

Department of LANDS, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Performance Report

Assessment and Approvals Reporting 2025-26



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Environment Protection Act 2019	4
3. Heritage Act 2011	11
4. Licensed Surveyors Act 1983	13
5. Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016	14
6. Planning Act 1999	16
7. Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998	20
8. Water Act 1992	21

Front cover: *Image 1: Northcrest site inspection.*

Image 2: Douglas Daly works progressing

Back cover: *Image 1: Zuccoli Aerial.*

Image 2: Soil scientist describing a soil profile.

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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 DLPE's second 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 and builds on reporting from the previous year.

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 three 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	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Referrals accepted for assessment	7	7	9
Decision that assessment is required	5	3	7
Decision that assessment is not required	3	3	1
Assessments completed	7	1	1
Environmental approvals granted	6	2	1

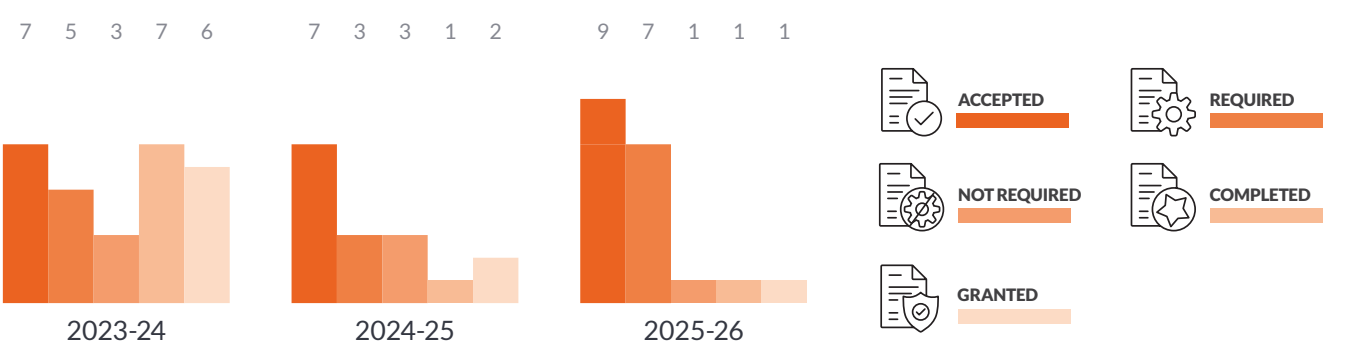


Figure 1: Referrals accepted, assessments and environmental approvals granted

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.

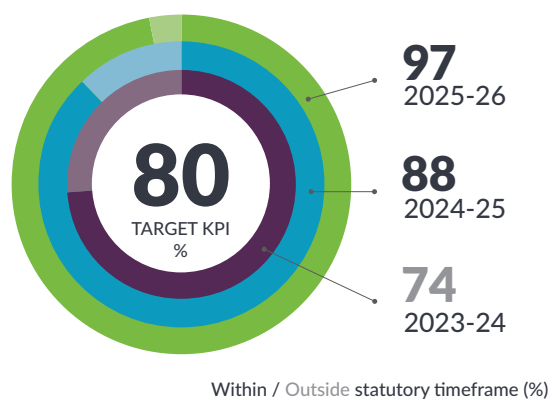
Figure 2 presents performance against the KPI over three financial years.

Figure 2: Environmental assessment KPI performance

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



Statutory timeframe 30 Days

Year	Timeframe (Days)
2023-24	24
2024-25	19
2025-26	20

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 three 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 2025-26 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 accepted and granted

Activity type	Accepted	Rejected	Withdrawn	Total applications	Licences granted
Exploration	64	12	8	84	54
Extractive operations	5	3	2	10	6
Mining operations	4	4	1	9	2
Total	73	19	11	103	62

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 2025-26. Figure 5 presents this performance by activity type.

