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Bioenergy Australia Submission – EPA Victoria: Digestate Consultation

Bioenergy Australia (BA) is the national industry association committed to accelerating Australia's bio economy. Our mission is to foster the bioenergy sector to generate jobs, secure investment, maximise the value of local resources, minimise waste and environmental impact, and develop and promote national bioenergy expertise into international markets.

The use of bioenergy can cost-effectively reduce carbon emissions, boost energy productivity and reliability, and pave the way to a circular economy — where waste and pollution is eliminated, resources are circulated, and nature is regenerated. It will benefit all of society, reduce business costs and our impact on the planet.

Bioenergy Australia established Australia's Renewable Gas Alliance (RGA) to accelerate decarbonisation of Australia's gas network through increased deployment of biomethane. This submission is on behalf of the RGA and will be supported by individual member submissions relating their specific expertise. The RGA has over 80 member organizations, including gas pipeline owners, gas retailers, project developers, technology providers, off takers, research organizations, and state and local government representatives.

Australia's Bioenergy Roadmap (ARENA, November 2021) outlines how, by the start of the next decade, Australia's bioenergy sector could contribute to around \$10 billion in extra GDP per annum and 26,200 new jobs, reduce emissions by about 9 per cent, divert an extra 6 per cent of waste from landfill, and enhance fuel security. Now is the time to capitalise on these opportunities and we commend EPA Victoria for developing a digestate specification that could reduce the regulatory barriers for digestate deployment, increasing the potential for biogas production.

We thank EPA Victoria for the opportunity to provide feedback and we welcome the proposed amendments to pasteurisation and use conditions specifications. We recognise that EPA Victoria has largely accepted our previous feedback and modified their approach to provide a regulatory system that supports flexibility, range and lowers costs.

Overall, we broadly support the proposed amendments and urge EPA Victoria to progress implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission. Please send any comments or queries to myself at shahana@bioenergyaustralia.org.au or 0439 555 764.

Sincerely,

Shahana McKenzie, CEO Bioenergy Australia