

Annual Report 2021-22



Chair's message

It is my pleasure to present the AELERT 2021-22 Annual Report.

In our first year of delivery against the 2021-24 Strategic Plan, we put considerable effort into modernising AELERT as a contemporary professional regulators network, while addressing key strategic risks.

This has seen the commencement of a new National Council, which is more representative of our member organisations; the commencement of a new Leadership Team, headed by Adam Gilligan as our inaugural AELERT Chief Executive Officer; the introduction of a fee-paying membership structure to ensure we have a sustainable funding model to support the operation of the network; and a refreshed branding which is more closely aligned with our online presence.

As we move forward, we will be developing an engagement strategy for partnering with key member agencies, aligning AELERT events and products to priorities of member agencies, and developing standards to tackle common issues for modern environmental regulators.

I look forward to collaborating with the AELERT National Council and Leadership Team as we continue this valuable work to foster world class environmental regulation and raise the profile of the regulatory profession.

Monica Collins
Chair





Monica Collins
Australian Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry (Cth)

The National Council is AELERT’s governing body which monitors AELERT’s strategic risks, sets AELERT’s strategic directions, provides financial oversight and ensures AELERT performs its functions and delivers value to its members in an efficient and effective manner. Monica Collins is Chair of AELERT’s National Council, which has 10 members.

The Leadership Team, headed by AELERT’s CEO, leads and delivers AELERT business by implementing AELERT’s Strategic Plan and key underpinning activities in pursuit of AELERT’s purpose and objectives. The team has three staff.

3



Adam Gilligan
Chief Executive Officer (Seconded from
NSW EPA)



Derek Poulton
Lake Macquarie City Council (Local
Government)



Mary O’Kane
O’Kane Associates (Independent)



Amy Dennison
Environment Protection Authority (NT)



Germaine Larcombe
Department of Water and Environmental
Regulation (WA)



Paul De Ionno
Department for Energy and Mining (SA)



Cindy Ong
Director Environmental Regulation,
Environment Protection Authority (Tas)



Grant Barnes
Chief Regulatory Officer, Natural
Resources Access Regulator (NSW)



Stuart Smith
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and
Environmental Management Authority
(Cth)

