

Department of LANDS, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

# Performance Report

## Assessment and Approvals Reporting 2024-25



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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

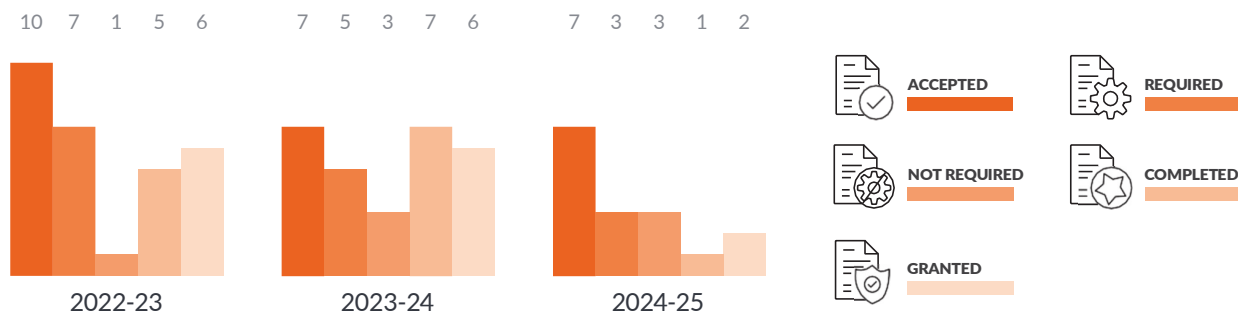
The number of referrals accepted by the NT EPA may be used as an early indicator of future development activity.

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.

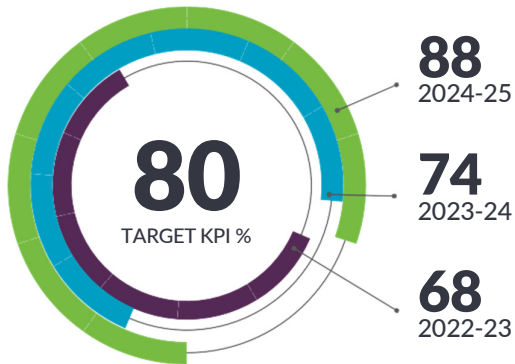


Figure 2: Environmental assessment KPI performance

### 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.

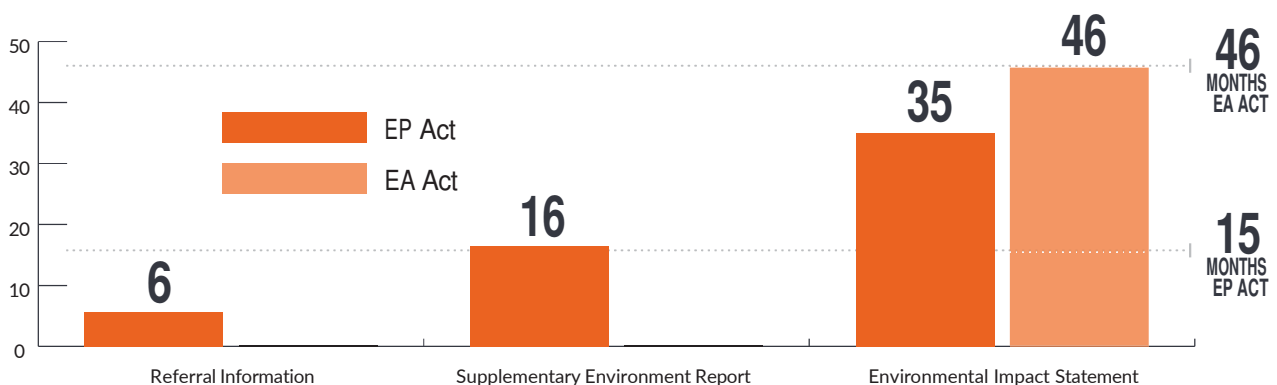


Figure 3: Average time in months to complete assessment under the EP Act and EA Act

## 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  $\geq 85\%$  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.

