Responses to Information Request – Productivity Commission Inquiry into Housing Supply Regulation

Department of Lands, Planning and Environment

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

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1. Introduction

The Northern Territory Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) welcomes the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Housing Supply Regulation and the opportunity to respond to the Commission's Information Request.

The Northern Territory's experience demonstrates that housing supply outcomes improve when planning, infrastructure and land development are treated as one integrated system.

Unlike many jurisdictions, land use planning in the Northern Territory is undertaken through a centralised planning system administered by DLPE. The Territory undertakes strategic land use planning, manages a long-term land supply pipeline, coordinates infrastructure investment, facilitates Crown land development and administers development approvals. This creates a highly integrated system focused on housing outcomes.

Planning, infrastructure investment, land release and housing delivery are coordinated through a single system rather than across multiple planning authorities and local governments.

Recent reforms have focused on:

- maintaining a long-term pipeline of development-ready land;
- coordinating infrastructure and housing delivery;
- reducing unnecessary regulation and administrative burden; and
- streamlining approvals and land titling.

Many of these reforms arose from the Bringing Land to Market reforms and implementation of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce recommendations, both of which were informed by industry feedback and focused on improving housing delivery outcomes.

This submission responds directly to the Commission's Information Request to the Northern Territory while demonstrating how Territory initiatives align with the Commission's four point best-practice framework.

2. Reform Initiatives and Best Practice

This section responds to the Commission’s request for:

- reform initiatives not captured in Appendix A;
- any underlying work that was done to inform which reform initiatives to implement and progress;
- evidence of progress made or outcomes achieved for the reform initiatives; and
- a specific case study for 1-2 reform initiatives that align with best practice or where lessons could be learnt.

2.1. Additional Reform Initiatives

Since 2024, DLPE has implemented a number of reforms focused on improving land supply, infrastructure coordination and housing delivery outcomes.

2.1.1 Northern Territory Subdivision Development Guidelines (NTSDG)

The NTSDG provides the Territory-wide framework for the planning, design, construction and handover of infrastructure associated with subdivision development.

The NTSDG were strengthened and formally incorporated into the NT Planning Scheme 2020 (NTPS) as a Reference Guideline, providing greater consistency for developers, councils and infrastructure providers and improving certainty about servicing requirements.

2.1.2 Improved Master Planning for Large Subdivisions

A more structured subdivision master planning process has been introduced for large staged developments.

The revised process identifies infrastructure requirements, servicing constraints, development sequencing and staging requirements earlier in the project lifecycle, reducing delivery risk and improving coordination between developers and government.

2.1.3 Strategic Infrastructure Contribution Guidelines (SICG)

The Territory has developed the SICG to support future Infrastructure Contribution Plans. The SICG establish a framework for transparency, consistency, infrastructure cost sharing, and future developer contribution arrangements.

Together, these initiatives support more coordinated infrastructure delivery and greater certainty around future infrastructure obligations.

Appendix A of the Commission's Information Request has been updated to incorporate these additional reforms (refer to **Attachment A**).

2.2. Underlying Work to Inform Reform Initiatives

Recent reforms have been informed by two significant reviews:

- the Bringing Land to Market review; and
- the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce's '*Saying Yes to Business*' report.

Both reviews involved extensive engagement with industry and developers. They recognised that increasing housing supply requires more than planning reform alone and highlighted the importance of coordinating land supply, infrastructure, approvals and development delivery.

2.2.1 Bringing Land to Market

The Bringing Land to Market review examined barriers affecting the timely delivery of serviced and titled residential land across the Territory. The review identified opportunities to improve coordination between planning, infrastructure delivery, subdivision approvals, surveying, titling and Crown land development. Its recommendations focused on ensuring sufficient titled land supply is available to meet market demand and that land progresses more efficiently through the development pipeline.

Key reform outcomes arising from the review include:

- strengthening and integrating the NTSDG into the planning system;
- improving master planning arrangements for staged subdivisions;

- introducing standard model subdivision conditions;
- streamlining titling and land administration processes;
- developing SICG; and
- supporting longer permit durations for master-planned developments.

These reforms were designed to improve certainty, reduce duplication and accelerate the delivery of development-ready land.

2.2.2 Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce

The Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce examined opportunities to reduce regulatory burden, improve approval timeframes and strengthen investment confidence. Consultation with industry indicated that low-risk developments were often subject to approval processes that were disproportionate to their impacts, creating unnecessary delays, costs and uncertainty.

The Taskforce recommended a stronger risk-based approach to regulation, including:

- simplifying approval requirements for lower-risk development;
- reducing unnecessary consultation and public notification requirements;
- increasing the use of delegated decision-making;
- expanding permitted development pathways;
- streamlining rezoning and planning scheme amendment processes; and
- introducing fast-track approval pathways for eligible applications.

DLPE has implemented all lands and planning recommendations. The reforms reflect a broader shift towards a planning and development system that focuses on housing outcomes, rather than administrative process alone. A summary of the implemented reforms and impact can be found in **Attachment B**.

2.3. Case Study – Greater Holtze (Asche)

Why This Case Study Matters

Greater Holtze (now Asche) provides a practical example of how the Northern Territory's approach to planning, infrastructure and land development works in practice.

The project demonstrates how the Territory plans for and delivers housing-ready land through a coordinated system that integrates long-term land supply planning, infrastructure investment, land development and regulatory reform.

Long-Term Housing and Land Supply Planning

The development forms part of the Territory's broader land supply framework, which uses population forecasting, housing demand modelling, infrastructure planning and staged infrastructure investment to maintain a continuous pipeline of development-ready land.

Under this framework, land progresses through a series of stages that reflect its readiness for development. This includes strategic planning and investigations, resolution of land tenure and environmental approvals,

infrastructure planning and delivery, and ultimately development-ready land capable of being subdivided and released to the market. A key benchmark of the framework is maintaining a minimum of five years of land under development across the Territory's major urban centres to support market responsiveness and housing supply.

Greater Holtze was identified through the Territory's long-term land supply planning process as a priority growth area within Greater Darwin. Investigations, environmental assessments and infrastructure planning were undertaken to determine development suitability and servicing requirements. This enabled infrastructure investment to be prioritised through DLPE's Land Development Program and ensured that land use planning, demand forecasting and infrastructure delivery were coordinated from the outset.

Availability of Strategic Crown Land

The project also highlights an important advantage of the Northern Territory's land development model. The availability of strategically located Crown land allows Government to identify future growth areas, undertake investigations, coordinate infrastructure delivery and sequence land releases ahead of demand. This approach provides greater certainty about future housing supply and enables infrastructure investment to be aligned with development priorities. Through the planned release of Crown land, Government can maintain a pipeline of development-ready land and supporting infrastructure, ensuring future housing opportunities are available to respond to population growth while providing industry with greater certainty and confidence.

Greater Holtze also demonstrates how recent planning and regulatory reforms can support more efficient housing delivery.

Reforms Applied to Project

A number of reforms arising from the Bringing Land to Market recommendations were applied to the project. These reforms included longer permit durations for master-planned and staged subdivisions, reducing the need for permit extensions or variations as individual stages are progressively delivered. The project also benefited from streamlined land titling processes and the introduction of standard model conditions for subdivision approvals, providing greater clarity and consistency for developers.

Planning reforms have further improved the efficiency of the project. The planning system now allows longer-lasting permits for master-planned subdivisions, improving certainty for developments that are delivered over an extended period.

In addition, the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment has declared certain classes of planning scheme amendments that no longer require public exhibition before a decision is made. This includes amendments that rezone land from Zone FD (Future Development) to its final operational zoning.

For developments such as Greater Holtze, where subdivision approval has already been granted and all required works have been completed, subsequent rezoning to operational residential zones such as LR (Low Density Residential) or LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential) can proceed under the declared amendment class process. This avoids the need for further public exhibition and removes a duplicated approval step.

The result is a more efficient pathway to the creation of new land titles and faster delivery of greenfield housing opportunities to the market.

Outcome

Taken together, Greater Holtze demonstrates how long-term planning, infrastructure coordination, Crown land development and planning reform can operate as a single integrated housing delivery system. It

provides a practical example of the Territory's broader approach to ensuring land is not only identified for future housing, but is infrastructure-ready, development-ready and capable of supporting housing supply when it is needed.

3. Infrastructure and Strategic Planning

This section responds to the Commission's requests regarding:

- the process in the Territory for ensuring residential land is infrastructure-ready;
- how the Territory monitors the readiness of residential land for housing development, including land that is already supported by housing-enabling infrastructure and land that requires further infrastructure investment before housing can be delivered;
- the scale of land supply currently progressing through each stage of the development pipeline; and
- the main constraints in coordinating infrastructure with housing.

3.1. How the Territory Ensures Land is Ready for Housing

DLPE has an established Land Development Strategy, Plan and Program (LDSPP) for coordinating the planning, prioritisation and sequencing of land supply with the enabling infrastructure required to support housing development.

The LDSPP provides a 20-year forward pipeline of greenfield and infill land supply, informed by market information, population forecasts and supply targets, infrastructure priorities and identified development opportunities. Its purpose is to ensure that future land supply is progressively advanced through planning, investigation, approvals and enabling infrastructure delivery so that sufficient land is development-ready for when housing is required.

DLPE has the central coordination role in maintaining the LDSPP and coordinating the sequencing of land development and supporting enabling infrastructure. Additionally, the Northern Territory Government, rather than local government, has the primary role in providing enabling infrastructure for new residential land supply and gifting this infrastructure to asset owners such as Power and Water Corporation and local government councils. Planning and delivery of enabling infrastructure necessarily involves consultation and approval through multiple parties, including infrastructure agencies, Power and Water Corporation and local government.

3.2. Monitoring Development Readiness

The LDSPP does not treat all identified or zoned residential land as being equally available for development. Land is considered according to its state of development readiness, with the 20-year pipeline structured across four broad categories as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Stages of Development Readiness

Category	Description
Land Under Development	Land that has progressed through the necessary planning and infrastructure processes and is being developed, including land held by developers where reticulated infrastructure is being delivered through the subdivision process.

Category	Description
Land With Enabling Infrastructure	Land identified for near term development where investment in enabling infrastructure is required or underway to facilitate development. This includes the planning, design and construction of strategic infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, power and drainage infrastructure.
Land Under Investigation	Potential future land supply requiring further investigations to inform development suitability, servicing requirements, environmental approvals and/or land tenure resolution.
Land Use Planning	Longer-term growth areas progressing through strategic land-use and infrastructure planning to determine future development opportunities and high-level infrastructure requirements.

The four categories establish a progressive pipeline rather than a static measure of zoned land supply. As demand approaches, land progressively moves through investigation, planning and enabling infrastructure investment toward development and release. This allows infrastructure requirements and investment decisions to be considered sufficiently in advance of the point at which additional residential land is required.

The LDSPP is supported by the Territory's broader Integrated Strategic Planning framework, which seeks to align land-use planning with infrastructure planning and investment rather than undertaking these activities independently. In particular, the framework supports the coordinated planning and delivery of enabling infrastructure including power, water, sewer, roads and drainage, from initial land investigations and project definition through funding, detailed design and construction.