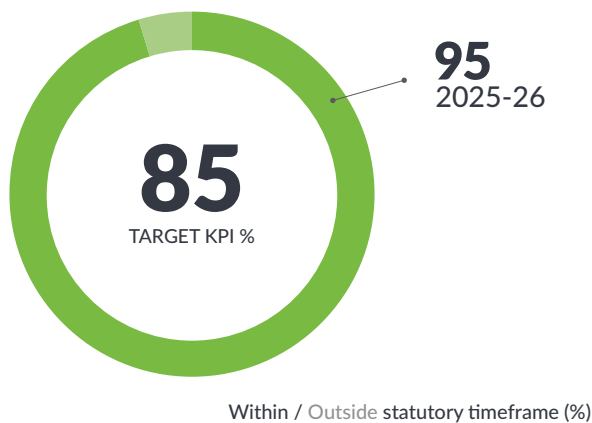


Figure 4: All environmental (mining) licences KPI performance

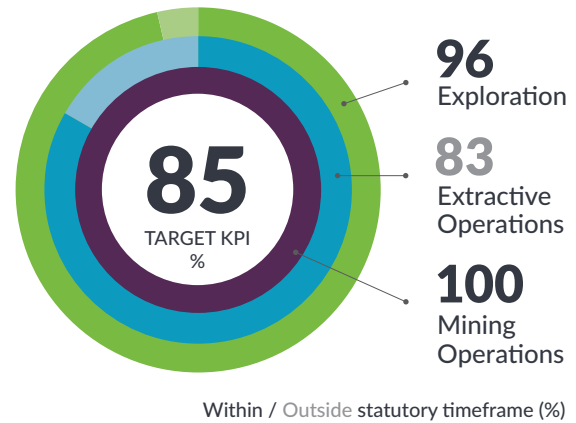


Figure 5: Environmental (mining) licence KPI performance by activity type

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	39	30	25	2	29
	Modified	13	40	34	9	50
	Tailored	4	60	48	39	59
Extractive operations	Standard	0	0	0	0	0
	Modified	3	30	36	31	44
	Tailored	3	50	68	48	82
Mining operations	Tailored*	2	120	88	66	110

* Standard and modified condition licences are currently not available for mining operations.

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

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	39	30	Nil	42	16-170	17	0-142
	Modified	13	40	15	64	24-120	14	0-65
	Tailored	4	60	15*	84	58-133	16	4-49
Extractive Operations	Standard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Modified	3	30	Nil	84	46-121	27	0-56
	Tailored	3	50	15	139	90-223	42	3-115
Mining Operations	Tailored*	2	120	30	167	142-192	49	2-96

* Standard and modified condition licences are currently not available for mining operations.

2.2.2. Mining Management Plan approvals

As of 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 and a further 18 assessments were completed during 2025-26; refer Table 7.

Table 7: Status of MMP as at 30 June 2026

Year	Approved	Refused	With operator	With department	Withdrawn	Voided
2024-25	66	1	23	10	4	n/a
2025-26	14	0	n/a	n/a	4	15
Total	80	1	n/a	n/a	8	15

Figure 6 presents the distribution of the completed (approvals and refusals) assessments across mining activity.

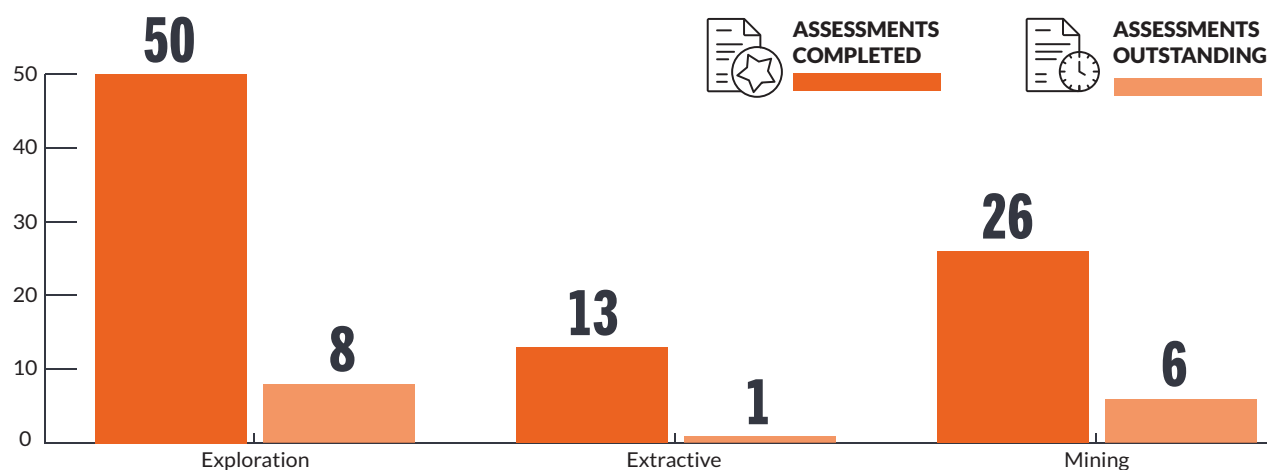


Figure 6: Total MMPs assessments completed (2024-25 and 2025-26)

As of 1 July 2025, 33 MMP assessments were outstanding. Table 8 identifies the status of those MMPs as of 30 June 2026.

