



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 319

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA:

Environmental Impact Assessment Compliance and Enforcement

- 1. How many environmental impact assessments were conducted in 2025-26, and how many projects received environmental approval?**

Completed and Active environmental impact assessments (EIA) under the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act) are available on the EIA register at [Environmental impact assessment | NTEPA](#).

Environmental Approvals issued under the EP Act are published at [Environmental approvals | DLPE](#).

- 2. Of those approved, how many were subject to conditions of approval?**

Refer [Environmental approvals | DLPE](#).

- a. How many had enforcement action taken for breaches of those conditions?**

A wide range of enforcement action is taken by the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment's Environmental Regulation Division in line with its Compliance and Enforcement policy and published at [Compliance and enforcement | NTEPA](#).

The Department publishes information about compliance and enforcement action in annual reports, including:

- Performance Report – Compliance and Enforcement: <https://environment.nt.gov.au/about-us>; and
- Compliance Report Card: [Compliance and enforcement | NTEPA](#).

The Department has undertaken inspections, provided advice and guidance and issued three warning letters in relation to non-compliances with environmental approvals.

- 3. How many active projects currently require monitoring by the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NTEPA), and how many on-ground compliance inspections were carried out in 2025-26?**

The Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) is not the compliance regulator for granted Environmental Approvals, it assesses significant projects prior to approval.

All active projects with an Environmental Approval are monitored for compliance by the Department.

Information on inspections is published at [Compliance and Enforcement Reporting 2025-26](#)

- 4. The NTEPA's annual report for 2024-25 records that it issued 15 warning letters for non-compliance with environment protection licence conditions and 4 penalty infringement notices. How many breaches of environmental approval conditions were identified in 2025-26 and what enforcement action was taken in each category? Please provide as a table by project type and action taken.**

NT EPA is not the regulator for granted Environmental Approvals, it assesses significant projects prior to approval.

Projects with recent Environmental Approvals were a compliance priority in 2024-25. You can see a summary of regulatory activities at [Environment Compliance Report Card 2024-25](#).

One warning letter was issued to an environmental approval holder for a mining project in 2025-26. Refer: [DLPE Performance Report: Compliance and Enforcement Reporting 2025-26](#).

Environmental approval holders are required to provide environmental and performance reports, which published at [Environmental approvals | DLPE](#).

- 5. How many full-time equivalent compliance and monitoring officers are currently employed to enforce environmental regulations in the Territory?**

There is a total of 43 FTEs employed in the Environmental Regulation Division. Within this Division, there are 24 appointed authorised officers.

- a. What assessment has the Department made of whether current staffing is adequate given the scale of major projects across mining, gas and agriculture?**

Staffing and resourcing requirements are considered through Government's normal budget and Cabinet processes, including as part of proposals relating to major projects and regulatory responsibilities.

For onshore petroleum regulation, resourcing is also supported by a cost recovery framework comprising Environment Management Plan assessment fees and annual compliance levies, which fund assessment, compliance, monitoring and enforcement functions associated with petroleum activities. These fees and levies are activity-based and vary according to the nature, scale and complexity of regulated activities.

6. What monitoring is in place to assess the long-term impacts of large-scale projects on aquifers, rivers and cultural water sources?

To support the management of the Northern Territory's (NT) water resources, the Department maintains over 400 groundwater monitoring bores and 150 surface water monitoring sites across the NT. Information and the data collected through these monitoring sites is available at [Water | NT.GOV.AU](http://Water.NT.GOV.AU).

This monitoring data informs a cyclical program of water resources investigations, assessments, coupled ground and surface water numerical modelling of water resources, and planning, regulation and compliance activities to ensure robust ongoing management of the NT's water resources

7. How is the Government ensuring that gas and mining projects, including in the Beetaloo Basin and at Middle Arm, comply with environmental protections including waste management, emissions reporting and water use conditions?

Proposals that have the potential for a significant impact on the environment are required to be referred to the NT EPA for consideration under the EP Act and available at [Environmental impact assessment | NTEPA](#).

The Middle Arm Precinct strategic proposal requires assessment under the EP Act. EIA documents and decisions are published at [Middle Arm Precinct | NTEPA](#).

The Department monitors compliance with approvals, licences and permits across a broad range of legislation. You can find a report of compliance and enforcement activities across the Department at [About us | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment](#).