The LDSPP provides a mechanism for identifying infrastructure requirements sufficiently early to inform government investment and delivery decisions. This enables infrastructure priorities to be considered alongside forecast land demand and assists government to direct enabling infrastructure investment to the right locations at the right time, rather than waiting until an identified housing supply shortage emerges.

3.3. Current Land Supply Pipeline

As at 30 June 2026, land supply in the pipeline across the key urban centres is as follows in Table 2.

Table 2: Lots According to Stages of Development Readiness

	*Land Under Development**	*Land With Enabling Infrastructure**	*Land Under Investigation**	*Land Use Planning**
Greater Darwin	3784 lots	-	4960 lots	4720 lots
Katherine	53 lots	223 lots	160 lots	200 lots
Tennant Creek	4 lots	-	150 lots	150 lots
Alice Springs	65 lots	45 lots	589 lots	2130 lots

**See land definitions above*

Land Under Development - number of years of supply

- In Greater Darwin, current land under development is approximately 13 years of supply.
- In Katherine, current land under development is approximately 5.9 years of supply.
- In Tennant Creek, current land under development is approximately 2 years of supply.

- In Alice Springs, current land under development is approximately 5.4 years of supply.

3.4. Key Constraints

The primary constraints relate to securing funding for enabling infrastructure, the long lead times required to investigate, design and construct major infrastructure, environmental and land tenure requirements, and the need to coordinate delivery across multiple agencies and infrastructure providers.

The Northern Territory mitigates these risks through long-term land supply modelling, strategic infrastructure planning and the sequencing of land through a 20-year development pipeline.

The Territory's ownership of strategic Crown land provides a unique advantage, allowing infrastructure investment and land release to be coordinated ahead of market demand. However, project-specific dependencies, such as the stormwater infrastructure required to support the Holtze development, can still influence delivery timing and require active management.

4. Other Data

4.1. Approvals Data

The Northern Territory collects and publicly reports planning and development approval performance information.

The Territory agrees with the Commission's emphasis on transparency and accountability in approval systems and supports performance reporting as a tool for identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.

DLPE publishes an annual Assessment and Approvals Performance Report, which includes information on development application activity, approval outcomes, and assessment performance;

The 2024–25 report is enclosed as **Attachment C**.

The report provides publicly available information that assists Government, industry and the community to monitor the performance of the planning and approvals system.

The 2025–26 report is expected to be released later in 2026 and can be provided to the Commission once available.

4.2. Developer Contributions

The Northern Territory's approach to infrastructure funding is materially different from most jurisdictions because a significant proportion of future urban land supply is delivered through Crown land.

Historically, the Northern Territory Government has funded and coordinated district and enabling infrastructure required to support Crown land releases, including roads, water, sewer, power and drainage infrastructure. While infrastructure costs may be partially recovered through the sale of Crown land, substantial upfront government investment is typically required to bring land to a development-ready state for subdivision to occur.

This issue is particularly pronounced in regional and remote centres where development scale, market demand and development feasibility often do not support private sector-led delivery. In these locations, residential development may be marginally feasible or unfeasible without government intervention, requiring

the Territory Government to directly fund investigations, enabling infrastructure and land development activities, or accept a reduced financial return on land releases to achieve broader housing, economic development and regional growth objectives

While the Northern Territory has historically delivered residential land supply through Crown land releases supported by government-funded enabling infrastructure, the SICG recognise the increasing role of strategically located private land in meeting future housing demand

The SICG establishes a policy framework to guide the future preparation, administration and governance of Infrastructure Contribution Plans, providing a transparent and consistent mechanism to equitably allocate district-level infrastructure costs across benefiting private landowners where development relies on government investment in enabling infrastructure. This supports a more coordinated approach to infrastructure funding and delivery, while ensuring costs are appropriately shared between government and those who directly benefit from development opportunities.

5. Land Use Reforms

This section responds to the Commission's requests regarding:

- how commercial feasibility is considered when changing land-use controls;
- availability of zoned residential undeveloped land in Darwin;
- the balance between greenfield and brownfield (including infill) housing supply;
- land-use controls that may constrain housing supply; and
- access to parcel-level planning data and spatial models of the Territory's planning system.

5.1. Considering Commercial Feasibility

Commercial feasibility is a key consideration in the Territory's land development and Crown land release processes. Pre-feasibility assessments are undertaken to evaluate development opportunities and inform decisions regarding the timing, scale and sequencing of land release. This assessment may consider factors such as anticipated development yield, market demand and absorption, land values, infrastructure and construction costs, staging, development timeframes and the level of government investment required to enable development.

In the Northern Territory, particularly in regional and remote centres, some land development opportunities may not achieve the commercial hurdle rates necessary to attract private sector investment. Where there is a demonstrated strategic, economic or community need to bring land to market, the Territory has the ability to facilitate delivery through the Land Development Corporation. This enables land development to proceed where broader government objectives, including housing supply, regional development, economic growth and strategic infrastructure outcomes, may justify investment beyond purely commercial considerations.

Consistent with this approach, the Territory may also subsidise development outcomes through direct infrastructure investment, grant funding or reduced financial returns from Crown land releases where required to facilitate development and deliver broader public benefits.

5.2. Availability of Zoned Residential Undeveloped Land in Darwin

Information on current land supply availability is provided in Section 3.3 (Current Land Supply Pipeline).

The Territory's approach focuses on tracking development-ready land rather than simply measuring zoned land supply. This provides a more accurate understanding of future housing capacity because it considers infrastructure readiness, servicing requirements and development timing.

5.3. Greenfield and Brownfield (including Infill)

Approximately 85% of residential land supply in the Northern Territory is expected to be delivered through greenfield development. The remaining supply (15%) is delivered through infill and brownfield redevelopment, including apartment and other higher-density residential projects.

While sufficient residential land has been identified through the LDSPP, the rate of housing delivery, particularly for apartment and higher-density developments, is generally constrained by development feasibility, construction costs and market conditions rather than the availability of appropriately zoned or development-ready land.

5.4. Land Use Controls that May Constrain Housing Supply

Under the NTPS, most residential land in Zone LR is limited to single dwelling development and a dwelling-independent (granny flat).

These provisions constrain development within existing residential areas by limiting the range of housing outcomes that can be achieved, making it difficult to respond to changing household needs, accommodate smaller households, or provide more and alternative housing forms within well-established suburbs.

The Northern Territory Government is currently progressing a proposal to amend the NTPS to facilitate infill development and subdivision in Zone LR areas, which includes many established suburbs in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and some smaller urban settlements.

The current proposed planning scheme amendment seeks to expand Zone LR from being a predominately detached housing zone to one that accommodates a broader gently density spectrum, including duplexes or dwellings on separate levels, where the maximum building height is two storeys.

The proposed change would also see a reduction in the minimum lot sizes in Zone LR from 900m^2 to 450m^2, potentially allowing owners of larger residential lots to subdivide when they are currently unable to.

5.5. Access to Parcel-Level Planning Data

The Northern Territory Government's parcel-level planning data is recorded in the Integrated Land Information System (ILIS) both textually and via spatial data layers (planning overlays).

This information can be provided in a consolidated format via a custom report. Further information would be required from the Commission to clarify any specific data request, and data supply would be managed through a Digital Data Agreement which would include data being supplied, data formats, permitted use and limitations on third-party supply, data management, retention and destruction.

DLPE would be pleased to work with the Commission to identify specific data requirements.

5.6. Use of Spatial Models

As part of planning reform and policy development, DLPE uses parcel-level planning and spatial data to evaluate the impacts of potential planning reforms and development scenarios.

DLPE would be pleased to discuss with the Commission any specific data or modelling requirements that may assist the inquiry.

6. How the Northern Territory Aligns with the Productivity Commission's Best Practice Framework

The Northern Territory supports the Commission's proposed best-practice framework and considers many of its key features are already embedded within the Territory's planning, infrastructure and land delivery systems.

The table below summarises how major reforms described throughout this submission align with the Commission's proposed principles. It is intended as a high-level summary of the evidence presented in earlier sections, rather than a comprehensive assessment of every reform initiative.

Table 3: Alignment with Best Practice Principles and NT Initiatives/Policies

Best Practice Characteristic	Northern Territory Initiative / Policies	Outcome
Principle 1 – Adopt a Build Mindset		
Zoning set based on infrastructure capacity, estimates of demand and externalities (congestion, agglomeration benefits etc).	• The LDSPP maintains a 20-year housing land pipeline informed by population forecasts, housing demand modelling, strategic planning and infrastructure planning. • Regional Land Use Plans and Area Plans identify future growth opportunities across Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek.	• Future housing demand and infrastructure needs are understood and planned for before shortages emerge. • Improved alignment between land release and infrastructure investment.
Higher density zoning near jobs and transport corridors.	• Compact Urban Growth Policy identifies Areas for Change around activity centres and transport corridors. • Proposed urban infill reforms to facilitate additional housing in existing serviced suburbs.	• Better use of existing urban infrastructure. • Increased opportunities for housing diversity and housing supply in established locations.
Regulatory impact statements required to establish regulations and review existing regulations	• Bringing Land to Market and Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce reforms systematically reviewed planning and development processes to identify barriers to housing delivery and opportunities to reduce delay and duplication.	• Planning controls and regulatory processes are regularly reviewed to identify unnecessary barriers to housing delivery.
Built-form controls used to manage a specific externality.	• Reduced parking requirements for one-bedroom dwellings, social housing and housing near activity centres. • Increased size limits for independent living units (second dwellings). • Review of low-density residential controls.	• More housing choice and flexibility. • Reduced development costs. • Better use of serviced residential land.

Best Practice Characteristic	Northern Territory Initiative / Policies	Outcome
Principle 2 - Only Regulate Where Necessary		
Allow households to pay for features which are valued but not essential for all such as larger lot size or outdoor space.	• Reduced parking requirements for one-bedroom dwellings and social housing. • Increased maximum floor area for independent living units (second dwellings). • No restrictive density controls for medium and higher density development.	• Greater consumer choice. • Greater flexibility in housing design and use. • Lower development costs for some housing types.
Ensuring regulation supports necessary infrastructure buffers, emergency vehicle access.	• The NTSDG. • Infrastructure servicing requirements embedded within subdivision and development processes.	• Infrastructure planning integrated with development delivery. • Development supported by appropriate servicing, access and infrastructure standards.
Principle 3 – Coordinate with infrastructure		
A coordinated infrastructure planning system across all levels of government	• The LDSPP. • Regional Land Use Plans. • Coordination between DLPE, Power and Water Corporation, local government and infrastructure providers.	• Housing growth, infrastructure investment and land release are coordinated through a single framework, reducing fragmentation and supporting development-ready land.
A state-wide strategic infrastructure planning framework that considers the efficient allocation of funds across infill and greenfield sites	• The LDSPP. • The Territory identifies infrastructure requirements, servicing constraints and funding needs before major land releases proceed. This occurs through long-term planning, investigations and project development processes.	• Infrastructure investment aligned with housing demand, land release priorities and future growth areas.

