

## National State of the Environment Reporting Forum Communiqué: February 2015

The National State of the Environment Reporting Forum met in Adelaide on 26-27 February, hosted by the South Australian Environment Protection Authority and attended by representatives of the Australian Government Department of Environment, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Bureau of Meteorology, the ACT Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, the NSW Environment Protection Authority, the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, the South Australian Environment Protection Authority, and the Victorian Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability.

### Key Messages:

- Understanding the audience is a critical step in state of the environment (SoE) reporting for all jurisdictions; SoE reporting must provide practical benefits for end-users
- Queensland is leading the development of digital, web-based reporting with their next SoE report due in 2016
- Australian Government data agencies, such as the Bureau of Meteorology and the ABS are critical partners for SoE reporters
- Maintaining relevance and resourcing are ongoing challenges for contemporary SoE reporters in all jurisdictions
- Jurisdictions need to continually assess the value of conventional reporting frameworks (e.g. DPSIR driving forces-pressures-state-impacts-responses) and seek opportunities for improvement

Since 2010, the forum has met twice yearly to review progress, examine options and share directions for state of the environment reporting across the Australian jurisdictions. A key objective is to promote the forum as the foundation of sound information management and leadership in environmental reporting in Australia.

An important function of forum meetings is to provide an opportunity for jurisdictions to efficiently work together and share lessons and advice. All members provided updates on their reporting processes and contributed to discussions of future directions.

### This meeting included:

- A presentation by the Victorian Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, Gillian Sparkes, on preliminary development of the framework for Victoria's 2018 SoE report.
- A presentation by Professor Corey Bradshaw of the University of Adelaide on a scientific perspective on SoE reporting.
- A presentation on the web-based, data-driven model for SoE reporting being developed by the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection for its 2016 SoE report (Ken Horrigan).
- A discussion on accessing climate and environmental datasets as they become available through the Bureau of Meteorology (Dr Andre Zerger).
- The ABS is playing a leading role in the national and international development of environmental accounts, and the forum welcomed a presentation by Mark Lound on the Bureau's role in developing a pilot satellite account for agriculture in Australia, with obvious significance for future SoE reporting.

In concluding, members recognised that environmental reporting needs to evolve: the collective challenge is to address an increasing range of demands and expectations among end users in the context of a need for increased efficiency, evolving technologies and ongoing environmental change. Institutional and public support for comprehensive and current SoE reporting remains strong.

The Forum will meet next in September 2015 in Melbourne.