Table 8: MMP applications assessed during 2025-26

Activity type	Total outstanding	Approved	Refused	Withdrawn	Voided
Exploration	13	2	0	2	9
Extractive Operations	5	3	0	1	1
Mining Operations	15	9	0	1	5
Total	33	14	0	4	15

Table 9 reports the number of MMP assessments completed over three financial years. Reported numbers are determined based on the MMP approval decision date falling within the reporting period.

Table 9: MMP assessments completed over three financial years

Approval type	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
MMP assessments completed	78	71	18

2.2.2.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

In accordance with the transitional arrangements under the EP Act, the 104 MMPs received were required to 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 applications that were not finalised were automatically voided (s308(4) of the EP Act).

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.

The KPI for the assessment of MMPs is ≥85% of assessments completed within 90 calendar days. Figure 7 presents performance against this KPI over three financial years.

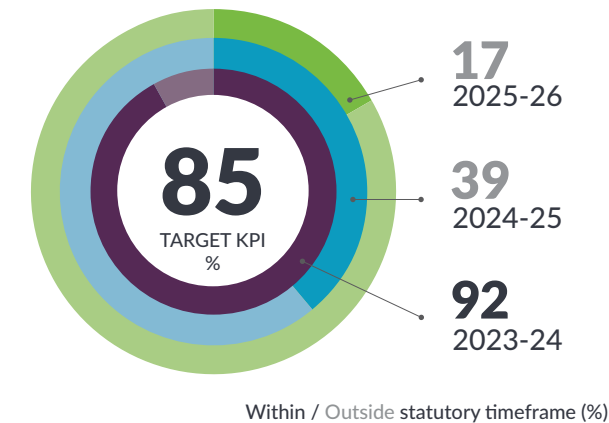


Figure 7: MMP assessment KPI performance

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	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Average days with operator	38	69	310
Time range with operator	1 to 289	0 to 461	0 to 972
Average days with department	43	137	298
Time range with department	2 to 139	6 to 610	6 to 696

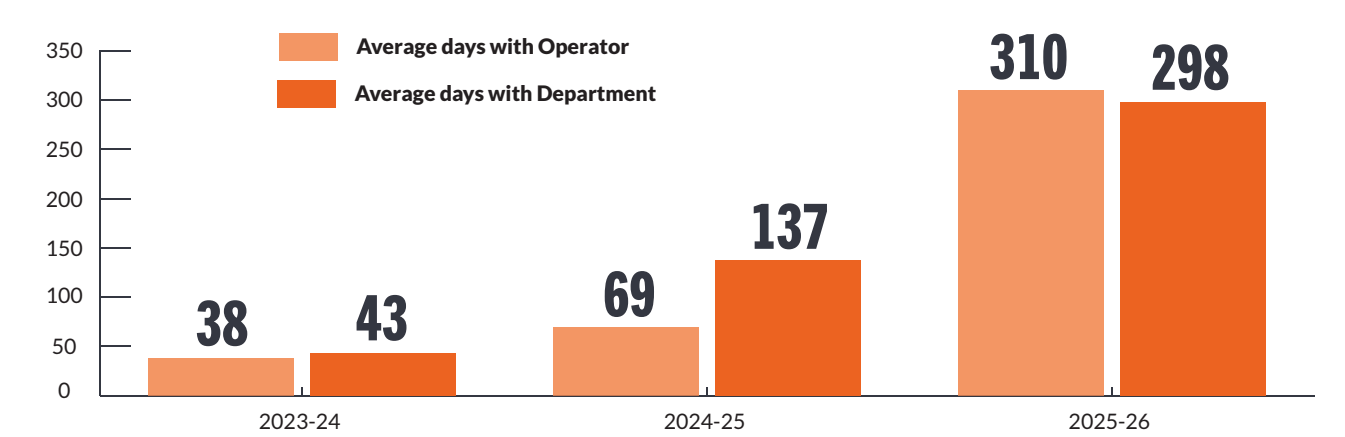


Figure 8: Average days MMPs are with the operator or the department

3. Heritage Act 2011

The *Heritage Act 2011* (Heritage Act) 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 Heritage Act also sets out requirements for the approval of works on declared heritage places.