Best Practice Characteristic	Northern Territory Initiative / Policies	Outcome
Clarity around who is paying for what type of infrastructure, when and how much it will cost	• The SICG establish a framework for future infrastructure cost sharing, governance and infrastructure contribution arrangements to help facilitate private sector land release/development.	• Greater transparency and consistency in infrastructure funding arrangements.
Developer cost-sharing arrangements for new major developments A developer contribution framework that is efficient, transparent, consistent within states and territories, timely, certain and simple	• The SICG framework supports future Infrastructure Contribution Plans and cost-sharing arrangements where government investment unlocks development opportunities on private land.	• Framework established to support equitable infrastructure cost sharing where appropriate. • Improved certainty for developers, landowners and government. • Greater transparency around infrastructure funding decisions.
Development-ready land is prioritised over zoned land alone	• Four-stage model of development readiness - Land Use Planning, Land Under Investigation, Land with Enabling Infrastructure and Land Under Development.	• Better visibility of future housing supply and infrastructure readiness. • Strong focus on development-ready land rather than theoretical zoning capacity.
Infrastructure and housing delivery are sequenced together	• Refer to Greater Holtze (Asche) land release case study. Infrastructure planning and servicing investigations undertaken prior to release. Enabling infrastructure is delivered in coordination with subdivision staging.	• Housing-ready land delivered with reduced infrastructure risk. • Greater certainty for developers and landowners. • Improved sequencing of land release and infrastructure delivery.

Best Practice Characteristic	Northern Territory Initiative / Policies	Outcome
Principle 4- Keep the Process Simple		
Local governments applying state-based policies in a coherent and consistent manner	• Centralised NT planning system administered by the Northern Territory Government through a single Planning Act and Territory-wide Planning Scheme.	• Greater consistency and less fragmentation than planning systems operating through multiple council approval authorities. Planning approvals are assessed through a Territory-wide system rather than separate local government approval pathways.
Approval pathways are clear, easy to follow and proportionate to risk	• Implementation of Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce reforms (refer **Attachment B**), which included simplified development application requirements. streamlined subdivision pathways and a risk-based assessment processes.	• Reduced complexity and lower regulatory burden for applicants.
Fast track pathways for common, low-risk dwelling types	• Dedicated fast-track planning assessment pathway. • Administrative approval processes for eligible lower-risk applications. • Expanded delegated decision-making arrangements.	• Faster approvals. • Improved certainty and responsiveness for applicants.
Adoption of digital technologies and AI to speed up processes and decision-making	• Development Applications Online (DAO) and Digital Plan Lodgement (DPL) provide online planning, survey and approval services and improve visibility of application progress. All planning applications across the NT are lodged, tracked and processed online through a single system.	• Improved customer experience. • Faster processing and greater transparency across planning and land administration functions.
Councils meet target timeframes without using 'stop the clock' exclusions to achieve them.	• Centralised planning system administered by the Northern Territory Government through a single Planning Act, Territory-wide Planning Scheme and Development Consent Authority framework.	• Greater consistency and less fragmentation than systems that operate through multiple council approval authorities. • Planning decisions are generally not dependent on separate local government approval processes.

Best Practice Characteristic	Northern Territory Initiative / Policies	Outcome
	• Development applications are assessed through Territory processes rather than multiple local government approval pathways. • Assessment and Approvals Performance Reporting provide public transparency regarding system performance.	• Increased transparency and accountability through public reporting of system performance.

Appendix A: Recent NT housing reforms - based on National Planning Reform Blueprint Progress Reports (September 2025)

Initiative	Start	End	National Planning Reform Blueprint Measure	Description
NT's draft Land Development Strategy	2024	ongoing~~2029~~	2,4	The strategy details forecasted land supply in the NT's major urban centres for residential housing over the next 20 years, based on potential dwelling yields identified in strategic land use plans. The strategy also identifies development ready land including estimated dwellings. It informs the sequencing of land development and timing for the delivery of district-level enabling infrastructure. The strategy was formally approved by the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment for internal use in 2025. To improve transparency and provide industry with greater visibility of future supply, a public dashboard is being developed to display the land supply pipeline for key urban centres.
Reduced density and parking	~~Aug~~Feb~~-25~~	~~on~~ongoing	3	~~In August 2025~~On 6 February 2026, ~~,~~ a ~~proposed~~ n amendment to the NT Planning Scheme ~~was exhibited~~took effect to facilitate and encourage single bedroom dwellings in the NT, while also making the construction of some types of housing more affordable through reduced car parking requirements. It includes: · amending dwelling density provisions in Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential) to allow density of 1 per 150m² to better support one-bedroom homes, reflecting smaller household sizes; · amending car parking provisions for one bedroom group dwellings (townhouses) and multiple dwellings (multi-storey units) to only require one-bedroom dwellings to provide one car parking space instead of two; and · introducing further car parking reductions for group dwelling and multiple dwelling development where it is considered 'well-located' and where the development or dwelling is for social housing.

Remote Communities Subdivision Program	Mar-24	ongoing	4	Part of the $~~1.~~14 billion remote housing program. Subdivisions and all residential dwelling developments are exempt from requiring planning approval if supported by the community and Traditional Owners (through land tenure agreements).
NT's Compact Urban Growth Policy - Areas for change	Sep-24	ongoing	3,5	Landowners can request planning scheme amendments to rezone a parcel of land in an 'area for change' for higher density development. Areas for change are localities identified to meet the objectives of this policy, including being located around activity centres or public transport corridors.
Bringing land to market report	Mar-24	ongoing	3	NT government has reformed the planning system to give effect to the 'Bringing Land to Market Report' which included 23 recommendations to achieve a titled land supply that satisfies the market demand (including for affordable housing) in a timely and efficient manner.
HAFF round 2 drawing on CEO (Housing) own~~d~~ed land	Jan-25	ongoing	4	NT is investigating opportunities to develop Department of Housing owned land, including refreshing ageing stock through the Australian Government's national housing and homelessness reform agenda.
Overarching Strategic Directions Planning Policy (SDPP)	Sep-24	ongoing	5	NT Planning Commission released a Discussion Paper to inform the development of the high-level SDPP, followed by two rounds of consultation. The plan has been adopted by the Commission and supports future strategic land use plans to support a diverse range of resilient housing options to cater for different housing needs.
Social housing requirements for greenfield land	Mar-24	ongoing	5	The NT Government incorporates provisions akin to inclusionary zoning for affordable and social housing within many greenfield land releases in urban areas of the NT, through development agreements between the NT Government and private developers.
Priority works stream	Mar-25	ongoing	5	The Australian Government announced funding of $25 million to boost housing in the NT through the Australian Government's Housing Support Program Priority Works Stream. The funding is being utilised to deliver additional housing in both Darwin and Alice Springs.

Land supply pipeline	Mar-25	ongoing	4	The NT's land supply pipeline identifies development-ready land as 'Land Under Development'. This refers to land held by developers where reticulated infrastructure services are being provided through the subdivision development process to deliver titled lots to market in Greater Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. The land supply pipeline sets out a 20 years supply of land for development to be able to respond to market demands in a flexible and agile manner.
Initiatives to streamline planning processes post approval - reduced barriers to modification	Apr-25	ongoing	6	Recent modifications to the Planning Act 1999 now allow changes to approved developments as long as they do not increase non-compliance with measurable aspect of the development by more than 5%. This change is expected to reduce delays associated with last-minute modifications and help streamline the development process.
Public exhibition exemptions	Apr-25	ongoing	6	The Minister declared certain classes of planning scheme amendments that do not require public exhibition under the Planning Act 1999. This is intended to reduce timeframes associated with proposals to amend the NT Planning Scheme by removing duplicative exhibition requirements. These include: • amendments which will facilitate the 'normalisation' of land – i.e. through the rezoning of land • amendments to add a building setback plan to schedule 9 of the Planning Scheme, if the plan was previously exhibited under the Planning Act 1999 as part of an approved development application for subdivision. • amendments to rezone land from Low Density Residential to Low-Medium Density Residential when the land is identified as an Area for Change in an Area Plan; and • amendments to rezone land in a Major Remote Town, subject to conditions.
Place naming	Sep-25	ongoing	6	A pre-approved list of place names has been created by the NT Government for the Holtze land release to streamline residential development. This included research, stakeholder engagement, consideration by the Place Naming Committee and approval by the Minister.

Minister's executive staff actioning planning scheme amendments	Oct-25	ongoing	6	A review of the Minister's functions under the Planning Act 1999 was conducted to identify opportunities for delegation aimed at streamlining processes. As a result, delegations were established to allow the Department's Executive staff to make initial decisions regarding planning scheme amendments. This initiative reduces the number of people required to receive and review applications before they proceed to exhibition, saving time and improving efficiency.
Submission period for service authorities and local governments reduced	Nov-25	ongoing	6	A legislative change was made to the Planning Act 1999 to half the submission period for service authorities and local governments to make a submission on an residential development applications that do not require public exhibition.
Interactive online tool	anticipated	ongoing	3~~6~~	As part of the NT's land supply planning, work is underway to deliver an interactive online tool that will provide clear, up-to-date information on the land supply pipeline and the availability of land ready for development across the Territory's four major centres (Greater Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs). Consultants have been appointed to deliver the tool by the end of the ~~2025/26 financial year.~~ 2026 calendar year.
Repurposing existing buildings for accommodation	2024	Oct 2025	3	Amendments were made to the *Building Regulations 1993* to remove the barrier that changes of use for conversion from commercial to residential are not required to comply with the current requirements of the National Construction Code where appropriate. The amendments introduce a flexible approach to building certification that allows registered building certifiers to use discretion in decision making with a focus on building integrity and safety.
Exception to encourage the repurposing of existing commercial buildings into rooming accommodation	Dec 25	Dec 27	3	On 5 December 2025, an amendment to the NT Planning Scheme took effect that allows for the use and development of an existing commercial building in the Darwin CBD to be used for the purpose of rooming accommodation (including student accommodation) without the need for planning permission.
Increased maximum floor area for second dwellings	June 26	ongoing	3	In June 2026, an amendment to the NT Planning Scheme took effect that increased the maximum floor area of independent living units (second dwellings) allowed on single dwelling lots (without any planning approval being necessary) from 50m2 to 100m2 in rural lifestyle areas.

				This built on an amendment to the NT Planning Scheme in December 2023 that increased the maximum floor area of independent living units (second dwellings) allowed on single dwelling lots (without any planning approval being necessary) from 50m2 to 75m2 in urban areas. This supported urban infill in low density areas and provided more housing choice.
Increasing permitted development in medium density residential zone	April 26	ongoing	3	Increased the number of townhouses permitted in medium density residential zone from two to four, removing the need for a planning application and approval, simplifying the regulatory process.
Introduced ability to create new rural lifestyle lots across the northern (wet) component of the NT without groundwater (i.e. using only rainwater tanks)	August 25	ongoing	3	Significantly increased the number of parcels of land able to be created in urban lifestyle areas across the top (wet) half of the NT and encourages use of rainwater tanks.
Removed third party appeal rights including for all residential development across the NT	March 25	ongoing	3	Multi-storey urban residential development previously attracted third party appeal rights resulting in uncertainty for developers and leading to residential developments being significantly delayed. Now developments can proceed with certainty and without delay.