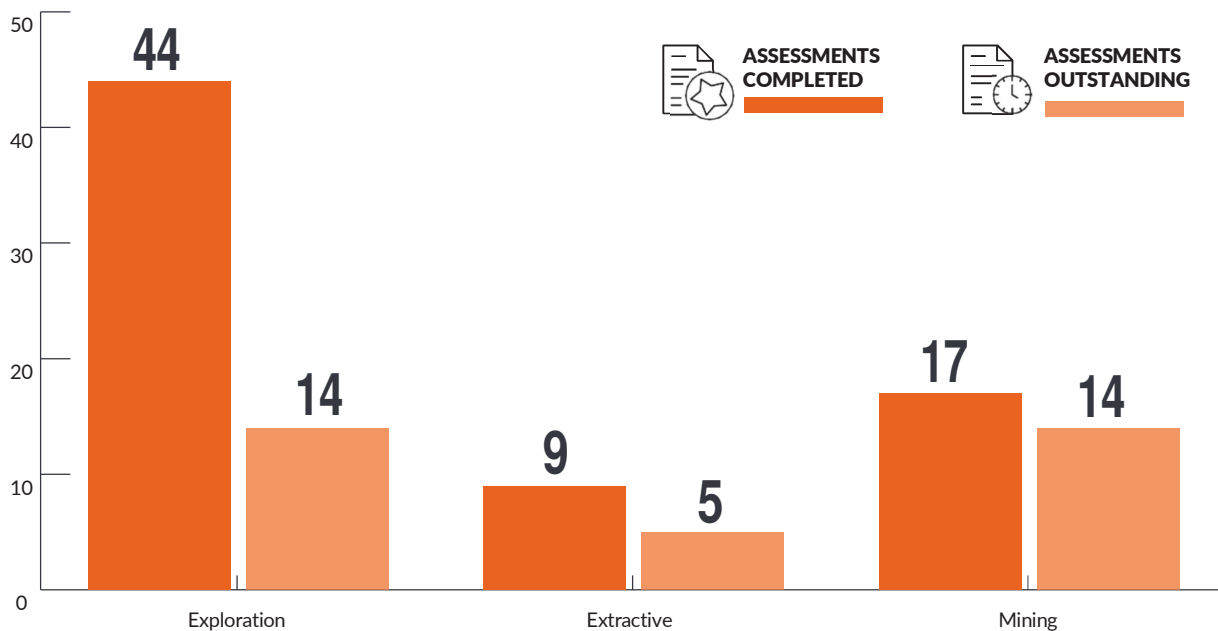
No additional MMPs can be accepted after 1 July 2024.

### 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.

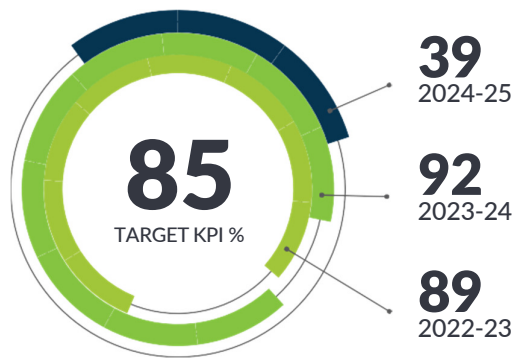
Assessment remains to be completed by the department for 32% of those MMPs submitted before 1 July 2024. Table 9 reports the status of the 104 MMPs as at 30 June 2025.

