

AELERT 2026 CONFERENCE

Future ready regulation: embracing innovation, leading change, and strengthening regulatory systems

6-8 October 2026 | Sofitel Melbourne on Collins | Naarm Melbourne, Australia

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Program overview and guidance for submitting your abstract

Regulators across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands are navigating the most consequential period of change in a generation. The Australian Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is being reformed, a National EPA is being established in Australia, and artificial intelligence is reshaping how compliance is monitored and enforced. Industries are transitioning at pace, and communities are demanding greater transparency, accountability and involvement from the regulatory agencies entrusted to protect the public interest.

The **AELERT 2026 Conference: Future Ready Regulation** is where regulators come together to respond — sharing proven strategies, building capability and strengthening the systems that underpin effective regulation. We are calling for abstract submissions from practitioners, researchers and specialists who are undertaking this work and have meaningful contributions to share. Abstracts are accepted across four formats:

- 1. Plenary sessions;**
- 2. Breakout sessions;**
- 3. Masterclass workshops; and,**
- 4. Poster presentations.**

Each format has a structured set of sessions. Please ensure you read the session briefings before submitting your abstract as the topic must fit the scope of the session you are nominating for.

All submissions must include

- Preferred format: plenary, breakout, masterclass or poster
- Nominated session (select from the sessions listed in this document)
- Abstract of up to 200 words describing your presentation, case study or research
- 2–3 key takeaways for delegates to retain from your presentation
- For masterclass submissions: how participants will engage and what they will leave with

Accepted presenter benefits

- Discounted conference registration rate for all accepted abstract presenters
- Certificate of attendance documenting structured professional development hours
- Presenter addendum confirming your contribution, suitable for CPD logs and professional development records
- Inclusion in the published conference program and access to the full three-day program

How to apply: Conference registrations and call for abstract submissions will be open in early May via the event website. Contact aelert@sa.gov.au for assistance with your application.

PLENARY SESSIONS | *High-impact presentations to the full delegate audience – all days*

Plenaries are curated by the program committee. We welcome abstracts where a presenter, case study or research finding makes a strong, compelling contribution to one session below. Your abstract must clearly align to a specific plenary brief. Strong submissions will offer broad relevance across regulatory functions, provide a strategic or sector-wide perspective, and present a clear point of view backed by evidence or experience.

Abstracts that do not match a plenary brief may be considered for a breakout session at the committee's discretion.

DAY 1 Embracing Innovation on the Frontier of Regulatory Practice	State of environmental regulation in 2026 A strategic, evidence-based view of regulation across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific shaped by climate reform, digitisation, public trust and industry transition.
	National reforms—climate and nature positive regulation Practical insight into EPBC Act reform, the Australian National EPA and emerging climate compliance, implementation challenges, agency adaptation and cross-jurisdictional impacts.
	Digital innovation and emerging technologies How AI, data and automation are being used in real regulatory contexts—governance, outcomes and practical application.
DAY 2 Fostering Regulatory Excellence	Regulatory excellence in practice Demonstrations of what regulatory excellence looks like: performance improvement, communicating outcomes, and capability uplift that others can replicate.
	Beyond compliance: harm reduction in environmental protection Enforcement framed around preventing and repairing harm, intelligence-led approaches, restorative practice, wildlife crime and NRM.
	Building public trust, legitimacy and social licence Practical approaches to strengthening community confidence, especially in high-pressure or contested regulatory situations.
DAY 3 Collaboration and Co-Design for Better Outcomes	First Peoples leadership and co-governance Country-centred regulation and co-governance, authentic First Peoples involvement, prioritising Indigenous leaders and communities.
	Regulatory stewardship and system leadership Future-ready regulation through whole-of-system stewardship, multi-agency governance, system design and adaptive frameworks with cross-jurisdiction value.
	Cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration Examples of real collaboration in action. What was done, how it worked, outcomes achieved, and what others can apply.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS | Concurrent 90-minute sessions — Day 1 and Day 2

Breakout sessions are the primary pathway for abstract submissions. They run concurrently across four streams on Day 1 and Day 2, going deeper on specific topics, case studies and regulatory practice. Most accepted presentations will be placed in a breakout session. Please select the session your abstract best fits. Your submission should clearly address the scope of that session — use the topics listed under each session as a guide for what fits.