Department of Lands, Planning and Environment

Recommended action	Measures of impact
8B. Determine land clearing applications in select zones (e.g. Agriculture, Horticulture, Rural) within DLPE rather than the Development Consent Authority (DCA).	• Streamlined assessment pathways by enabling decisions to be made administratively within DLPE. • Reduced approval complexity and improved clarity for applicants. • Supports more efficient processing of eligible land clearing applications, supporting BP3 target of more than 80% of applications for clearing on unzoned land assessed within 84 days.
2F. Develop a pre-approved list of Place Names to streamline process for industry.	• Reduces administrative delays associated with place naming approvals by providing developers with a pre-approved list of place names for use in new developments. • Supported timely land release and subdivision delivery, including the Asche development, where pre-approved street names were available for selection by Holtze Land Company to support titling of the first stage of lots in December 2025. • Improves certainty for developers and landowners while supporting recognition of Territory identity, with around 20 local roads and four urban parks named to honour Territorians' contributions to health and wellbeing and traditional bush medicines.
2A. Develop a truncated and simplified process for rezoning land that is identified for densification under an area plan.	• Reduces rezoning timeframes by removing the requirement for a 28-day public exhibition period where land has already been identified for densification through an endorsed area plan. • Accelerates delivery of housing and development opportunities in strategic growth areas. • Provides greater certainty for landowners and developers.
3A. Streamline planning approvals by declaring classes of assets that no longer require public consultation.	• Reduces rezoning timeframes by removing the requirement for a 28-day public exhibition period where land has already been identified for densification through an endorsed area plan. • Accelerates delivery of housing and development opportunities in strategic growth areas. • Provides greater certainty for landowners and developers.
3C. Establish a risk-based framework for planning approvals and exempt low-risk development from requirements regarding public notification requirements.	• Reduces approval timeframes by removing the 14-day public exhibition period for eligible low-risk developments, supporting the BP3 target of average processing of development applications within 55 days. • Streamlines planning processes while maintaining appropriate regulatory oversight. • Enables low-risk developments to proceed more efficiently with greater certainty.

Recommended action	Measures of impact
6C. Exempt existing vacant low-risk commercial/industrial buildings/areas from non-safety related requirements under the National Construction Code when changing building classification or undertaking renovation works.	• Supported the adaptive reuse of an existing office building on 87 Mitchell Street, Darwin CBD (former Health House) into 90 self-contained units for hotel-style accommodation. (JH Group's project) • Reduces construction costs by facilitating the reuse of existing buildings rather than requiring demolition and rebuild. • Encourages investment, brings underutilised assets back into productive use and supports revitalisation of the Darwin CBD.
7A. Exempt low-risk buildings from requirements to submit a new planning application for minor changes to the building.	• Reduces administrative burden, approval costs and delays associated with minor building modifications. • Enables property owners and businesses to make minor changes more efficiently. • Supports the continued use and revitalisation of buildings, reducing the risk of vacancy and deterioration.
11D. Allow staged approvals for Land Clearing applications on unzoned land under the *Planning Act 1999*.	• Enables eligible land clearing projects to commence earlier through staged approvals of lower-risk works while assessment of subsequent stages continues. • Reduces approval timeframes for eligible applications by approximately 2–3 weeks. • Represents an indicative 15–25% reduction in end-to-end processing time and will support BP3 target of more than 80% of applications for clearing on unzoned land assessed within 84 days.
22A. Introduce dedicated "fast-track" planning assessment processes to reduce approval times for low-risk applications.	• Reduces approval timeframes for low-risk planning applications through an expediated assessment pathway, supporting the BP3 target of average processing of development applications within 55 days. • The fast-track process has already supported developments such as NextDC's data centre in Ryko Court through variation of an existing development permit to facilitate changes to floor layouts, car parking, building facades and landscaping. • Enables straightforward applications, such as minor residential variations with no objections from neighbours or council, to be fast-tracked more efficiently without requiring consideration by the Development Consent Authority.

Recommended action	Measures of impact
6E. Amend the Land Clearing Overlays in the NT Planning Scheme to exempt controls or approvals for low-risk activities.	• Allows eligible low-risk activities to proceed without approval where they are permitted or exempt under the NT Planning Scheme. • Eliminates application and approval timeframes for eligible activities, enabling work to commence sooner, and will support BP3 target of more than 80% of applications for clearing on unzoned land assessed within 84 days. • Reduces regulatory burden, compliance costs and administrative requirements for landholders.
1B. Increase the Fidelity Fund Certificate minimum construction cost trigger to ensure the Fund covers appropriate works.	• Increased the Fidelity Fund Certificate threshold from $12,000 to $25,000, removing certification requirements for lower-value residential building works. • Reduced compliance costs and administrative burden for homeowners and builders undertaking low-risk projects. • Enables eligible projects to progress to construction sooner by removing a regulatory step.
2E. Review the application of Merit Assessable Uses across all zoning categories to convert low risk developments to Permitted Use.	• Increased the number of low-risk land uses that can proceed without planning consent. • Reduces approval costs and timeframes for businesses, landowners and developers, supporting the BP3 target of average processing of development applications within 55 days. • Supports faster delivery of low-risk development projects.
11B. Review existing restrictions on lots that are currently restricted to single dwelling development.	• Supports consideration of opportunities to increase housing choice through changes to single-dwelling development restrictions. • Supports more efficient use of residential land. • Any resulting NT Planning Scheme amendments will provide greater flexibility for future development.
11C. Undertake a review of minimum lot sizes to ensure Design Codes support the delivery of housing supply.	• Supports consideration of opportunities to increase housing supply and housing choice through review of minimum lot size requirements. • Creates opportunities for more efficient subdivision and development outcomes. • Any resulting NT Planning Scheme amendments improve flexibility and responsiveness to housing demand.
6A. Amending the Planning Regulations to exempt certain Crown Land transactions from requiring subdivision.	• Removes unnecessary subdivision approval requirements for eligible Crown land transactions. • Reduces approval timeframes, administrative burden and costs for businesses, community organisations, and the Territory. • Enables land transactions to proceed more efficiently.

Recommended action	Measures of impact
6B. Establish a risk-based framework for planning approvals and exempt low-risk development requirements from development applications.	• Reduces information requirements, administrative burden and lodgement timeframes for eligible applicants. • Streamlines application preparation and assessment processes, , supporting the BP3 target of average processing of development applications within 55 days.
18. Finalise implementation of the remaining recommendations from the Bringing Land to Market report within 12 months.	• Improved awareness of the NT Subdivision Development Guidelines. • Provides greater certainty and consistency for proponents seeking subdivision approvals. • Supports more efficient land development and housing supply outcomes.

Other approvals highlights from DLPE

1. **Removal of Third-Party Merits Review (Petroleum, Planning and Water)**

- The *Petroleum, Planning and Water Amendment Act 2025* removed third-party merits review of decisions.
- It delivers a reduction in end-to-end project delays by removing a post-decision review pathway that resulted in project commencement being delayed by several months to multiple years.
- Overall impacts include removal of uncertainty and delay risks in contested matters, and improved certainty, investor confidence and project delivery timing.

2. **Performance Indicators for DLPE**

- DLPE has published its Assessment and Approvals Performance Report 2024-25, providing transparency and accountability on assessment and approval timeframes.
- Key highlights for 2024-25 include:
  - survey plan approvals approved in an average of 3.9 business days against a six day non-statutory target;
  - development applications under the *Planning Act 1999* remain within statutory limits, with average end-to-end determination times (including deferred days) of around 71 days against an 84-day statutory timeframe.

Department of **LANDS, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT**

Performance Report

Assessment and Approvals Reporting 2024-25



NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

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Front cover: *Loading mining truck in an open pit mine © Shutterstock*

Taking soil samples near the Wave Hill Stock Route, Buchanan © Department of Lands, Planning and Environment, Northern Territory Government

Back cover: *Overhead drone view of Katherine subdivision © Department of Lands, Planning and Environment, Northern Territory Government*

Bitter Springs. A thermal spring in the tropical Elsey National Park © Shutterstock

1. Introduction

The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) supports the Territory's economic development and protection of our natural and cultural assets through integrated planning, evidence-based advice and efficient regulation.

The department is responsible for administering 33 Acts and 25 subordinate regulations to manage the Territory's built environment and natural resources. This regulatory framework includes licences, approvals and permits from the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA), the Controller of Water Resources, the Development Consent Authority and the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment.

This report details DLPE's performance in relation to the assessment and approval timeframes for applications for key approvals, permits and licences administered by the department under the:

- *Environment Protection Act 2019*
- *Heritage Act 2011*
- *Licensed Surveyors Act 1983*
- *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016*
- *Planning Act 1999*
- *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998*
- *Water Act 1992*

This is the department's first assessment and approvals performance report. It includes available data and reports against key performance indicators (KPIs) published as part of Agency Budget Statements (Budget Paper 3) and internal departmental KPIs. Additional data may be included in future reports.

Responsibility for the management of the Territory's built environment and natural resources through administration of

33

LEGISLATED ACTS

25

SUBORDINATE REGULATIONS

2. Environment Protection Act 2019

The *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act) is designed to protect the environment and promote ecologically sustainable development. The EP Act manages impacts on the environment through two statutory frameworks:

- environmental impact assessment and environmental approval of actions with the potential to have a significant impact on the environment
- environmental (mining) licences for mining activities.

2.1. Environmental impact assessment and environmental approvals

The environmental impact assessment process decisions and approvals addressed in this report are:

- Environmental impact assessment process

  Proposals that have the potential to have a significant impact on the environment must be referred to the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) ("a referral"). The NT EPA decides whether the proposal requires environmental impact assessment, and if so, the NT EPA assesses the significant impacts and provides advice to the Minister on whether the proposal should be approved and any associated conditions.
- Environmental approval by the Minister

  An environmental approval issued under the EP Act is a permission granted by the Minister after an assessment by the NT EPA.

2.1.1. Referrals accepted and environmental approvals granted

The number of referrals accepted by the NT EPA may be used as an early indicator of future development activity.

Table 1 reports the number of referrals accepted, the number of NT EPA decisions about whether assessment is required, and the number of environmental approvals granted by the Minister over 3 financial years. This information is also presented in Figure 1.

There is a difference between reporting on referrals accepted and approvals based on the timing of decisions, whether assessment is required, the duration of the assessment and granting of approvals.