**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  $\geq 85\%$  of assessments completed within 90 calendar days.

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



**Figure 7: MMP assessment KPI performance**

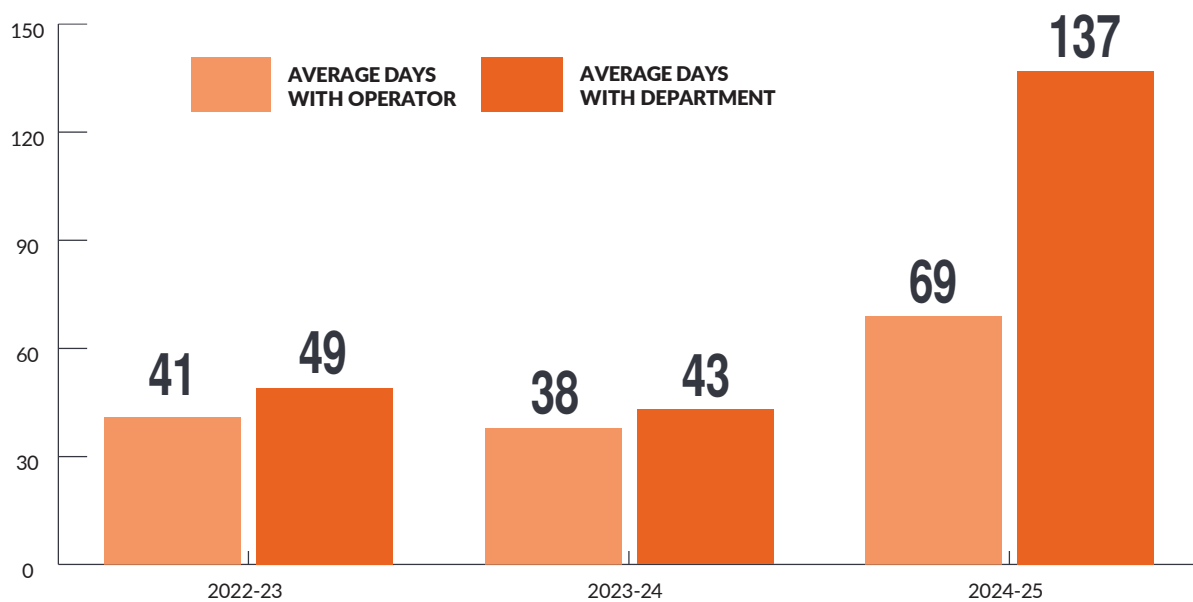
### 2.2.2.3. Average processing time

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.

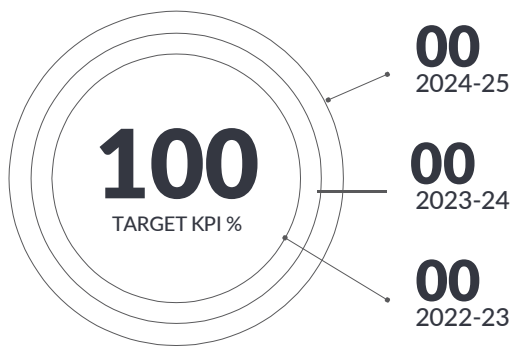


Figure 9: Nomination assessments KPI performance



Figure 10: Major works approvals KPI performance



Figure 11: Minor works approvals KPI performance

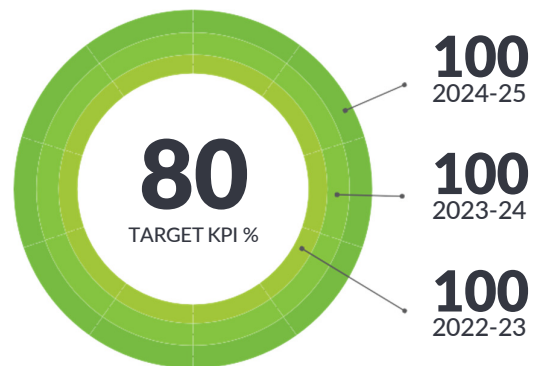


Figure 12: Response to RFIs KPI performance

# 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      |

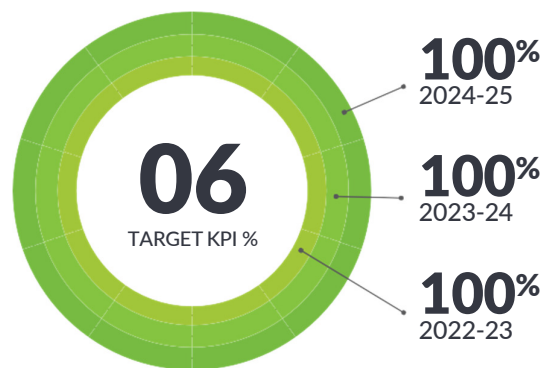
\* Includes cancellation and recreation of parcels related to the Kakadu land grant, including Jabiru.

