Library Fellowship Paper

Towards good environmental governance? Assessing the evolution of Victoria's environment portfolio

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

DCFL	Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands
DNRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
LCC	Land Conservation Council
MCFL	Ministry for Conservation, Forests and Lands
MPE	Ministry for Planning and Environment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEPA	Swedish Environment Protection Agency

Executive Summary

Governments around the world have established environment portfolios as a means for providing political leadership over environmental matters. The ministers responsible for these portfolios are at the centre of environmental debate and are responsible for treading a delicate path through difficult political and administrative terrain. However, relatively little is known about environment portfolios and how they have changed over time. This is a significant gap in academic knowledge, given the high profile of environmental issues in contemporary political debate, and the recognition in the academic literature that good environmental governance is conceptually and practically challenging.

This paper provides an analysis of Victoria's environment portfolio. It finds that, while institution-building has occurred, the frequent redefining of the portfolio and reorganising of the machinery of government, and lack of coherent strategy for dealing with environmental matters, is problematic.

A more systematic approach is required if Victoria is to effectively manage the environmental challenges that it faces. Such an approach could be based on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and would position sustainable development at the conceptual and practical heart of governance, so that environmental objectives are fully considered in all decision making.

Approach to research

This research investigates Victoria's overarching approach to environmental governance. It provides an account of Victoria's environment portfolio, how it has evolved to meet changing priorities, and what might be done in the future. The approach to research is informed by policy analysis, portfolio studies, and contemporary history.

The challenge of environmental governance

Environmental issues are frequently challenging for policy makers because of the ways in which people conceptualise the environment and nature, the characteristics of environmental issues, and the difficulties involved with determining good environmental performance.

The evolution of Victoria's environment portfolio

Government is large and complex, so governments establish structures that enable the delivery of their service and policy priorities. In this paper, Victoria's overall approach to environmental governance and how it has evolved is explored through four specific areas of inquiry:

- When was the portfolio established?
- What legislation has been allocated to the portfolio?
- Who are Victoria's Ministers for Environment?
- What departmental machinery of government arrangements have been put in place?

Assessment of Victoria's approach

Victoria has a mature system of environmental governance and the arrangements in place provide a basis for managing many issues. However, the effectiveness of these arrangements can be questioned given the environmental challenges facing Victoria. Part of the problem is that the frequent restructuring of the portfolio and machinery of government, and lack of coherent strategy, limits the possibilities for achieving more integrated environmental governance. A more systematic approach is required to put Victoria onto a more sustainable trajectory.

The 'environment' has emerged as a major field of public policy interest since the late 1960s. In response, governments around the world have established ministerial portfolios for the environment to provide a focus for governmental action over this policy area. Public interest in environmental matters continues to grow as new challenges, such as climate change, emerge. Information and knowledge about the environment—and the effects of human activities upon it—have also grown considerably, as have views about how the environment should be managed.

Consequently, environmental governance is complex, dynamic and contested. Ministers for the Environment in Westminster systems of government are at the centre of these considerations and need to tread a delicate path through conflicting views and interests, under circumstances of considerable uncertainty and urgency. However, there is limited academic understanding about the role of 'Minister for the Environment', the environment portfolio, or how the scope of the portfolio has evolved to meet changing priorities.

To address this gap, this paper will consider how successive state governments have contributed to building Victoria's institutional structures for environmental governance (and their overall trajectory of reform), rather than focussing on electoral fortunes, internal party machinations, individual environmental issues, or the details of specific legislation or policies. This approach is inspired by the question posed by Professor Elim Papadakis regarding 'whether or not political institutions and organisations can contribute to addressing concerns about the deterioration of the environment'.[1] This is a critical question facing all governments around the world as they grapple with the ecological, social and economic consequences of human activities.

The aim of this exploratory research project, therefore, is to provide an account of Victoria's environment portfolio, how it has evolved, and what might be done into the future. It will provide foundational insights into an increasingly important, but relatively overlooked, area of government and public administration—the environment portfolio. Specific areas of inquiry include:

- Establishment of the portfolio
- Legislation allocated to the portfolio
- Chronology of Victoria's Ministers for the Environment
- Government departmental machinery arrangements to support the Minister

This report has four major sections, which:

- Explain the approach to research adopted;
- Summarise some major challenges associated with environmental governance;
- Provide a schematic account of the evolution of Victoria's environment portfolio; and
- Assess Victoria's approach and considers what might be done.

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[1] E. Papadakis (1996) *Environmental Politics and Institutional Change*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

1. Approach to research

This research explores the establishment and evolution of Victoria's core public institutions and organisations for addressing environmental concerns, and assesses their adequacy for dealing with the environmental challenges facing Victoria. Conceptually, it is situated at the intersection of research on environmental policy and governance, portfolio studies, and contemporary history.

The voluminous literature on environmental policy and governance inspires the focus on how the environment is, and should be, governed. For example, UK academics Neil Carter and Philip Lowe, analysed the logic behind a decision to set up a new cross-sectoral environmental agency in the UK during the 1990s,[2] while Australian academic, Reg Henry, has assessed the contribution of Queensland's environment department to promoting sustainable development.[3] Further, inspired by a concern that traditional bureaucratic processes are 'ill-suited to meeting the challenges posed by environmental problems', Professor of public policy, Jenny Stewart, explored the prospects for water management bureaucracies 'to deliver environmental objectives'.[4] She argued 'the problems experienced in implementing integrated catchment management stem at least in part from the limitations of the traditional bureaucratic form'.[5] Relatedly, former senior public servant in the Western Australian Department of Environment Protection, Dr Bryan Jenkins, investigated the design of organisations for sustainability, concluding that 'there is a need for a wide-ranging review of institutional arrangements … to identify changes that are needed to achieve sustainability'.[6] Put simply, governments around the world are currently engaged in a long-term reform project concerned with what Professor Steven Dovers, of the Australian National University (ANU), would call building 'institutions for sustainability'.[7]

The academic literature on portfolio studies provides guidance into how to make sense of the complexity of government, how it changes over time, and what this may mean for governance. Methodologically, academic researchers Jeremy Moon and Christine Fletcher identify ministerial portfolios, public organisations, legislation and budgets as potential indicators of changes in the nature and scope of government.[8] Further, Moon and colleague Anthony Sayers highlight why a focus on ministerial portfolios is useful—namely, that portfolios: (1) 'offer a pure or absolute indicator of government'; (2) are approximately politically equal in terms of parliamentary systems, such that 'each portfolio signifies an area of commitment with its own organisational and legal infrastructure' and 'each portfolio holder is susceptible to the same sort of political scrutiny'; and, (3) their meaning 'is stable across time and political system'.[9] Put simply, the very presence of a portfolio demonstrates

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[2] N. Carter & P. Lowe (1994) 'Environmental politics and administrative reform', *The Political Quarterly*, 65(3), pp. 263-75.

[3] R. Henry (1997) 'ESD Policy-making and DOEs: Evaluating the Queensland experience', *Green Politics in Grey Times*, Ecopolitics XI Conference, University of Melbourne, 4-5 October.

[4] J. Stewart (1997) 'Australian water management: Towards the ecological bureaucracy?', *Environmental and Planning Law Journal*, 14(4), p. 259.

[5] ibid, p. 266.

[6] B. Jenkins (2002) 'Organisation for sustainability', *Australian Journal of Environmental Management*, 9(4), p. 243.

[7] S. Dovers (2001) *Institutions for Sustainability*, TELA series, Melbourne, Australian Conservation Foundation.

[8] J. Moon & C. Fletcher (1988) 'New government and policy change in western Australia 1983-1988: Did Mr Burke make a difference?', *Politics*, 23(1), pp. 78-89.

[9] J. Moon & A. Sayers (1999) 'The dynamics of governmental activity: a long-run analysis of the changing scope and profile of Australian Ministerial Portfolios', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 34(2), pp. 150-151.

that the government views the area of policy as a legitimate focus for government activity.[10] Finally, the portfolio studies literature also provides insight into the nature of portfolios.[11]

Contemporary history provides inspiration for this research through its demonstration of the importance of examining recent developments with a sensitivity to their historical dimensions.[12] Documents were the principle sources of data used, including: Victorian government directories, Hansard (*Parliamentary Debates*), Administrative Orders, General Orders, records on past and present Members of Parliament (for example, the Parliament of Victoria's Re-member database[13]), and media clippings.

It is important to be transparent about the limitations associated with the approach to research adopted. The focus of the research is to provide a schematic analysis of Victoria's overall approach to environmental governance. This means that this report does not analyse the detailed provisions of the Acts introduced and nor does it focus on specific administrative processes, polices or strategies, although it is informed by the author's awareness and understanding of such processes, policies and strategies. Furthermore, it does not address areas of environmental policy that are not within the environment portfolio. This means, for example, that this report cannot provide insight into the ways in which the numerous reforms made to the *Environment Protection Act 1970* since its creation have shaped environmental governance. This is a deliberate strategy: my central purpose is to understand the overarching institutional and organisational architecture within which environmental issues are considered, and how it may be improved. This is because focussing on the evolution of the Ministerial portfolio for the environment provides a way to highlight some of the complexities involved in environmental governance, as well as direct attention to systemic issues, and matters which may be taken for granted.

