6.5 / 9.5 / 13.2, 13.3
Air

3. That EPA Victoria prioritise the implementation of the EPA Inquiry Recommendations 6.3 and 7.2 to develop a publicly accessible, real-time assessment of air quality across Victoria that incorporates air-quality monitoring data, citizen science observations, air-quality modelling and an up-to-date air-pollution inventory. Future monitoring and assessments would also be expanded to include ultrafine particles and data on indoor air quality.

UN SDG targets – 3.9 / 9.5 / 11.6
Air

4. That Victoria’s Chief Environmental Scientist, supported by relevant government agencies and research partners, lead the establishment of a contemporary pollen-monitoring network to enable community access to information on pollen levels in the air in a timely manner, through actions including increasing the number of locations monitored, the frequency of the monitoring, and automating the monitoring process.

UN SDG targets – 3.9 / 9.5 / 11.6
Biodiversity

5. That DELWP streamline the governance and coordination of investment in the science and data capability of all government biodiversity programs and improve the coherence and impact of the publicly-funded, scientific endeavour. Further, that DELWP establish the position of the chief biodiversity scientist to oversee this coordinated effort and provide esteemed counsel to the DELWP Secretary and the Minister for Environment to improve the impact of investment in biodiversity research across the Victorian environment portfolio. That DELWP improve biodiversity outcomes on public land by streamlining and coordinating governance arrangements.

UN SDG targets - 2.5 / 4.7 / 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.b / 11.4, 11.7 / 12.2, 12.8 13.1, 13.3 / 14.4 / 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9 / 16.6 / 17.14, 17.17
6. That DELWP improve biodiversity outcomes on private land by accelerating private land conservation. This will require resourcing permanent protection measures that focus on high-priority ecosystems and landscapes, and investing in local government capability to enforce the existing Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation and the Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework.

**Biodiversity**

**UN SDG targets - 4.7 / 6.6 / 12.2, 12.8 / 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.8**
Land

7. That Agriculture Victoria lead the design and delivery of a state soil and land condition monitoring program, that includes analysis of the threats and impacts of land use and land-use change, to improve decision-making across a variety of sectors including agriculture, planning and water management.

UN SDG targets – 2.4 / 6.5 / 9.5 / 12.2 / 15.3
8. That DELWP maintain their commitment to resourcing and maintaining the VFMP and enhance it to (i) improve statewide understanding of the impacts of forest fragmentation on forest-dependent species (including the development of an authoritative list of Victorian forest-dependent species), and (ii) improve assessment of protected areas by conducting detailed research to identify the benefits of various types of IUCN-protected areas for target species. Any amendments to the VFMP must not disrupt future trend analyses.

UN SDG targets –15.1, 15.5
9. That the Victorian Government establish a structured framework based on the findings of the dual-scale ecosystem-resilience monitoring program, piloted by DELWP in 2017–18, and undertake a detailed analysis of the persistence of key fire-response species to increased fire frequency in Victoria, particularly in areas where below-minimum Tolerable Fire Interval exists.

UN SDG targets – 1.5 / 13.1
10. That DELWP expand the Marine Knowledge Framework to include all state marine and coastal environments.

UN SDG targets - 6.3, 6.5 / 11.3, 11.4, 11.7 / 12.2, 12.5, 12.8 / 13.1, 13.3
Water Resources

11. That DELWP use the current long-term water resource assessment (LTWRA) to identify metrics for monitoring the condition of, and risks to, Victoria’s water resources and waterway health for reasons related to flow, and commit to long-term monitoring. Complementary thresholds would also be established for these metrics, and actions determined for circumstances when thresholds are crossed. Further, in a changing climate, it is recommended that DELWP review the 15-year period between LTWRAs, as more frequent assessments may be required to maintain ecosystem health and function.

