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## **EHA Calls for part of \$234.35M Investment to Address Critical Environmental Health Workforce Shortages**

*\$17.45 Million Proposal to Strengthen Australia's Environmental Health Workforce.*

**Hobart, TAS, March 12 2025**

Environmental Health Australia (EHA) is calling for a targeted investment of \$17.45 million over four years to strengthen Australia's Environmental Health workforce and bridge the growing service gap, particularly in under-served regional, rural, and remote communities.

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are essential to safeguarding public health through food safety regulation, waste management, water quality monitoring, and disease prevention. However, with up to 30% of EHO positions unfilled and an ageing workforce, urgent action is needed.

The proposal outlines four key initiatives designed to ensure a sustainable, well-resourced Environmental Health workforce capable of protecting community health across the country:

- Know Our Numbers – A National Workforce Study to map workforce shortages, assess skills and knowledge gaps, and forecast future needs. (Budget: \$2M)
- Data for Action – Development of a National Workforce Data Set to support better planning, funding, and policy decisions. (Budget: \$2.5M)
- Boosting Professional and Regional Resilience
  - Part 1: Establish a Commonwealth-supported Environmental Health Services Agreement to meet local government workforce needs. (Budget: \$3M)
  - Part 2: Pilot an inspection fee scheme to support under-served areas and ensure sustainable regulatory compliance. (Budget: \$4.5M)
- One Employer, One Mission – Implement a Single Employer Model (SEM) to recruit, train, and place cadet EHOs in high-need locations. (Budget: \$5M)

“This investment is essential to build a capable, future-ready workforce that can deliver critical environmental health services where they’re needed most,” said Melissa Burn, EHA National President.

“Without strong local Environmental Health capacity, communities are left vulnerable to preventable public health risks.”

EHA urges the Federal Government to support this proposal as part of the 2025–26 Budget, helping to close service gaps and secure the future of environmental health in Australia.

*The submission document can be seen here: <https://www.eh.org.au/documents/item/1658>*

*“We protect people from hazards in their environment!”*

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