2. The challenge of environmental governance

Environmental governance is recognised as a considerable challenge for policy makers. Some public policy scholars view environmental issues as both politically and technically complex,[14] whilst others discuss 'wicked problems' as a widely used way of characterising environmental challenges: problems which defy easy definition and solution.[15]

To provide some conceptual context, this section introduces ways of thinking about the environment, why it is a particularly challenging area of public policy, and how environmental performance might be assessed.

What is 'the environment'?

The 'environment' and 'nature' can be understood in different ways. Therefore, appreciating the ways they are understood can help to avoid confusion by enhancing understanding of what motivates

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[10] E. Fells (2003) 'The proliferation of identity politics in Australia: An analysis of Ministerial portfolios, 1970-2000', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 38(1), pp. 101-117.

[11] A. Lawlor & J. Lewis (2014) 'Evolving structure of governments: portfolio adoption across the Canadian provinces from 1867-2012', *Canadian Public Administration*, 57(4), pp. 589-608.

[12] P. Catterall (1997) 'What (if anything) is distinctive about contemporary history?', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 32(4), pp. 441-452.

[13] www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/people-in-parliament/re-member

[14] B. Guy Peters (2015) *Advanced Introduction to Public Policy*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

[15] H. Rittel & M. Webber (1973) 'Dilemmas in a general theory of planning', *Policy Sciences,* 4, pp. 155-169.

different approaches to environmental governance. For example, for some people, the environment is simply 'our surroundings', such as our cities, suburbs, and homes.

A useful starting point is to highlight the difference between 'nature' and the 'environment.' Environmental historian William Cronon proposes that 'nature' can be understood as an abstract, almost neutral sense of the non-human world, while 'environment' is associated with a more local or determinate sense of a non-human (or human) milieu or surrounding.[16]

Cronon suggests that 'the natural world is far more dynamic, far more changeable, and far more tangled with human history than popular beliefs about the "balance of nature" have typically acknowledged',[17] such that 'nature is not nearly so natural as it seems'.[18] As evidence of this, Cronon identifies how nature can be represented as:

- naïve reality;
- moral imperative;
- Eden;
- artifice or self-conscious cultural construction;
- virtual reality;
- commodity;
- demonic other; and
- contested terrain.[19]

Such interpretations illustrate that there are numerous ways in which 'nature' can be represented in environmental debate, which has implications for what it is that needs to be managed. For example, the 'nature as Eden' view portrays nature as something that is pure and perfect. However, such a view would be unlikely to be held by people who experience earthquakes, fires, floods, and/or drought.

In relation to the 'environment', Professor John Barry identifies four 'environments': wilderness; countryside/garden; urban environment; and global environment.[20] These categories suggest that the environment can be partitioned in different ways for different purposes, which raises the question about where the environment begins and ends—for example, are suburban backyards or nature strips part of the environment? Also, presenting an area of native vegetation as 'wilderness' can effectively erase consideration of Indigenous peoples in deliberations. Further, Professor of anthropology, Arturo Escobar, considers that talking about the 'environment', rather than 'nature', is a choice, with important implications;[21] thus, it is important to be mindful of the different ways in which debate occurs. More recently, there has been interest in 'socio-environments', places mutually created by human and non-human interactions, which draw upon the various ways that humans influence the environment and the environment influences humans.[22]

This discussion highlights that there are many ways of understanding and categorising the world in which we live, and our place in it, each with strengths and weaknesses. For the purposes of this report,

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[16] J. Barry (1999) *Environment and Social Theory*, London, Routledge. p. 16.
[17] W. Cronon (1996) 'Introduction: In Search of Nature', in W. Cronon (ed.) *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, W.W. Norton and Company. pp. 24-25.
[18] ibid., pp. 35-51.
[19] ibid., pp. 35-51.
[20] Barry (1999) op. cit., pp. 22-29.
[21] A. Escobar (1996) 'Constructing nature: Elements for a post-structural political ecology', in R. Peet & M. Watts (eds) *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development and Social Movements*, London, Routledge. pp. 46-68.
[22] J. Cidell (2017*) Imagining Sustainability: Creative Urban Environmental Governance in Chicago and Melbourne*, London, Routledge.

it is sufficient to acknowledge that there are many ways in which 'the environment' and 'nature' can be understood, and that these are often deeply ingrained, and so frequently taken for granted.

Why managing it can be challenging

Ecological systems and processes do not adhere to human boundaries which means environmental governance can be particularly challenging.

For example, Professor Neil Carter, from the University of York, lists the following seven core characteristics that distinguish the environment as a policy problem.[23]

Table 2. Core characteristics of environmental problems

Characteristic	Description
Public goods	Many environmental resources can be described as public goods, whereby one person's consumption of the good does not impact upon another person's (e.g. clean air)
Transboundary problems	Environmental systems and environmental problems cross administrative boundaries (e.g. migratory species, water catchments, climate change, marine pollution)
Complexity and uncertainty	Ecological and biophysical systems are complex. In nature everything is connected, as captured in the phrase 'the web of life'. This therefore makes it difficult, if not impossible, to know exactly how it works or what might happen
Irreversibility	Species extinction is forever and non-renewable resources can be exhausted
Temporal and spatial variability	Impacts may not be experienced immediately, or in the place where they are caused (e.g. the hole in the ozone layer and the effects of acid rain are spatially and temporally displaced, which means the people who cause the problem may not be the ones who suffer from it)
Administrative fragmentation	Different departments have different responsibilities which means that the activities of some departments can impact negatively (or in some cases positively) on the portfolio responsibilities of other government departments
Regulatory intervention	Addressing environmental issues can impose costs on those causing the problem

Further, Professor Dovers from the ANU, proposes that environmental issues are more likely than other policy issues to have attributes which make them particularly challenging for policy makers to deal with, namely:

- temporal scale (issues emerge over time and responses may take time to work);
- spatial scale (what happens in one place effects somewhere else);
- limits;
- irreversibility (extinction is forever);
- urgency;
- connectivity and complexity (ecological and biophysical systems are complex and connected, e.g. water cycles);
- uncertainty;
- cumulation (some issues are like 'the straw that breaks the camel's back' where incremental changes can have large consequences);

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[23] N. Carter (2018) *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp. 180-196.

- moral and ethical dimensions (they involve important philosophical questions); and
- novelty (humanity hasn't faced the kinds of questions that we now face, e.g. major climate change).[24]

For Dovers, these attributes are significant because:

> Existing processes, which have evolved around problems that do not as commonly display these attributes, can be suspected to have limited ability in coping with problems that do [such that] the shortcomings of current responses to sustainability have a structural basis, being the products of unsuitable processes.[25]

Writing in 2003, Dovers suggested that much environmental policy and management in Australia suffers from 'amnesia' and 'ad hocery' such that 'what we do at a given time often appears uninformed by previous experiences and, often, previous policy and management attempts are not even recognised'.[26] Further, policy amnesia can occur in situations where, for example, there is organisational churn (e.g. rapid staff turnover and frequent restructuring) and limited absorptive capacity (an organisation's capacity to incorporate new concerns).[27]

Challenges in assessing environmental performance

Finally, assessing the performance of government policy is challenging because evaluation is 'fundamentally political'[28] and 'an inherently normative act'.[29] This means that judgements about policy performance will always be subjective. Professor Emeritus Patrick Weller AO, for example, highlights how the choice of criteria for an evaluation may vary, asking:

> Should governments be judged by the plans they announced in advance – their intent – or by what they are able to achieve, given economic and social forces – their capability. Should they be judged by outcomes alone?[30]

For Weller, performance can be considered in relation to intent (what they said they would do); capability (what they could, and did, do); and process (how they acted). It is also important to recognise that 'governments inherit a past, and a largely pre-ordained future',[31] which means that while governments are not without a capacity to act, their capacity to do so is shaped by the context in which they operate.

Further, several features of environmental issues add further complexity to an already complex and contested undertaking. Firstly, the boundary of what constitutes environmental policy, and hence environmental performance, is unclear—Professor Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh queried whether

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[24] S. Dovers (1996) 'Sustainability: Demands on policy', *Journal of Public Policy*, 16(3), pp. 303-318.

[25] ibid., p. 313.

[26] S. Dovers (2003) 'Processes and Institutions for resource and environmental management: Why and how to analyse?' in S. Dovers & S. Wild River (eds) *Managing Australia's Environment*, Sydney, Federation Press, p. 3.

[27] A. Stark (2019) 'Explaining institutional amnesia in government', *Governance*, 32, pp 143-158.

[28] M. Hill (2005) *The Public Policy Process*, Harlow, Pearson Longman.

[29] M. Bovens, P. Hart & S. Kuipers (2006) 'The politics of policy evaluation', in M. Moran, M. Rein, & R. Goodin (eds) *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. pp. 319.

[30] P. Weller (1993) 'Evaluating the state: Reform is in the eye of the beholder', in B. Stevens & J. Wanna (eds) *The Goss Government: Promise and Performance of Labor in Queensland*, South Melbourne, Centre for Australian Public Sector Management and MacMillan Education. pp. 12-22.

