



Department of Water and
Environmental Regulation



Annual report 2022-23

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Prime House, 8 Davidson Terrace Joondalup Western Australia 6027
Locked Bag 10 Joondalup DC WA 6919

Phone: 08 6364 7000 | Fax: 08 6364 7001
National Relay Service 13 36 77

wa.gov.au/dwer

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Front cover concept: Department staff at work
Back cover: Hydrographer Nerissa Black installs temporary river monitoring instruments at our destroyed Dimond Gorge site, in the upper Fitzroy catchment. Picture: Nathan Dyer

Thanks to Ash Ramsay, Katharina Starke, Mogli Olawsky, Pete Horgan, Ruwani Gilmour and Mark Bundock for their photo contributions in this report

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This publication is available at our website wa.gov.au/dwer or for those with special needs it can be made available in alternative formats such as audio, large print, or Braille.

Statement of compliance

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Hon Simone McGurk MLA

Minister for Water

Hon Reece Whitby MLA

Minister for Environment; Climate Action

In accordance with section 63 of the *Financial Management Act 2006*, I hereby submit for your information and presentation to Parliament the annual report for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

The annual report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Financial Management Act 2006*.



Michelle Andrews

Director General

13 October 2023



Our staff meet with our Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group and the Committee of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Interests

Acknowledgement and reconciliation

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we live and work throughout Western Australia and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

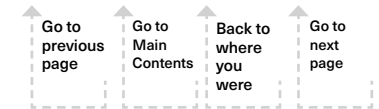
We recognise the practice of intergenerational care for Country and its relevance to our work as water and environmental managers.

We seek to listen, learn and genuinely engage and build strong partnerships. We aim to provide sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal people within our workforce and through our business.

Working with the community, we move forward with a shared commitment to protect and conserve Country for future generations. We recognise Country is a term used by Aboriginal people to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are intrinsically linked, and to which their wellbeing, law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity belong.

Better together!





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From the Director General



Minister for Water Hon Simone McGurk MLA and Minister for Environment; Climate Action Hon Reece Whitby MLA with Director General Michelle Andrews

I am delighted to present the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's annual report for 2022–23. It details another busy year in pursuit of our vision of a low-carbon Western Australia with a healthy environment and secure water resources for future generations.

The past 12 months have seen extreme weather events around the world, none having a greater impact on Western Australia than the Kimberley Floods.

For 10 days from 29 December 2022, heavy rainfall associated with ex-tropical cyclone Ellie saw up to 500 mm recorded in parts of our state's north-west, causing major flooding and damage. On 4 January 2023 our gauging station at Fitzroy Crossing bridge registered a river level 1.5 m higher than the previous record. The bridge was washed away and that gauging station was one of four that stopped working, affecting the flood forecasting and warning operations of the Bureau of Meteorology and constraining our ability to provide flood risk advice.

Our Kimberley Flood Recovery Team sprung to action to help the emergency response. Floodplain engineers in Perth analysed data to support emergency services decisions and prepare updates for local shires. The North West Region Measurement team worked hard to get into the field in dangerous conditions, taking measurements, assessing damage and repairing our monitoring infrastructure, helped by colleagues from the Hydrologic Technology Centre in Welshpool.

We also tackled waste management issues, undertook urgent sewer repairs, and provided strategic planning for landfills. It was a commendable team effort.

This was another reminder of our changing weather systems, and in this annual report you will read about an acceleration of our work supporting the State Government's Climate Action priorities.

We are developing Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategies to help achieve a transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, while creating a *Climate Adaptation Strategy* to build our community's ability to adapt to a changing climate and to enhance resilience to extreme weather events. We are supporting this work by producing the most detailed Western Australian climate projections for the rest of this century through the Climate Science Initiative, utilising the most powerful research supercomputer in the Southern Hemisphere, based at the Pawsey centre in Perth.

We are also establishing the Green Energy Approvals Initiative to provide a streamlined pathway to assess renewable energy projects while balancing environmental protection.