Regarding the onshore petroleum sector specifically, activities must be undertaken in accordance with approved Environment Management Plans

assessed under the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016*, which may include requirements for waste management, emissions monitoring and reporting, and general monitoring and reporting on environmental performance. Where an interest holder proposes to extract water for use in their operations, it must obtain and comply with any water extraction licence required under the *Water Act 1992*. The Department monitors compliance with requirements, including through desktop reviews, inspections and audits. These frameworks also put self-reporting obligations on industry, for example: [Annual Environment Performance Report | DLPE](#).

8. Are proponents required to report scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 emissions in environmental assessment and, if so, under which provision or guideline?

Guidance regarding proposals that have potential for a significant impact on the environment are published on the NT EPA website at [Environmental management | NTEPA](#), including the NT EPA's guidance on atmospheric process that discusses emissions, expectations and legislative context [Environmental Factor Guidance](#).

For onshore petroleum activities, greenhouse gas emissions are addressed through the [Code of Practice: Environment](#), which requires greenhouse gas emissions to be identified, monitored and managed through an Environment Management Plan. The Code requires greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting and includes requirements for keeping a register of all material scope 1 and 2 Greenhouse Gas emissions associated with the regulated activities.

Greenhouse gas emissions from larger petroleum facilities are also regulated under the Australian Government's National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting framework and Safeguard Mechanism. The Northern Territory Government's [Regulatory Statement: Regulation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the NT](#) explains how these Commonwealth requirements operate alongside the NT regulatory framework.

a. How is that information used in assessment, and in which published document is that use described?

Environmental impact assessment documents including statement of reasons for decisions and completed assessment reports are published at [Environmental impact assessment | NTEPA](#).

The Ministers reasons for decisions for issuing environmental approvals under the EP Act are published at [Environmental approvals | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment](#).

Approved Environmental Management Plans and statement of reasons for decisions are published at [Environment management plan decisions | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment](#).

- b. If scope 3 emissions are not required to be reported, has requiring them been considered and, on what date?**

Refer to guidance at [Environmental management | NTEPA](#), the EIA register at [Middle Arm Precinct | NTEPA](#) and Ministers reasons for decisions for issuing environmental approvals under the EP Act are published at [Environmental approvals | DLPE](#).

- 9. The NTEPA's annual report for 2024-25 records that the annual Compliance Plan and Compliance Report Card are published, and that “the Compliance Report Card gives an overview of the findings and outcomes of compliance activities”. It states that the outcomes of 2024-25 regulation activities “will be detailed in the 2024-25 Compliance Report Card”.**

- a. Has the 2024-25 Compliance Report Card been published? If so, on what date; if not, by what date will it be?**

[Environment Compliance Report Card 2024-25](#)

- b. Does the Compliance Report Card identify non-compliances by premises, licence or proponent, or only in aggregate?**

The Report is available at [Environment Compliance Report Card 2024-25](#)

The Department publishes additional information about compliance and enforcement action in annual reports, including:

- Performance Report – Compliance and Enforcement: <https://environment.nt.gov.au/about-us>; and
- NT EPA's Annual Reports [Annual reports | NTEPA](#) .

In addition, various environmental regimes require self-reporting, for example:

- where required, environmental approval and licence holders submit annual reports recording each non-compliance. These are published on the licence and approval register at [Licences and approvals register | NTEPA](#);
- holders of Environmental Management Plans Report recordable and reportable incidents and annual performance are available at [Compliance and reporting | DLPE](#);
- Environmental approval holders are required to provide environmental and performance reports, published at [Environmental approvals | DLPE](#); and

- Notification of pollution incidents are available at [Section 14 reported incidents | NTEPA](#).

c. Will environmental impact assessment data, groundwater modelling and project-level compliance status be published in a publicly accessible and timely manner and, if not, why not?

Refer to the [Current assessments | NTEPA](#) for projects assessed under the EP Act.

Environmental approval holders are required to provide environmental and performance reports, published at [Environmental approvals | DLPE](#).

10. How is the public informed about community complaints received, and investigations undertaken, into environmental harm?

The number of pollution reports received is published at [NT EPA Annual Report 2024-25](#) and the [DLPE Annual Report 2024-25](#) as well as the DLPE Performance Report at [Performance Report](#). Individual investigation information is not published due to the volume of reports received unless it results in notable enforcement action e.g. infringements and prosecutions.