[31] ibid., p. 18.

environmental policy concerns activities undertaken by the environment department, or all activities which have significant impact on the environment.[32] For example, in investigating Victoria's approach to environmental governance, is it appropriate to simply focus on the environment portfolio, or should the environmental effects of Treasury decisions also be considered? Secondly, what conceptual yardstick should be used to assess the effects of environmental policy is also unclear. This idea is explored in Australian academic Peter Christoff's dissertation, where he asks whether the success of environmental policies are to be found in the implementation of specific recommendations, the embrace of underlying principles, or actual improvements in environmental trends.[33] The third issue is whether environmental assessment ought to consider the overall trajectory of environmental performance, or specific areas (land, fresh water, air, coastal and marine areas), sectors (agriculture, forestry, urban planning) or issues (biodiversity loss, salinity, drought, climate change, etc.). Finally, and relatedly, given the spatial and temporal interrelationships associated with environmental activities, there is no definitive basis as to whether the focus should be placed on input, outputs, or outcomes.

More generally, there is also considerable focus on environmental capacity as a way to assess the adequacy of a public institution's approach to environmental governance. For Christoff, there are four criteria by which to assess a jurisdiction's capacity for effective environmental governance, namely:

- *Consensus-building capacity*—the existence of styles and forums for agenda setting and policy development, which enable open deliberation of options and encourage widely accepted, enduring and ecologically sound outcomes in both public and private sectors.
- *Strategic capacity*—the state's ability to recognise environmental problems and develop rational policy responses that would lead to ecologically sustainable outcomes if implemented effectively.
- *Implementation capacity*—staffing levels and a skill base which can react to new challenges and learn from previous experiences, and budgets appropriate for effective implementation of policy initiatives. This includes capacity for research, monitoring, public reporting and review.
- *Integrative capacity*—the existence of agencies, laws and decision-making processes which enable the state to integrate ecological principles, practices and goals into (whole-of-government) public, as well as private, sector activity.[34]

This section has outlined some of the central aspects associated with debates about environmental governance, which in turn provide a broad conceptual context for the following sections of this paper.

3. The evolution of Victoria's environment portfolio

Dispersed responsibilities (pre-1970)

Victoria has a history of what we now know as 'environmental policy', although it has not always been thought about in the way it is now—as evident from the rich histories of Victoria's approaches to

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[32] C. O'Faircheallaigh (1993) 'Evaluating performance on the environment', in B. Stevens & J. Wanna (eds) (1993) *The Goss Government: Promise and Performance of Labor in Queensland,* South Melbourne, Centre for Australian Public Sector Management and MacMillan Education. pp. 248-267.

[33] P. Christoff (2002) *Ecological Modernisation, Ecologically Sustainable Development and Australia's National ESD Strategy*, PhD Dissertation, Melbourne, University of Melbourne.

[34] P. Christoff (1998) 'Degreening government in the garden state: environmental policy under the Kennett Government 1992-1997', *Environment Planning and Law Journal*, 15(1), pp. 10-32.

national parks, forests and soil conservation.[35] Victoria's national park estate had its beginnings in the latter stages of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century. This places Victoria near the historical forefront in national park establishment, comparable in timing to Royal National Park in New South Wales, established in 1879, and Yellowstone National Park in the United States, which was established in 1872. While early national parks were managed by either committees of management or local municipal councils, the passing of the *National Parks Act 1958* provided for the establishment of a standalone national parks authority. Interest in forest management dates to the gold rush era and various approaches have been utilised since then. Further, legislation to establish a soil conservation authority was introduced in the 1940s, namely the *Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Act 1949*. While these examples illustrate Victoria's history of governmental action to address specific environmental issues, it is also apparent that the approach taken was not holistic. This would now be called a 'siloed' response.

Further, environmental responsibilities were spread across different Ministerial portfolios. For example, in 1971, fisheries and wildlife were the responsibility of the Chief Secretary, vermin and noxious weeds were the responsibility of the Minister for Crown Lands and Survey, soil conservation was the responsibility of the Minister for Conservation (which was a subsidiary role reporting to the Premier)[36], environmental protection and national parks were the responsibility of the Minister for State Development, and forests were the responsibility of a standalone Forest Commission.

Growing awareness (1970–72)

In the 1960s, books such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* contributed to raising public awareness about the environmental consequences of human activities.[37] The associated emergence of the environmental movement during the early 1970s provided a political constituency around which concerns about environmental issues were mobilised, with many environmental non-government organisations having their origins around this time.[38] Associated with these developments is a recognition of the limitations of reactive, ad hoc, and end-of-pipe approaches to environmental management,[39] and the view that 'environmental problems can be solved in accordance with the workings of the main institutions of society'.[40]

Environmental issues also began to gain a higher profile on the political agenda in Australia. This is illustrated by the political conflict surrounding the flooding of Lake Pedder in Tasmania, and in Victoria, where the proposed clearing of the Little Desert was influential in increasing awareness about environmental issues.[41] This emergence of the environment as an issue worthy of policy concern is clearly demonstrated by its 'appearance' in a speech made by then Liberal Premier, the Hon. Henry

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[35] E. Anderson (2000) *Victoria's National Parks: A Centenary History*, Melbourne, State Library Victoria; B. Doolan (2016) *Institutional continuity and change in Victoria's forests and parks 1900-2010.* Master of Arts Thesis, Melbourne, Monash University; F. Moulds (1991) *The Dynamic Forest – A History of Forestry and Forest Industries in Victoria*, Richmond, Lynedoch publications; G. Thompson (1979) *A Brief History of Soil Conservation in Victoria – 1834 – 1961*, Melbourne, Soil Conservation Authority.

[36] From 15 December 1949, Premier Henry Bolte acted as the inaugural Victorian Minister for Conservation, operating within the Department of the Premier. The position was held as a subsidiary ministerial portfolio by successive Victorian ministers thereafter until the Hamer Ministry was formed on 23 August 1972.

[37] R. Carson (1962) *Silent Spring*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin.

[38] T. Doyle, D. McEachern & S. MacGregor (2016) *Environment and Politics*, London, Routledge.

[39] A. Weale (1992) *The New Politics of Pollution*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

[40] M. Hajer (1995) *The Politics of Environmental Discourse*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. p. 3.

[41] L. Robin (1998) *Defending the Little Desert: The Rise of Ecological Consciousness in Australia*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press.

Bolte, at the Ararat Town Hall on 12 May 1970. Bolte's speech, made in the lead up to a state election, positioned the environment as central to improving quality of life, as the following extract indicates:

> …We have been devoting our attentions mainly to problems of production and progress. These are problems of quantity. I believe, and I think that most of the electorate desire, that in the 1970's we must devote equal attention to the problems of values, the problems of change and the problems of quality…

> …The government believes that the quality of life depends upon the preservation and improvement of our environment – the air, the water, the soil, the natural landscape and the wildlife.[42]

The inclusion of the environment as important for 'quality of life' is significant, as the following anecdote from future environment minister, the Hon. William Borthwick, explains:

> Bolte came to me for the 1970 Policy speech and got me to write a segment on conservation – never been in a policy speech before. He knew it was time – Bolte was a great politician – he knew that things and attitudes had changed.[43]

Borthwick's later recollection of an incident in the Ararat pub following Bolte's speech further illustrates the novelty of the Government's new focus, and the changing times:

> We walked in on the press and they were saying "Who wrote Bolte's speech? He's saying things he doesn't understand?"[44]

Other noteworthy developments around this time included the establishment of the Environment Protection Authority,[45] and the Land Conservation Council.[46] However, responsibility for environmental management was still spread across several Ministerial portfolios.

Establishing the portfolio (1972–82)

Arguably, Victoria's first environment portfolio was established by the Hamer Liberal Government in 1972 with the passing of the *Ministry for Conservation Act*. This brought together separate Acts addressing clean air, game, soil conservation, Port Phillip Bay, fisheries, land conservation, environment protection and national parks. The purpose of this, as explained by the Minister for Conservation Borthwick, in the Second Reading Speech, was to:

> Bring together in one Ministry, several government agencies concerned with different facets of the government's activities directed towards the achievement of conservation.[47]

The claimed advantages of such an approach were that it would 'provide the government and the people of Victoria with a department strong in environmental knowledge and expertise' [and that it] 'will be a focus point for policy making in relation to the use and management of our environment'.[48] This approach attracted cross-party support in Parliament:

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[42] ibid., p. 8.
[43] Borthwick in Robin op. cit. p. 21.
[44] ibid., p. 21.
[45] P. Russ & L. Tanner (1978) *The Politics of Pollution*, Melbourne, Widescope International Publishers.
[46] Robin (1998) op. cit.; D. Clode (2006) *As If For A Thousand Years: A History of Victoria's Land Conservation and Environment Conservation Councils,* Melbourne, Victorian Environmental Assessment Council.
[47] W. Borthwick, Minister for Conservation (1972) 'Second reading speech: Ministry for Conservation Bill 1972', *Debates*, Victoria, Legislative Assembly, 2 November, p. 1814.
[48] ibid., p. 1815.

