

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ)

POLICY STATEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

This is a policy statement on Environmental Management Systems adopted by the Council of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand on 16 March 2001

Background

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a tool to enable an organisation to take a systematic approach to managing its environmental performance and to integrate environmental issues and responsibilities into the organisation's functions or business.

Although research suggests that most organisations prepare and implement an EMS to achieve legislative compliance and environmental due diligence, an EMS is also an important tool for implementing and achieving ecologically sustainable development principles, practices and outcomes. For many organisations, development of an EMS provides a process to analyse business activities from an environmental perspective to identify cost savings and potential business opportunities.

An EMS may be restricted to a single business or may extend across an organisation's operations to include a number of localities or interests, including subsidiary enterprises.

Increasingly, government to business and business to business commercial relationships are requiring the adoption of an EMS by the party supplying the product or service. In some cases, this requires evidence that the supplier has an EMS which meets the requirements of international, national or state standards or guidelines such as AS/NZS ISO 14001:1996 or the NSW Government Construction Policy Steering Committee EMS Guidelines.

Policy of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ)

The EIANZ considers that all business and government organisations should develop and maintain an EMS that is appropriate to their functions and activities, the environmental impacts of these functions and activities and the environmental risks and opportunities facing the organisation.

The EIANZ considers that an organisation's EMS should be fully integrated with the corporate policies, practices and business management systems of the organisation.

The EIANZ considers that the effectiveness of an EMS is dependent upon senior management support and commitment and employee ownership of the system. Ownership can be achieved through employee participation during the development of the EMS, communication of and training in the EMS, and integration of the EMS into the organisation's human resources policies and practices.

The EIANZ considers the effectiveness of an EMS is maximised also through the involvement of stakeholders such as customers, suppliers and community groups in developing elements of the EMS such as the environmental policy and performance targets and in ongoing review of the EMS.

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The EIANZ supports initiatives by governments and businesses to require suppliers to have an EMS which meets the requirements of an international, national or state standard or guideline.

The EIANZ considers that an EMS should seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- implementation of the principles of ecologically sustainable development and a balance of social, economic and environmental values;
- legislative compliance and due diligence;
- resource conservation;
- prevention of pollution and the elimination or reduction of waste;
- protection of ecological systems, landscapes and the conservation of species and genetic biodiversity;
- protection of cultural heritage, indigenous and built heritage;
- informed and transparent decision-making; and
- continuous improvement.

The EIANZ considers that while it is appropriate for EMSs to take a variety of forms, depending on the circumstances of the particular organisation, they should at least include the following elements:

- an environmental policy which is accessible to the public;
- identification of goals, objectives, performance indicators and targets and development of plans for achieving these;
- involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies and targets and ongoing review of the EMS;
- integration of environmental management into organisational planning and investment strategies;
- adequate resourcing to achieve desired environmental outcomes and the implementation of the EMS;
- clearly defined responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities;
- training programs to provide employees with the knowledge, skills and competencies required to achieve environmental targets and outcomes;
- detailed work practices, procedures or processes to manage and reduce the environmental impacts of the organisation, to understand the life cycle implications of the organisation's products and services, and to take advantage of environmental opportunities;
- regular monitoring of environmental performance and EMS implementation;
- internal and third party audits of progress in achieving the desired environmental outcomes and EMS implementation;

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- development of reporting systems to include regular environmental reporting internally and externally to stakeholders and reporting against the performance indicators; and
- regular review and continuous improvement of the EMS and of the organisation's environmental performance.

References

AS/NZS ISO 14001:1996. *Environmental management systems – Specification with guidance for use*

UNEP 1997 *Environmental Management System Training Resource Kit* United Nations Environment Programme; International Chamber of Commerce and International Federation of Consulting Engineers

Environment Australia 2000 *A Framework for Public Environmental Reporting – An Australian Approach* Consultant Report by Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation and the Australian Industry Group, Environment Australia, Canberra

Australian Local Government Association 1996 *Managing the Environment – a Practical Guide for Local Government to Environmental Management Systems and ISO 14001*

NSW Government Construction Policy Steering Committee 1998 *Environmental Management Systems Guidelines* DPWS Report No. 97018.

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