## 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

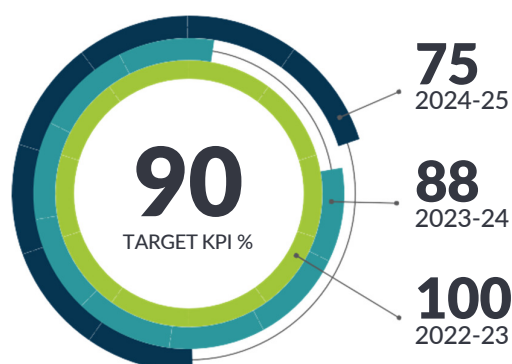
The PE Regulations include statutory timeframes for decisions under regulations 11(2) and (3); refer Table 17. Reporting is in calendar days.

**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**

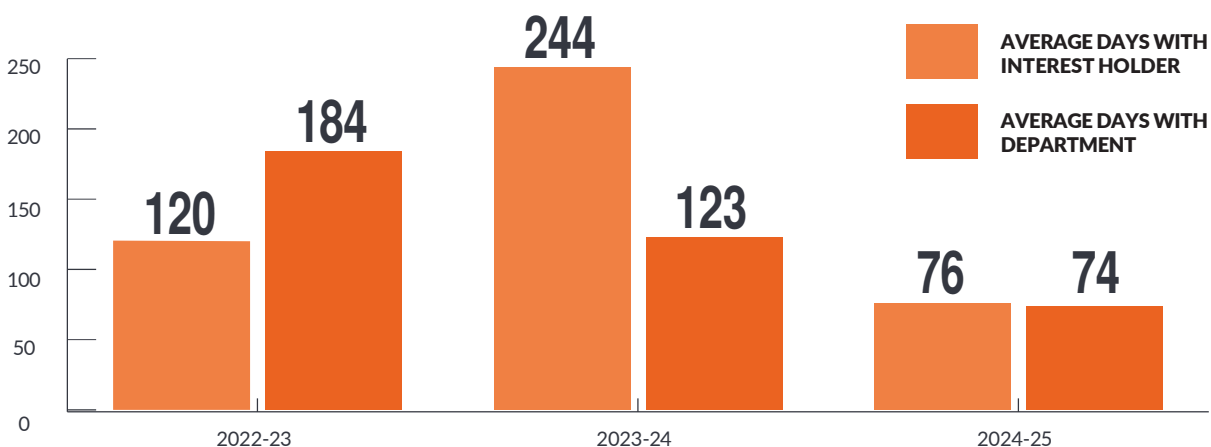
### 5.3. Average processing time

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

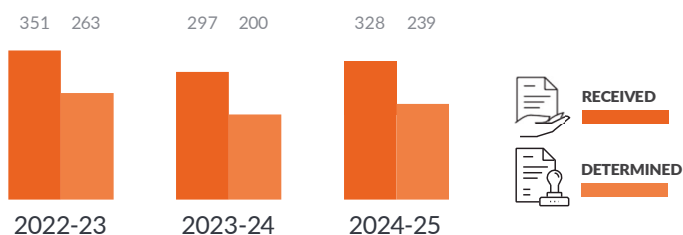
Table 19 reports the number of applications received and determined (including approvals and refusals) over 3 financial years.

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.

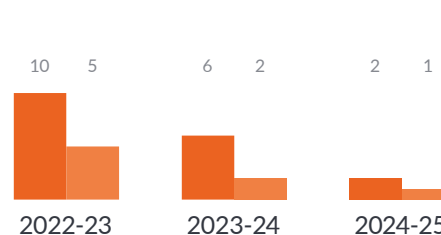
**Table 19: Applications received and approved under the *Planning Act 1999***

| 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<br>(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  $\leq 55$  calendar days. Performance against this KPI is included in Table 21.