The assessment process and approval decisions under the Heritage Act 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 three 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 three financial years

Approval Type	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Nominations received	1	1	0
Assessments presented to Heritage Council	2	1	1
Decisions on declaration of heritage place or object	2	3	2
Work Approval applications received	15	23	17
Work Approvals applications reviewed by Heritage Council	15	20	17
Work Approvals approved (total)	12	17	14
• Major	4	2	2
• Minor	8	15	12

3.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

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

Table 12: Target timeframes

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 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 three financial years.

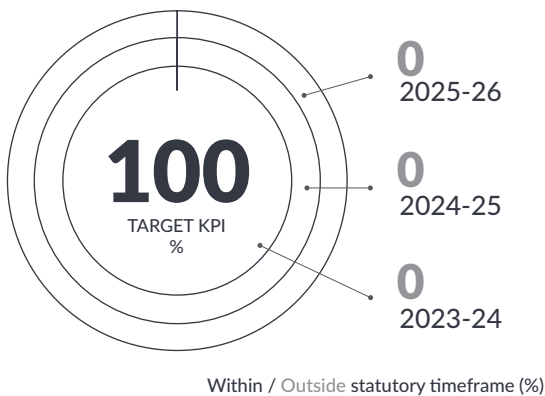


Figure 9: Nomination assessments KPI performance

Note: no nominations have been accepted, so the KPI cannot be reported against.

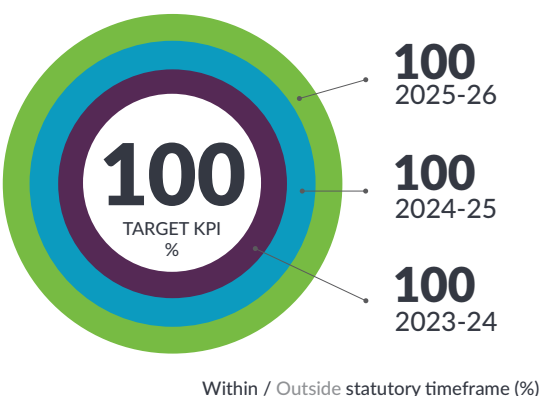


Figure 10: Major works approvals KPI performance

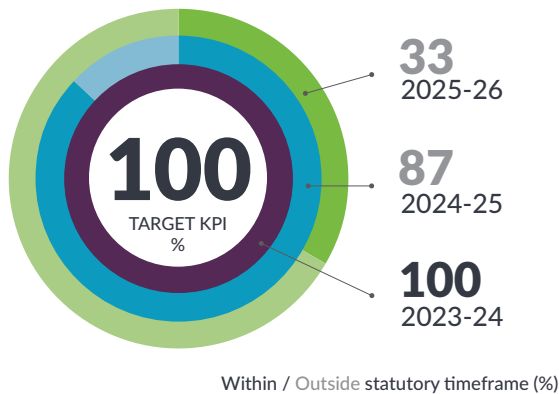


Figure 11: Minor works approvals KPI performance

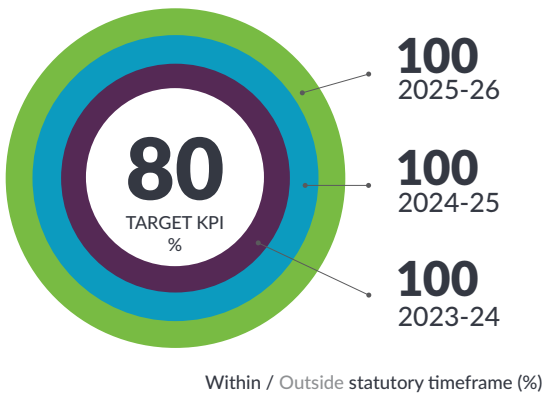


Figure 12: Response to RFIs KPI performance

4. Licensed Surveyors Act 1983

The *Licensed Surveyors Act 1983* (Licensed Surveyors Act) regulates the practice of land boundary surveying by providing for the registration of land boundary surveyors. The Licensed Surveyors 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 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 three financial years.