Day 1 — Embracing innovation on the frontier of regulatory practice

<p>DAY 1 — BREAKOUT A</p> <p>AI-enabled and automated regulation</p>	<p>This session focuses on practical applications of AI and automation in regulatory systems and processes.</p> <p>Submissions may address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI tools for compliance targeting, triage and case drafting • Predictive enforcement and priority-setting using data and intelligence • Governance, safeguards and human oversight in automated regulatory decisions • Moving from AI pilots to embedded operational practice • Intelligence-led regulation and modern digital compliance tools
<p>DAY 1 — BREAKOUT B</p> <p>Digital evidence and chain of custody</p>	<p>This session addresses how digital and AI-generated evidence is changing investigation and prosecution workflows, and standards of practice.</p> <p>Submissions may address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing digital evidence and maintaining chain of custody • Admissibility of AI-generated or algorithmically derived evidence • Cybersecurity considerations for regulatory investigations • Digital forensics tools and their operational application • Case studies in digital evidence: what worked, what didn't.
<p>DAY 1 — BREAKOUT C</p> <p>Advanced monitoring technologies</p>	<p>Technology-enabled monitoring and intelligence approaches that are improving environmental oversight, compliance detection and emergency response.</p> <p>Submissions may address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote sensing, drones, sensors and satellite applications in environmental compliance • Real-time environmental intelligence and data analytics • GIS, spatial data and cumulative impact analysis • Technology-enabled industry oversight and field compliance • Emergency readiness applications of monitoring technology
<p>DAY 1 — BREAKOUT D</p> <p>EPBC reform in practice</p>	<p>This session explores EPBC Act reform from impact assessment to biodiversity standards and how practitioners are preparing for and navigating the transition.</p> <p>Submissions may address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational and strategic implications of EPBC Act reform for your agency • National EPA establishment, what it means for existing regulators • Translating Nature Positive policy into compliance and enforcement practice • Biodiversity standards, protected areas and ecosystem protection in practice • Cross-jurisdictional coordination in the reform transition

Day 2 — Fostering regulatory excellence
**DAY 2 — BREAKOUT
A**
**Compliance and
enforcement
excellence**

This session focuses on the regulatory craft, intelligence-led investigation, joint operations, case handling and more. Case studies and practitioner experience are strongly encouraged.

Submissions may address:

- Intelligence-led compliance and investigation approaches
- Joint operations, cross-agency enforcement and shared resources
- Harm-focused and restorative enforcement approaches
- Enforced undertakings, civil remedies and alternative compliance pathways
- Wildlife crime, NRM enforcement and landscape-scale compliance
- Building enforcement culture and practitioner capability

DAY 2 — BREAKOUT B
**Approvals and
impact
assessment
reform**

Impact assessment and approvals systems are under significant reform pressure from EPBC changes to streamlining agendas to emerging industry applications. This session focuses on what better, faster and more robust approvals processes look like in practice, and what it takes to get there.

Submissions may address:

- Streamlined impact assessment: what effective reform looks like in practice
- Translating policy reform into operational approvals processes
- Emerging industry applications: renewables, PFAS, batteries and mine closure
- Risk-based prioritisation in approvals workloads
- Water, land use and regional environmental impact assessment

**DAY 2 — BREAKOUT
C**
**Workforce and
capability building**

The regulatory workforce is changing, in skills, expectations, diversity and ways of working. This session is for those investing in the next generation of regulatory capability, from authorised officer training to leadership development to multidisciplinary team models.

Submissions may address:

- Regulatory officer capability frameworks and training pathways
- Multidisciplinary team models and collaborative capability building
- Leadership development for regulatory practitioners
- Diversity, inclusion and workforce culture in regulatory agencies
- Learning and development programs that are working successfully

DAY 2 — BREAKOUT D
**Leading change in
emerging and
transitioning
industries**

New industries create new regulatory risks. Old ones are winding down in ways that create complex obligations. This session is for regulators navigating the challenge of staying ahead of rapid economic and technological change, from renewable energy and battery storage to mine closure, PFAS and the circular economy.

Submissions may address:

- Regulating renewable energy, battery storage and the energy transition
- Mine closure, rehabilitation and long-term liability management
- Contemporary waste streams: PFAS, solar panels, batteries and asbestos
- Disrupting waste crime and improving circular economy outcomes
- Building fit-for-purpose oversight models for new and transitioning sectors



MASTERCLASS WORKSHOPS | *Hands-on, facilitated sessions — Day 2 only*

Masterclass Workshops are participatory, skills-focused sessions running on Day 2. The format is designed to be a learning experience where participants actively engage, apply tools and collaborate. Pending review of abstracts there may be opportunity for supporting presentations or collaborative facilitation during the sessions.

A single strong submission can anchor a full masterclass as the hero session (approximately 30 minutes of facilitated content plus activities and collaboration). Shorter supporting presentations are also welcome where they complement the teaching objective and fit within the 90-minute format. The program committee will determine how submissions are combined.