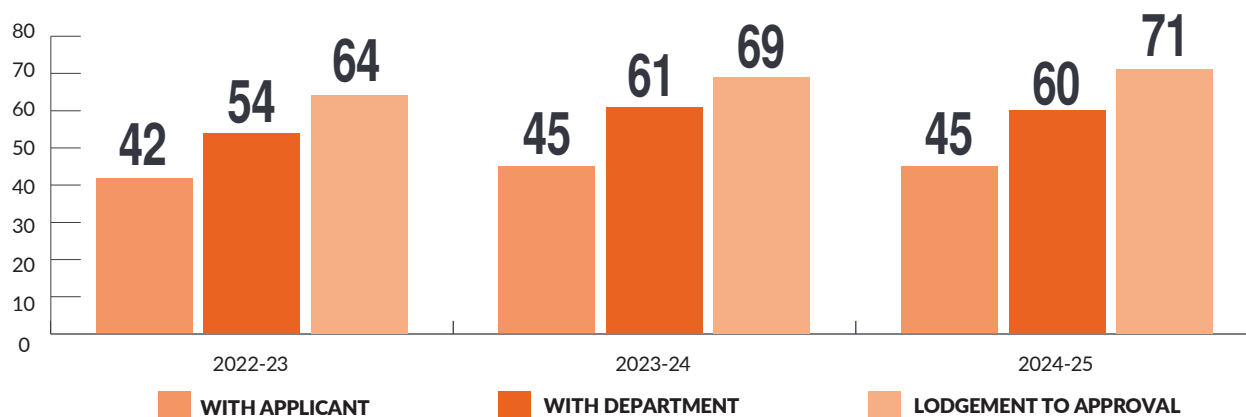
## 6.3. Average processing time

### 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

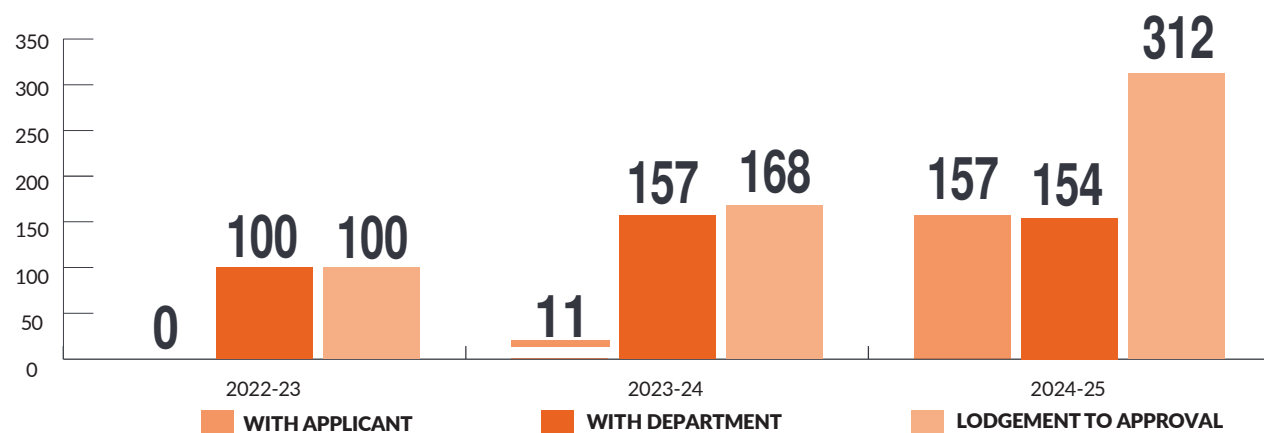
Applications to clear native vegetation on unzoned land require appropriate environmental information to inform their assessment. Where insufficient information is provided and/or further surveys, studies or on-ground data is required to enable appropriate assessment of environmental impacts, the application 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.