Table 13: Survey plans lodged and approved

Service/Approval	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Data Allocation Requests	300	168	162
Survey Plans Lodged	87	132	103
Survey Requisitions	152	203	82
Survey Plans Approved	94	113	87
New Parcels on Approved Plans	557	737	584

4.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The Licensed Surveyors Act does not include statutory timeframes, however the department has adopted non-statutory timeframes as a KPI; refer Table 14. Figure 13 presents performance against the KPI over three financial years.

Table 14: Target timeframes under the Licensed Surveyors Act

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



Figure 13: 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	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Average number of days	6 or less	2.6	3.9	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 three financial years.

Table 16: EMPs received and approved

Approval type	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
EMP received	8	4	7
EMPs approved	7	10	2

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 PE Regulations

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 14 presents performance against the KPIs over three financial years.

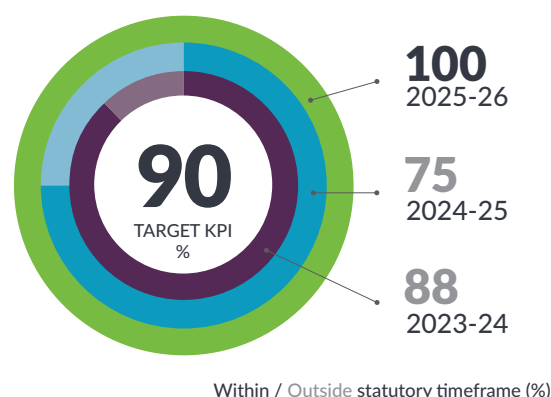


Figure 14: Decisions made under regulation 11(2) KPI performance

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 15.

Table 18: EMP assessment days

Year EMP submitted	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Average time for a decision made under regulation 11	82	50	70
Decision time range	59-101	45-56	50-90
Average assessment time	272	145	129
Assessment time range	175-548	119-167	83-174
Average days with the department	137	96	92
Range of days with the department	117-182	62-119	64-119
Average days with interest holder	135	48	37
Range of days with interest holder	35-429	0-69	19-55

Note: Determinations of EMPs are reported based on year submitted. Reporting data for previous financial years may require updating in the future to reflect decisions that have not yet been made.

