

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Monday, 1 November 2021

NEW CHIEF INVESTIGATOR TO CRACKDOWN ON WASTE CRIME

The Andrews Labor Government is pleased to announce the Environment Protection Authority has appointed its first Chief Investigator.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio announced well-respected investigator Ernestina Di Marco will take on the Chief Investigator role and lead a team dedicated to preventing harm to the environment and the community.

Ernestina Di Marco will lead 40 investigators based across the state as part of the new Environmental Crime Branch. The Branch includes surveillance experts, environmental protection officers, intelligence analysts, criminal investigators and prosecutors who will work together to detect, prevent and investigate environmental crime.

The role is part of the new EPA structure which comes into effect today – creating greater efficiency and effectiveness. Under the structure the EPA has 759 roles, more than double the number of just six years ago.

Since the *2017-18 Victorian Budget*, the Labor Government has made an unprecedented investment in Victoria's environmental watchdog with \$292.3 million in funding to equip the EPA with the powers and tools it needs to be a world-leading environmental agency.

Ms Di Marco has 19 years' experience in national investigations and intelligence operations with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). Ms Di Marco will join EPA from Emergency Management Victoria where she is currently the Manager of Cross Border and Preparedness Unit.

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"Fighting waste crime is critical to keeping the environment and community safe from pollution, I am delighted that such an accomplished investigator will be leading the authority's efforts in tackling non-compliance."

Quote attributable to Environment Protection Agency CEO Lee Miezi

"Ernestina's appointment as our chief investigator creates a stronger EPA. She will lead a bolstered frontline across Victoria, dedicated to preventing harm to the environment and community from pollution and waste, and taking swift action when environmental laws are broken."

Quote attributable to Environmental Crime Branch, Chief Investigator Ernestina Di Marco

"I am thrilled to be joining the Environmental Crime Branch at such an exciting time and I look forward to working collaboratively with our partners to drive continuous improvement across waste crime disruption and prevention."