

# Fact sheet: Engaging consultants



Environment  
Protection  
Authority Victoria

Publication 1702 June 2018

Fact sheet

## Why do I need a consultant?

Sometimes managing risks to human health and the environment can be complicated. You may need a consultant to help to identify and understand hazards, and design solutions to prevent or mitigate harm.

## Who are consultants and what do they do?

There are many different kinds of consultants which provide expertise in specialised areas such as contaminated land, noise, and odour. Services they provide include environmental assessments, audits, advice on due diligence, assessment of risk, and designing environmental management plans.

## Why it is important to carefully choose a consultant

When choosing consultants, follow the simple tips we have laid out below so you are made fully aware of your responsibilities, and avoid additional costs. Also remember the rule of 'buyer beware' – which is why we urge caution with selecting a consultancy to assist in your business.

## How to engage a consultant

This section outlines the specific things that can be done to get the best price, and the right consultant, for the job. It helps to prevent being overcharged or a consultant underdelivering.

Here are some tips to ensure that, when you employ a consultant, you get the best possible service.

- Provide the consultants with as much information as possible so they can give an accurate quote.
- Give a clear scope of what is required for the job.
- Request quotes from multiple different consultancies.
- Request a detailed description of the consultant's proposal, including the project team members, timings, costs, relevant previous experience, and health and safety procedures.
- Confirm that the consultant is familiar with all relevant Victorian legislation, and check that they refer to the *Environment Protection Act 1970* ('the Act') and relevant state environment protection policies.
- Ask the consultant to provide copies of their insurance documents, e.g. Certificate of Currency or Professional Indemnity.
- Investigate the consultancy's credentials by checking with associations they are a member of.

Finally, always make sure to read the fine print on the quote, and get legal advice before signing an agreement.

## Further information

Contact EPA on  
**1300 372 842**  
(1300 EPA VIC)  
or [epa.vic.gov.au](http://epa.vic.gov.au)

# Fact sheet: Engaging consultants

---

## Where to find a consultant

There are many options when it comes to looking for a consultancy.

- **Word of mouth** – contact individuals or businesses you know that have engaged a consultant in the past and ask who they would recommend.
- **Search online** – using the search term 'Environmental and/or Pollution Consultants' on Yellow Pages for example will return many results. You will be responsible for checking their credentials.
- **Call for an expression of interest** – open tenders for an environmental consultant in a major newspaper can yield a good number of respondents. Ideally you will already know the scope of the work necessary and be able to properly assess the quotes submitted.

## Certification schemes

While EPA does not endorse any specific certification or accreditation schemes, they do provide a useful benchmark.

## Professional associations

There are a number of professional associations that may be able to help you by providing contact details for their members. Note that the type(s) of association(s) you contact will depend on the nature of the work you want to commission.

Some associations include:

- Australian Contaminated Land Consultants Association: <http://aclca.org.au/>
- Australasian Land and Groundwater Association: <http://landandgroundwater.com/>
- Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand: [www.eianz.org](http://www.eianz.org)
- Engineers Australia: [www.engineersaustralia.org.au](http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au)
- Soil Science Australia: <http://www.soilscienceaustralia.com.au>
- Association of Australasian Acoustical Consultants: <http://www.aaac.org.au/>
- Australian Institute of Geoscientists: [www.aig.org.au](http://www.aig.org.au)
- International Association of Hydrogeologists (Australian Chapter): <https://www.iah.org.au/>
- Consult Australia: [www.consultaustralia.com.au](http://www.consultaustralia.com.au)

*The content relating to engaging a contaminated land management consultant has been reproduced with permission of the NSW Environment Protection Authority.*