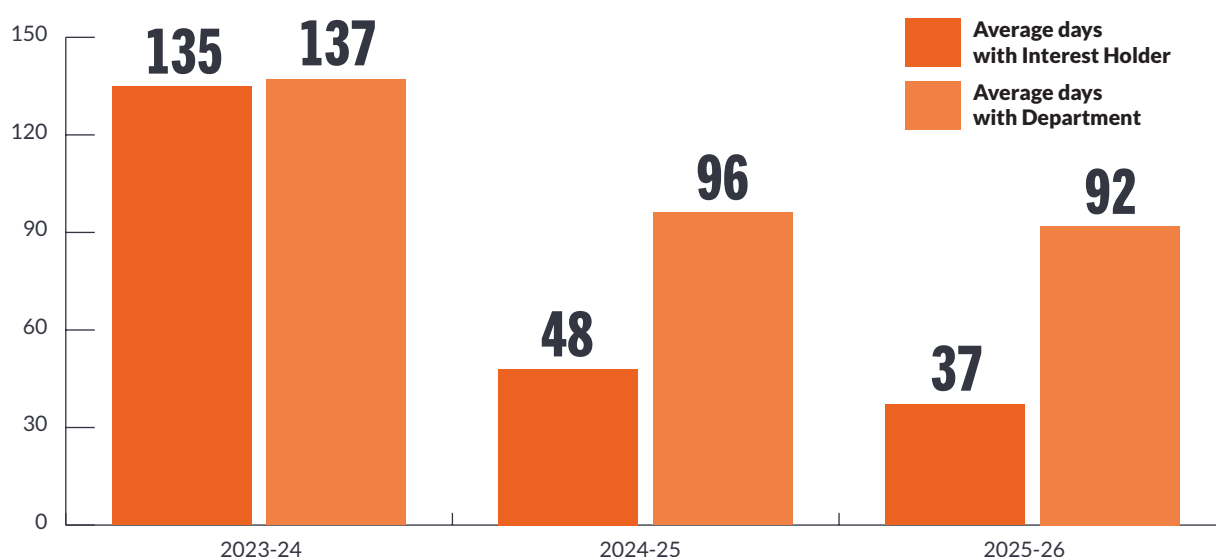


Figure 15: Average days EMPs are with the interest holder or the department

6. Planning Act 1999

The *Planning Act 1999* (Planning Act) regulates how land can be used and developed. It establishes a framework for planning schemes, development applications and enforcement of planning rules. The Planning 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 native vegetation (including existing cleared native vegetation) on unzoned land must lodge a development application and receive a permit before clearing commences where the clearing will result in:
 - » more than ten hectares of clearing on land parcels greater than 100 hectares, or
 - » more than one hectare of clearing on land parcels 100 hectares or smaller.
- 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 three financial years.

Figure 16 presents development applications received and determined. Figure 17 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

Approval type	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Development applications received	297	328	316
Development applications determined	200	239	300
Clearing of native vegetation (unzoned land) applications received	6	2	9
Clearing of native vegetation (unzoned land) applications determined	2	1	11
Planning scheme amendments received	27	29	34
Planning scheme amendments determined	13	18	28

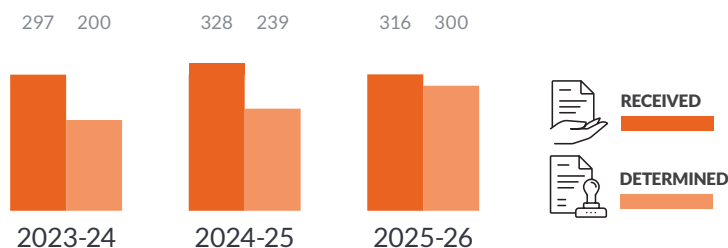


Figure 16: Development applications received and determined



Figure 17: Unzoned Land Clearing applications received and determined

6.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The Planning Act 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

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.

The KPI for a decision of a development application for the clearing of native vegetation on unzoned land under the Planning Act requires 80% of applications to be assessed within 84 days. This recognises the longer consultation period typically required for these application types (28 days rather than 14 days) and the scientific review required by environmental experts to determine potential impact to the environment. This KPI was introduced to report on the 2025-26 financial year. Performance against this KPI is included in Table 22.

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 18 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	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total applications determined	200	239	300
Percentage applications deferred	16%	21%	18%
Average days on deferral with applicant	45	45	7
Time range with applicant	7 – 154	6 – 168	2 – 147
Average days with department	61	60	56
Time range with department	19 – 168	19 – 208	15 – 207
Average days from lodgement to determination, including deferred days	69	71	64
Time range from lodgement to determination, including deferred days	19 – 252	21 – 277	15 – 300

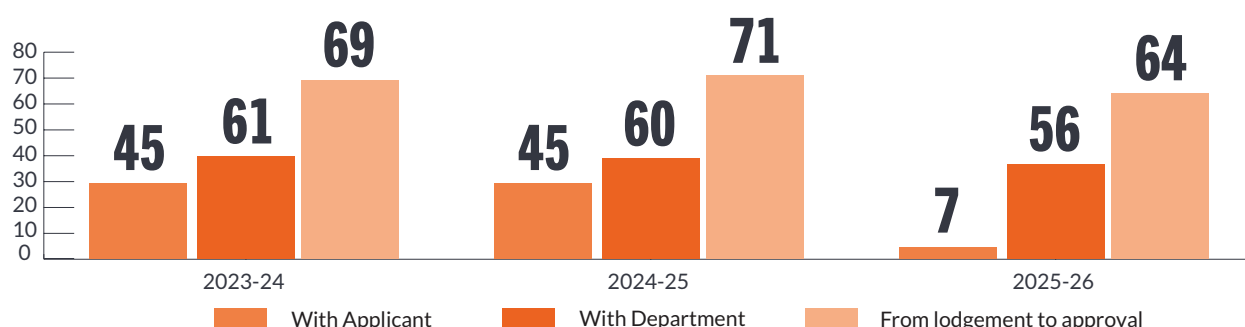


Figure 18: Average days development applications take to process including when on deferral with the applicant or being assessed by the department

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. When 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. Data for 2025-26 also includes information on applications to clear native vegetation in zones A, H and R, due to this responsibility being transferred to the respective work unit.