Table 1: Referrals accepted and assessed, and environmental approvals granted

Approval type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Referrals accepted for assessment	10	7	7
Decision that assessment is required	7	5	3
Decision that assessment is not required	1	3	3
Assessments completed	5	7	1
Environmental approvals granted	6	6	2

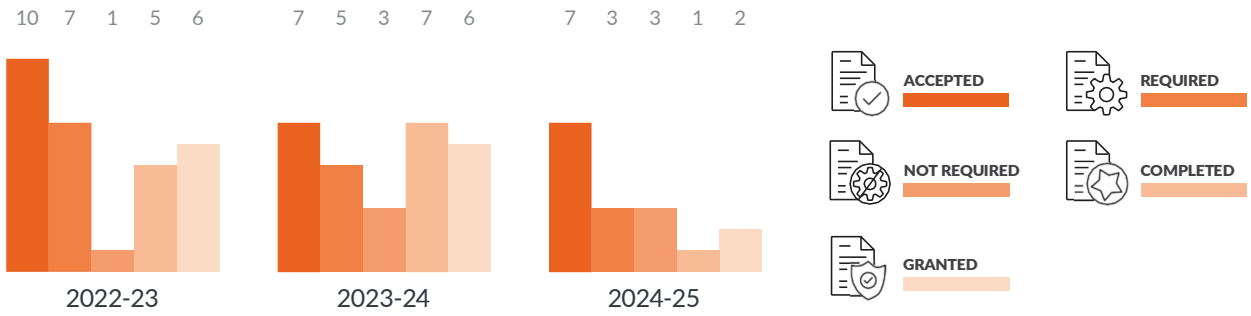


Figure 1: Referrals accepted, assessments and environmental approvals granted

2.1.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The EP Act provides statutory timeframes for each step of the environmental impact assessment and environmental approval process.

The KPI for environmental impact assessment processing under the EP Act is 80% of processes completed within statutory timeframes.

Figure 2 presents performance against the KPI over the 3 financial years.

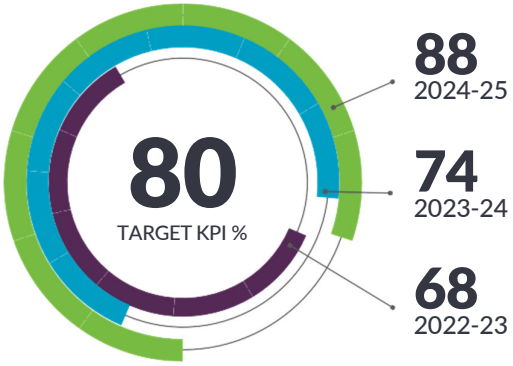


Figure 2: Environmental assessment KPI performance

Interesting fact:

The average time to complete an environmental impact assessment under the EP Act is 15 months. This timeframe has reduced by about 67%, compared to assessments under the previous *Environmental Assessment Act 1982* (EA Act). This is largely attributed to the EP Act providing the NT EPA with two new, more efficient methods of assessment i.e. 'Referral Information' (RI) and 'Supplementary Environment Report' (SER), in addition to the 'Environmental Impact Statement' (EIS) method.

The average time to complete an assessment for each level of assessment is:

- assessment by RI - 6 months
- assessment by SER - 16 months
- assessment by EIS - 35 months.

Figure 3 presents the average time taken to complete an assessment by EIS has decreased by 24% under the EP Act compared to the former EA Act.

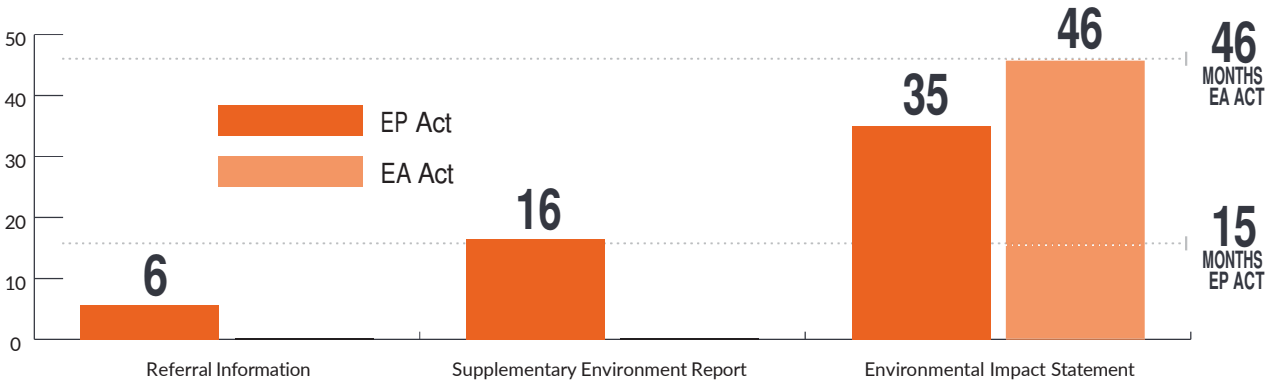


Figure 3: Average time in months to complete assessment under the EP Act and EA Act

2.1.3. Average processing time

Table 2 reports the average days taken for the Minister to grant an environmental approval after receiving the NT EPA's advice. Reporting is in business days.

Table 2: Average time taken to grant an environmental approval

Approval type	Statutory timeframe	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Environmental Approval	30	26	24	19

2.2. Regulation of mining activities

The mining regulatory decisions and approvals addressed in this report are:

- Environmental (mining) licences

  An environmental (mining) licence is required for any exploration activity that will cause 'substantial disturbance', and all extractive and mining operations. There are 3 categories of licence available: standard condition licences; modified condition licences; and tailored condition licences.

  The public consultation processes and assessment timeframes associated with each licence type differ, reflecting the risk-based approach of the framework.

  This regulatory framework commenced 1 July 2024.

- Mining management plan approvals

  The repealed *Mining Management Act 2001* (MMA) required a mining operator to develop, and submit for approval, a Mining Management Plan (MMP) as part of the authorisation process to conduct mining activities.

  The MMP was required to outline how a mining operator proposed to conduct its activities in a manner that was safe, environmentally sound, consistent with good industry practice, and met legal requirements.

  In accordance with transitional arrangements under the EP Act, applications for authorisations and the approval of new or amended MMPs submitted on or before 30 June 2024 continue to be assessed in accordance with the MMA.

2.2.1. Environmental (mining) licences

2.2.1.1. Licence applications received and granted

A high-level summary of the number of applications received, and licences granted over the 2024-25 financial year is reported in Table 3. For detail about the numbers of applications received by licence type, refer to the quarterly mining regulation assessment timeframes reports published by DLPE.

There is a difference between the number of applications accepted and the number of licences granted due to timing differences associated with completing assessments.

Table 3: Environmental (mining) licence applications received and granted

Activity type	Accepted	Rejected	Withdrawn	Total applications	Licences granted
Exploration	35	26	9	70	24
Extractive operations	6	2	4	12	4
Mining operations	2	3	-	5	1
Total	43	31	13	87	29

2.2.1.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The EP Act includes statutory timeframes for the grant or refusal of environmental (mining) licences. Timeframes differ depending on the type of mining activity, and the type of licence; refer Table 4.

Public exhibition periods also apply for modified and tailored condition licences. Public exhibition periods are in addition to the periods specified in Table 4.

Table 4: Licence application assessment timeframes

Mining activity	Assessment period (business days)		
	Standard Licence	Modified Licence	Tailored Licence
Exploration	30	40	60
Extractive operations	30	50	80
Mining operations	40	80	120

KPIs for environmental (mining) licensing processing under the EP Act apply from 1 July 2025. KPIs include that ≥85% of applications for environmental (mining) licences under the EP Act be assessed within statutory timeframes. Figure 4 presents overall performance against this KPI over 2024-25. Figure 5 presents this performance by activity type.



Figure 4: All environmental (mining) licences KPI performance

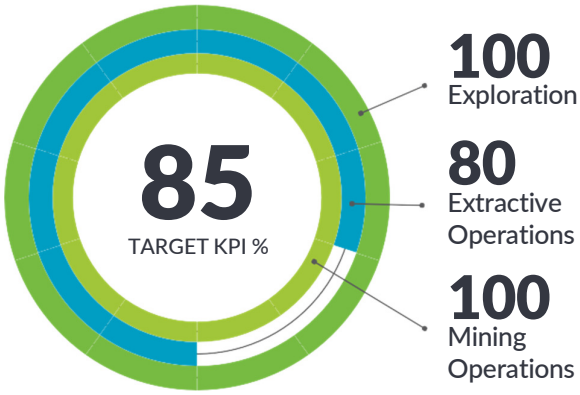


Figure 5: Environmental (mining) licence KPI performance by activity type

2.2.1.3. Average processing time

The assessment process for environmental (mining) licences requires applications to be processed by the department and when required, the operator is requested to provide additional information.

Table 5 reports the average timeframe taken by the department to assess applications for each licence type against statutory timeframes.

Table 6 reports the end-to-end timeframe for application assessments. This includes the time the licence application was under assessment by the department, on public exhibition, and with the operator for additional information.

Reporting is in business days.

Table 5: Time taken by the department to complete assessment of licence applications

Activity type	Licence type	Number of completed licences	Statutory assessment period	Assessment time with Department		
				Average	Shortest	Longest
Exploration	Standard	15	30	20	5	30
	Modified	8	40	29	17	38
	Tailored	1	60	53	53	53
Extractive operations	Standard	2	30	21	7	34
	Modified	2	50	20	12	27
Mining operations	Tailored	1	120	76	76	76

Table 6: End-to-end processing timeframes for environmental (mining) licences for 2024-25

Activity type	Licence type	Completed licences	Statutory assessment period	Public exhibition period	End to end assessment		Days with operator	
					Average	Time range	Average	Time range
Exploration	Standard	15	30	Nil	29	5-49	9	0-27
	Modified	8	40	15	48	32-60	6	1-10
	Tailored	1	60	15*	100	100	32	32
Extractive Operations	Standard	2	30	Nil	43	7-79	23	0-45
	Modified	2	50	15	35	27-42	0	0
Mining Operations	Tailored	1	120	30	111	111	5	5

2.2.2. Mining Management Plan approvals

As at 1 July 2024, there were 104 applications for the approval of a new or amended MMP requiring assessment; refer Table 7.

No additional MMPs can be accepted after 1 July 2024.

2.2.2.1. Applications assessed

Of the 104 MMPs submitted prior to 1 July 2024 requiring assessment by 30 June 2026, 71 assessments were completed during 2024-25; refer Table 7. Figure 6 presents the distribution of the completed (approvals and refusals) assessments across mining activity.

