



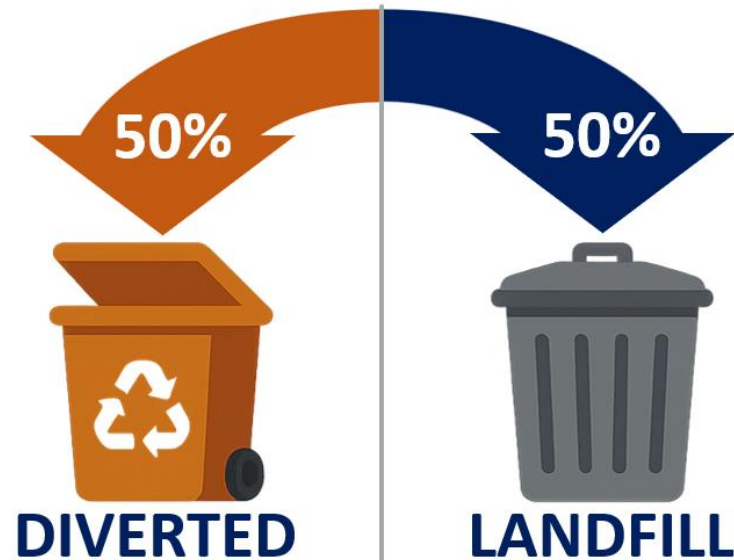
Audit
Tasmania

Management of landfills

Report of the Auditor-General No. 1 of 2025-26

Background

**1,001,000
TONNES OF
WASTE WAS
GENERATED BY
TASMANIA IN
2023-24**

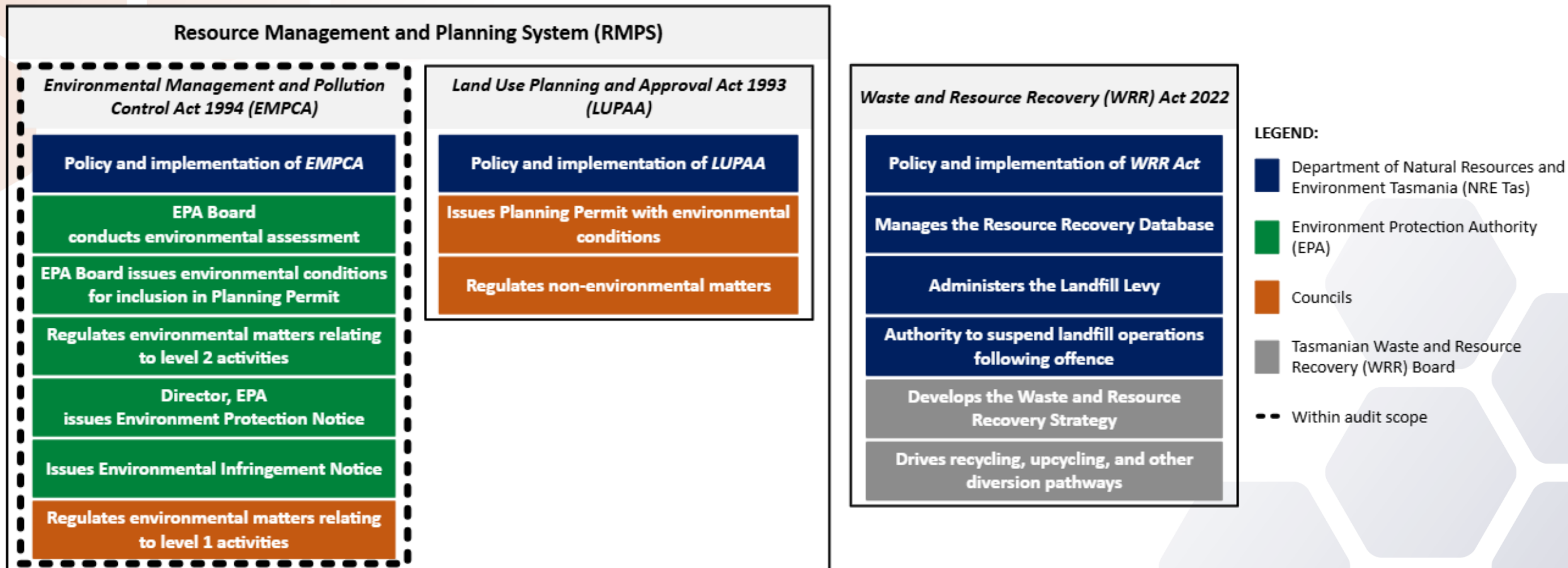


Landfills can pose a range of risks to the environment and to human health.

Risks include:

- leachate and landfill gases
- air/water/noise pollution
- biodiversity loss
- chemicals stored and processed on-site
- fire and exposure to contaminants

Regulatory framework



What we concluded

We did this audit to assess the **effectiveness** of governance and regulatory oversight of landfill management.

We found:

- **Oversight and guidance** for the management of publicly owned landfills – NOT EFFECTIVE
- Responsible parties **monitor and comply** with regulatory requirements – PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE

Key findings – oversight and guidance

1. There is no statewide strategy for landfill management. Accountability is dispersed in a complex map of landfill management stakeholders.
2. The Act has not been updated as the policy environment changed, which impacts on landfill operations and regulatory oversight. No contemporary standards are in place to ensure landfill management across the State is consistent.

Key findings – oversight and guidance

‘Any full review of significant legislation such as EMPCA is a significant government commitment that is influenced by a range of factors; these include the nature of the issues and impacts for Tasmania and across relevant stakeholders, availability of resources, competing priorities across government, and interrelationship with other reforms.’