Figure 19 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	2023-24 [^]	2024-25 [^]	2025-26 [*]
Total applications approved	4	3	12
Average days on deferral with applicant	11	157	157
Time range with applicant	0 to 28	0 to 324	0 to 796
Average days with department	161	179	106
Time range with department	133 to 228	112 to 253	56 to 206
Average days from lodgement to approval	171	314	263
Time ranges from lodgement to approval	133 to 242	112 to 574	56 to 1002

^{*}Reporting for applications to clear native vegetation on zones A, H and R was included. For previous years, this information has been reported in Table 21.

[^]Data in previous years has been clarified in this report, to better represent the number of days with the department until decision.

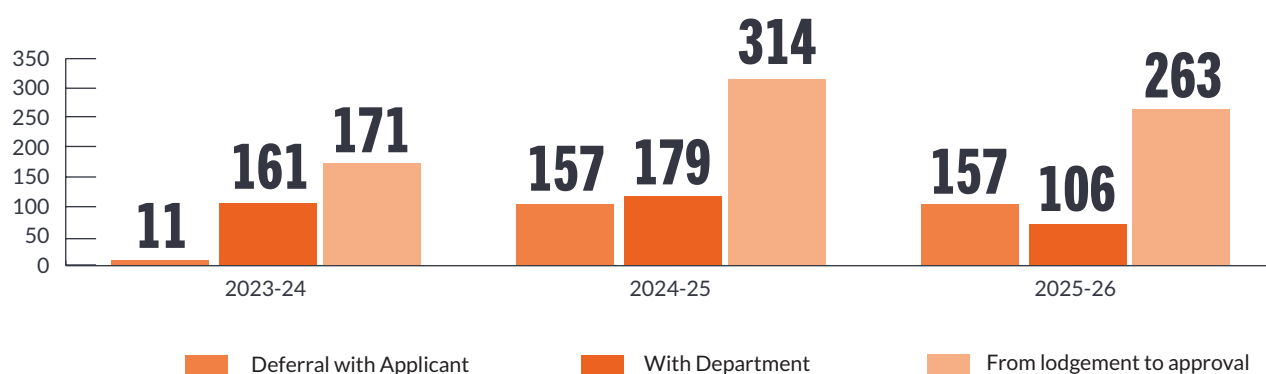


Figure 19: Average days applications for native vegetation clearing on unzoned land take to process including when on deferral with the applicant or being assessed by the department

6.4. Planning reform

The Planning system in the NT is consistently recognised as having some of the fastest approval timeframes in the country. Continued enhancements to the planning system helps grow the NT economy, support community needs such as housing and ensure the NT remains competitive in attracting major investment.

Planning reform efforts in 2025-26 have primarily focused on implementing recommendations of the Approvals Fast Track Taskforce. These have included:

- Reduced approval requirements for low-risk developments, including for residential, commercial, industrial and community uses;
- Exempted some low-risk land clearing activities from needing consent and increased the use of delegations for other clearing proposals;
- Removed barriers that prevented subdivision of land in a restricted water extraction area, if a person wants to utilise rainwater tanks as their primary source of water;
- Made it easier to provide student accommodation in Darwin CBD by allowing the repurposing of vacant commercial buildings for student accommodation without planning approval;
- Removing consultation requirements for some types of development to speed up assessment processes;
- Amended legislation to increase flexibility to vary or change already approved development permits if changes are not substantive; and
- Introduced a dedicated fast-track planning process to provide an expedited assessment pathway for eligible applications.

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 for activities associated with:

- disposal of waste by burial,
- listed waste collecting, transporting, storing, recycling, treating or disposing, and
- processing hydrocarbons to produce, store and/or dispatch liquefied natural gas or methanol.
- **Environment Protection Approvals (EPAs)**
 - The NT EPA grants EPAs for the activities listed in Schedule 2 Part 1 of the WMPC Act identified above. EPAs are 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 Part 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 three financial years.

Table 23: Approvals and licences issued under the WMPC Act

Approval Type	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
EPAs issued	6	3	4
EPLs issued	46	50	58

7.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The WMPC Act does not include statutory timeframes. The KPI for processing applications for EPAs and EPLs in 2023-24 and 2024-25 was 90% of applications processed within 60 business days. This KPI has changed for 2025-26 to process 80% of applications within 60 business days. The change reflects the longer period now granted for licences (5 to 10 years), meaning there are fewer applications, but a higher proportion of more complex applications requiring longer to assess.