Table 7: MMP applications submitted for approval

Activity type	Total	Approved	Refused	Under assessment
Exploration	58	44	0	14
Extractive Operations	14	9	0	5
Mining Operations	32	17	1	14
Total	104	70	1	33

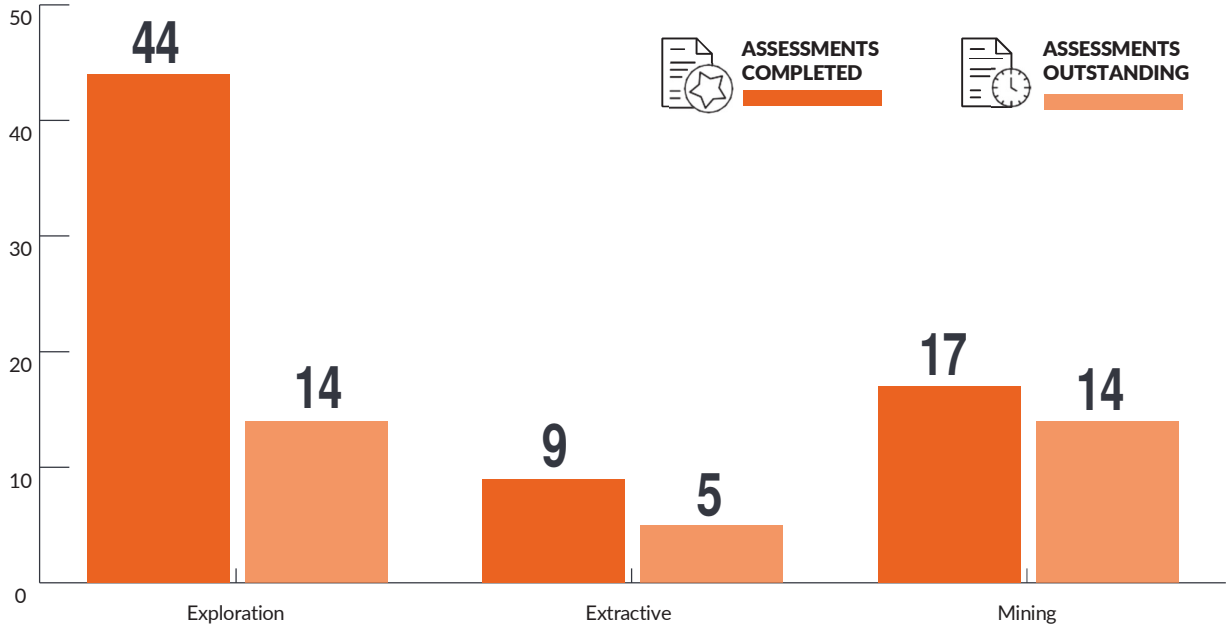


Figure 6: MMPs assessed during 2024-25

Table 8 reports the number of MMP assessments completed over 3 financial years.

Reported numbers are determined based on the MMP approval decision date falling within the reporting period.

Table 8: MMP assessments completed over 3 financial years

Approval type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
MMP assessments completed	90	78	**71**

2.2.2.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

In accordance with the transitional arrangements under the EP Act, the 104 MMPs received must be assessed by 30 June 2026. Any MMPs approved correspond to a deemed licence under the EP Act, with an expiration of 30 June 2028.

Any operator holding a deemed licence wishing to continue mining activities is required to obtain an environmental (mining) licence under the licensing framework as outlined in section 2.2.1.

Assessment remains to be completed by the department for 32% of those MMPs submitted before 1 July 2024. Table 9 reports the status of the 104 MMPs as at 30 June 2025.

Table 9: Status of MMPs as at 30 June 2025

Approved	Refused	With operator	With department	Withdrawn
66	1	23	10	4

The KPI for the assessment of MMPs is ≥85% of assessments completed within 90 calendar days.

Figure 7 presents performance against this KPI over 3 financial years.

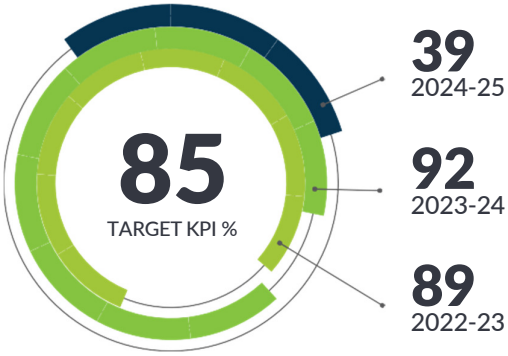


Figure 7: MMP assessment KPI performance

2.2.2.3. Average processing time

The assessment process for MMPs requires the documents to be processed by the department and when required, the operator is requested to provide additional information.

Table 10 reports the range and average number of days that the MMP or request for additional information was with the department or the operator. This information is also presented in Figure 8.

Table 10: Average days with operator or department

Reporting	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average days with operator	41	38	69
Time range with operator	1 to 235	1 to 289	0 to 461
Average days with department	49	43	137
Time range with department	3 to 344	2 to 139	6 to 610

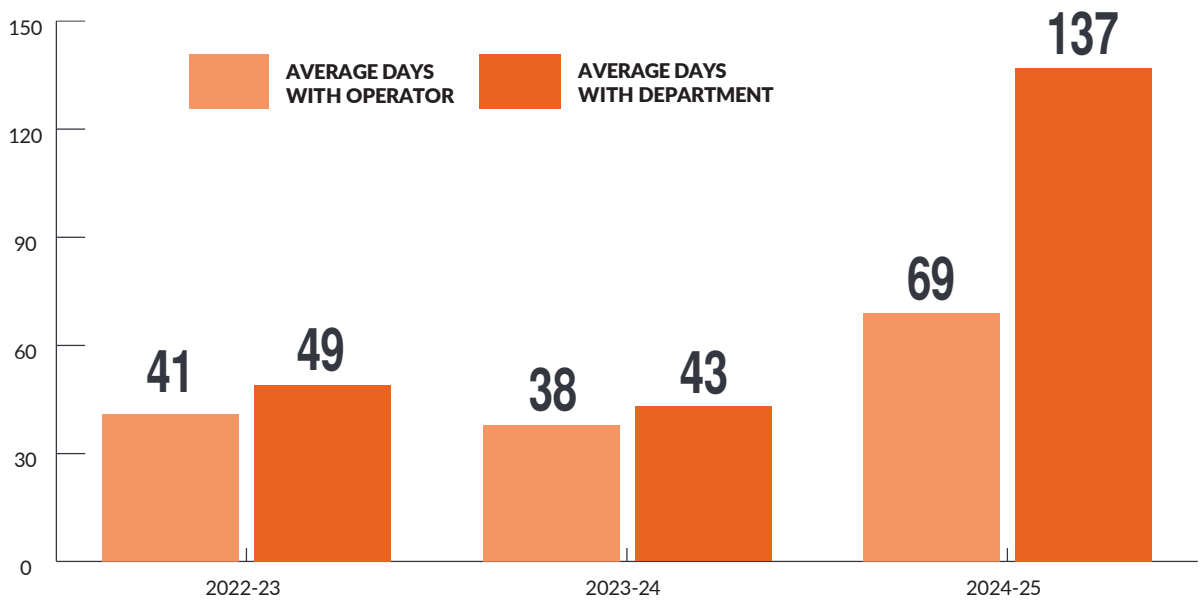


Figure 8: Average days MMPs are with the operator or the department

3. Heritage Act 2011

The *Heritage Act 2011* provides a framework for the conservation of the Northern Territory's cultural and natural heritage. It establishes processes for identifying, assessing and protecting places and objects of heritage significance. The Act also sets out requirements for the approval of works on declared heritage places.

The assessment process and approval decisions under the *Heritage Act 2011* addressed in this report are:

- Heritage nomination assessments

  This process begins with a nomination to declare a heritage place or object to the Heritage Council. A comprehensive assessment report is prepared for the Heritage Council that includes original research, fieldwork, preliminary consultation and the application of heritage significance criteria.
- Heritage nomination decisions

  The Minister decides whether to declare a heritage place or object, informed by advice from the Heritage Council.
- Heritage Work Approval

  A work approval is required to undertake any construction or development work on a heritage-listed property. This approval process ensures that proposed works on heritage places are assessed for their impact on the heritage significance of the site and cultural and natural heritage is protected. The Minister approves major (significant) work, and the Heritage Council approves minor work.
- Requests for Information

  A Request for Information (RFI) allows anyone to seek information or advice about heritage places or objects within the NT, including Aboriginal archaeological places. Requests may range from simple requests for information to seeking advice on complex development and mitigation matters.

3.1. Applications received and approved

Table 11 reports the number of nominations and applications received, assessed and declared or approved over 3 financial years.

There is a difference between the number of assessments and approvals based on the timing required for completing assessments and granting approval.

Table 11: Nominations /applications received, assessed and approved over 3 financial years

Approval Type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Nominations received	5	1	1
Assessments presented to Heritage Council	7	2	1
Decisions on declaration of heritage place or object	1	2	3
Work Approval applications received	8	15	23
Work Approvals applications reviewed by Heritage Council	8	15	20
Work Approvals approved (total)	8	12	17
• Major	2	4	2
• Minor	6	8	15

3.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The *Heritage Act 2011* includes statutory timeframes for Heritage nomination assessments and work approvals. Timeframes for RFIs are not statutory. Refer Table 12.

Table 12: Target timeframes under the *Heritage Act 2011*

Assessment or Approval Type	Timeframe
Nomination assessment	6 months
Work Approval	
• Major	30 calendar days
• Minor	14 calendar days
Request for Information	10 business days

The KPIs for processing requests under the *Heritage Act 2011* are:

- 100% nomination assessments completed within 6 months or owner notified
- 100 % major works approvals completed within 30 calendar days
- 100 % minor works approvals completed within 14 calendar days
- 80% of requests for information (RFIs) responded to within 10 business days

Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11 and Figure 12 present performance against the KPIs over 3 financial years.

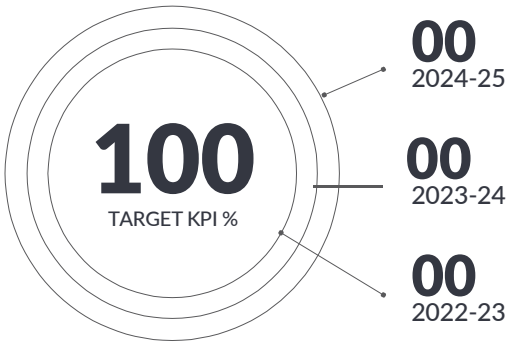


Figure 9: Nomination assessments KPI performance



Figure 10: Major works approvals KPI performance

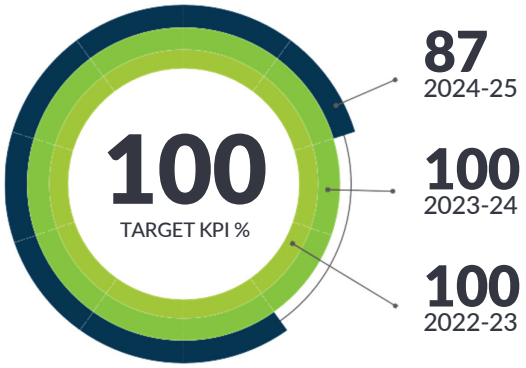


Figure 11: Minor works approvals KPI performance



Figure 12: Response to RFIs KPI performance

4. Licensed Surveyors Act 1983

The *Licensed Surveyors Act 1983* regulates the practice of land boundary surveying by providing for the registration of land boundary surveyors. The Act ensures the competency and ethical conduct of surveyors and maintains the integrity of land title systems through the regulation of survey data and subdivision processes.

Approval of survey plans is a key and critical step in the land development process, enabling the release of titled lots to market.

To progress a survey plan to the Surveyor-General for approval, a licensed surveyor must lodge, consistent with prescribed formats:

- any survey plan certified by the surveyor required in relation to title, rights and obligations, and
- all data from which the plan was prepared.

4.1. Survey plans received and approved

Table 13 reports the number of survey plans lodged and approved, and associated data, over 3 financial years.

Table 13: Survey plans lodged and approved

Service/Approval	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25*
Data Allocation Requests	339	300	168
Survey Plans Lodged	105	87	132
Survey Requisitions	166	152	203
Survey Plans Approved	97	94	113
New Parcels on Approved Plans	2348*	557	737

* Includes cancellation and recreation of parcels related to the Kakadu land grant, including Jabiru.