About us

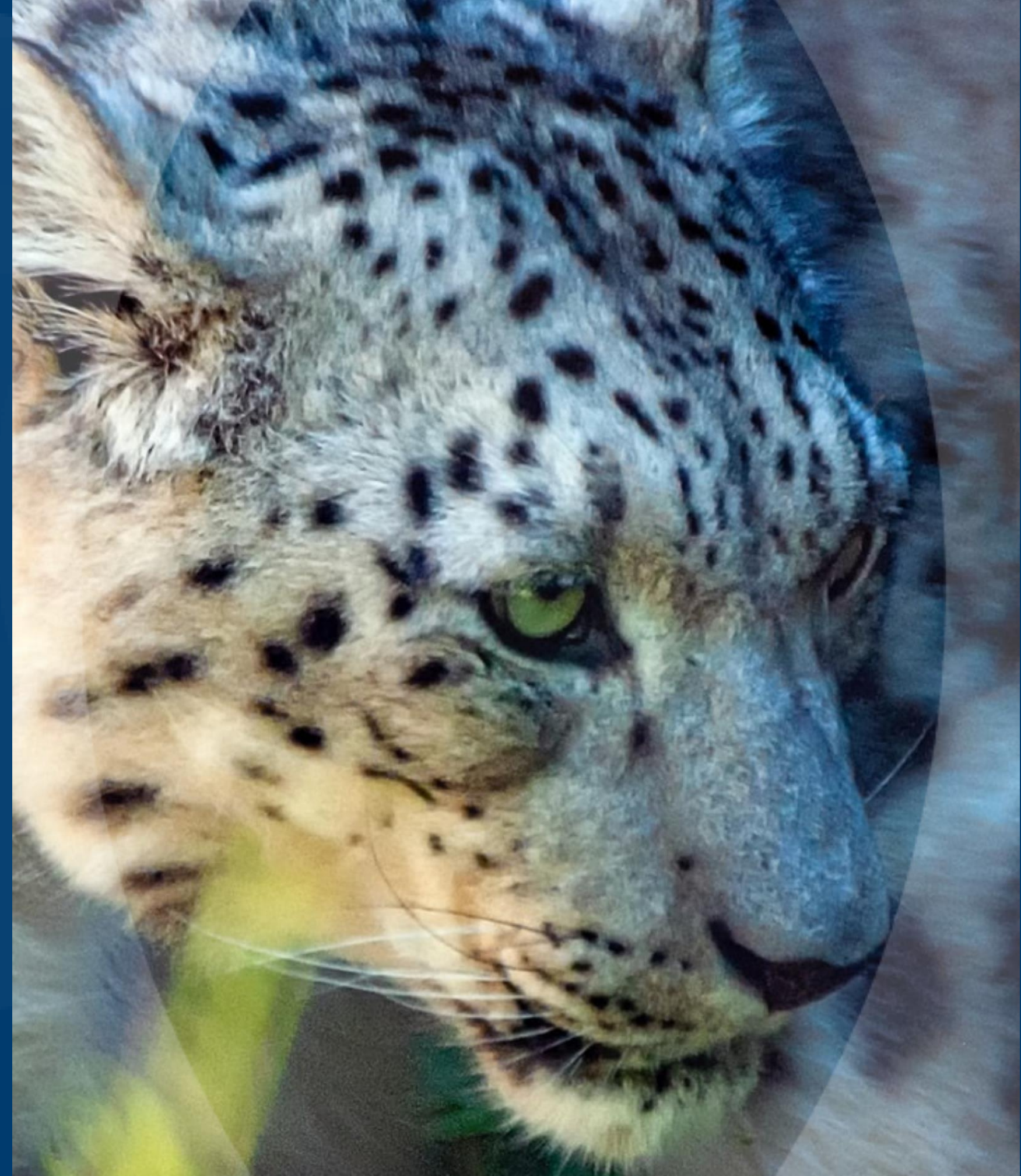
The Australian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators Network (AELERT) is a network of regulatory agencies concerned with the implementation of environmental law. The network was initiated by the Commonwealth in 2003. Since then, AELERT has grown into a widely recognised professional network for sharing of knowledge and experience between regulatory practitioners within agencies in the field of environmental regulation.

AELERT's membership spans all levels of government across Australia and New Zealand and encompasses a broad range of regulators including but not limited to air, noise and water pollution, chemicals, contaminated land, dangerous goods, biosecurity, environmental impact assessment, forestry, pesticides, waste, water regulation, and wildlife.

AELERT's purpose is to foster world class environmental regulation through building our collective regulatory capability and collaborating on common problems. AELERT provides a unique opportunity for regulatory agencies and practitioners, with a focus on environmental regulation, to:

- Collaborate and exchange resources, information, and knowledge
- Share experiences and practical approaches to common challenges
- Build organisation regulatory capability
- Participate in a professional forum of regulators

Through our focus on world class environmental regulation, we aim to provide public value by protecting and enhancing the environment and human health.