Figure 20 presents performance against the KPI over three financial years.

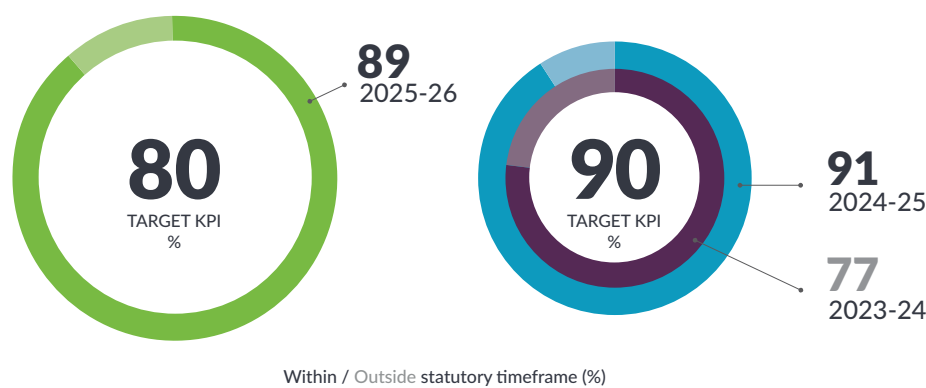


Figure 20: WMPC Act KPI performance

8. Water Act 1992

The *Water Act 1992* (Water Act) 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 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 over three 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

Approval type	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Groundwater extraction licence applications	29	39	64
Groundwater extraction licences approved	24#	22#	71
Surface water extraction licence applications	5	6	2
Surface water extraction licences approved	4	1	5
Waste discharge licence applications	8	9	10
Waste discharge licences approved	27	6	7

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

Figure 21 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.

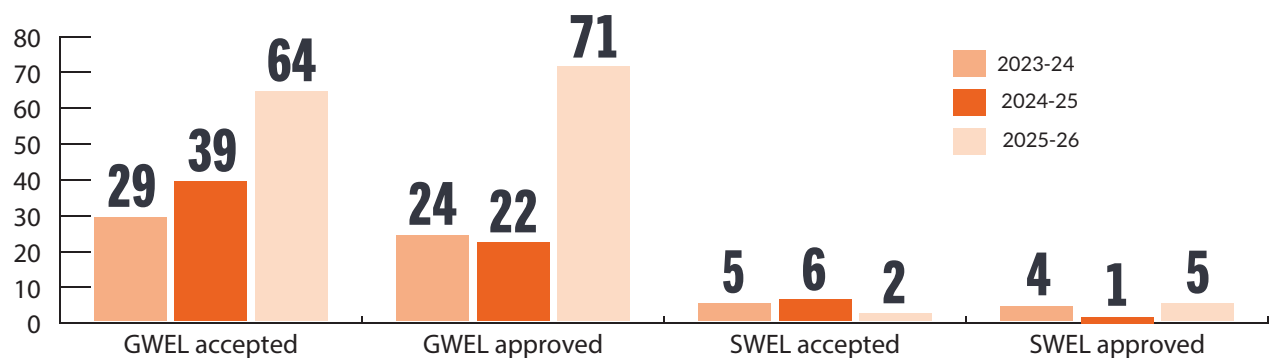


Figure 21: Groundwater extraction licence (GWEL) and surface water extraction licence (SWEL) applications accepted and approved

8.2. Target timeframes and KPI reporting

The Water Act 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

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

The KPIs under the Water Act are:

- 70% of water extraction licences assessed within 80 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 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 22 presents performance against the KPI over three financial years.

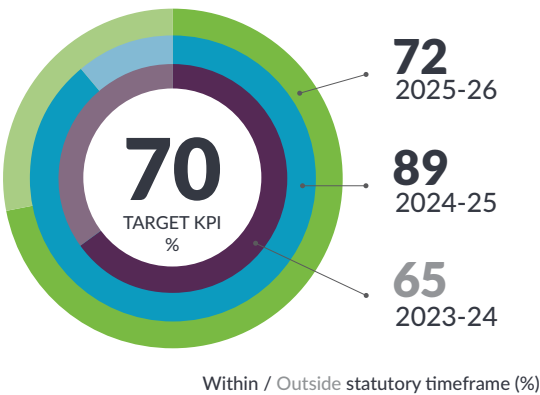


Figure 22: Water extraction licence KPI performance

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