> The passage of this Bill will bring within the jurisdiction of the new Ministry many operations which are at present scattered among a number of Government departments. Basically, this is sound. It is wise to have the responsibility for conservation held by one department.[49]

Further, in the parliamentary debates, Members of Parliament viewed the establishment of the Ministry for Conservation as something that would come to be of increasing importance:

> Well we started it off: it has continued under various governments and finally we have a state of which we are proud. We have left our children something.[50]

Borthwick, Victoria's longest-serving environment minister (see Box 1, below) provided leadership over the new portfolio until 1979, when he was replaced as Minister by the Hon. Vasey Houghton, who held the portfolio until 1982. Between 1972 and 1982, important legislation was introduced which, together with the existing Acts allocated to the portfolio, provided the foundation for Victoria's approach to environmental governance. For example, the *Environmental Effects Act 1978* provided for the assessment of the potential effects of major construction projects and the *Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972* provided mechanisms to enhance nature conservation on private land, while the *National Parks Act 1975* 'enshrined the concept of different types of reserves for different purposes'.[51]

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[49] B. Evans (1972) 'Ministry for Conservation Bill 1972', *Debates*, Victoria, Legislative Assembly, 5 December, p.2932.

[50] I. Trayling (1972) 'Ministry for Conservation Bill 1972', *Debates*, Victoria, Legislative Council, 7 December, p. 3197.

[51] D. Clode (2006) op. cit., p. 24.

Box 1.   Victoria's first Minister for the Environment The Hon. William Archibald Borthwick, AM

The Hon. William Archibald Borthwick, AM (1924–2001) holds the distinction of being Victoria's first, and to date, the longest-serving environment minister, holding the portfolio from June 1970 until May 1979.

Borthwick's legacy in environmental matters is widely lauded in Victoria, particularly his role in establishing the much-respected Land Conservation Council (LCC). In recognition of this contribution, the Victorian Government—through the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council—offers Bill Borthwick Student Scholarships in the range of $500–$2,500 to Honours, Masters or PhD students undertaking research projects related to public land in Victoria. The significance of the LCC is that it provided a relatively systematic way to assess the values and use of Victoria's extensive public land estate, rather than the ad hoc piecemeal approach it replaced. Victoria had previously been mired in a significant public conflict over the proposed clearing of part of the Little Desert in north-western Victoria for agricultural production. While not perfect, the LCC (and subsequent manifestations) provided a robust approach to strategic environmental assessment that is legislated, transparent, participatory and evidence-based, and which since 1970 has, in various forms, informed the expansion of Victoria's network of national parks and protected areas.

Borthwick's approach to environmental matters was well suited to the times and served to build Victoria's capacity for environmental governance. Importantly, Borthwick's commitment to such ideas appears longstanding, with antecedents evident in his inaugural speech to Parliament on 9 November 1960. Within the context of a speech resonating with the Bolte government's belief in 'progress and prosperity', Borthwick suggested that any problems that occur 'when rapid growth takes place' are nonetheless 'problems which continued sound government can minimize'.

Finally, Borthwick's success as a Member of Parliament extended beyond the environment portfolio, as he also had responsibilities for major portfolios including water supply (May 1967– June 1970) and health (May 1979–April 1982) and, from June 1981 to April 1982, was Victoria's Deputy Premier. Borthwick is remembered as a pluralist who oversaw major changes in Victoria's approach to environmental management and was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1987.

Sources of information:
B. Coffey, J. Fitzsimons & R. Gormly (2011) 'Strategic public land use assessment and planning in Victoria, Australia: 40 years of trailblazing, but where to from here?' *Land Use Policy,* 28, pp. 306–313.

W. Borthwick (1960) 'Governor's Speech: Address in Reply', *Debates*, Victoria, Legislative Assembly, 9 November, pp. 1062-1064.

The environment portfolio during the 1970s reflects a growing concern with 'quality of life' issues. This growing importance is evident from the way in which the Ministry for Conservation's budget grew:

> The new Ministry for Conservation began life with a budget of $6.5 million; by 1978-79, that budget had swollen to $30 million. The EPA budget grew from $1.3 million to $6.2 million. The National Parks Service was given $1.3 million to spend for the first time in 1973-74; five years later, its budget was $5 million, its staff numbers had almost trebled, and annual park-visitor numbers had grown from 700,000 to 3.4 million.[52]

In summary, the 1970s saw the establishment of modern environmental governance in Victoria, which put Victoria in a position where it was 'seen as having the most advanced environmental legislation in the nation'.[53] Table 3 below provides a summary of the scope of the portfolio and major developments between 1972 and 1979.

Table 3. Summary of portfolio, 1972–82

Portfolio	Ministers	Department	Major legislative reforms
Conservation (1972-82)	Borthwick (1972-79) Houghton (1979-82)	Ministry for Conservation	*Ministry for Conservation Act 1972* *Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972* *National Parks Act 1975* *Environmental Effects Act 1978*

Restructuring the portfolio and reorganising the machinery (1982–92)

The election of the Cain Labor Government in 1982, with an ambitious 'managerial' agenda for public sector reform,[54] heralded a period of significant change in the environment portfolio (see Table 4, below).[55]

From 1983 through to 1990, Victoria effectively had two environment portfolios, one centred around the Ministry for Conservation, Forests and Lands (MCFL), and one centred around the Ministry for Planning and Environment (MPE). The logic underpinning this approach was the separation of strategic and regulatory functions from on-ground management, fulfilled by MPE and MCFL, respectively.[56] In terms of political leadership, the MCFL portfolio was subject to frequent change, with five different Ministers between 1983 and 1992. This included the Hon. Joan Kirner (Victoria's first female environment Minister, and later Victoria's first female Premier).

Under the dual-portfolio approach, responsibilities for environmental matters were consolidated into two mega-departments: the MPE, which focussed on urban and regional planning, environmental effects, and oversight of the Environmental Protection Authority; and the Department of Conservation,

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[52] T. Colebatch (2014) *Dick Hamer: The liberal Liberal*, Melbourne, Scribe. p. 239.

[53] ibid., p. 237.

[54] J. Holmes, J. Halligan, & P. Hay (1986) 'Victoria', in B. Galligan (ed.) *Australian State Politics*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire. pp. 25-50; M. Considine & B. Costar (eds) (1992) *Trials in Power: Cain, Kirner and Victoria, 1982-1992*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press; M. Considine & M. Painter (eds) (1997) *Managerialism: The Great Debate,* Melbourne, Melbourne University Press.

[55] N. Economou (1992) 'Greening the garden state? Labor and environmental policy', in M. Considine & B. Costar (eds) *Trials in Power: Cain, Kirner and Victoria 1982-1992*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press. pp. 99-112; Christoff (1998) op. cit.

[56] Elements of this approach continue to operate in 2018, most notably seen in the allocation of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to the planning portfolio.

Forests, and Lands (DCFL), which was responsible for public land (e.g. forests, national parks, and crown lands), soil conservation, and biodiversity. Conceptually, this administrative structure reflected the 'mega-department' model, whereby a small number of larger departments was preferred over a larger number of small departments, because of administrative efficiency, and internalisation of debates.[57]

Legislative foundations for the DCFL were introduced in 1987. In broad terms, the Bill formalised:

> Reorganisation of the previous Department of Crown Lands and Survey, the State Forests Department and the Forest Commission and major parts of the Ministry for Conservation – including the National Parks Service, the Fisheries and Wildlife Division and the Soil Conservation Authority – to form the new Department [whose primary objective is to] manage the State's public land and its natural resources in an integrated and balanced way.[58]

Administratively, the DCFL was intended to 'remove redundant provisions of existing legislation and to simplify and centralise the legislative machinery by which the Minister is to achieve the Governments' objectives relating to the integrated management of public land and its resources'.[59] While not necessarily opposed to these reforms, some issues of concern were noted by Members in parliamentary debates at the time, including whether the MPE had too much say over the DCFL.[60] Christoff expanded on these issues in his detailed exploration of environmental policy reform in Victoria during the 1980s and 1990s.[61]

Another feature of this period was legislative reform to statutory bodies, whereby bodies such as the State Electricity Commission, the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, and the Rural Water Commission were corporatised and subjected to greater ministerial oversight.[62] Statutory bodies were viewed as occupying a significant role in Victoria's public sector until the 1980s, whereby public corporations were viewed as being largely beyond the immediate influence of the executive or ministerial departments.[63]

Other major legislative reforms included the establishment of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, which provided for the protection of Victoria's biodiversity, and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, which overhauled the *Town and Country Planning Act 1961*.[64]

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[57] P. Weller, J. Forster, & G. Davis (1993) *Reforming the Public Service: Lessons from Recent Experience*, Melbourne, MacMillan Education Australia.

[58] I. Cathie, Minister for Education (1987) 'Second reading speech: Conservation, Forests and Lands Bill', *Debates*, Victoria, Legislative Assembly, 26 February, p. 169.

[59] ibid., p. 170.

[60] R. de Fegely (1987) 'Conservation, Forests and Lands Bill 1987', *Debates*, Victoria, Legislative Council, 30 April 1987, p. 1287.

[61] Christoff (1998) op. cit.

[62] Holmes et al. (1986) op. cit.

[63] Holmes et al. (1986) op. cit.; J. Halligan & J. Power (1992) *Political Management in the 1990s,* Melbourne, Oxford University Press; B. Galligan (1986) 'The political economy of a liberal state', in B. Head. (ed.) *The Politics of Development in Australia,* Sydney, Allen and Unwin. pp. 114-137.