MEMBER OVERVIEW



- Ongoing support for AELERT Working Groups and Communities of Practice



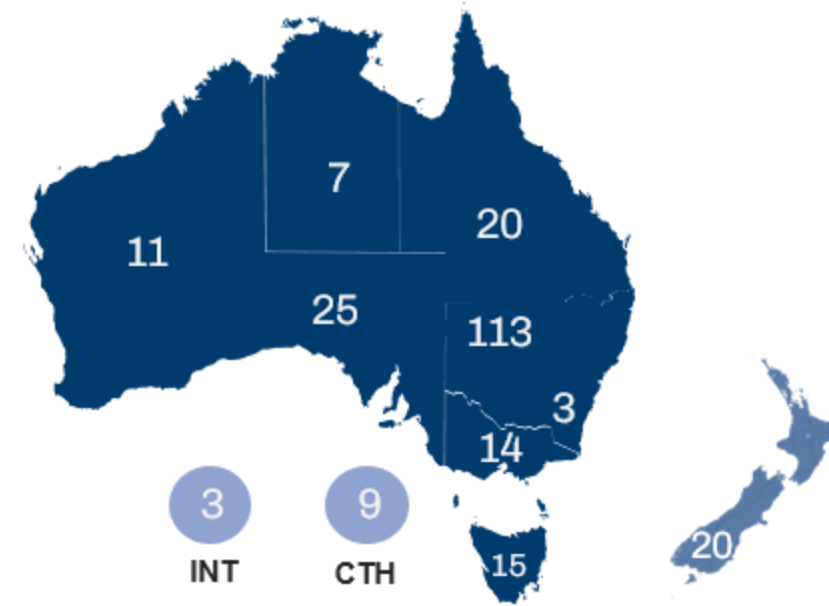
- Targeted consultation with member agencies in each jurisdiction
- Communication & Engagement Strategy being drafted



- Preliminary planning for AELERT Conference
- Hosted 5 webinars



- Governance Review undertaken
- Interim CEO appointed
- Membership for Fee model implemented
- National Council established
- AELERT 2022 Charter drafted

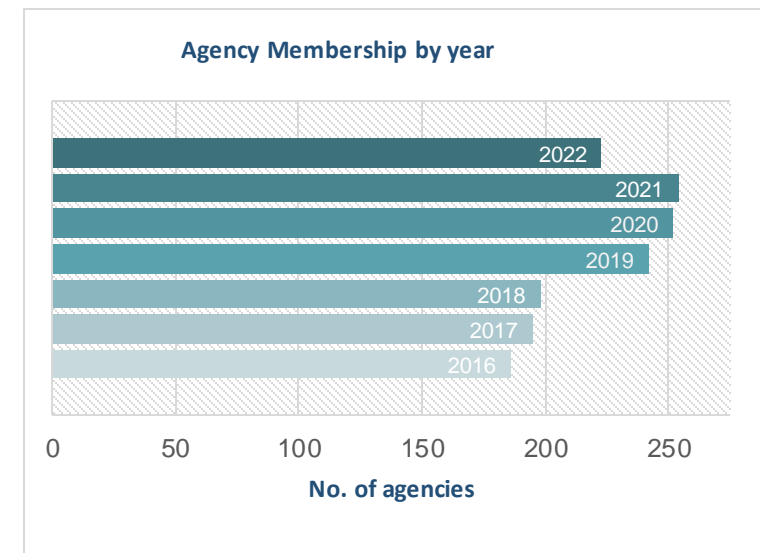


223

Member Agencies

3217

Individual Members



| Individual members by Jurisdiction | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Jurisdiction | Members |
| Cth | 344 |
| ACT | 38 |
| NSW | 924 |
| NT | 130 |
| QLD | 626 |
| SA | 289 |
| VIC | 353 |
| WA | 327 |
| NZ | 58 |
| TAS | 117 |
| INT | 7 |
| CEO | 4 |

Strategic Plan 2021-2024

In December 2020, the AELERT Strategic Plan 2021–2024 was endorsed by the Steering Committee following a Strategic Planning forum.