UN SDG targets - 6.4, 6.5 / 9.5 / 13.2
Water Quality

12. That DELWP, working with its portfolio agencies, implement an agile water-quality monitoring framework that (i) clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all agencies and the community, (ii) improves monitoring of pollution hotspots, and (iii) builds on EPA Victoria’s implementation of EPA Inquiry recommendations 6.3 and 7.2.

UN SDG targets - 6.3, 6.6 / 9.5
Waste and Resource Recovery

13. That Sustainability Victoria, in 2019, develop indicators and implement a comprehensive monitoring and reporting framework to measure delivery of the current SWRRIP and WRRIPs against their circular-economy design principles. From July 2020, that Sustainability Victoria expand that monitoring and reporting framework to track the progress of the implementation of the strategy and publicly report, at least annually, on Victoria’s transition to a circular economy.

UN SDG targets – 12.3, 12.4, 12.5
14. That the Victorian Government, commencing within the metropolitan region as a minimum, align the institutional planning and procurement processes (including leveraging Victorian Government procurement) to support the delivery of the circular economy strategy from July 2020. Ultimately, this alignment would be adopted statewide and enable an orderly transition to a circular economy in Victoria by 2030. In developing the action plan to deliver the circular-economy strategy, the roles and responsibilities of all agencies should be clarified to nominate those agencies responsible for delivering policy, procurement, program, reporting and regulatory roles. Further, that the Victorian Government commit to long-term, systemic, statewide community education to support this transition and assist the change in behaviours that will be required to improve long-term system outcomes. Reducing consumption and contamination levels in kerbside recycling would be the initial focus.
Energy

15. That DELWP establish a set of indicators, and implement measures to collect appropriate data, to track the impact of energy emissions reduction to meet interim targets set under the Climate Change Act 2017. The reporting should also track the transition of Victoria’s grid, transport and industry infrastructure to support a low-carbon future.

UN SDG targets – 13.2, 13.3
Energy

16. That DELWP implement measures to collect data and track the impact of the transition to a low-emissions electricity system on

(i) consumer sentiment and behaviour,

(ii) investment in distributed, low and zero-emissions electricity generation, and

(iii) the associated markets, governance and business models.

UN SDG targets – 7.2, 13.3
Transport

17. That EPA Victoria, in coordination with other Victorian Government agencies, improve transport-related air and noise monitoring, including: developing a real-time noise-monitoring network across Melbourne (with a view to expansion across larger cities in regional Victoria), focusing on monitoring near major transport hotspots that include busy roads, flight paths and along public transport routes, increasing the number of roadside air-monitoring stations and publishing the noise and air data on the internet in real-time.

UN SDG targets – 3.9 / 9.5 / 11.3, 11.6
Megatrends

18. That DELWP develop its spatial information capability and database, and ensure it is regularly and routinely updated, to inform decision-making across the environment portfolio.

UN SDG targets – 6.6 / 9.4 / 12.2, 12.8 / 15.1, 15.2, 15.5
International Frameworks: UN SEEA

19. That DELWP establishes environmental-economic accounting as a core capability and delivers a set of environmental-economic accounts for Victoria by 2022, consistent with the SEEA guidelines, DELWP Valuing and Accounting for Victoria’s Environment strategy and aligned with the agreed common national approach. Further, that the Minister for Environment include in the Statement of Expectations to the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability a requirement to incorporate reporting against Victoria’s environmental-economic accounts in State of the Environment reporting for Victoria from 2023.

UN SDG targets – 15.9
International Frameworks: UN SDGs

20. That the Minister for Environment include in the Statement of Expectations to the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability a requirement to adopt the SDGs as an operating framework for SoE reporting in Victoria from 2023. This will require that DELWP support the Commissioner by leading a portfolio review of the data requirements to assess Victoria’s progress against the selected SDG targets, which will include a complementary analysis of current legislation, policy and programs against the SDG targets, and the development of a plan to improve data-acquisition processes for socio-economic indicators by 2021.

UN SDG targets – 16.6 / 17.14, 17.17
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