- **NRE Tas**

Key findings – monitoring and compliance (EPA)

3. EPA systems and databases are not fit-for-purpose, limiting EPA's ability to identify compliance risks effectively and efficiently.
4. Permit conditions are not reviewed regularly, and we identified instances of inadequate permit conditions.
5. EPA's oversight of closed landfill sites with active permit conditions is ineffective. There are instances of rehabilitation ongoing for decades, carrying elevated risk to human health and the environment.
6. EPA directs its resources to responding to emerging issues.
7. EPA has established and complied with its enforcement and compliance model but under-utilises enforcement action.

Key findings – monitoring and compliance (provisions)

8. While EPA does not seek assurance that sufficient landfill rehabilitation and aftercare provisions are in place, most councils have provisions in place.
9. There is no comprehensive guidance on rehabilitation and aftercare provisions available to landfill owners and approaches to establishing provisions vary widely across councils.

Key findings – monitoring and compliance (provisions)

‘Preliminary investigation at Cygnet finds elevated concentrations of chemicals, nutrients and metals, having the potential to present a risk to human health and the environment.

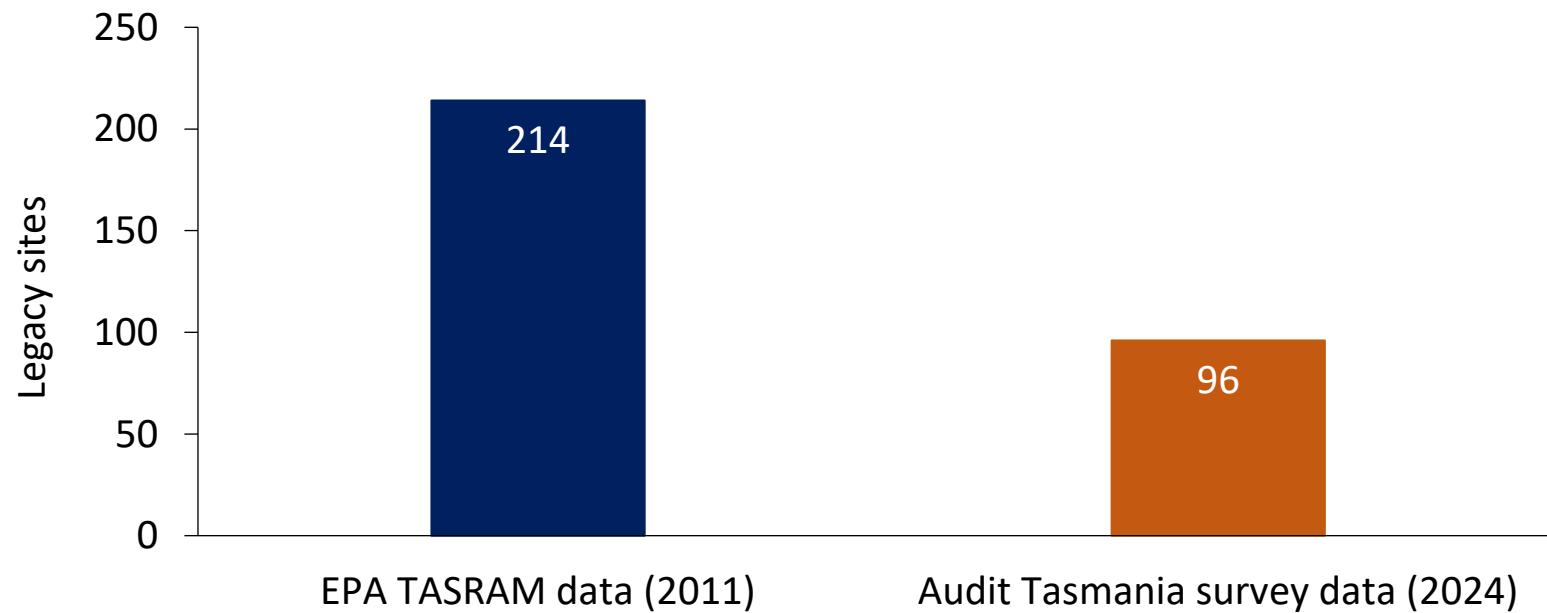
Under section 74B of EMPCA, council provides notification that the Cygnet site is, or is likely to be, a contaminated site.’

- Case study extract

Key findings – monitoring and compliance (councils)

10. Council oversight is outside of EPA regulation and compliance. There is limited knowledge of active level 1 sites and council oversight of legacy landfills has been lost.

Figure 5.3 from the audit report: Legacy landfill sites comparing EPA TASRAM data (2011) and Audit Tasmania survey responses (2024)



What we recommended

NRE Tas	...develop a Statewide strategy for landfill management, incorporating those elements already underway	AGREED, in part
Shared	NRE Tas work with EPA and landfill managers holding data to develop systems for data sharing to establish a single source of truth and inform policy and regulatory oversight. This work should encompass a shared understanding of data needs.	AGREED, in principle
	NRE Tas in collaboration with EPA develop contemporary guidance material for landfill owners and operators, including on financial provisions.	AGREED, in principle
EPA	...better target its resources to fulfil its statutory obligations.	AGREED
	...support councils to develop sustainable landfill management practices, while defining and maintaining boundaries between regulatory and advisory functions.	AGREED, In principle

Summary of responses

We received responses from:

- Environment Protection Authority
- Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Circular Head Council
- City of Hobart Council
- Dorset Council
- Glenorchy City Council
- Huon Valley Council
- The Treasurer

We did not receive responses from: Break O'Day Council, the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Local Government.