



Statement of Expectations 2026-27

ACT Environment Protection Authority

Overview

This Statement of Expectations (the Statement) is jointly agreed by the Environment Protection Authority (the Authority) and the Head of Access Canberra. The Statement establishes the Authority's 2026-27 financial year priorities for the administration of:

- The *Environment Protection Act 1997* (EP Act);
- The *Water Resources Act 2007*; and
- Associated subordinate legislation and instruments.

Through the establishment of the Authority, the ACT Government recognises the importance of regulation for protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment and human health, as well as supporting the management of a sustainable, safe and liveable city and environment.

The Authority is an independent statutory position, embedded in Access Canberra as part of the City and Environment Directorate.

Key priority areas of focus

In the 2026-27 financial year the Authority will focus on delivering its statutory functions and regulatory value through a risk-based, intelligence-led approach, targeting the greatest risks of harm and supporting positive environmental outcomes across the regulatory lifecycle. This will be achieved through:

Core statutory functions

1. Delivery of core regulatory functions including licensing, compliance, enforcement, water management, and incident response.
2. Targeted regulatory programs and environmental risk reduction
 - a. Focusing regulatory effort on the highest risks of harm, using intelligence and evidence to prioritise activity and deliver measurable regulatory value.
 - b. Building on targeted programs established in 2025–26 to reduce environmental harm in the civil construction, residential building and waste management sectors.
3. Water resource regulation and reform
 - a. Strengthening oversight and sustainability of water resource use.
 - b. Continuing water compliance and metering reforms progressed in 2025–26, responding to the need for improved licence management, compliance oversight, and alignment with broader policy and market reforms.

Responding to emerging trends

4. Industry engagement and prevention-focused regulation
 - a. Strengthening industry capability in order to prevent non-compliance.
 - b. Expanding the engagement model developed in 2025–26, and reinforcing the shift toward prevention-focused regulation to address recurring non-compliance and reduce reliance on reactive enforcement.

5. Cultural and community considerations in decision-making
 - a. Incorporating cultural values and community perspectives into regulatory processes.
 - b. Extending initial work in 2025–26 on First Nations engagement and community considerations, addressing the need for more inclusive, culturally informed, and community-responsive regulatory approaches.
6. Transparency, accountability and regulatory presence
 - a. Improving transparency and accountability by ensuring regulatory expectations, decisions and actions are clear, consistent and accessible to industry and the community.
 - b. Building on improvements in communications from 2025–26, to provide greater public visibility, clearer expectations, and stronger confidence in regulatory processes.
7. An integrated, systems-based approach to regulation
 - a. Working closely with planning and development partners across planning, environmental regulation and service delivery functions.
 - b. Adopting a customer-focused approach to regulatory interactions to improve consistency, customer experience, and environmental outcomes.
 - c. Embedding a unified operating model across all EPA functions.

Ensuring regulatory maturity

8. Regulatory maturity and governance reform
 - a. Embedding a consistent, organisation-wide regulatory operating model.
 - b. Building on governance reforms and the Maturity Action Plan delivered in 2025–26, to improve decision-making and strengthen accountability.
9. Data-driven regulation
 - a. Using integrated data and intelligence to drive regulatory decisions.
 - b. Building on improvements in data use and intelligence functions to identify emerging risks, coordinate action, resources allocation and evaluate performance.

Governance and independence

This Statement recognises the Authority's governance arrangements, including its independence, through:

- The appointment of the Authority (section 11 of the EP Act) as an independent statutory authority with the function of administering the EP legislation having regard to its objects and principles;
- Statutory provisions ensuring that the investigation and enforcement powers of the Authority are free from influence (section 93(2)); and
- The Authority's accountability to ministers (through its Annual Report) and appearance before relevant Legislative Assembly committees as required, to enable scrutiny of its performance.

Reporting framework

The Authority will report on outcomes and activities relating to the priority areas of focus in this Statement of Expectations following the end of 2026-27.