Deliverables

The Strategic Plan identifies four key deliverables:

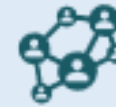
1. Develop an engagement strategy for partnering with key member agencies
2. Develop standards to tackle common issues for modern environmental regulators
3. Align AELERT events and products to priorities of member agencies
4. Deliver the AELERT Governance Review and Secretariat refresh

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

Purpose

Foster world-class environmental regulation through building our collective regulatory capability and collaborating on common problems

Objectives



Collaborate

Dialogue to solve common challenges



Foster

Provide access to all members to fit-for-future tools and training to build capability



Innovate

Facilitate 'thinking at the edge' on emerging regulatory challenges

Strategic Priorities

Partners Build relationships with member agencies and position delivery to align capability needs

Members Grow environmental regulator capability to meet the needs of members and member agencies

Products Promote consistent best practice regulation through tools, training, network activities and events

Service Modernise governance and refine our service offering

Key Strategic Risks

AELERT will face key strategic risks unless we:



Delivery

Ensure activities deliver clear benefits for regulatory practitioners



Relevance

Meet the contemporary and emerging needs of members and partners



Sustainability

Implement a new funding model for long term stability



Governance

Adopt modern governance practices

Deliverables/Activities

1. Develop an engagement strategy for partnering with key member agencies

2. Align AELERT events and products to priorities of member agencies

3. Develop standards to tackle common issues for modern environmental regulators

4. Deliver the AELERT Governance Review and Secretariat refresh

Progress against the Strategic Plan

In our first year of delivery against the 2021-24 strategic plan we put considerable effort into governance reforms to modernise AELERT as a contemporary professional regulators network. We have addressed our key strategic risks so we can focus on the other key deliverables of the Strategic Plan.

1. Develop an engagement strategy for partnering with key member agencies

Status: Underway

Milestones:

- Targeted consultation with member agencies in each jurisdiction has occurred throughout 2021-22, particularly regarding the new membership for fee model
- Communication & Engagement Strategy being drafted

2. Align AELERT events and products to priorities of member agencies

Status: Underway

Milestones:

- Preliminary planning undertaken for the 2022 AELERT Conference
- Hosted 5 webinars

3. Develop standards to tackle common issues for modern environmental regulators

Status: Not commenced

Aim: To build on the existing range of AELERT tools

- Statement of Better Practice
- Modern Regulator Improvement Tool (MRIT)
- Regulatory Officer Capability Framework
- Authorised Officer Policy Guide

4. Deliver the AELERT Governance Review and Secretariat refresh

Status: Complete

Milestones:

- Governance Review undertaken
- CEO appointed and new Leadership Team commenced
- New Membership for Fee model implemented
- National Council established and members appointed
- Adopted new AELERT Charter 2022



