



Public health planning and environmental health

Environmental health considered and addressed in planning and development

Prior to development of land, environmental health risks need to be considered in the early land use planning stages to ensure developments do not impact negatively on the health and wellbeing of future populations living in or around the area. Opportunities to enhance the human health benefits of these developments should also be considered.

This is a cost-effective way of minimising future health implications and associated health related costs for State and Local Governments, developers and local businesses, due to poorly planned or located developments.

It is vital to consider environmental health at the earliest stages of the planning and development process to prevent encroachment of incompatible land uses. By integrating environmental health strategies into local planning policies and processes, local governments can ensure sustainable development, protect public health and wellbeing, enhance the quality of life for residents and minimise any future costly interventions.

Example strategies that could be implemented are included in the table below:

Examples
Advocate for, develop, and implement local planning policies to incorporate strategies to mitigate conflicting land uses (e.g. establish and maintain science-based protective separation distances to contaminated sites, agricultural land, mosquito breeding sites, sensitive land uses, odorous activities) and protect public health and safety in land use planning decision-making processes. Incorporate requirements of the residential estates precincts and urban developments , industrial estates precincts and industrial developments and mine sites exploration camps and construction villages .
Ensure environmental health is consulted at the local planning and other early planning stages.
Adopt and maintain minimum default separation distances between industrial and sensitive land uses in accordance with the EPA 2005 Separation Distances Between Industrial and Sensitive Land Uses .
Adopt and maintain minimum default separation distances between petrol filling/service stations and sensitive land uses in accordance with the Department of Health Position Statement : Service stations and sensitive land uses
Develop and implement planning policy initiatives that assess and manage nuisance odours by establishing and maintaining science-based protective separation distances

Examples

around odorous activities and land uses. Odorous land uses include landfill sites, solid/liquid treatment facilities, intensive agricultural facilities, abattoirs/stock-grounds, breweries, paint/varnish spray shops, chemical manufacture and use etc.

Develop and implement planning policy initiatives that assess and manage the impacts from new and evolving technologies, such as liquid hydrogen fuel production/storage, neighbourhood electric vehicle (EV)/battery hubs and solar farms. New and evolving technologies often include hazardous materials (e.g. liquid hydrogen, lithium, lead, cadmium, cobalt, nickel etc) which can catch fire. The siting, layout and design of such facilities requires careful assessment and management to minimise potentially catastrophic impacts.

Advocate for public health assessments to be integrated into local Development Assessment Panels to ensure health considerations are addressed in the planning phases of local development projects and facilitate risk management strategies early.

Establish and maintain a current searchable database of contaminated sites classified under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*. This extends the existing [free access database](#) published by the Department Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), to include those additional sites which have been classified as “Possibly Contaminated – Investigations Required” and “Decontaminated”.

Require all applications for rezoning, change of use, and development approval to include a current [Basic Summary of Records](#) available from DWER.

Implement soundproofing measures in residential housing to reduce noise pollution.

Supporting resources

- [Environmental hazards](#)
- [Health risk assessment](#)
- [Public health assessments](#)
- [Public health nuisances of developments](#)

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