To focus on these challenges, and many others in our department's wide scope as the state's primary water and environmental regulator, we are transforming our operations and embracing new technology.

This past year has seen us continue to lead in the delivery of the Streamline WA program and apply its principles to everything we do: reducing duplication and overlap, making timely and transparent decisions, and applying regulation that is proportionate to the risk.

Progress on Environment Online, which went live in August 2022, is expanding our digital service capabilities and transforming how we deliver our regulatory services.

In the waste sphere, you will read about how we are continuing our fight to reduce single-use plastic pollution with the second phase of the Plan for Plastics. At the same time, we are collaborating extensively with the Waste Authority to support Western Australia's transition to a circular economy, preparing for the Australian Government's ban on disposing electronic waste to landfill in 2024, and undertaking a waste

infrastructure review so we can better reprocess glass, plastic, cardboard, tyres, and food and garden organic waste.

Managing water resources to support growth and liveability also remains critical to our service delivery. Our allocation and licensing provides access to water for industry, food production and public water supply. It also ensures our water resources are healthy, sustainable and able to meet use while protecting natural ecosystems.

Our continued excellence in rivers and estuaries health work, and commitment to protecting biodiversity, was rewarded through our role in the exciting discovery of new freshwater crayfish species in Western Australia's south-west.

Work on native vegetation policy and regional planning will continue our goal of nature-positive outcomes for native habitat, supporting conservation and rehabilitation.

It is our firm belief that all this work, and much more, is enhanced if we engage with, listen to, and learn from our state's First Nations peoples.

In October 2022 we launched our second Waterwise Perth Action Plan, *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan*, which means 'water knowledge' in the Whadjuk and Bindjareb dialects of the Country the plan covers. In it we pledge to walk with Noongar people to incorporate traditional environmental knowledge into waterwise action and heal our waterways.

We also published our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan which, among many commitments, focuses on increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our department and providing career development pathways and leadership opportunities. I was thrilled to announce during Reconciliation Week that Noongar woman Jillian Collard had been promoted to the role of Director Aboriginal Engagement and Partnerships as part of the Public Sector Commission's Women in Executive Leadership Development Experience Initiative. This includes joining our Corporate Executive and I look forward to working closely with Jillian.

Although we have achieved much this past year, we know we can always improve our operations and service delivery, and reform is front and centre of much that we do.

A performance audit by the Auditor General, into our compliance and enforcement program for environmental conditions surrounding mining approvals, made a number of recommendations and we are addressing these.

In September 2022 we saw the publication of the Public Sector Commission's Agency Capability Review, which identified our strengths and listed areas for improvement for us to be a high-performing agency. As a result we are moving to a portfolio-based operational structure and I welcomed two new Deputy Directors General in Dennis O'Reilly (Strategy and Performance) and Emily Briggs (Climate and Sustainability). Our third Deputy Director General, Chris Shaw, will join the department in November to lead the Approvals portfolio.

I was proud that the Agency Capability Review highlighted our committed and values-based workforce with strong science knowledge and policy skills, and I am confident those attributes will come to the fore as we progressively implement the report's recommendations into the next financial year.



Michelle Andrews
Director General

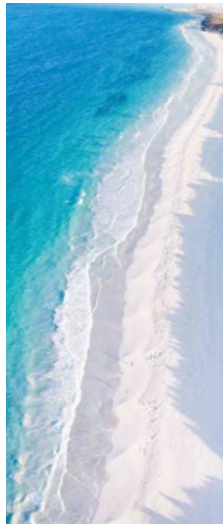


Overview

Who we are

As Western Australia's primary water and environmental regulator, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) has a responsibility to be an influential and future-focused organisation.