[64] Cathie (1987) op. cit., p. 171.

Table 4. Summary of portfolio, 1982–92

Portfolio	Ministers	Department	Major legislative reforms
Conservation (1982-83)	Evan Walker (1982-83)	Conservation	*Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*
Conservation, Forests and Lands (1983-90)	Rod MacKenzie (1983-85) Joan Kirner (1985-88) Kay Setches (1988-90)	Conservation, Forests and Lands (1983-90)	*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* *Water Act 1989* *Renewable Energy Authority Act 1990*
Conservation and Environment (1990-92)	Steve Crabb (1990-92) Barry Pullen (1992)	Conservation and Environment (1990-92)	*Heritage Rivers Act 1992*
Planning and Environment (1983-90)	Evan Walker (1983-86) James Kennan (1986-87) Tom Roper (1987-90)	Planning and Environment (1983-90)	*Planning and Environment Act 1987*

Redefining the role of government (1992–99)

The election of a Liberal-National Coalition Government in 1992, led by Premier Jeff Kennett, heralded another period of significant reform across many areas of public policy and public management.[65]

Of the legislative reforms introduced during the Government's first term, the most significant were the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (which established statewide and regional bodies with strategic planning and advisory roles relating to catchment management); and the *Coastal Management Act 1995* (which established statewide and regional bodies with strategic planning and advisory roles relating to coastal management).

More significant reform of the portfolio occurred following the Kennett Government's re-election in 1996. Initial changes included: a change of Minister, from the Hon. Mark Birrell to the Hon. Marie Tehan; a change to the name of the portfolio, from 'Conservation and Environment' to 'Conservation and Land Management'; and an increase in the number of Acts for which the Minister was responsible (from 28 to 43). Significant Acts transferred to the portfolio at this time included the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the *Forests Act 1958* (from the Resources portfolio), as well as some Acts related to specific parcels of land (e.g. *Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985*). Other legislative reforms introduced by Minister Tehan concerned: national parks management (which among other things involved the creation of Parks Victoria as a standalone statutory body for the provision of national park management services); the replacement of the LCC with the Environment Conservation Council; and the replacement for the Environment Protection Authority of a community-oriented Environment Council with a more corporate-oriented Environment Protection Board.[66]

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[65] J. Alford & D. O'Neill (eds) (1994) *The Contract State: Public Management and the Kennett Government,* Melbourne, Deakin University Centre for Applied Social Research; B. Costar & E. Economou (eds) (1999) *The Kennett Revolution: Victorian Politics in the 1990s*, Sydney, UNSW Press; M. Webber & M. Crooks (eds) (1996) *Putting the People Last: Government, Services and Rights in Victoria,* Melbourne, Hyland House Publishing.
[66] B. Coffey (2001) 'National park management and the commercialisation of nature: The Victorian experience', *Australian Journal of Environmental Management*, 8(2), pp. 70-78; D. Clode (2006) op. cit.; Christoff (1998) op. cit.

Conceptually, these changes were informed by the efficiency-oriented ideas and practices of 'new public management'.[67] A feature of the reforms was the separation of policy and commercial objectives from service delivery and other objectives. For example, water policy advice was provided through the newly-formed Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). Conversely, the more commercial aspects of water management (e.g. the supply of water for irrigated agriculture) became the responsibility of government-owned businesses, while non-commercial aspects became the responsibility of catchment management authorities, which had a stronger focus on community ownership and responsibility.[68] Throughout this period, the 'mega-department model' continued to be used, with the DNRE established in 1996 by amalgamating the primary industry and environment portfolios. A summary of the portfolio is provided in Table 5, below.

Table 5. Summary of portfolio, 1992–99

Portfolio	Minister	Department	Significant reforms
Conservation and Environment (1992-96)	Mark Birrell (1992-96)	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (1992-96)	*Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* *Coastal Management Act 1995*
Conservation and Land Management (1996-99)	Marie Tehan (1996-99)	Department of Natural Resources and Environment (1996-99)	*Environment Conservation Council Act 1997* *Parks Victoria Act 1998*

From 'conservation' to 'environmental sustainability' (1999–2010)

The year 1999 saw the election of a 'third way'-oriented Labor Government,[69] led by Premier Steve Bracks. A key aspect of the new government's environmental policy agenda was that it would build 'the principles of ecologically sustainable development into the processes of decision making across the whole of government'.[70] Conceptually, such a move is consistent with the concept of environmental integration. Within this context, the Hon. Sheryl Garbutt was appointed Minister for Environment and Conservation, with an important role in leading this agenda. Importantly, water was made part of the environment and conservation portfolio.

During its first term, the Government's commitments in the environmental arena primarily focussed on addressing what they considered were negative aspects of the previous government's approach, and included halting the commercialisation of national parks, restoring funding to particular public sector agencies, or revising agencies that had been reformed. Major legislative reforms introduced during its first term included the introduction of the *Victorian Environment Assessment Council Act 2001* and the *Environment Conservation Council Act 1997*.[71]

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[67] C. Hood (1991) 'A public management for all seasons?', *Public Administration*, 69 (spring), pp. 3-19; O. Hughes (2003) *Public Management and Administration: An Introduction,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan; D. Osborne & T. Gaebler (1993) *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector,* New York, Plume.

[68] The boards of catchment management authorities are primarily made up of community representatives with experience in primary industries.

[69] A. Giddens (1999) *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy,* Maldon, Polity Press.

[70] J. Gobbo, Governor of Victoria (1999) 'Governor's Speech', *Debates*, Victoria, Legislative Council, 3 November, pp. 2-8.

[71] D. Clode (2006) op. cit.

Major changes were introduced to the portfolio following the 2002 state election, when the Bracks Government was returned with a large majority. For example, the name of the portfolio was changed to 'environment' rather than 'environment and conservation', Victoria's Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Thwaites, was appointed to the position of Minister for the Environment, and the number of Acts assigned to the portfolio decreased from 51 to 27. Responsibilities for water were transferred to a separate water portfolio (also led by Thwaites as Minister for Water), and various Acts relating to specific parcels of land were also transferred elsewhere while, significantly, responsibility for the *Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria Act 1999* came into the portfolio. Significant environment legislation enacted during the government's second term in office included the: *Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003* (which provided for the appointment of a Commissioner with, among other things, responsibility for the preparation of a Victorian state of the environment report every five years); the *Sustainable Forest (Timber) Act 2004*; and the *Sustainability Victoria Act 2005*, which brought together various bodies and programs dealing with energy, waste and resource recovery.

Further changes occurred following the resignation of Thwaites from Parliament in 2007. (Thwaites is Victoria's second-longest serving Minister for the environment.) Thwaites was replaced by the Hon. Gavin Jennings as Minister for a renamed portfolio ('Environment and Climate Change' rather than 'Environment'). Alongside being renamed, various Acts relating to land were assigned to the portfolio, which increased the number of Acts from 30 to 56. In 2010, the *Victorian Climate Change Act* was introduced to give effect to some of the Government's commitments on climate change.

Administratively, the mega-department model continued to provide the basis for machinery of government, although three different approaches to the organisation of environmental responsibilities were pursued.[72] First, between 1999 and 2002, there was the continuation of the DNRE. Then, from 2003 to 2007, there was the creation of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). It was created by 'transferring responsibilities for primary industries (e.g. agriculture, mining, forests, and fisheries) from the DNRE to a new Department of Primary Industries (with responsibilities for agriculture, mining, forestry, and fisheries)'[73] and adding the planning portfolio to the parts of DNRE that remained. In effect, it brought together into one department the state's responsibilities for managing Victoria's natural and built environments, to provide a strong focus on sustainability as a key objective of government. This move has been recognised as being the first time that the word 'sustainability' featured in the name of a Victorian Government department.[74] Finally, in 2007 DSE's planning responsibilities were transferred to another department, effectively returning DSE to a standalone environment department. Significant changes were made to the portfolio between 1999 and 2010, with the emergence of a concern with environmental sustainability being a notable feature (see Table 6, below).

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[72] B. Coffey (2012) 'Another lost opportunity? Victorian Labor's enactment of sustainability', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 71(3), pp. 303-313.
[73] ibid. p. 308.
[74] ibid.

Table 6. Summary of portfolio, 1999–2010

Portfolio	Ministers	Department	Major legislative reforms
Environment and Conservation (1999-2002)	Sheryl Garbutt (1999-2002)	Natural Resources and Environment (1999-2002)	*Sustainable Environment Authority Victoria Act 1999* *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council 2002*
Environment (2002-06)	John Thwaites (2002-06)	Sustainability and Environment (2003-10)	*Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003* *Sustainable Forest (Timber) Act 2004* *Sustainability Victoria Act 2005*
Water, Environment and Climate Change (2006-07)	John Thwaites (2006-07)		
Environment and Climate Change (2007-10)	Gavin Jennings (2007-10)		*Climate Change Act 2010*

Re-connecting 'environment' and 'primary industries' (2010–14)

The election of a Liberal-National Coalition Government in 2010, led by Premier Ted Baillieu, saw the appointment of the Hon. Ryan Smith as Minister for Environment and Conservation. Various land-related Acts were transferred to another portfolio, which decreased the number of Acts for which the Minister was responsible from 56 to 42. The major focus of the government's agenda in the environment portfolio between 2010 and 2014 was environmental partnerships, which aimed to provide a 'clear pathway for action by government, community, and businesses to work in partnership to maintain a healthy environment and lifestyle while securing a competitive economy'.[75] Within this context, significant legislation was passed in relation to water management portfolio.