4.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The *Licensed Surveyors Act 1983* does not include statutory timeframes, however the department has adopted non-statutory timeframes as a KPI; refer Table 14. Figure 14 presents performance against the KPI over 3 financial years.

Table 14: Target timeframes under the *Licensed Surveyors Act 1983*

Approval Type	Non-statutory Timeframe (business days)
Approval of survey plans	Within 6 business days



Figure 14: Survey plans approved

4.3. Average processing time

Table 15 reports the average number of days taken to approve a survey.

Table 15: Average number of days taken to approve survey plans

Survey plan approval	Target	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average number of days	6 or less	2.6	2.6	3.9

5. Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016

The *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016* (PE Regulations) provide a framework for the assessment and approval of Environment Management Plans (EMPs) for petroleum activities. EMPs are required to demonstrate how a petroleum activity will be carried out to ensure environmental impacts and risks are reduced to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable and acceptable. EMPs must also be accompanied by an Authority Certificate issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA).

The decisions and approvals addressed in this report are:

- Decisions under regulation 11(2)

  The decision of the Minister to either approve an EMP that has been submitted, or to request that the EMP be resubmitted.
- Decisions are made under regulation 11(3)

  When an EMP has been resubmitted in response to the Minister's decision under regulation 11(2), the decision of the Minister to either approve the EMP, request the EMP to be resubmitted again, or refuse to approve the EMP.

5.1. Plans received and approved

Table 16 reports the number of EMPs that have been received and approved over 3 financial years.

Table 16: EMPs received and approved

Approval type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
EMP received	8	8	4
EMPs approved	3	7	10

5.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The PE Regulations include statutory timeframes for decisions under regulations 11(2) and (3); refer Table 17. Reporting is in calendar days.

Table 17: Target timeframes under the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016*

Approval type	Statutory timeframe (calendar days)
Decision under regulation 11(2)	90
Decision under regulation 11(3)	30

The KPI for decisions under regulation 11(2) of the PE Regulations is 90% of decisions made within 90 days.

Figure 15 presents performance against the KPIs over 3 financial years.

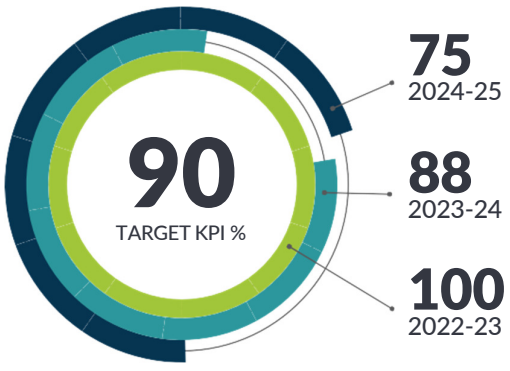


Figure 15: Decisions made under regulation 11(2) KPI performance

5.3. Average processing time

Table 18 reports the range and average number of days taken for assessments under regulation 11 of the PE Regulations. Reporting is in calendar days. This information is also presented in Figure 16.

Table 18: EMP assessment days

Reporting year approved	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average time for a decision made under regulation 11	65	78	50
Decision time range	50-78	53-101	45-56
Average assessment time	304	367*	149
Assessment time range	111-540	175-688*	119-167
Average days with the department	184	123*	74
Range of days with the department	103-283	53-182	62-119
Average days with interest holder	120	244*	76
Range of days with interest holder	8-310	35-633	0-164

*Figures reported only include EMPs approved within the year. There are outstanding EMPs for the 2023-24 financial year

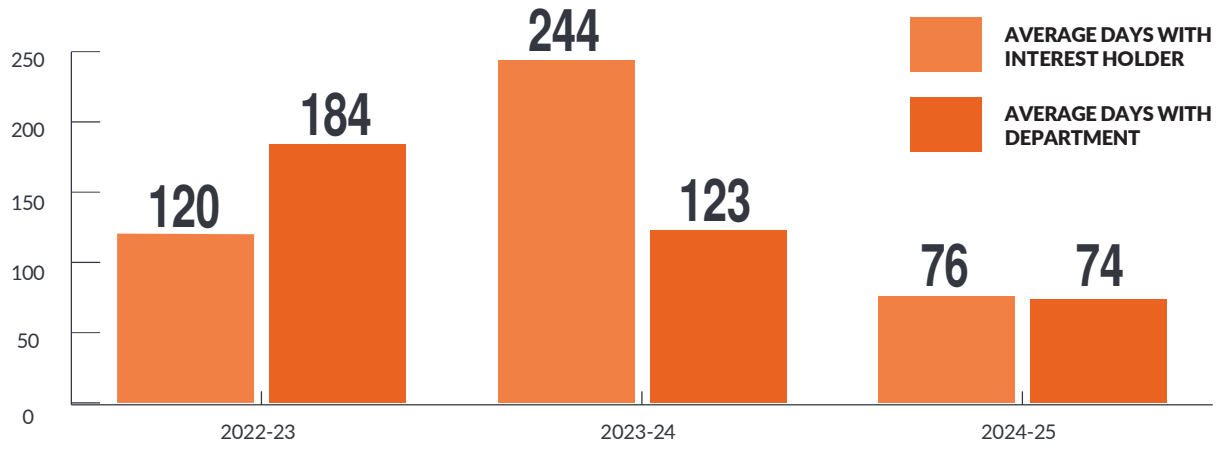


Figure 16: Average days EMPs are with the interest holder or the department

Interesting fact:

The total assessment timeframe for the assessment and approval of an EMP includes the time taken to complete an initial assessment, any time taken by an interest holder to prepare an EMP for resubmission, assessment of a resubmitted EMP, and time with the Minister to make an approval decision.

There was a 59% reduction in the average assessment time for EMPs submitted in FY 2024-25 compared to the previous financial year. This reduction is primarily attributed to the streamlining of internal procedures, the high quality of the submissions received during the reporting period, and the low complexity of the regulated activities proposed in the EMP.

6. Planning Act 1999

The *Planning Act 1999* regulates how land can be used and developed. It establishes a framework for planning schemes, development applications and enforcement of planning rules. The Act aims to ensure orderly and sustainable land use, balancing community needs with environmental and economic considerations.

The decisions and approvals addressed in this report are:

- Development applications – all other applications

  Landholders who want to build, renovate, subdivide or change the use of their land, may need planning approval.
- Development applications – for the clearing of native vegetation on unzoned land

  Landholders wanting to clear more than a total of one hectare of native vegetation on unzoned land, including existing cleared native vegetation on their property, must lodge a development application and receive a permit before clearing commences.
- Planning Scheme Amendments

  A planning scheme amendment is required if landholders want to rezone their land, change planning policy or change other rules in the planning scheme.

6.1. Applications received and approved

Table 19 reports the number of applications received and determined (including approvals and refusals) over 3 financial years.

Figure 17 presents development applications received and determined. Figure 18 presents applications for clearing of native vegetation on unzoned land received and determined in the same financial year.

Table 19: Applications received and approved under the *Planning Act 1999*

Approval type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Development applications received	351	297	328
Development applications determined	263	200	239
Clearing of native vegetation (unzoned land)* applications received	10	6	2
Clearing of native vegetation (unzoned land) applications determined	5	2	1
Planning scheme amendments received	26	27	29
Planning scheme amendments determined	12	13	18

*excludes variations

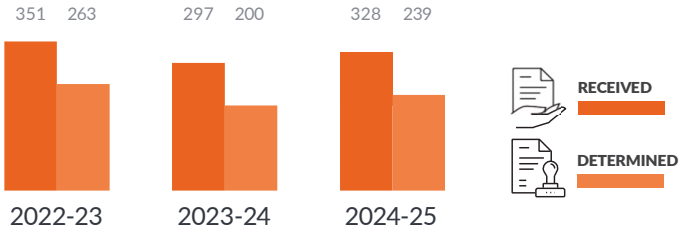


Figure 17: Development applications received and determined



Figure 18: Unzoned Land Clearing applications received and determined

6.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The *Planning Act 1999* includes statutory timeframes; refer Table 20. Reporting is in calendar days.

Reporting is from the date the application is lodged through to the date the decision is signed.

It does not include days where an application is formally deferred, which may occur when insufficient information is provided with the application to enable the statutory consent authority to properly consider the application. Alternatively, an application may be deferred if an assessment by another statutory authority (NT EPA, Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) or Controller of Water Resources) is required.

Table 20: Target timeframes under the *Planning Act 1999*

Approval type	Statutory timeframe (calendar days)
Development applications (includes clearing of native vegetation on unzoned land)	84

The KPI for a decision under the Planning Act applies to development applications, other than those related to the clearing of native vegetation on unzoned land. It requires the average processing time to be ≤ 55 calendar days. Performance against this KPI is included in Table 21.

6.3. Average processing time

6.3.1. Development applications

Table 21 reports the range and average number of days that a development application takes to process and details the periods where the applications are deferred to request additional information from the applicant. Figure 19 depicts the average number of days an application is with the applicant or the department.

Table 21: Average processing time for development applications

Reporting year approved	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total applications determined	263	200	239
Percentage applications deferred	26%	16%	21%
Average days on deferral with applicant	42	45	45
Time range with applicant	1 – 162	7 – 154	6 – 168
Average days with department	54	61	60
Time range with department	17 – 241	19 – 168	19 – 208
Average days from lodgement to determination, including deferred days	64	69	71
Time range from lodgement to determination, including deferred days	17 – 149	19 – 252	21 – 277

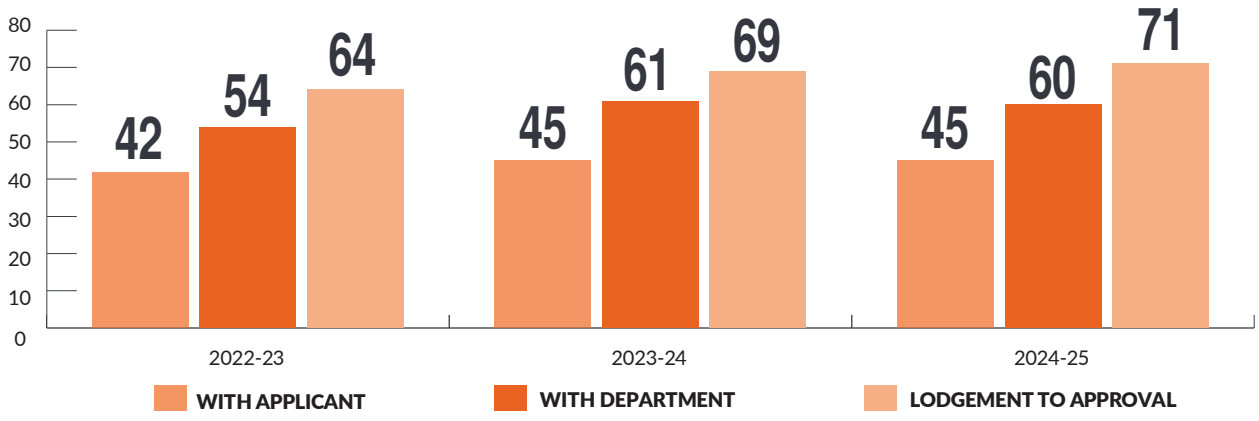


Figure 19: Average days development applications take to process including when on deferral with the applicant or being assessed by the department

6.3.2. Clearing of native vegetation (unzoned land) applications

Applications to clear native vegetation on unzoned land require appropriate environmental information to inform their assessment. Where insufficient information is provided and/or further surveys, studies or on-ground data is required to enable appropriate assessment of environmental impacts, the application is placed on deferral. The applicant is provided with a deferral notice and requested to provide additional information for assessment.