Engagement

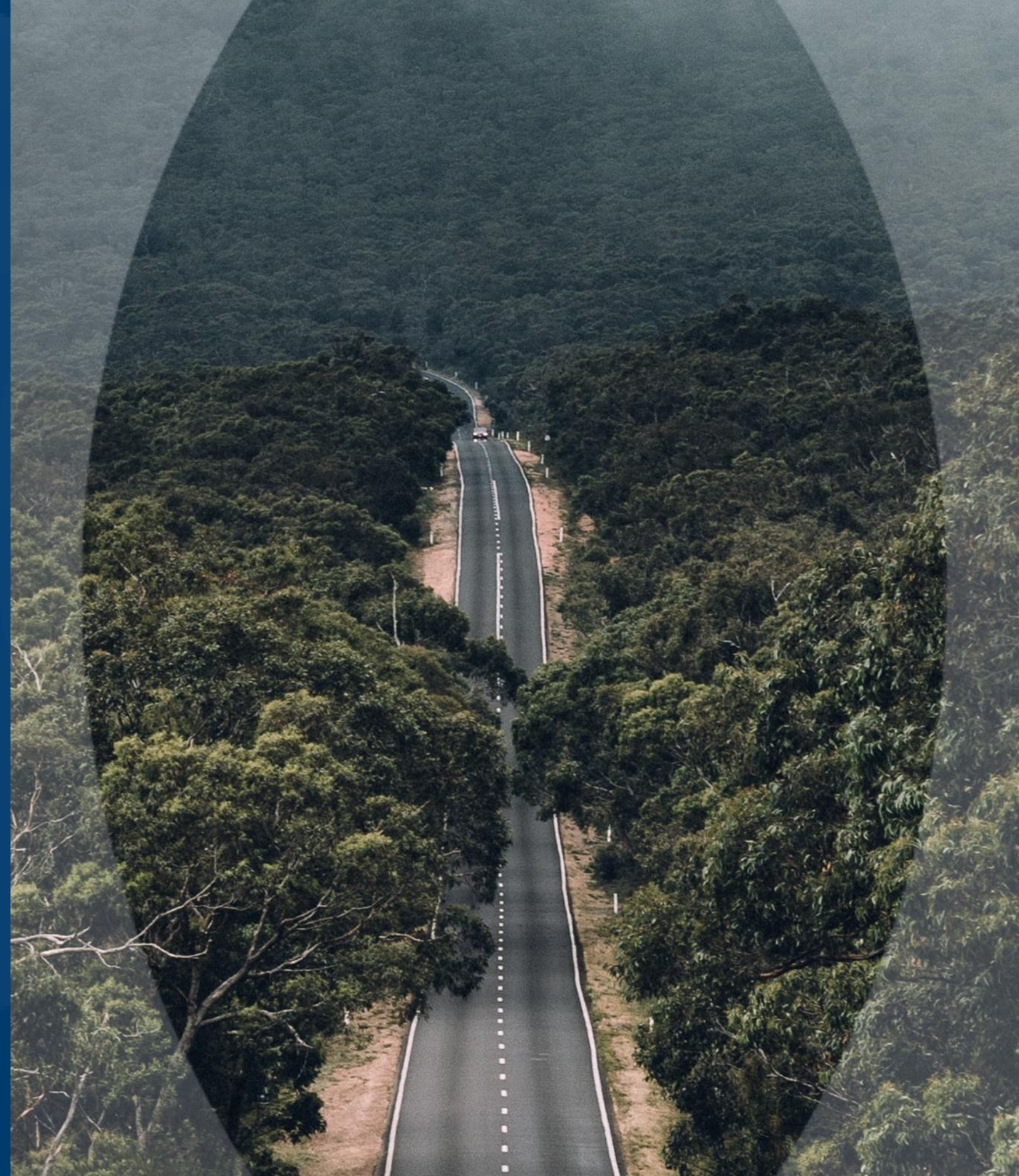
Targeted consultation with member agencies in each jurisdiction has occurred throughout 2021-22. This involved Steering Committee members and their agencies along with other key agencies at National, State and Local levels. The feedback received was generally positive towards the proposed membership for fee model.

Feedback on AELERT was overwhelmingly positive – of most value was the Working Groups and Communities of Practice, particularly in smaller jurisdictions. The Working Groups were not only valued for the inherent networking role, but as a mechanism to achieve policy and procedure harmonisation, to develop practical advice and assistance for small agencies, and to speak with a common voice to Commonwealth agencies when seeking to interpret federal policy.

One of the challenges identified was that Working Groups require a high level of commitment from Chairs and members to support the effective operation of the group. There was support for the AELERT Leadership Team playing a greater role to provide logistical and program support to the working groups.

There is significant variability in the level of local government membership in each jurisdiction - ranging from 93 NSW Councils (73% of all NSW Councils) down to just 3 Victorian Councils (4%). This represents an opportunity for growth for AELERT.

Consultation and engagement with member agencies will continue into 2022-23.





WEBSITE
5,427 users
19,264 page views
22 board posts
4 news items (last 90 days)



EMAIL
Secretariat mailbox, monitored daily.
Member contact point.



