

The EPA’s role is to protect the community and environment from harm. In considering the most significant near-term threats, the EPA has identified six major risks it will prioritise for 2022–23.

These regulatory and compliance priorities are consistent with the EPA’s strategic focus areas of ecologically sustainable development, waste, water quality, legacy and emerging contaminants, and climate change.

1. Forestry

The bushfires of summer 2019–20 led to increased environmental risk and sensitivity in forests. This warrants the EPA focusing on ensuring all lawful protections are delivered. We will continue our compliance efforts to make sure the native forestry industry is meeting its regulatory obligations.

2. End-of-life tyres

Following China’s ban on importing plastic waste, the Australian Government also banned the export of unprocessed plastics and tyre waste. This has led to a greater likelihood of tyres being stockpiled. Waste tyres must be managed responsibly and the NSW Government supports the national Tyre Product Stewardship Scheme. In addition, the EPA will focus on:

- disposal of tyres, including illegal dumping
- tracking of waste tyres
- safe storage of waste tyres
- resource recovery.

3. End-of-life plastics

With a number of changes in the global recycling market, the potential for plastic stockpiling has increased. We need to make sure this risk is well managed.

The [NSW Plastics Action Plan](#) was launched in June 2021 to manage plastic throughout its life cycle, from generation to supply and disposal. The plan includes reducing plastic waste, making the most of our plastic resources, reducing plastic leakage, and improving our understanding of the future of plastics.

4. Hazardous and liquid wastes

Prolonged wet weather has exacerbated infrastructure and processing challenges for the hazardous and liquid waste industry. The industry now needs to work differently to manage risks and meet the needs of the NSW community.

We will prioritise additional regulations for generating, storing, transporting, treating and disposing of hazardous and liquid wastes.

5. Radioactive sources

There are tens of thousands of registered radiation sources in NSW and these may pose risks if not managed responsibly and safely.

In the current year, the EPA will focus on collaborating with industry to ensure radioactive sources used in medicine, industry, research and education are safely used and disposed of.

6. Pesticides and chemicals

Pesticides and chemicals, when used incorrectly or unsafely, can have catastrophic impacts both short- and long-term on our health, our economy and the environment.

We will work to ensure that pesticide use is undertaken safely. We will engage collaboratively, with a particular focus on overspray and run-off on the North Coast, Central and Northwest regions of the State.

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