Administratively, a major reform was the establishment of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries in 2013, with the aim of 'boosting productivity' and 'reorganising the vital role played by land managers and Landcare groups in the protection of our environment and the management of our natural resources'.[76] This involved re-joining environment and primary industry agencies, and effectively returned the departmental machinery of government to how it was between 1996 and 2002 (see Table 7, below).

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[75] R. Smith, Minister for Environment and Climate Change (2012) *Victorian Government Unveils Environmental Partnerships Plan*, media release, 10 November.
[76] D. Napthine, Premier (2013) *A Stronger Focus on Jobs and Investment*, media release, 9 April.

Table 7. Summary of portfolio, 2010–14

Portfolio	Minister	Department	Major legislative reforms
Environment and Climate Change (2010-14)	Ryan Smith (2010-14)	Sustainability and Environment (2010-12) Environment and Primary Industries (2013-14)	Focussed on amending existing legislation

Climate change and the linking of 'environment' and 'energy' (2014–18)

In 2014, following the election of a Labor Government led by Premier Daniel Andrews, the Hon. Lisa Neville was appointed to the position of Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change. This portfolio involved the merging of responsibilities for water and environment. The number of Acts the new Minister was responsible for increased from 36 to 52, through the addition of various Acts covering water and other small parcels of land. A Ministerial reshuffle in May 2016 saw the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio appointed as Victoria's Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. This was notable for the addition of energy responsibilities to the portfolio, and the removal of responsibilities for water (the number of Acts allocated to the portfolio increased from 52 to 59, as did the mix of Acts in the portfolio). For example, the *Victorian Renewable Energy Act 2006* and the *Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007* were now part of the environment portfolio. Significant legislation introduced since the Ministerial reshuffle included the *Climate Change Act 2017*; the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (which contained amendments resulting from a major strategic review of Victoria's environment protection legislation); the *Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017*; and the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (which replaced the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and enhanced the focus on marine issues).

To support the delivery of its environmental priorities, the Government created a new Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). This involved transferring the primary industries portfolio to a new 'mega department' geared towards economic development, and realigning the environment portfolio with the planning portfolio. This strategy was explained in Labor's 2014 election platform:

> [Labor will] provide for separate departmental responsibility for resources management and environmental and sustainability management.[77]

In making these changes, the Andrews Government continued an established tradition in Victoria—the reorganisation of the departmental machinery of government assigned to support the Minister, in the pursuit of the government's environment priorities. The reappointment of D'Ambrosio as Minister following the 2018 election, and the maintenance of DELWP suggests there may be some continuity in the environment portfolio for the foreseeable future. Table 8, below, provides a summary of the major developments in the portfolio between 2014 and 2018, with the inclusion of energy in the environment portfolio being particularly noteworthy.

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[77] Victorian Labor (2014) *2014 Victoria ALP Platform*, Victorian Labor policy document, Election 2014, Melbourne, p.87.

Table 8. Summary of portfolio, 2014–18

Portfolio	Ministers	Department	Major legislative reforms
Environment, Climate Change and Water (2014-16)	Lisa Neville (2014-16)	Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2014-18)	
Energy, Environment and Climate Change (2016-18)	Lily D'Ambrosio (2016-18)		*Climate Change Act 2017* *Environment Protection Act 2017* *Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017* *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* *Parks Victoria Act 2018*

4. Assessing Victoria's approach: Towards good environmental governance?

Given the way in which the portfolio has evolved since its inception in the early 1970s, this section focuses on what can be said about the portfolio and what it indicates about Victoria's approach to environmental governance. It considers whether Victoria's approach can be considered as good environmental governance, by addressing four general themes:

- nature and scope of the portfolio;
- Ministers who held the portfolio;
- departmental machinery of government established to support the minister; and
- broader implications arising from Victoria's approach, and possible future directions.

The changing nature and scope of the portfolio

If the establishment of a ministerial portfolio demonstrates that a government sees the environment as a legitimate area of policy interest,[78] then environmental matters are recognised as a genuine area of governmental concern in Victoria. However, the nature and scope of the portfolio has also been the subject of significant reform since it was established in 1972, as depicted in Table 9, below. The portfolio has had 11 different names over 46 years (which equates to a name change roughly every four years). In a very technical sense, it is possible to argue that Victoria has only had an 'environment' portfolio for a mere 48 months between 2002 and 2006.

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[78] Fells (2003) op. cit., p. 103.

Table 9. Names used for environment portfolio

Name of ministerial portfolio	Length of time name used
Energy, Environment and Climate Change	30 months (23/05/16-present (24/11/18))
Environment, Climate Change and Water	18 months (04/12/14-23/05/16)
Environment and Climate Change	88 months (03/08/07-04/12/14)
Water, Environment and Climate Change	18 months (01/12/06-30/07/07)
Environment	48 months (05/12/02-01/12/06)
Environment and Conservation	37 months (20/10/99-05/12/02)
Conservation and Land Management	43 months (03/04/96-20/10/99)
Conservation and Environment	72 months (02/04/90-03/04/96)
Conservation, Forests and Lands	79 months (01/09/83-02/04/90)
Planning and Environment	79 months (01/09/83-02/04/90)
Conservation	135 months (01/06/72-01/09/83)

Some of this dynamism is welcome and reflects the emergence of new challenges and priorities—with the emergence of climate change as a component of the portfolio being a notable example. However, it may also reflect a lack of clarity about the proper nature and scope of a portfolio that has a responsibility in ensuring that the environmental needs of humans and other species are met. This lack of clarity is also evident in the way in which the number of Acts assigned to the portfolio has changed. For example, following the establishment of the Ministry for Conservation in 1972, the number of Acts allocated to this portfolio increased to 20, then decreased to 16, then increased to 32, then decreased to 22, then increased to 47, then decreased to 28, then increased to 58, then decreased to 27, then increased to 61, then decreased to 53, and then increased to 66.

This 'accordion effect' is not simply due to the introduction of new legislation and the repeal of outdated legislation, but instead is frequently associated with the re-assignment of legislation between portfolios. For example, environmental effects legislation is now primarily associated with the planning portfolio, and water law has moved in and out of the environment portfolio like a tide, while forestry, planning, and energy law have also been part of the environment portfolio at various times. Surprisingly, even something as seemingly central to environmental management as the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* has, for a short time at least, not always been in the environment portfolio. Notwithstanding this, it is also clear that significant institutional building has occurred since 1972, with there being many examples of successful legislative action that has stood the test of time—for example, the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.[79]

The Ministers

To date, Victoria has had 18 environment ministers (noting that there were two environment portfolios for a time during the 1980s), and women have held the portfolio on six occasions (see Table 10, below). Comparatively, Victoria has had ten Premiers since 1972, with all but one being male.[80]

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[79] A. Bolitho & B. Coffey (2014) *Twenty Years of Integrated Catchment Management in Victoria: Celebrating the Achievement of the Catchment and Land Protection Act (1994) and Looking to the Future*, Melbourne, report prepared for the Victorian Catchment Management Council.
[80] Parliament of Victoria (2018) Ministers database and Re-Member database.

Table 10. Victoria's Ministers for the environment

Name	House	Party	Name of Ministerial Portfolio	Gender	Period as Minister
Lily D'Ambrosio	MLA	ALP	Energy, Environment and Climate Change	F	30 months (23/05/16-24/11/18)
Lisa Neville	MLA	ALP	Environment, Climate Change and Water	F	18 months (04/12/14-23/05/16)
Ryan Smith	MLA	LIB	Environment and Climate Change	M	48 months (02/12/10-04/12/14)
Gavin Jennings	MLC	ALP	Environment and Climate Change	M	40 months (03/08/07-02/12/10)
John Thwaites*	MLA	ALP	Water, Environment and Climate Change	M	8 months (01/12/06-30/07/06
John Thwaites*	MLA	ALP	Environment	M	48 months (05/12/02-01/12/06)
Sheryl Garbutt	MLA	ALP	Environment and Conservation	F	37 months (20/10/99-05/12/02)
Marie Tehan	MLA	LIB	Conservation and Land Management	F	43 months (03/04/96-20/10/99)
Mark Birrell	MLC	LIB	Conservation and Environment	M	42 months (06/10/92-03/04/96)
Barry Pullen	MLC	ALP	Conservation and Environment	M	9 months (21/01/92-06/10/92)
Steve Crabb	MLA	ALP	Conservation and Environment	M	21 months (02/04/90-21/01/92)
Kay Setches	MLA	ALP	Conservation, Forests and Lands	F	18 months (13/10/88-02/04/90)
Tom Roper#	MLA	ALP	Planning and Environment	M	25mths (14/12/87-02/04/90)
James Kennan#	MLC	ALP	Planning and Environment	M	22mths (25/02/86-14/12/87)
Joan Kirner	MLA	ALP	Conservation, Forests and Lands	F	42 months (14/03/85-13/10/88)
Robert MacKenzie	MLC	ALP	Conservation, Forests and Lands	M	18 months (01/09/83-14/03/85)
Evan Walker#	MLC	ALP	Planning and Environment	M	29 months (01/09/83-25/02/86)
Evan Walker	MLC	ALP	Conservation	M	17 months (08/04/82-1/09/83)
Vasey Houghton	MLC	LIB	Conservation	M	36 months (?/05/79-?/04/82)
William Borthwick	MLA	LIB	Conservation	M	108 months (?/06/70-?/05/79)

Responsibilities for the environment were split between two portfolios – 'Conservation, Forests and Lands' and 'Planning and Environment'

*Thwaites was Minister for two versions of the portfolio

Different Ministers have occupied the role for considerably different timeframes, with, for example, Borthwick (see Box 1) being responsible for the portfolio for over seven years, while Pullen occupied the role for less than a year (see Table 11, below). Based on this data, it is possible to conclude that the political leadership of Victoria's environment portfolio has been relatively stable, except for a period during the Cain and Kirner Governments when there were six different ministers (Evan Walker, Robert MacKenzie, Joan Kirner, Kay Setches, Steve Crabb, and Barry Pullen) responsible for the portfolio in approximately ten years.