TWITTER
622 followers



LINKEDIN
886 followers
65 followers
246 reactions
1,437.5%
8317 impressions



CONFERENCE
Social media posts
150+ targeted SH letters & emails
Weekly EDMs



NEWSLETTER
12 monthly editions
2346 subscribers
35% clicks/ open
21.4 % open rate

NEWSLETTER

| INDUSTRY | OPEN RATE | CLICK RATE | UNSUBSCRIBE RATE |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| AELERT | 21.4% | 6.8% | 0.06% |
| GOVERNMENT & POLITICS | 31% | 5.5% | 0.2% |
| AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT | 23.5% | 3.1% | 0.2% |
| AVERAGE* | 20.6% | 3.1% | 0.2% |

LINKEDIN & TWITTER

| ACCOUNT | FOLLOWERS LINKEDIN | FOLLOWERS TWITTER | LINKEDIN ENGAGEMENT |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| AELERT | 886 | 622 | 6.31% |
| EHA | 2,126 | 287 | 4.73% |
| ANZSOG | 11,563 | 5,735 | 6% |
| VIC EPA | 22,233 | 13,600 | 4.1% |

*Global average across all industries including health, education etc.

Engagement Strategy

Communication and engagement activities for AELERT have traditionally included monthly e-newsletters, webinars, podcasts, the AELERT website and discussion board, a social media presence on Twitter and LinkedIn, the flagship biennial conference and the facilitation of Working Groups and Communities of Practice.

A more strategic approach to content and its consistent and contemporary delivery is vital in ensuring members are engaged and connected. A formal Communication and Engagement Strategy is currently under development which outlines the key communication and engagement activities to be undertaken by AELERT.

The Strategy will provide a collaborative and integrated approach to communication and engagement with AELERT members. Strong connections and contemporary information delivery will enhance the tangible member benefits, and build an informed, connected and engaged network of environmental regulatory agencies. The Strategy will utilise various communication channels such as email newsletter, social media, annual reporting and the AELERT website, which is currently undergoing a refresh and rebuild.



Events

Key communication and engagement projects included in the Strategy which are currently in progress to re-engage members are:

- Preliminary planning undertaken for the 2022 AELERT Conference, to be held in Sydney from 29 November to 1 December 2022
- A reinvigorated AELERT Webinar Series. 5 webinars were held in 2021-22:
 - Commonwealth waste reform
 - Victoria's new environmental laws
 - Lake Macquarie City Council's Regulatory Compliance Framework
 - Leading Women in Environmental Regulation
 - 'It's a Wild Life' with specialist wildlife crime investigator Luke Bond



