

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

DEVELOPMENT CONSENT AUTHORITY







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LETTER TO THE MINISTER

Dear Minister,

2024-25 Annual Report – Development Consent Authority

I am pleased to present you with the Development Consent Authority's annual report for 2024-25.

Under section 104A of the Planning Act 1999, the Chair must prepare and give to the Minister a report on the performance by the Development Consent Authority of its functions during the financial year.

The report must be given to the Minister by 31 October following the end of the financial year.

As the responsible Minister, you are required to table a copy of the report in the Legislative Assembly within six sitting days of receiving the report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Philip', with a small horizontal line to the right.

Suzanne Philip
Chair
Development Consent Authority

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Suzanne Philip

Chair of the Development Consent Authority

Suzanne Philip is the Chair of the Development Consent Authority (DCA) which covers the whole of the Northern Territory. Suzanne has lived in Darwin since 1982, raising a family and contributing extensively to the Territory's legal and business sectors and the community from a number of platforms.

Suzanne is a solicitor and barrister of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, and has extensive experience as a Senior University Lecturer, teaching Contract, Commercial, Vendor and Purchaser and Property Law.

From 2008 to 2014, Suzanne held the position of legal member and chair of the NT Agents' Licensing Board, responsible for licensing real estate, business and conveyancing agents, investigating allegations and holding disciplinary inquiries about licensed agents.

Suzanne has participated in both the development and community advocacy side of the planning process and has high-level experience, and long-held interest in planning matters.

Suzanne is enjoying her fifth consecutive term as Chair of the DCA having been first appointed in August 2017.

I am pleased to present the 2024-25 Annual Report of the Development Consent Authority (DCA).

This report outlines the activities and achievements of the DCA over the 2024-25 financial year.

The work of the seven DCA divisions was carried out by a dedicated group of members, one third of which is represented by women.

There were six new members appointed during 2024-25: Mr Rodney Applegate, Mr Ben Giesecke, Mr Mitch Virgin, Mr Matt Cunningham, Mr Gregory Marlow and Mr Sid Vashist. I welcome these members and hope that they enjoy their time working with the DCA.

2024-25 saw the terms conclude for several community and specialist members: Mr Mark Blackburn, Mr Adam Twomey, Mr Brad Rake, Ms Deepika Mathur and Mr Len Holbrok.

Three members also resigned, Ms Danielle Everleigh, Ms Allison Bitar and Mr Allan Domaschenz, and I note with sadness the death of Mr Colin Freeman.

I thank those members for their dedicated service and valuable contribution to the DCA.

I would also like to thank all current members of the DCA for their continuing support and hard work over the past 12 months.

The DCA conducted 52 meetings in 2024-25 and determined 339 planning applications.

During 2024-25, 44 complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Act were lodged in accordance with section 78 (making a complaint) of the *Planning Act 1999*.

In the same year, 64 complaints (which may include complaints received prior to 1 July 2025) were successfully resolved.

Resolution of complaints can involve the cessation of illegal activities, the obtaining of relevant approvals or confirmation that the use or development is in accordance with the relevant requirements.

Two applications for review were lodged with NTCAT against enforcement decisions of the DCA.

I am looking forward to the year ahead and working with all seven divisions of the DCA to promote good planning outcomes in the Northern Territory.

ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT AUTHORITY

The Development Consent Authority (DCA) is established under section 82 of the *Planning Act 1999*, and section 83 establishes different divisions of the DCA. These are generally associated with the larger population centres within the NT. Each division is responsible for making statutory planning decisions within their area.

Where a DCA division has not been established, the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment is the consent authority.

DCA division areas are established in the following localities:

- Alice Springs
- Batchelor
- Darwin
- Katherine
- Litchfield
- Palmerston
- Tennant Creek

Maps of these areas can be found on the Department's website www.environment.nt.gov.au/boards-committees/dca

The composition of a DCA division is established by section 87 of the Act. It allows the Minister to appoint a Chair of the DCA (who presides over all divisions), two community members nominated by the local government council, one alternate member nominated by the local government council, and two specialist members.



CHAIR

All 7 DCA Divisions
Appointed by the Minister



COMMUNITY MEMBERS x2

Nominated by the local government council
Appointed by the Minister
Alternate member also appointed



SPECIALIST MEMBERS x2

Appointed by the Minister, and have relevant qualifications, skills or experience

Community members are appointed when a division falls within a local government council area. The local government council nominates potential members, who may be councilors, or members of the public with good standing whom the local government council believe will represent the community.