Table 11. Longevity in Role

Longevity in role	No of Ministers	Minister (months in role)
More than 6 years	1	**Borthwick (108)+**
3–6 years	7	Thwaites* (48), **Smith (48)**, **Tehan (43)**, **Birrell (43)**, Kirner (42), Jennings (40), Garbutt (37)
1–3 years	7	**Houghton (36)**, D'Ambrosio (30), Crabb (21), Neville (18), Setches (18), McKenzie (18), Walker (15)
Less than 1 year	2	Pullen (9), Thwaites* (8)

+Liberal-National Coalition Ministers in bold
*Thwaites was Minister for two versions of the portfolio

The departmental machinery of government

Government is large and complex, so governments establish structures that enable the delivery of their service and policy priorities with these structures known as the 'machinery of government'.[81] Machinery of government arrangements are used to align functions in a way that governments believe will assist in delivering their policy priorities.[82] Clearly, these structures are the organisational manifestation of the way a government thinks their policy priorities can best be administered.

In the environment domain, Victoria has had eight overarching departmental machinery of government configurations to support the work of their portfolio Ministers (see Table 12, below). The 'mega-department' model is well entrenched, particularly since the establishment of the DCFL in the 1980s. However, the actual configuration of departments has been the subject of frequent, if not quite continuous, change in terms of departmental structures, internal arrangements, and the Ministerial portfolios to which they report. Changing the departmental machinery of government to deliver on governmental priorities is a highly visible means for reforming environmental governance. This is made clear in a comment by Donaldson:

> The machinery of government reshuffle has become a standard part of a change in government in Australia. It demonstrates that the Minister has different priorities to their predecessor and is a nice announceable to show that you are doing something.[83]

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[81] Legal and Social Issues Committee (2016) *Inquiry into machinery of government changes: Final report*, Parliament of Victoria, Melbourne.
[82] ibid., p. 1.
[83] D. Donaldson (2018) 'Back-to-back MoGs induce 'dysfunction', warns APS review Submission', *The Mandarin*, 8 September.

Table 12. Major departmental machinery of government arrangements

Name of Department	No. of ministerial portfolios supported by Department
Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2015-18)	1. Energy, Environment, and Climate Change/Environment, Climate Change and Water 2. Planning 3. Local Government
Environment and Primary Industries (2013-14)	1. Environment and Climate Change 2. Water 3. Agriculture and Food Security
Sustainability and Environment (2003-13)	1. Environment/ and Water/ Climate Change 2. Planning 3. Water
Natural Resources and Environment (1996-2002)	1. Environment and Conservation/ Conservation and Land Management 2. Agriculture/ Agriculture and Resources
Conservation and Natural Resources (1992-95)	1. Conservation and Natural Resources / Conservation and Environment 2. Natural Resources
Conservation and Environment (1990-91)	1. Conservation and Environment
Conservation Forests, and Lands* (1983-89)	1. Conservation Forests, and Lands
Ministry for Conservation (1972-82)	1. Conservation and Lands

*Note: some environmental responsibilities during this time were with the Department of Planning and Environment, which was a separate department that reported to the Minister for Planning and Environment

However, whether machinery of government reform is an effective mechanism is another matter. Blackman et al., in their submission to the Independent Review of the Australian Public Service, argue that machinery of government reforms are 'frequently enacted but poorly implemented and are, therefore, unlikely to deliver on anticipated gains'.[84] They add that reforms 'are highly disruptive particularly when they involve functions/departments with fundamentally different organisational cultures and they are implemented within a short time frame'.[85] Further, Blackman et al. suggest that departments that undergo multiple machinery of government changes within a short period of time 'do not have sufficient time to recover from each change before embarking on a new one'.[86] Under such circumstances policy amnesia[87] is to be expected, because of organisational churn. Given this context, it is not surprising that the issue of 'reform fatigue' was alluded to in Nethercote's investigation of the sweeping changes to the Commonwealth machinery of government introduced by the Hawke Government in 1987.[88] Machinery of government changes are also expensive.[89]

Critically, environmental machinery of government reform is not simply a matter of changing letterheads; rather, it has important implications for how environmental issues are framed and positioned within government decision-making processes. This is evident in the dynamics surrounding

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[84] D. Blackman, H. Dickinson, K. Gardner, K. Buick, S. Johnson, & S. Olney (2018) *Submission to the Independent Review of the Australian Public Service Panel*, UNSW Public Service Research Group, accessed via https://contribute.apsreview.gov.au/submissions (13/12/18).
[85] ibid.
[86] ibid., no page number.
[87] Stark (2019) op cit.
[88] J. Nethercote (2000) 'Departmental Machinery of Government since 1987', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 59(3), pp. 94-110.
[89] Blackman et al (2018) op. cit.

whether to align environmental protection and economic development (i.e. primary industries) objectives within a single department. Having them separate may reduce the tensions associated with the mixing of regulatory and industry development responsibilities, and yet paradoxically it may make it more difficult to achieve integrated environmental governance. This is because the primary industries portfolio can argue that environment issues are not their responsibility. Further, the frequent restructuring of environmental agencies would appear to contrast with the relative organisational stability of central agencies, such as the Department of Premier and Cabinet or the Department of Treasury and Finance.

The key point is that machinery of government reform is a blunt instrument—good environmental governance requires a whole-of-governance approach, which builds the environment into all aspects of governing. Put simply, because ecological processes are blind to administrative boundaries, there is a need to consciously and proactively work across whatever administrative boundaries are in place. This is consistent with the point made by Legacy et al. that achieving more integrated policy and planning requires going beyond organisational restructuring.[90] What is needed are clear and proactive strategies—what the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) calls an 'integration agenda' for driving the consideration of the environment matters into all portfolios, including planning, primary industries, industry development, health, and education, as well as treasury and finance.[91] Such an approach requires the environment to be considered on a whole-of-governance basis (all departments of government, all sectors of the economy, and all parts of society).

Implications and possible future directions

Successive governments have actively developed Victoria's system of environmental governance since 1972. Importantly, major reforms have been introduced by governments of different political persuasions, such that no one party 'owns' environmental policy. However, it is also clear that Victoria's system of environmental governance has evolved in a relatively arbitrary way, rather than in accordance with any coherent and systematic approach. There is no overarching sense of purpose which can direct environmental sustainability efforts.

Victoria's approach can therefore be considered as suffering from, in the words of Professor Stephen Dovers, 'ad hocery' and 'amnesia'.[92] This is not intended to disparage what has been achieved through efforts to date: it is simply to emphasize that, given the environmental challenges facing Victoria[93], a more coherent and systemic approach is needed if Victoria is to become more sustainable.

Two ways in which such an approach could be pursued include: (1) making sustainable development the conceptual and practical focus of government; and (2) systematically embedding consideration of environmental issues into all areas of governmental decision making.

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[90] C. Legacy, C. Curtis, & S. Sturup (2012) 'Is there a good governance model for the delivery of contemporary transport policy and practice? An examination of Melbourne and Perth', *Transport Policy*, 19, pp. 8-16.

[91] OECD (2002a) *Improving Policy Coherence and Integration for Sustainable Development*, Policy Brief, Paris OECD.

[92] Dovers (2003) op cit.

[93] Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (2013) *Victoria: State of the Environment*, Melbourne, Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were established by world leaders on 25 September 2015.[94] The SDG represent the new development agenda, and the overall outcomes which the international community agree are the overarching goals for sustainable human societies,[95] as summarised in Box 2, below. Importantly, the UN states that 'All stakeholders: governments, civil society, the private sector, and others, are expected to contribute to the realisation of the new agenda'.[96] Furthermore, the UN sees the goals as interconnected so that they all need to be achieved for development to be sustainable.