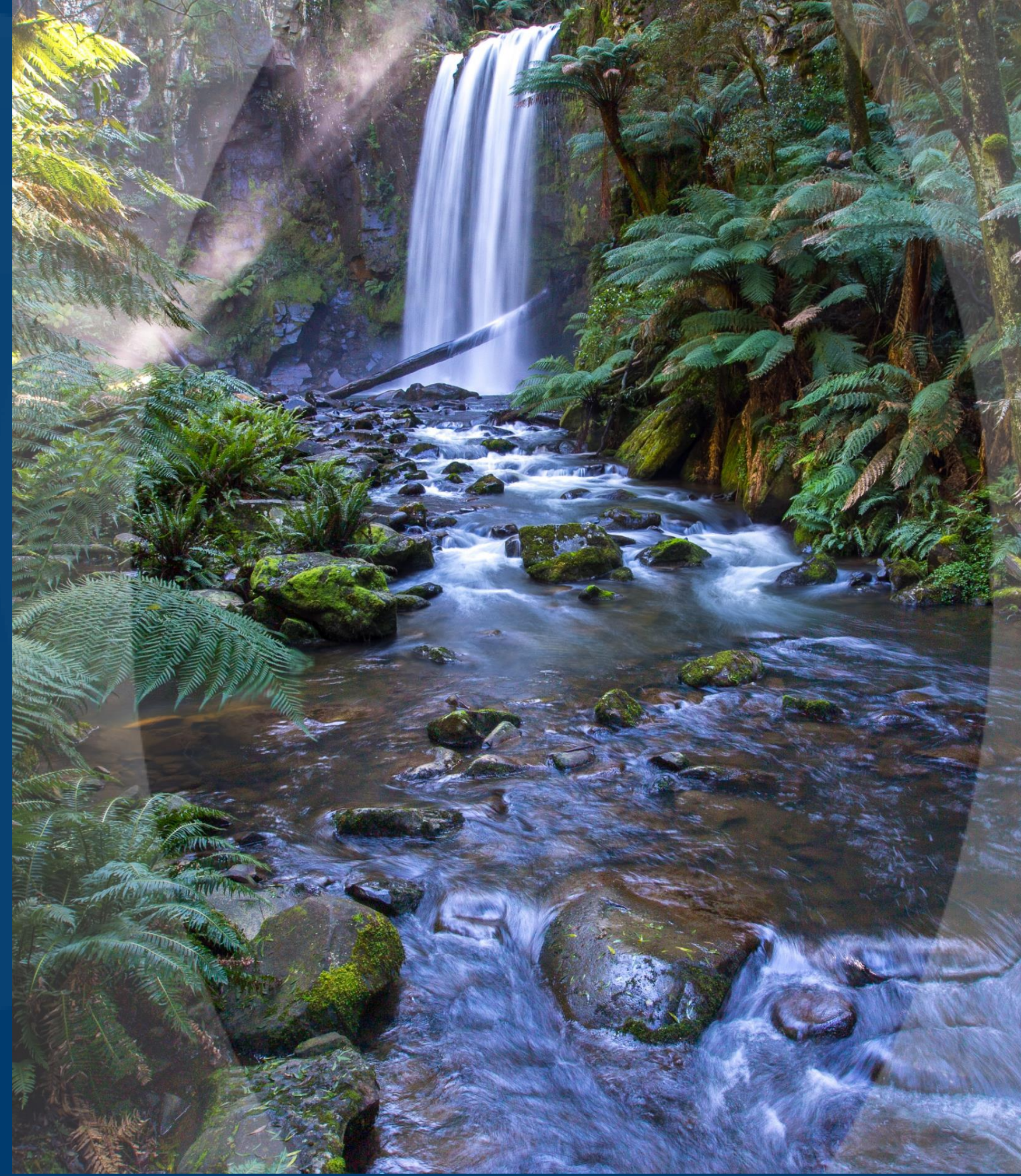
Tackling issues facing modern regulators

The Strategic Plan calls for AELERT to develop standards to tackle common issues for modern environmental regulators. The aim is to build on the existing range of AELERT tools, including:

- Statement of Better Practice
- Modern Regulator Improvement Tool (MRIT)
- Regulatory Officer Capability Framework
- Authorised Officer Policy Guide

While work has yet to commence on these formal standards, AELERT continues to provide day to day support for agencies with specific challenges. This year, this has included:

- Ongoing support for AELERT Working Groups and Communities of Practice
- Connecting agencies to discuss COVID-19 policies and procedures
- Assisting agencies to collaborate to tackle cross-border waste crime
- Connecting an agency with experts in environmental assessment to review and streamline their processes



Governance Review

AELERT has operated for almost 20 years. During this time, AELERT has grown to a membership of over 3000 individual members and over 220 agency members.

With this increased membership and growth across the broad sector of environmental regulation, AELERT had reached a point where its original governance model was no longer fit for purpose. This was also the situation with its funding, which was still drawn from the original nine jurisdictions who formed AELERT in 2003.

In 2021, the AELERT Steering Committee engaged Johnson Partners to investigate options and develop recommendations for its governance arrangements, to align with contemporary standards and to better serve the needs of its members. The review focused on four key areas of AELERT's governance, functions, funding, and membership.

The review found that the structure, control and accountability of AELERT was unsuitable for a collaborative network which has grown significantly, and that funding based on the original agreement, was no longer suitable for AELERT as it now comprises a diverse and expanded membership. There was a need to share funding between a larger network of members to be effective.