Our 2022–23 at a glance



\$40 million

allocated to developing climate-resilient communities through the Climate Adaptation Strategy



\$22.5 million

allocated to drive delivery of green energy solutions for Western Australia



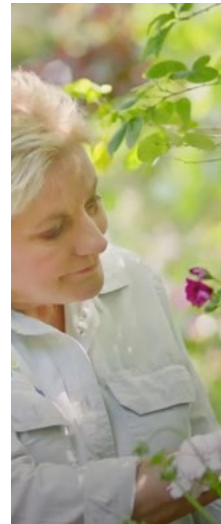
300 million

plastic straws saved from landfill through the Plan for Plastics



\$8.8 million

donated to charities and community organisations through Containers for Change



420,000

views of our Be Groundwater Wise videos with garden expert Sabrina Hahn



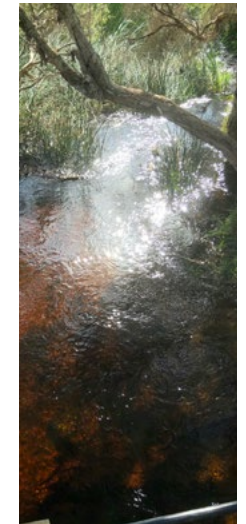
1.3 million

users reached by the Be a GREAT Sort social media campaign



200,000

households receiving three-bin FOGO services



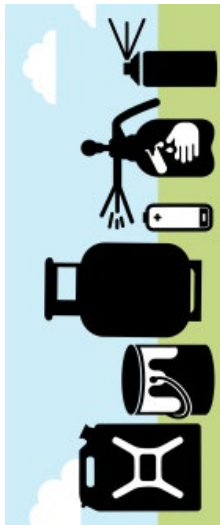
12,767

water licences managed across 775 groundwater and 413 surface water resources



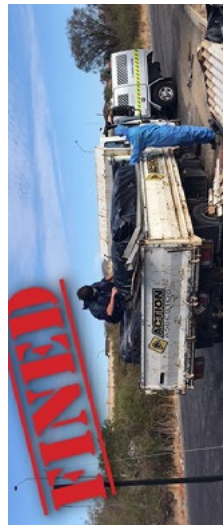
12,000 million+

litres of water saved by our two Waterwise Perth action plans, enough to fill Optus Stadium 12 times



485 tonnes

of household hazardous waste materials collected for safe recovery or disposal



25

illegal dumpers prosecuted



\$2.986 million

spent supporting 12 active groundwater investigation projects



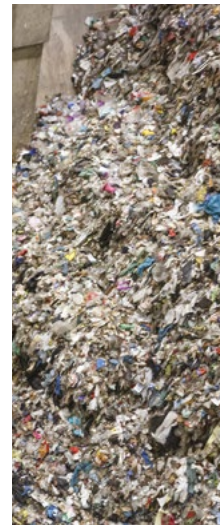
8,657

requests for water information on our Water Information Reporting portal



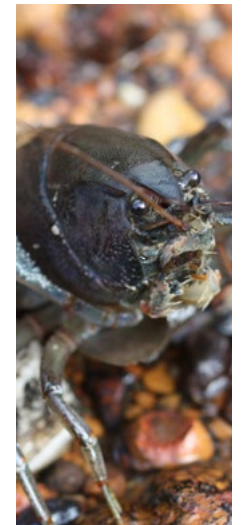
3,922

reports to Pollution Watch



1.3 million

tonnes of controlled waste tracked



3

new freshwater crayfish species identified in south-west Western Australia

Our vision

Our vision is for a low-carbon Western Australia with a healthy environment and secure water resources for future generations.

Our mission



Waste

We act to reduce the harmful impact of waste and create a low-waste circular economy.



Climate

We act to reduce emissions, mitigate climate change impacts and build greater environmental and community resilience.



Water

We act to ensure our water resources meet the needs of the community, ecosystems and economic development.



Environment

We act to make sure that environmental values are protected, and that development is sustainable.