An employee of a local government council is not eligible to be appointed as a community member for that local government council. The local government council also provides nominees for an alternate community member, who acts for a community member when they are absent or unable to attend.

Specialist members are appointed to a specific DCA division directly by the Minister. They are to have relevant qualifications, skills or experience in at least one of the fields shown below.

The term of appointment of a member or Chair of the DCA is two years and there is no limit on the number of times a member or Chair can be re-appointed.

Arrangements with the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment

The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment provides technical and secretariat support to the Development Consent Authority to enable it to properly exercise its power and perform its functions.

For additional information relevant to the processing of planning applications in the Northern Territory (including the average processing time for development applications which is currently standing at 60 days) see the Annual Report for the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment available at [Annual reports | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment](#)





CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

*Alternate for community members

Alice Springs

Members	Position	Appointed
Christopher Neck	Specialist Member	12 April 2019
Matt Cunningham	Specialist Member	15 May 2025
Matt Paterson	Community Member	16 November 2022
Mark Coffey	Community Member	4 December 2023

Batchelor

Members	Position	Appointed
Monica Baumgartner	Specialist Member	12 April 2014
Mitch Virgin	Specialist Member	30 April 2025
Andrew Turner	Community Member	14 February 2007
Richard Luxton*	Community Member	13 December 2021

Darwin

Members	Position	Appointed
Marion Guppy	Specialist Member	12 April 2019
Rod Applegate	Specialist Member	30 April 2025
Peter Pangquee	Community Member	25 July 2019
Mick Palmer	Community Member	4 December 2021
Jimmy Bouhoris*	Community Member	4 December 2023

Katherine

Members	Position	Appointed
Annabel McLarty	Specialist Member	27 April 2021
Rod Applegate	Specialist Member	30 April 2025
Madeleine Bower	Community Member	4 December 2023
Denis Coburn	Community Member	13 December 2021
Jeremy Trembath*	Community Member	13 December 2021

Litchfield

Members	Position	Appointed
Rick Grant	Specialist Member	12 April 2023
Mitch Virgin	Specialist Member	30 April 2025
Emma Sharp	Community Member	4 December 2021
Rachael Wright	Community Member	4 December 2021
Doug Barden*	Community Member	1 July 2016

Palmerston

Members	Position	Appointed
Trevor Dalton	Specialist Member	12 April 2019
Dr Elisha Harris	Specialist Member	12 April 2023
Athina Pascoe-Bell	Community Member	10 July 2018
Sarah Henderson	Community Member	10 July 2018
Ben Giesecke*	Community Member	30 April 2025

Tennant Creek

Members	Position	Appointed
Barbara Shaw	Community Member	2 April 2024
Greg Marlow	Community Member	30 April 2025
Sid Vashist*	Community Member	30 April 2025

MEETINGS

DCA division meetings are scheduled once per month, except for the Darwin Division which has meetings scheduled twice per month.

Meetings for Batchelor are scheduled as required. Meetings may be cancelled from time to time if there are insufficient applications to form an agenda.

Closed session meetings can occur when there are no public items to be heard but there is other DCA business to attend to.

Similarly, out of session meetings can occur when it is more efficient for a division to hear an application on the papers rather than in person.

Not all applications need to go to a meeting.

Many applications are determined under delegation by Departmental Officers where they meet criteria established by the applicable DCA division.