Table 22 reports the range and average number of days that an application to clear native vegetation on unzoned land takes to process and details the periods where the applications are deferred to request additional information from the applicant. These figures include all applications finalised to approval in that particular financial year including those lodged in previous financial years.

Figure 20 reports the average number of days unzoned land clearing applications are on deferral with the applicant or processed by the department and the average days from lodgement to approval.

Table 22: Average processing time for applications to clear native vegetation (unzoned land)

Reporting year approved	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total applications approved	5	4	3
Average days on deferral with applicant	0	11	157
Time range with applicant	0	1 to 31	1 to 353
Average days with department	100	157	154
Time range with department	1 to 141	1 to 224	1 to 221
Average days from lodgement to approval	100	168	312
Time ranges from lodgement to approval	1 to 141	1 to 238	1 to 574

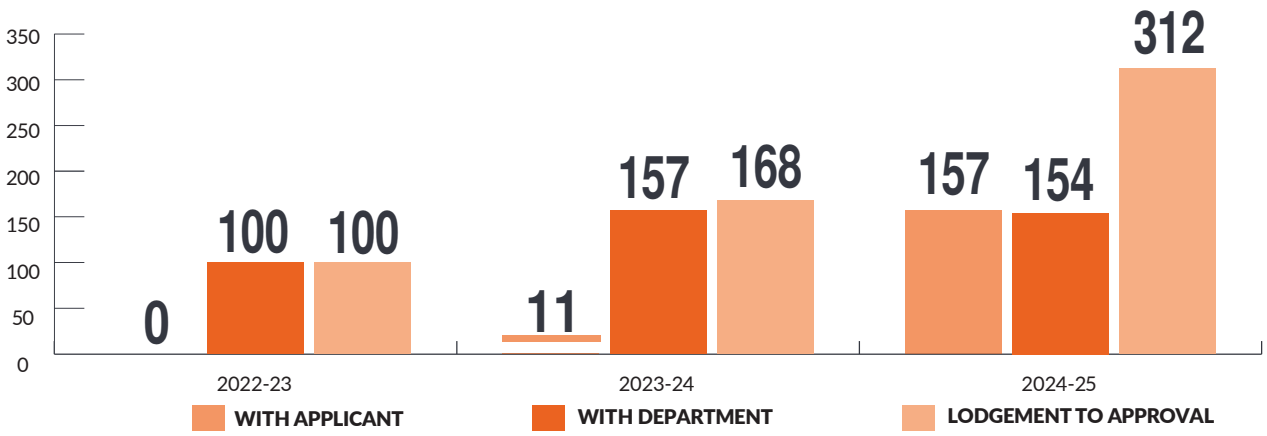


Figure 20: Average days applications for native vegetation clearing on unzoned land take to process including when on deferral with the applicant or being assessed by the department

7. Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998

The *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998* (WMPC Act) aims to protect and enhance the quality of the Northern Territory's environment by regulating waste and pollution.

The decisions under the WMPC Act addressed in this report are:

- Environment Protection Approvals (EPAs)

  The NT EPA grants EPAs for activities listed in Schedule 2 of the WMPC Act. These activities are associated with:

  - disposal of waste by burial
  - listed waste collecting, transporting, storing, recycling, treating or disposing
  - processing hydrocarbons to produce, store and/or dispatch liquefied natural gas or methanol.

  An EPA is granted for those works associated with the construction phase of the activity.
- Environment Protection Licences (EPLs)

  The NT EPA grants EPLs for the activities listed in Schedule 2 of the WMPC Act identified above. EPLs are granted for the operational phase of the activity.

7.1. Applications approved

Table 23 reports the number of EPAs and EPLs issued over 3 financial years.

Table 23: Approvals and licences issued under the WMPC Act

Approval Type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
EPAs issued	6	6	3
EPLs issued	47	46	50

7.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The WMPC Act does not include statutory timeframes. The KPI for processing applications for EPAs and EPLs is 90% of applications processed within 60 business days.

Figure 21 presents performance against the KPIs over 3 financial years.

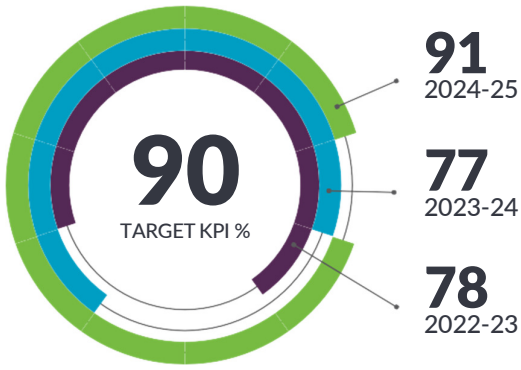


Figure 21: WMPC Act KPI performance

8. Water Act 1992

The *Water Act 1992* provides a framework for the investigation, allocation, use, control, protection, management and administration of water resources in the NT. It establishes the rules for how water is managed, including who can use it, how much they can take, and how water quality is maintained.

Decisions under the *Water Act 1992* that are addressed in this report are:

- Groundwater Extraction Licence (GWEL)

  A groundwater extraction licence permits the take of groundwater from a bore.
- Surface Water Extraction Licence (SWEL)

  A surface water extraction licence permits the take of surface water.
- Waste Discharge Licence

  A waste discharge licence authorises the discharge of waste into water. It regulates the quality and quantity of waste discharges into water bodies, ensuring environmental protection.

8.1. Applications accepted and approved

Table 24 reports the number of applications received and approved for licences and permits under the *Water Act 1992* over 3 financial years.

Applications include new, increases, amendments, transfers and renewals of both surface water and groundwater licences.

There is a difference between the number of applications received and licences granted based on the timing required for completing assessments and granting a licence.

Table 24: Applications accepted and approved under the *Water Act 1992*

Approval type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Groundwater extraction licence applications	13	29	39
Groundwater extraction licences approved	10	24#	22#
Surface water extraction licence applications	1	5	6
Surface water extraction licences approved	3	4	1
Waste discharge licence applications	21	8	9
Waste discharge licences approved	10	27	6

Not included in the figures, is where an application was assessed, and the decision was to not grant a water extraction licence.

Figure 22 presents for groundwater extraction licence (GWEL) and surface water extraction licence (SWEL) applications received and approved in each financial year. There is a difference between reporting on applications and approvals based on the timing of completion of assessments and granting of approvals.

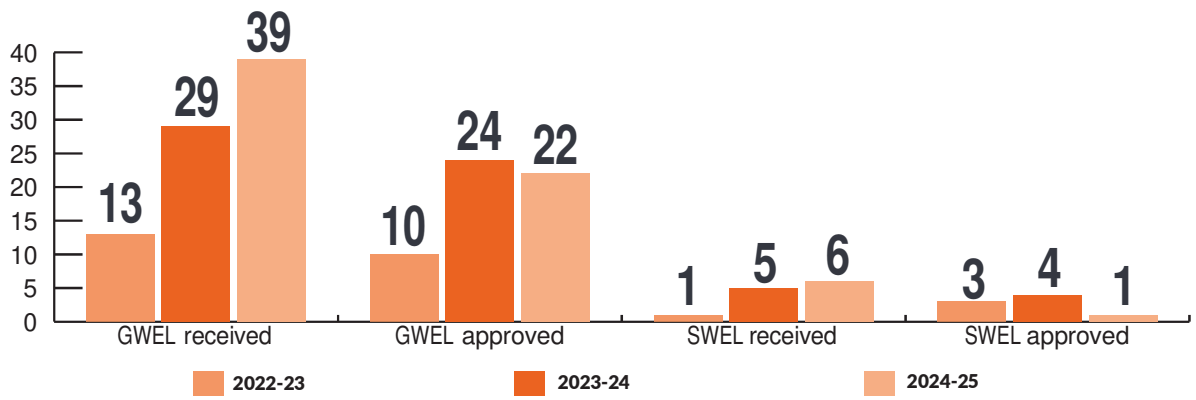


Figure 22: Groundwater extraction licence (GWEL) and surface water extraction licence (SWEL) applications received and approved

8.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The *Water Act 1992* does not include statutory timeframes for the approval process, however the department has adopted non-statutory timeframes; refer Table 25. The timeframe does not commence until an application is accepted as complete. Reporting is in business days.

Table 25: Target timeframes for decisions under the *Water Act 1992*

Approval Type	Non-statutory timeframe (business days)
Groundwater and surface water extraction licences	80
Waste discharge licence	60

The KPIs under the *Water Act 1992* are:

- 70% of water extraction licences assessed within 80 business days
- 90% of waste discharge licences processed within 60 business days

Water extraction licence applications are either simple or significant applications. Simple applications are assessed for completeness and accepted within 10 business days and often processed within the 80 business day timeframe.

Significant applications require a more thorough pre-acceptance process to assess risks to the water resource prior to being accepted as complete. The pre-acceptance process includes an administrative and technical review and may take up to 60 days. Once accepted as complete, significant applications are often processed within an 80 business day timeframe.

The *Water Act 1992* does not provide for deferral of applications.

KPI reporting for water extraction licences only considers applications accepted and decided within the same financial year.

Figure 23 and Figure 24 present performance against these KPIs over 3 financial years.

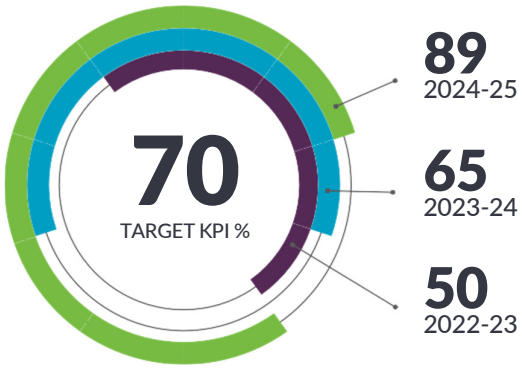


Figure 23: Water extraction licence KPI performance

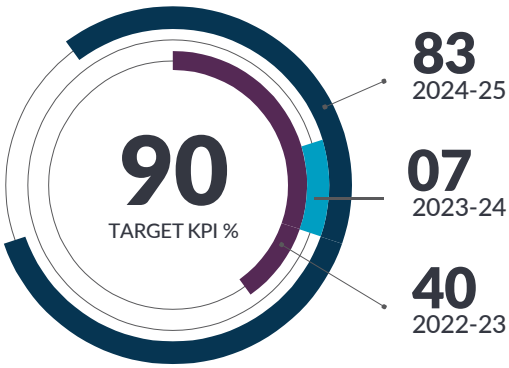


Figure 24: Waste discharge licence KPI performance


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