Your abstract should describe not just what you will cover, but how participants will engage. What activities do you propose? What will they do? What will they leave with?

MASTERCLASS

Risk-based regulatory design

This masterclass builds practical capability in designing regulatory effort around risk, how to set priorities, design programs and report on outcomes rather than just outputs. Strong submissions will offer tools, frameworks or methods that participants can apply in their own agency context. A single well-designed 30-minute session with activities can anchor this workshop, with supporting presentations considered where they add teaching value. The session should be hands-on and participants should leave with something they can use.

Submissions may address:

- Risk-based prioritisation and regulatory program design
- Outcomes-focused reporting frameworks
- Practical tools for regulatory priority-setting and resource allocation
- Connecting risk appetite to compliance strategy
- Case examples of risk-based design in action

MASTERCLASS

Behavioural insights for compliance

This masterclass gives regulators practical tools for applying behaviour-change methods to improve voluntary compliance. Submissions should offer a facilitated learning experience, not a lecture on theory, but an applied session where participants work through real compliance challenges using behavioural insights frameworks. A hero presentation of around 30 minutes with activities works well here and supporting contributions that demonstrate specific applications are welcome.

Submissions may address:

- Applying behavioural insights and nudge theory to compliance design
- Message design, communication framing and behaviour change
- Data and analytics to understand compliance behaviour
- Designing voluntary compliance programs that work
- Case studies in behavioural compliance including successes and failures



MASTERCLASS WORKSHOPS CONT. | *Hands-on, facilitated sessions — Day 2 only*

MASTERCLASS

Emergency readiness and environmental resilience

Climate-driven emergencies are becoming more frequent, more severe and more complex to manage. This masterclass strengthens environmental crisis readiness through scenario-based practice, real-time intelligence tools and cross-agency coordination models. Submissions should be participatory, tabletop exercises, scenario walkthroughs and collaborative problem-solving are the format. A strong facilitated session or a combination of short contributions and structured activities both work well.

Submissions may address:

- Emergency operations and incident management for environmental regulators
- Scenario planning and tabletop exercises for environmental crises
- Cross-agency coordination in disaster and emergency response
- Real-time environmental intelligence and monitoring in emergencies
- Long-term resilience planning and post-event regulatory response

MASTERCLASS

Communications, risk communication and outrage mitigation

Communicating with communities in high-pressure, high-scrutiny or contested regulatory situations is one of the most consistently requested skills across the AELERT network. This masterclass is practical and scenario-driven, not a presentation on communications theory, but a working session where participants build and test real approaches. Submissions can be a single hero session or a set of complementary contributions covering risk comms, stakeholder engagement, media management and outrage mitigation.

Submissions may address:

- Risk communication frameworks for regulatory situations
- Outrage mitigation, when the community is angry and you need to respond
- Stakeholder engagement in contested or sensitive regulatory matters
- Managing media and public scrutiny of regulatory decisions
- Citizen science, community monitoring and participatory compliance

POSTER PRESENTATIONS | *Research, case studies and practitioner insights – all days*

Poster presentations are a high-visibility format at the AELERT 2026 Conference. If you have research findings, a project case study or a practitioner insight worth sharing, a poster gives you multiple touchpoints with the full delegate audience across the program.

Poster presentation entitlements

- A 2–3 minute lightning presentation on the main stage as part of a dedicated plenary to the full delegate audience
- Physical poster display during conference breaks, the Day 1 Welcome Reception event and the Day 3 Regulatory Knowledge Exchange session
- Poster included in the online conference platform and shared with all delegates via the post-conference distribution package
- Certificate of attendance plus a presenter addendum confirming your contribution, suitable for CPD logs and professional development records

Poster submissions are open across all sessions and topics. When submitting, select the poster presentation format as your option, then the breakout session or plenary theme your poster most closely relates to — this helps with program placement and delegate wayfinding.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Abstracts are welcomed from regulatory practitioners, researchers and academics at all career stages.
- Submitting an abstract does not guarantee acceptance. All abstracts are reviewed by the program committee.
- The program committee may place accepted abstracts in a different session or format to the one nominated.
- Accepted presenters are expected to fund their own travel and accommodation unless otherwise advised.
- Accepted presenters will receive confirmation of acceptance, session details and presenter guidelines following review.

AELERT 2026 Conference: Future Ready Regulation

Dates: 6–8 October 2026

Venue: Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, Melbourne

Format: In-person and virtual

Virtual opens: August 2026

Partnership: Delivered in partnership with EIANZ

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