AELERT activities were fragmented and undertaken on a 'volunteer' basis, causing pressure on execution of projects, due to competing time and resource constraints.



Governance

- Structure is expanded to include:
- National Council
- Leadership Committee
- Leadership Advisory Forum
- Secretariat

Functions

AELERT is a network of Australian and New Zealand agencies with responsibilities for environmental regulation, facilitating shared information, experience and ideas so that ultimately the capability of regulatory and law enforcement officers builds across Australia.

Membership

4 categories of AELERT membership:

- Founding members
- Partner agencies
- Practitioners
- Affiliate agencies

Funding

AELERT moves towards a more sustainable funding base, requiring funding from all member agencies and individual practitioners.

- 4 layers of governance – National Council – representative of broad membership base, CEO, Leadership Team and Leadership Advisory Panel
- Interim CEO to manage the transition
- Leadership Team established at a permanent location as full-time employees

- AELERT is a network of agencies, driving collaboration between members on emerging regulatory challenges and investing in the regulatory profession and future-ready workforces.
- Through our focus on world class environmental regulation, we aim to provide public value by protecting and enhancing the environment and human health. We provide value to our members via capability building, collaboration and innovation

- Membership structure will consist of three types - Agencies, Practitioners and Affiliate members

- Funding model broadened to include a fee structure for each tier of membership, aligned with member benefits.
- National Council to explore further avenues for potential sustainable funding

Membership

AELERT has operated for almost 20 years and provides a valued professional network for environmental regulatory agencies and practitioners. AELERT connects members to facilitate collaboration, solve common problems and address emerging regulatory challenges. We champion the environmental regulatory craft and elevate capability amongst members through a range of contemporary forums. We foster world class environmental regulation through:



Capability Building



Innovation



Collaboration



Membership Benefits

- Network with fellow environmental regulators on regulatory challenges, emerging areas, policy and best practice
- Help your agency strengthen its environmental regulatory policy, practice and procedures
- Build capability through discounted training for your regulators
- Access exclusive webinars, newsletters, podcasts and forums
- Gain discounted tickets to our biennial conference
- Benefit from AELERT communications and coordination support
- Join our Working Groups and Communities of Practice, bringing together practitioners to work collaboratively on shared challenges
- Promote your events, jobs and news through AELERT channels
- Access a library of AELERT and member agency tools and resources, such as the Modern Regulator Improvement Tool (MRIT) and key agency policies and procedures



Membership Tiers

| Membership type | Annual fee |
|--|-------------------|
| Small 1 - 5 regulators | \$1,500 |
| Medium 6 - 50 regulators | \$4,500 |
| Large 51 - 200 regulators | \$15,000 |
| Unlimited More than 200 regulators | \$60,000 |



Key priorities for the AELERT Leadership team over the next year include:

- Maintaining and enhancing support for AELERT Working Groups and Communities of Practice
- Increased communication and engagement with members
- Further development of our Communications and Engagement Strategy
- Continued planning and preparation for the 2022 AELERT Conference in November 2022
- Implementation of our new membership model
- Refresh and rebuild of the AELERT website
- Enhanced reporting including tracking member engagement
- Continuing to produce and publish the monthly Network Newsletter
- Reviewing and refreshing the AELERT capability building offering



Financial Summary

as at 30 June 2022

2021-22 Revenue \$591,554

- Revenue rollover from 2020-21 of \$251,307
- 2021-22 jurisdiction contribution invoices of \$297,250

2021-22 Expenses \$330,586

- Contractor services for Executive Officer and Communications and Project Officer costs
- Consultancy expenses to Johnson Partners for AELERT Governance review
- Subscription services for website hosting to Karmabunny
- Branding and design costs to Paper Moose

Other items to note:

- AELERT CEO position funded by NSW EPA to December 2022