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Box 2. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. No poverty
Goal 2. Zero hunger
Goal 3. Good health and wellbeing
Goal 4. Quality education
Goal 5. Gender equality
Goal 6. Clean water and sanitation
Goal 7. Affordable and clean energy
Goal 8. Decent work and economic growth
Goal 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
Goal 10. Reduced inequalities
Goal 11. Sustainable cities and communities
Goal 12. Responsible production and consumption
Goal 13. Climate action
Goal 14. Life below water
Goal 15. Life on land
Goal 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
Goal 17. Partnerships for the goals

Source: United Nations (2015) Development Agenda, UN website.

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In terms of how to integrate consideration of environmental objectives into all areas of governmental decision making, useful guidance is provided by the OECD's work on sustainable development and Sweden's experience with environmental objectives.[97] Both provide useful examples of more vertically and horizontally integrated approaches to decision making. For the OECD, effective implementation of sustainable development goals requires:

- A clear, widely accepted and operational definition and goal structure for sustainable development;

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[94] United Nations (2015) 'Development Agenda', UN website.
[95] D. Griggs et al. (2013) 'Sustainable development goals for people and planet', *Nature*, 495, pp. 305-307; J. Thwaites (2015) 'The world's new sustainable development goals', *The Conversation*, 22 September.
[96] United Nations (2015) op cit.
[97] Integration is a key defining feature of sustainable development. Two dimensions of integration which provide a focus for action are: (1) Horizontal (or inter-sectoral) integration, which involves a coherent and coordinated strategy being pursued across different sectors (e.g. whole of government approaches); and (2) Vertical (or intra-sectoral) integration, which involves a coherent and coordinated strategy being pursued across all levels within a sector or organisation (e.g. alignment of policy, budgeting and investment, and delivery). For further explanation, see, W. Lafferty & E. Hovden (2003) 'Environmental policy integration: Towards an analytical framework', Environmental Politics, 12(3), pp. 1-22; and, Carter (2018) op cit. p. 303.

- A clear commitment within government at the highest level [with this commitment communicated] throughout the government machinery to support the development of a clear strategy;
- This strategy should be enforced by a 'focal point' at the centre of government, and non-environmental policy sectors should be mandated to develop their own sectoral strategies in conformity with the overarching goals defined; and,
- Citizens should be encouraged to engage in decision making.[98]

Sweden's experience in establishing environmental objectives and pursuing their achievement, as summarised in Box 3, below, provides a potentially useful model that could be drawn on in Victoria. Taking on board the SDGs and learning from the experience of the OECD and Sweden would be a useful way for positioning sustainable development at the conceptual and practical heart of state governance in Victoria: not merely an add-on to issues of economy, efficiency, or effectiveness, but instead a thorough reimagining of development and governance.

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[98] OECD (2002b) *Working Towards Sustainable Development: The OECD Experience*, Policy Brief, Paris, OECD. pp. 31-33.

Box 3. Sweden's system of environmental objectives

Sweden, which is frequently recognised as a forerunner in environmental policy has established, through an Act of Parliament, a system of environmental objectives to guide action on environmental matters. Sweden's approach involves three different types of environmental objectives, namely:

A *generational goal* that is intended to guide environmental action at every level in society: "The overall goal of environmental policy is to hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved, without increasing environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders."

16 *environmental quality objectives*, which describe the quality of the environment desired:
- Reduced climate impact
- Clean air
- Natural acidification only
- A non-toxic environment
- A protective ozone layer
- A safe radiation environment
- Zero eutrophication
- Flourishing lakes and streams
- Good quality groundwater
- A balanced marine environment, flourishing coastal areas, and archipelagos
- Thriving wetlands
- Sustainable forests
- A varied agricultural landscape
- A magnificent mountain landscape
- A good built environment
- A rich diversity of plant and animal life

Milestone targets for priority areas, which are designed to set out the changes in society needed to meet the environmental quality objectives and generational goal.

Sweden's progress towards meeting the objectives is tracked through a structured system of monitoring and evaluation, which involves multiple participants:
- Government and the Parliament establish policies and decide on laws and taxes to progress the achievement of the objectives.
- Government agencies have varying, but specified, responsibilities for achieving the environmental objectives, in terms of their operations, and/or following up on particular objectives. Overall support is provided by the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) while an Environmental Objectives Council provides a platform for cooperation between the heads of government agencies.
- All Party Committee submits proposals to government, with an aim to secure a broad political consensus on issues requiring long-term discussion.
- Local and regional bodies undertake actions and use the objectives to guide their actions.
- Business, community and stakeholder organisations also contribute to fostering an understanding of the need for change, and undertaking appropriate action.

Source: Swedish Environment Protection Agency (2018) 'Sweden's Environmental Objectives: An Introduction', SEPA Website.

Importantly, in pursuing such an approach Victoria can build on current developments and learn from useful recent experience. Firstly, Victoria's *Climate Change Act 2017* includes a range of useful mechanisms to embed consideration of climate change in government decision making.[99] Secondly, the development of socio-economic indicators, based on the SDGs, to inform state of environment reporting (SOER), show some promise, with the regular preparation of a SOER being a requirement of the *Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003*.[100] Thirdly, Victoria can learn from previous policy efforts to promote sustainable development through *Growing Victoria Together*[101] and *Our Environment Our Future: Victoria's Framework for Environmental Sustainability*,[102] as summarised in Box 4, below. The overarching weakness of these two initiatives was the failure to pursue them in an integrated way so that sustainable development was embedded into all aspects of decision making. Doing so would have provided for policy, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes to be linked in strategic improvement cycle.[103]

Box 4. Recent sustainable development initiatives in Victoria

Growing Victoria Together: Innovative State, Caring Communities (2001)
Growing Victoria Together (GVT) was a strategic policy statement released by the Bracks Government in 2001. It provided a comprehensive whole-of-government vision for a period of ten years covering economic, social and environmental objectives, and an indication of how the government intended to meet them. Eleven strategic issues, 42 priority actions and 25 progress measures were included as a means for working towards the Government's vision for Victoria. The issues and priorities identified were intended to guide budget choices and the directions of departments.

Our Environment Our Future: Victoria's Framework for Environmental Sustainability (2005)
Our Environment Our Future (OEOF) was the Bracks Government's overarching framework for environmental sustainability. It outlined the environmental sustainability challenges facing Victoria, defined environmental sustainability and explained why it is important, and outlined the government's approach, which was focused on three strategic directions: (1) maintaining and restoring our natural assets; (2) using our resources more efficiently; and (3) reducing our everyday impacts. OEOF also explained how the framework would be enacted.

Sources:
Department of Premier and Cabinet (2001) *Growing Victoria Together: Innovative State, Caring Communities*, Melbourne, Government of Victoria.
Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005) *Our Environment Our Future, Victoria's Framework for Environmental Sustainability*, Melbourne, Government of Victoria.

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[99] DELWP (2018) 'Climate Change Act 2017', DELWP website.
[100] Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (2018) 'Applying the SDGs – determining socio-economic indicators for Victoria's environment', CES website.
[101] D. Adams & J. Wiseman (2003) 'Navigating the future: a case study of growing Victoria together', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 62(2), pp. 11-23.; K. Crowley & B. Coffey (2007) 'Policy making for sustainability: Tasmania Together and Growing Victoria Together compared', *Public Administration Today*, 10, pp. 48-60.; L. McMahon & J. Phillimore (2014) 'State and Territory Government strategic plans: Exercises in managing, monitoring and marketing', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 72(4), pp. 404-418.
[102] B. Coffey (2012) op cit.; B. Coffey (2013) op cit.
[103] B. Coffey (2013) ibid. p.70.

5. Conclusion

This report has investigated the evolution of the ministerial portfolios established in Victoria to deal with environmental matters. It has documented major developments in terms of the nature and scope of the portfolio, the characteristics of the political leadership provided for the portfolio, and the departmental machinery of government used to support the achievement of governmental priorities.

Considerable institution-building has taken place since the 1970s. This provides Victoria with a mature system of environment management that has some capacity to identify and respond to many environmental challenges. Environmental governance in Victoria has benefited from the willingness, at various times and to varying degrees, of governments of different political persuasions to introduce reforms which substantially enhance Victoria's system of environmental governance, and the relatively stable political leadership of the portfolio.

However, the effectiveness of Victoria's approach to environmental governance can be questioned given the current and emerging environmental challenges facing the state. Part of the problem is that the frequent restructuring of the portfolio and machinery of government, and lack of coherent strategy, limits the possibilities for achieving more integrated environmental governance. In particular, over-reliance on departmental machinery of government reform to achieve integrated environmental governance is unlikely to be successful. A more systematic approach is required to put Victoria onto a more sustainable trajectory.

Two ways in which a more systematic approach could be pursued include: (1) making sustainable development the conceptual and practical focus of government; and (2) embedding consideration of environmental issues into all areas of governmental decision making.

Embracing these strategies would provide the Government and people of Victoria with a more robust approach to pursuing long-term environmental and sustainable development objectives.

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Ministry for Conservation Act 1972
National Parks Act 1958
National Parks Act 1975
Parks Victoria Act 1998
Parks Victoria Act 2018
Planning and Environment Act 1987
Renewable Energy Authority Act 1990
Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017
Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Act 1949
Sustainability Victoria Act 2005
Sustainable Energy Authority Act 1999
Sustainable Forest (Timber) Act 2005Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972
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About this publication

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