Our values



We serve to make a difference

- We are professionals who deliver sustainable outcomes for current and future generations
- We align our work with the department's priorities and government's direction
- We continue to improve our engagement with Aboriginal people for everyone's prosperity
- We recognise the practice of intergenerational care for Country by Traditional Custodians
- We plan with the future in mind, regularly reviewing our efforts to focus on the right priorities at the right time



We build trust

- We engage early, listen to understand, and respond consistently
- We ensure our work is transparent, evidence-based, and accountable
- We are respectful, honest and kind, and demonstrate empathy
- We operate with the highest levels of integrity
- We hold ourselves and each other to account



We care

- We work as a team, valuing the expertise of each other
- We take time to build capability and contribute to the development of our people
- We contribute to an inclusive, safe and healthy workplace
- We are upstanders and support one another to respectfully challenge inappropriate behaviour



Open minds

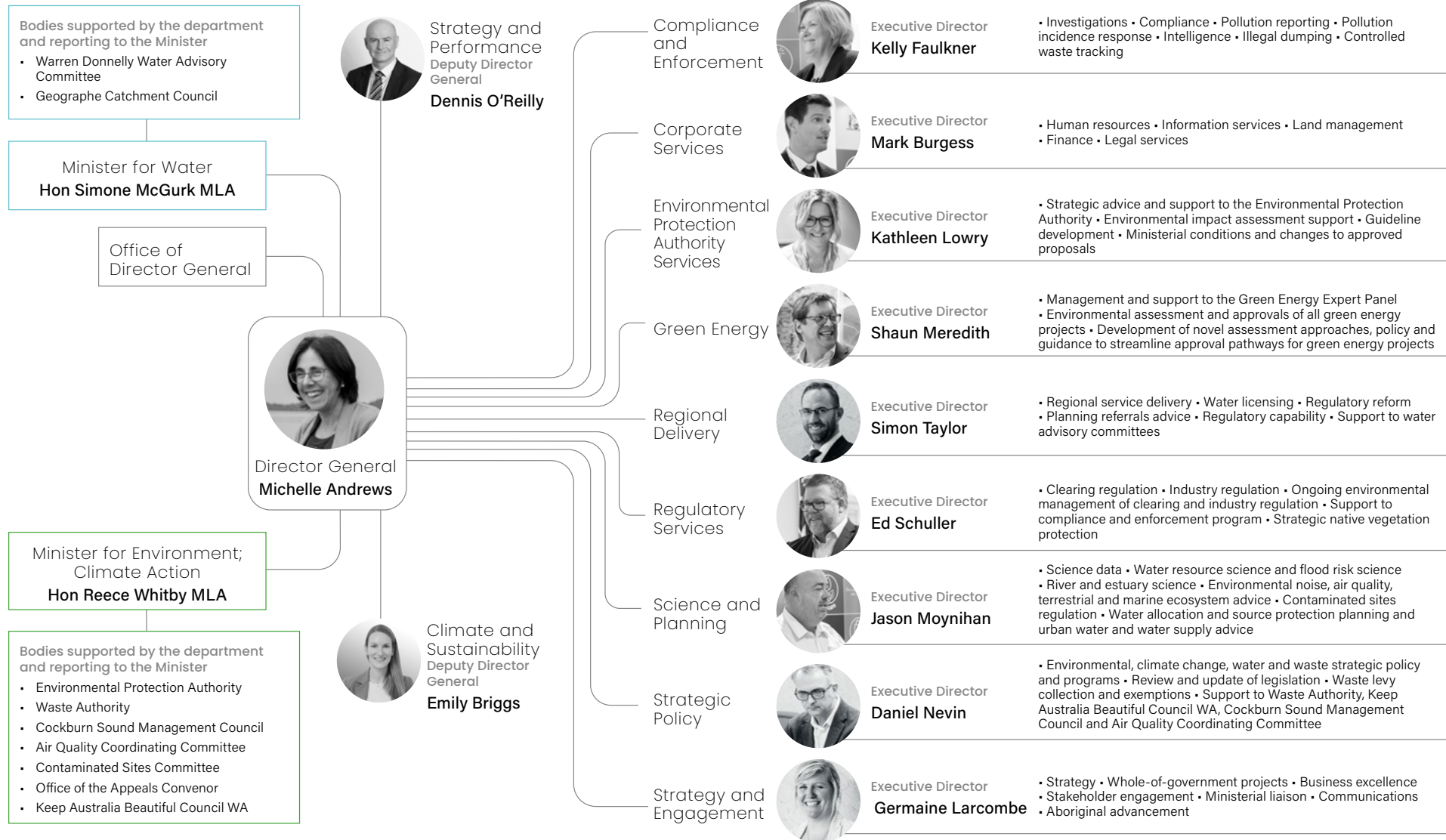
- We embrace new ideas and innovation
- We are mindful of both the big picture and local place-based information in our work
- We are flexible and seek better ways to do our work, and we learn from our mistakes
- We are adaptable and resilient in the face of change