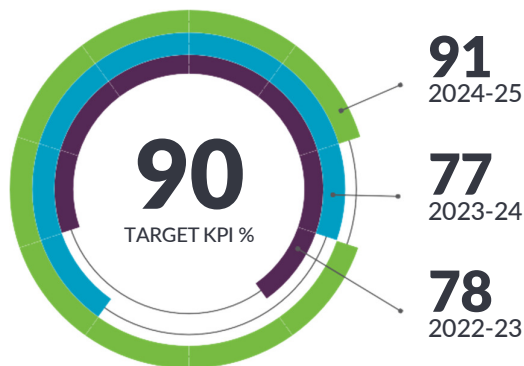


Figure 21: WMPC Act KPI performance

# 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.

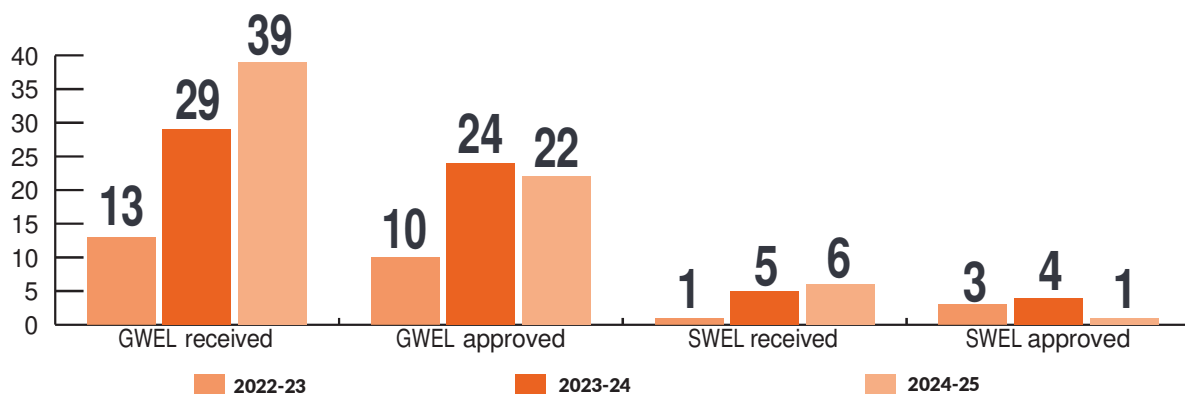


Figure 22: Groundwater extraction licence (GWEL) and surface water extraction licence (SWEL) applications received and approved