There are also public registers for certain administrative actions like pollution abatement notices and environmental audit notices. Self-reporting of material environmental harm is also published at [Section 14 reported incidents | NTEPA](#) and [Reportable incidents | DLPE](#).

11. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026-27 sets, for the environment output, a target that at least 80 percent of assessment decisions under the *Environment Protection Act 2019* are made within statutory timeframes and that at least 90 per cent of environment management plan decisions under the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016* are made within 90 calendar days.

a. How many assessment decisions were made outside the statutory timeframe in each of the three years to 2025-26?

This information is published in DLPE Performance Reports at [DLPE Performance Report: Assessment and Approvals Reporting 2025-26](#).

Additional information can also be found in the NT EPA Annual Reports available at [Annual reports | NTEPA](#).

b. What is the consequence, for the proponent and for the decision, of a decision made outside a statutory timeframe?

If a decision is not made under the EP Act on whether to accept or refuse to accept a referral (or notice of significant variation) for

standard assessment within the required period, the referral (or notice of significant variation) is taken to be accepted.

A failure to make a decision or give a direction under the *Environment Protection Regulations 2020* or the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2020* within a specified time does not invalidate the decision or direction.

- c. On what basis is a target of 80 percent compliance with a statutory timeframe set, rather than 100 percent?**

The key performance indicator (KPI) is a measure that is meaningful and relevant regarding timely processes and decisions whilst being achievable taking into account varying operational circumstances.

- d. How many environment management plan decisions were made outside 90 calendar days in each of those years?**

This information is published in performance reports at [About us | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment](#).

- 12. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026-27 records, among the key performance indicators for the environment output, the measure “Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority satisfaction with support provided”, with a target of at least 5.**

- a. Budget Paper No. 3 records that the measure “ranges from a rating of 1 = extremely dissatisfied through to 6 = extremely satisfied”. Who is surveyed, how many responses were received in 2025-26, and is the result published?**

All members of the NT EPA are surveyed for their level of satisfaction. This process is undertaken confidentially within the NT EPA by members and the Chair. The resultant KPI is provided to the Department by the Chair and is published in the DLPE annual report.

- b. Is there any published measure of environmental compliance, enforcement or environmental outcomes for the Territory and, if not, has one been considered and on what date?**

Refer [Environment Compliance Report Card 2024-25](#); [Compliance and reporting | DLPE](#); and [DLPE Performance Report: Compliance and Enforcement Reporting 2025-26](#).

- c. The NTEPA's Annual Report for 2024-25 records 59 site inspections and states that all sites identified in the 2024-25 Compliance Plan were inspected. How many sites were identified in that Plan, how is the Plan's scope determined, and by whom is it approved?**

The Annual Compliance Plan is published following endorsement by the legislated decision makers: the NT EPA, Controller of Water Resources, Chief Executive DLPE and the Minister. The Plan is developed annually using multiple lines of evidence and intelligence. Reasons for identified compliance priorities are detailed in each plan and usually relate to matters identified and reported on in the previous reporting period. All plans and report cards are available at [Compliance and enforcement | NTEPA](#).

d. How many licensed or regulated sites exist in total, and what proportion was inspected in 2025-26?

Licensed sites are listed on the NT EPA website.

EPA/EPLs under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998*: [Licences and approvals register | NTEPA](#).

Waste Discharge Licences under the Water Act: [Waste discharge licences | NTEPA](#).

Environmental Approvals under the EP Act: [Environmental approvals | DLPE](#).

Approved Environment Management Plans under the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016*: [Environment management plan decisions | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment](#).

Inspections are reported at: [DLPE Performance Report: Compliance and Enforcement Reporting 2025-26](#).

e. The annual report records 59 site inspections for 2024-25 and, separately, three inspection measures expressed by reference to the *Environment Protection Act* (EP Act) and the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* (WMPC Act): “100% of premises that had an environmental approval issued under EP Act in place on 1 July 2025”, “100% of hydrocarbon processing facilities and landfills licensed under WMPC Act” and “100% of high-risk transporters and waste management facilities licensed under WMPC Act”. How many premises are in each of those three categories?

Licence and approval registers are available at the above links. Refer here for details of premises that were inspected: [Environment Compliance Report Card 2024-25](#).