Better together

- We work inclusively and collaboratively and have a 'one Government' mindset
- We value our differences and use them to expand our thinking
- We actively share knowledge and information
- We engage in a practical and courteous way with those affected by our work
- We lead at all levels and empower our people to make decisions











Our 2022–23 structure



Our people

Our department grew to 1,058 employees in 2022–23. Our *Workforce and Diversity Plan* affirms that by bringing together people, from different backgrounds and with different points of view, we create the most value and better reflect the community that we serve.

Snapshot of our diversity

	 Women in Senior Executive Services	 Youth	 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	 Culturally and linguistically diverse people	 People with disability
Aspirational targets	50.0%	5.8%	3.7%	15.5%	5.0%
Number of staff 30 June 2023	13	29	10	164	43
Change from last year	 up from 10	 up from 24	 down from 12	 up from 119	 up from 31
% representation	46.4%	2.7%	0.95%	15.5%	4.1%
Gap to meet target	1	32	29	Met target	10

Performance summary

Actual results versus budget targets

The department evaluates, measures and reports on the effectiveness of its services in achieving its desired agency-level outcomes through key performance indicators.

Key performance indicators comprise both effectiveness and efficiency indicators.

Effectiveness indicators show the extent to which the department achieved its department-level outcomes, while efficiency indicators show the cost of services delivered by the department, as summarised in the following tables.

You will find more detail in our Disclosures section, which starts on page 107.

Financial targets

	2021–22 Actual (\$'000)	2022–23 Budget (\$'000)	2022–23 Actual (\$'000)	2022–23 Variance (\$'000)
Total cost of services (i.e. endorsed expense limit)	182,373	244,639	211,497	33,142
Net cost services (details in the income statement)	45,369	88,339	52,256	36,083
Total equity (details in the statement of financial position)	566,945	561,216	655,670	-94,454
Agreed salary expense level	92,872	113,309	109,702	3,607
Working cash limit	8,376	11,107	9,656	1,451

Summary of key effectiveness indicators

Outcome	Key effectiveness indicator	2021–22	2022–23		
		Actual %	Target %	Actual %	Variance %
1. Western Australia's growth and development is supported by the sustainable management of water resources for the long-term benefit of the state	Proportion of stakeholders who perceive the department to be effectively managing the state's water as a resource for sustainable, productive use	59	60	58	-2
	Proportion of priority growth areas that have a water supply planning strategy	10	57	57	0
2. Emissions, discharges and clearing of native vegetation are effectively regulated to avoid unacceptable risks to public health and the environment	Percentage of regulatory compliance activities completed as planned	87	100	100	0
	Percentage of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring program that are rectified within two months	34	40	22	-18
3. Development and implementation of strategic policy and legislation that promoted sustainable environmental outcomes	Percentage of advice and recommendations that met Ministerial approval, without the need for significant modification	99	95	99	4
4. Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised	Percentage of municipal solid waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to waste strategy target in the Perth metropolitan region	32	65	36	-29
	Percentage of commercial and industrial waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target	40	70	45	-25
	Percentage of construction and demolition waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target	84	75	85	10
5. Quality advice to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Minister for Environment on significant proposals and environmental issues	The EPA's satisfaction with the department's environmental impact assessment (EIA) service, during the year, in line with best practice principles of EIA	95	82	96	14
	Percentage of project-specific conditions which did not require significant change following the appeal process	89	82	98	16
	Percentage of assessments that met agreed timelines	79	75	80	5
	The EPA's satisfaction with the department's provision of environmental management services during the year	97	82	97	15
6. Compliance with Ministerial statement implementation conditions are monitored effectively	The number of Ministerial statements audited compared to targets	57	100	42	-58

