



Public health planning and environmental health

Reducing harm from environmental health hazards

Local governments play a critical role in managing environmental health hazards. This includes conducting surveillance, raising public awareness of various risks, and maintaining safe environments for everyone. By adopting proactive strategies for managing environmental health hazards, local government can effectively mitigate environmental health risks and protect public health.

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

Examples
Mosquito management
Undertake field investigations and identify management options where mosquito-breeding presents a risk to public health.
Develop and implement a mosquito management program for the local jurisdiction.
Contribute to aerial larviciding in high mosquito-borne disease risk regions of WA's South West to reduce larval mosquito populations.
Communicate details of aerial larviciding to the community on the council website and promote through other local communication channels.
Form a Contiguous Local Authorities Group to access Department of Health funding for mosquito management where required for health driven mosquito management.
Undertake mosquito and arbovirus surveillance to monitor Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus across WA, and surveillance of Murray Valley encephalitis virus, West Nile virus (Kunjin strain) and Japanese encephalitis virus in the north of the state.
Follow up notified cases of mosquito-borne disease (regional WA) and initiate risk strategies to manage mosquitoes and eliminate breeding sites.
Raise public awareness of mosquito-borne disease risks utilising the Fight the Bite campaign. Communicate messages through various local communication channels and community events.
Incorporate the Fight the Bite campaign into a local environmental health promotion communication plan to educate individuals on simple ways to prevent being bitten and reduce mosquito breeding around their home/holiday accommodation.
Asbestos
Incorporate the safe handling and disposal of asbestos into a local environmental health promotion communication plan to educate individuals about asbestos safety.

Examples

Develop programs to support ratepayers to safely drop off small amounts of asbestos or other hazardous materials at local transfer stations for free or a small fee.

Provide financial incentives for homeowners who replace damaged or degraded hazardous building materials (asbestos fences panels, lead pipes) with safer alternatives.

Develop and implement strategies to assess and manage fire damaged asbestos containing materials and other hazardous materials at residential fire scenes.

Chemicals and contaminants

Investigate opportunities to install CCTV at suspected or known illegal (fly-tipping) hotspots and pursue regulatory enforcement for fly tipping offences.

Provide guidance on reducing exposure to pesticides, heavy metals and other environmental contaminants of concern. e.g. alternatives to pesticides, considerations for [growing veggies and keeping backyard chickens](#) for eggs.

Provide guidance for homeowners on hazards associated with undertaking renovations and how to minimise exposure risks, e.g. [renovation dusts](#), [asbestos](#), [lead-based paint](#), etc. Link to information on the HealthyWA website on the local government website or use this material to produce own, tailored guidance.

Develop inhouse capability or preferred contractor expertise to provide residents with affordable, available and competent hazardous material removal services.

Air quality

Establish and maintain a comprehensive air quality monitoring network to track pollutant levels in key areas. Advocate for access to [real-time air quality data](#) to the public. Educate the public about the [Air Quality Index for WA](#) and recommended health directions people should consider during periods when air quality is impacted.

Implement and enforce dust control measures at construction sites to minimise dust emissions and airborne particles. Require construction companies to prepare and implement dust management plans as part of the assessment process.

Develop an annual [BurnWise](#) communication program.

Initiate initiatives to encourage homeowners, particularly asthmatics, to remove and replace wood heaters with reverse cycle air conditioners.

Safe housing

Develop strategies to address household crowding and/or hoarding and squalor matters.

Educate residents about [mould growth in damp homes](#), and outline risk mitigation strategies to minimise mould growth in the lead up to winter period each year.

Develop and implement planning and policy initiatives that manage indoor air quality within residential houses.

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