



## **POLICY STATEMENT No. 78**

### **SCIENCE POLICY**

#### **1. OBJECTIVE(S)**

This policy formalises the procedures applicable to science conducted within, and on behalf of, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) to ensure it receives an optimal return on its investment.

#### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all science undertaken within or on behalf of DEC where science refers to scientific research, scientific monitoring and science communication (see Appendix for definitions) undertaken in relation to the biological, physical and social environments.

#### **3. CONTEXT**

The effectiveness of DEC's policy, planning, management and regulatory frameworks is dependent largely on the knowledge that informs these processes. As such, DEC invests significantly in the conduct of science on key and priority areas. Scrutiny of the scientific knowledge underpinning DEC policies and programs is inevitable, therefore it is imperative that all science supported by DEC is of high quality. Formal approval, documentary and quality control processes will lead to minimisation of duplication, improved retention of corporate knowledge, exemplary science, and effective knowledge transfer into policy development, planning and operational management

#### **4. STANDARDS**

A standard framework for science in DEC will ensure

- 4.1 DEC-funded science is relevant to departmental objectives and science needs;
- 4.2 the quality of science planning, implementation and reporting is high;
- 4.3 publications and other science communication and knowledge transfer are timely and appropriately communicated and distributed;
- 4.4 the integrity of long-term monitoring programs and datasets is maintained;
- 4.5 data (including metadata) are accessible, stored and easily retrieved for future application;
- 4.6 personal responsibility for science investment is promoted via links to staff performance management and through annual reporting requirements; and
- 4.7 a legacy remains to promote the retention of corporate knowledge and facilitate knowledge transfer and uptake internally and externally.

#### **5. LEGISLATION**

The policy covers all science undertaken within, and on behalf of, DEC to fulfil DEC's functions under all legislation administered by DEC.

## 6. POLICY

- 6.1 All internally and externally funded science projects undertaken by DEC staff will be aligned with DEC service priorities, be well planned and executed, have a nominated project leader responsible for internal administration, and communicate results to relevant staff for implementation through DEC policy, planning and operational management.
- 6.2 All science projects carried out by external providers and supported by DEC will be aligned with DEC service priorities, have a DEC project leader responsible for the internal administration of the project, and have results communicated to relevant DEC staff for implementation.
- 6.3 Only those science projects that have been approved through the processes outlined in this policy will be supported by DEC.

## 7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 7.1 The policy will be implemented in accordance with the set of Science Policy Guidelines that describe the context, administrative processes and accepted conduct for science projects undertaken within, or on behalf of, DEC. Science coordinators in each Division will be responsible for application of the Guidelines.
- 7.2 A project leader will be appointed by the relevant divisional science coordinator for all research or monitoring projects conducted internally by DEC staff, or conducted by an external science provider and supported by DEC.
- 7.3 Advice on planning and implementation of science projects should be obtained from appropriately qualified professionals from within, or if necessary external to, DEC.
- 7.4 All science projects will obtain approval from the relevant Director through submission of a Science Concept Plan. Detailed Science Project Plans will be developed for all internal DEC science projects with an approved Concept Plan.
- 7.5 Project leaders are responsible for submitting an annual report to their divisional science coordinator for inclusion in the relevant divisional annual science report.
- 7.6 Research outputs, including data and metadata, reports and publications, are to be lodged in relevant repositories and accessible to appropriate DEC staff.
- 7.7 Project leaders are responsible for targeted and effective knowledge transfer to ensure implementation of science results.

## 8. CUSTODIAN

Director, Science Division is the custodian of this policy.

## 9. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed 3 (three) years after date of approval.

## 10. DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL

Approved on

23 January 2012

By Keiran McNamara  
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Keiran McNamara

## SCIENCE POLICY APPENDIX 1

### BACKGROUND

This policy specifies processes for formal and mandatory quality control, data management, reporting, accountability, knowledge transfer and archive of information for science undertaken within, and on behalf of, DEC. Application of these processes will ensure an optimal return on the public investment in science that is made through DEC. These processes provide the necessary ‘third-party’ scrutiny that ensures the science is relevant to departmental objectives, the quality of science planning, implementation and reporting is high, publications are timely and appropriately distributed, and data are accessible, stored and easily retrieved for future application. Furthermore, these processes promote personal accountability for projects (via staff performance management and annual reporting), foster synergies and collaborations, and minimise duplication. The archival processes in place to capture data and publications ensure a legacy remains after the project is completed and hence promotes the retention of corporate knowledge and knowledge uptake.

### DEFINITIONS

“Research” means the search for knowledge or any systematic investigation to establish facts. It results in increasing the understanding of: (i) the composition, structure and functioning of biological and physical systems and (ii) human interactions with the natural environment.

“Monitoring” means measuring trends in the environment, particularly resource condition, against agreed benchmarks, pressure and the effectiveness and efficiency of management responses. Ecological monitoring includes monitoring of reference sites to assess natural variability, routine surveillance and ecosystem ‘health’ monitoring. Social monitoring measures trends in human use, attitudes, needs and expectations. The term “monitoring” in this context includes evaluation and reporting but does not include ‘monitoring’ for enforcement, compliance or approvals.

“Science communication” means transferring scientific knowledge into improved policy, planning and operational management, positively influencing community attitudes and behaviour towards conservation and sustainable use of the environment, and influencing the attitudes of politicians, stakeholders, media and industry groups with an aim of building confidence about governance, regulation and use of science and technology.

Support for external projects includes cash and/or ‘*in kind*’ contributions such as staff time, equipment, vehicles, boats etc.

### GUIDELINES

The following set of [Science Policy Guidelines](#) describe the context, administrative processes and accepted conduct for research and monitoring undertaken within DEC

- Science Policy Guideline No. 1 – Science project plans
- Science Policy Guideline No. 2 – Implementing research results
- Science Policy Guideline No. 3 – Publications, reports and manuscripts
- Science Policy Guideline No. 4 – Databases and their management
- Science Policy Guideline No. 5 – Scientific ethics and etiquette
- Science Policy Guideline No. 6 – Scientific sites register