Summary of key efficiency indicators

Service	Key efficiency indicators	2021-22	2022-23				
		Actual	Target	Actual		Variance	
Service 1	Water information and advice	Proportion of statutory referrals from decision making authorities where advice is provided within target timeframes	92%	95%	89%	-6%	↓
		Average cost per statutory referral assessment	\$5,418	\$7,960	\$6,046	-1,914	↑
		Average cost per water measurement site managed	\$5,944	\$9,389	\$6,638	-2,751	↑
Service 2	Water planning, allocation and optimisation	Average cost per plan, report or guidance document to support water planning, allocation and optimisation	\$268,753	\$282,257	\$243,074	-39,183	↑
		Average cost per hour of scientific support for water planning, allocation and optimisation	\$185	\$178	\$197	19	↓
Service 3	Water regulation, licensing and industry governance	Average cost of assessing a water licence application by risk assessment category:					
		• Low risk	\$3,348	\$3,782	\$4,018	236	↓
		• Medium risk	\$4,464	\$5,043	\$5,357	314	↓
		• High risk	\$5,580	\$6,303	\$6,697	394	↓
		Average time taken (days) to assess a licence application by risk assessment category:					
		• Low risk	35	65	43	-22	↑
		• Medium risk	52	75	57	-18	↑
		• High risk	65	95	85	-10	↑
	Average Cost of compliance monitoring and enforcement action	\$130	\$156	\$206	50	↓	
Service 4	Environmental regulation	Average cost per works approval and licence application	\$55,425	\$60,931	\$73,244	12,313	↓
		Average cost per native vegetation clearing permit application	\$30,353	\$35,895	\$33,764	-2,131	↑
Service 5	Water and environment policy	Average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations	\$273	\$398	\$328	-70	↑
Service 6	Waste strategies	Cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected	1.87%	1.50%	1.64%	0.14%	↓
Service 7	Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of assessment output	\$45,444	\$58,209	\$79,177	20,968	↓
Service 8	Environmental management services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of environmental management services output	\$26,706	\$54,191	\$26,151	-28,040	↑
Service 9	Compliance monitoring services to the Minister	Average cost per environmental audit completed	\$51,684	\$100,191	\$148,276	48,085	↓



Keep Australia Beautiful Council Beach Clean-up

Our priorities

The department is responsible for ensuring the state's water resources and environment are healthy to support a strong economy and thriving communities. This section reflects our work delivering on the strategic directions of the Government of Western Australia.

Climate Action	20	Aboriginal engagement and advancement	34
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Our changing climate

...the science is clear



1.4°C

average increase in temperature in Australia since 1910
(BoM 2022)



19%

decline in May to July rainfall in south-west Australia since 1970, larger than anywhere else in Australia
(CSIRO and BoM 2022)



More frequent and intense

rainfall events across WA, leading to localised flooding and infrastructure damage
(CSIRO and BoM 2015)



Double

number of days over 40°C in Perth since the 1930s
(Breshears et al. 2021)



More human deaths

caused by heatwaves in Australia than all other extreme weather events combined
(Coates et al. 2022)



24 cm

rise in sea levels along the WA coast predicted by mid-century
(CSIRO and BoM 2015)



Increasing sea surface temperatures

on average, affecting our marine environment and fisheries and causing marine heatwaves
(CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology 2022; Caputi et al. 2016; Le Nohaïc et al. 2017)



8%

rise in threatened species in Australia because of climate change between 2016 and 2021
(Murphy and van Leeuwen 2021)

Climate Action

The department is leading implementation of the [Western Australian Climate Policy](#).