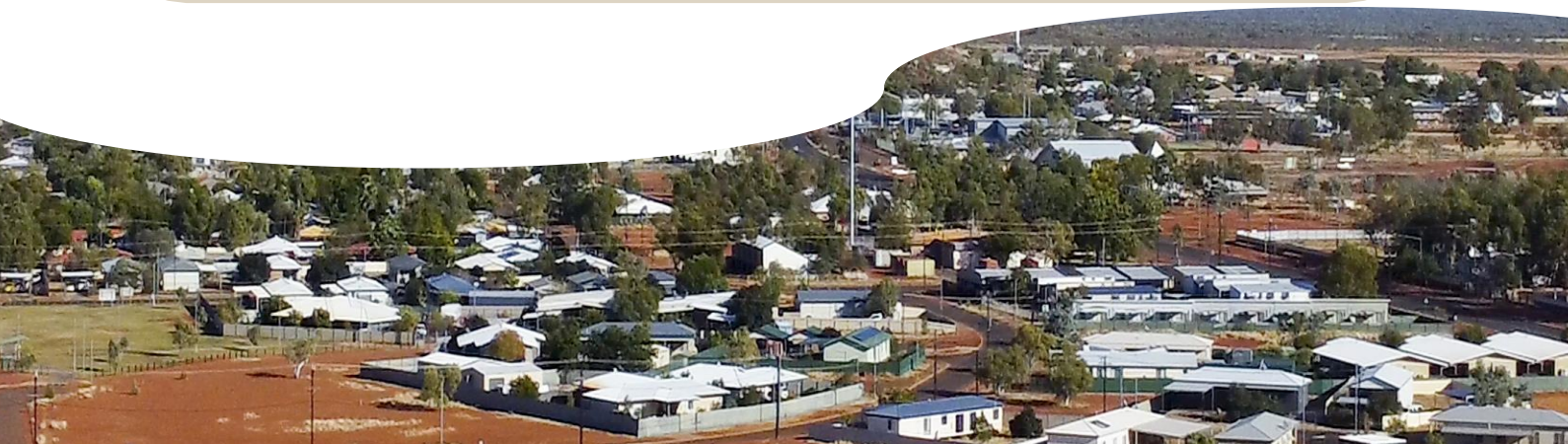
Development applications are usually processed within eight weeks; however, this can vary depending on the complexity of the application; the length of advertising needed; and/or if more information is needed. The average processing time for applications in 2024-25 was 60 days.

DCA Meeting Dates Calendars are available on the Department's website:

www.environment.nt.gov.au/boards-committees/dca/meetings-and-agendas

Meetings are scheduled to avoid public holidays, but not school holidays

Division	Public Meetings	Other (closed/out of session)	Total
Alice Springs	7	0	7
Batchelor	0	1	1
Darwin	18	1	19
Katherine	3	1	4
Litchfield	7	2	9
Palmerston	9	0	9
Tennant Creek	1	2	3
Total	45	7	52



BUSINESS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT AUTHORITY

The following application types are included in the below figures: alteration, certificate of existing use, concurrent, development, extension of time, subdivision, variation of development and variation to a deemed permit. Applications determined may include applications lodged in previous financial years, similarly some applications lodged in the financial year may yet to be determined.

Applications Lodged

Division	Number of applications lodged
Alice Springs	48
Batchelor	2
Darwin	146
Katherine	27
Litchfield	80
Palmerston	46
Tennant Creek	13
Total	362

Applications Determined

Division	Number of applications approved	Number of applications refused
Alice Springs	43	0
Batchelor	3	0
Darwin	140	2
Katherine	22	0
Litchfield	69	0
Palmerston	47	2
Tennant Creek	15	0
Total	339	4

These figures do not include applications processed outside of DCA areas, or applications for compliance checks and planning certificates.

RIGHTS OF REVIEW

The Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) has jurisdiction over applications for review of certain decisions of the DCA's (including in relation to an enforcement notice) and/or any conditions imposed.

Sections 111-116 of the Act provides a full list of decisions of the consent authority that are eligible for review.

Section 117 of the Act and Regulations 13 and 14 provide further guidance on the circumstances where third party rights of review may or may not apply.

Number of initiating applications lodged with NTCAT

Division	Number of applications lodged	Type (applicant or third party)
Alice Springs	0	N/A
Batchelor	0	N/A
Darwin	2	enforcement action
Katherine	0	N/A
Litchfield	0	N/A
Palmerston	0	N/A
Tennant Creek	0	N/A
Total	2	

To view NTCAT decisions visit [NTCAT | Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal](#)



ENFORCEMENT

The DCA receives, investigates and is the decision-maker for complaints and enforcement matters within each of its divisions.

The DCA is responsible for taking action relating to non-compliance with the Scheme and the Act, which includes the issuing of Show Cause Notices, Enforcement Notices, and prosecution of offences if necessary.

The total number of complaints in progress at any one time may be more than the number of complaints lodged in a financial year, as complaints lodged in previous financial years may still be under investigation.

Similarly, the number of complaints resolved may include complaints lodged in previous financial years.

Division	Number of complaints lodged	Number of complaints resolved
Alice Springs	9	7
Batchelor	0	0
Darwin	9	15
Katherine	1	3
Litchfield	21	30
Palmerston	3	7
Tennant Creek	1	2
TOTAL	44	64

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The DCA expenditure 2024-25 was \$321,178.

The Development Consent Authority is financially supported by the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.