## 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.

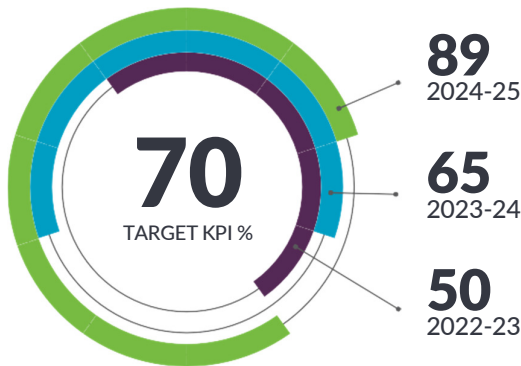


Figure 23: Water extraction licence KPI performance

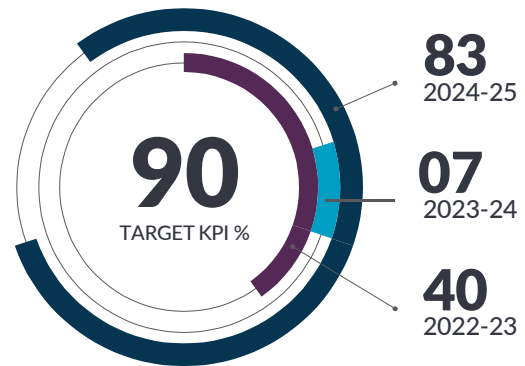
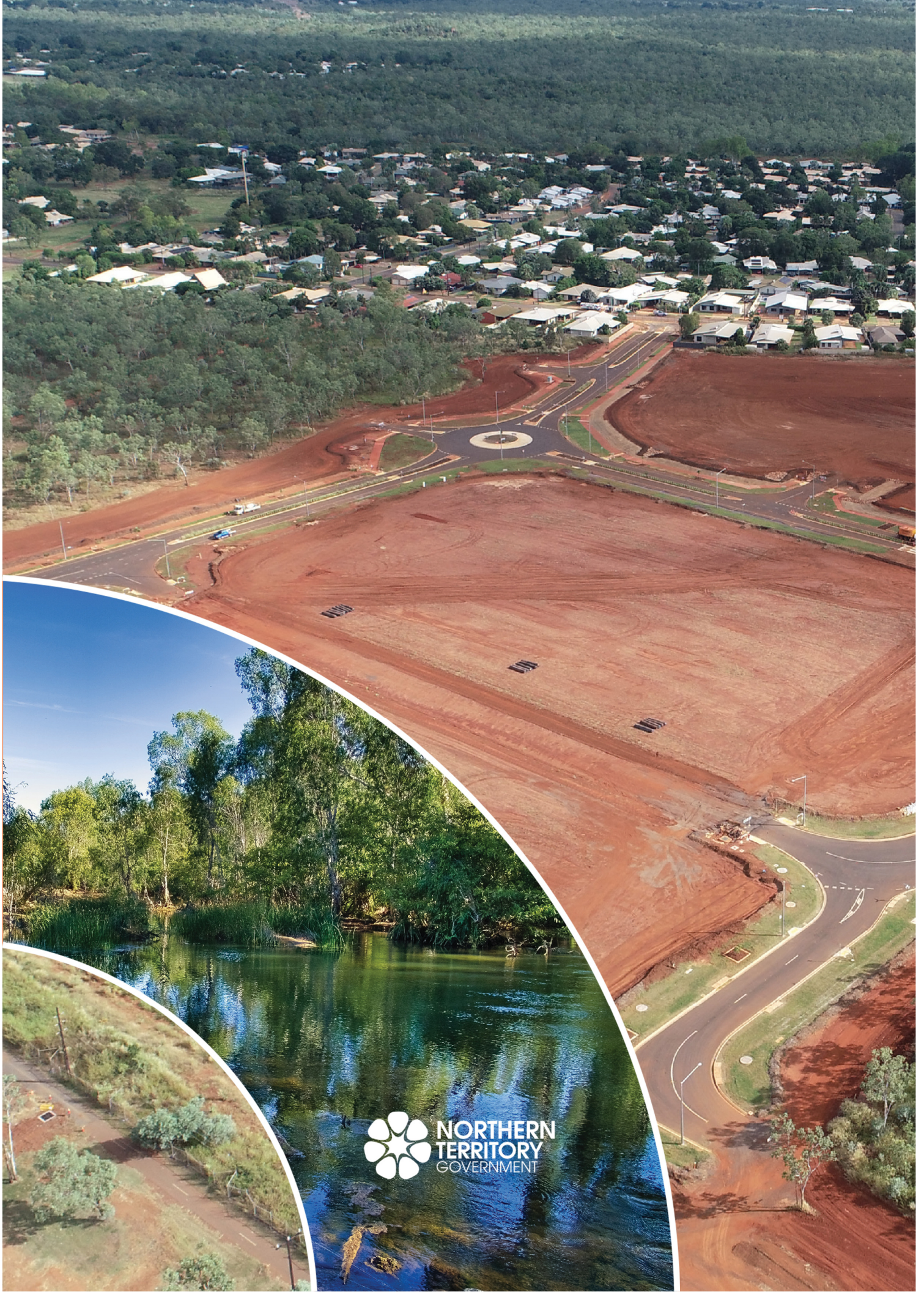


Figure 24: Waste discharge licence KPI performance



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