Key initiatives progressed in 2022–23 included:

- development of the [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) to enhance climate resilience
- detailed climate change projections for Western Australia through the [Climate Science Initiative](#)
- development of the [Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategies](#) (SERS) to support transition of Western Australia's economy to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Additionally, [Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Perth Action Plan 2](#) was launched with a focus on combating climate change through water-efficiency initiatives, water-sensitive urban design and policy reviews to drive waterwise outcomes. It also has a stronger focus on actions to target climate change through enhanced collaboration across participating State Government agencies.

State Government emissions reduction

The State Government is committed to demonstrating leadership in the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

We are also working with other agencies to help reduce the State Government's emissions to 80 per cent below 2020 levels by 2030.

This [Government Emissions Interim Target](#) applies to emissions from all government agencies across the state and emissions generated by Government Trading Enterprises. Reductions will occur through a range of actions, including energy-efficiency upgrades, electrification, installation of onsite renewable energy and use of grid-based renewable electricity.

Over the 2022–23 financial year we have developed guidance to support agencies to measure and reduce emissions to contribute to the State Government reduction target.

Climate Resilient WA

Adaptation is a key component of the long-term response to protect communities, livelihoods and ecosystems from climate change.

The [Climate Resilient WA directions paper](#), released in December 2022, lays the foundations for Western Australia's *Climate Adaptation Strategy*.

Four directions have been identified to accelerate immediate action and support a comprehensive, long-term approach (see below).

These directions are the result of analysis of national and international climate action, and respond to targeted consultation undertaken in 2022 and 2023 with government, environment groups, peak industry bodies and Aboriginal groups.

The State Budget of May 2023 saw almost \$40 million allocated to developing climate-resilient communities through the *Climate Adaptation Strategy*. This strategy was released in July 2023 and included new initiatives and actions to enhance resilience of industries, cities and regions.



Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategies

The Western Australian Climate Policy commits to the development of SERS to guide cost-effective emissions reduction in key economic sectors.

During 2022 and 2023 the department led the development of SERS, in collaboration with other State Government agencies. SERS will provide robust and credible emissions reduction pathways for Western Australia with tangible actions for reducing emissions consistent with the State Government's target of net zero emissions by 2050.

The strategies will address emissions from electricity generation, as well as those from industry including resources and manufacturing, transport, buildings, agriculture, waste and land use. The State Government is consulting with industry to develop sectoral strategies and aims to release a consolidated strategy by the end of 2023.

Climate change legislation

In January this year, the State Government made a commitment to introduce climate change legislation to establish the framework to meet Western Australia's goal of net zero by 2050.

The legislation will ensure accountability and transparency for government. It will establish the state's long-term target and provide statutory requirements to set interim emissions reduction targets and develop policies to reduce emissions and enhance climate resilience. It will also give industry, business and investors certainty to frame their decisions and actions.



Green Energy Approvals Initiative

On 6 December 2022 the State Government announced the establishment of the cross-government Green Energy Approvals Initiative. It will drive timely approvals of green energy projects through clear, fit-for-purpose assessment pathways that deliver strong environmental outcomes for the community.



This \$22.5 million initiative will progress delivery of green energy solutions for Western Australia, underscoring the State Government's commitment to net zero by 2050.

The implementation of this initiative has led to the creation of the Green Energy directorate within the department, starting on 1 July 2023, to:

- undertake assessments of green energy proposals
- implement novel assessment processes to increase efficiency
- develop government policy and Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) guidance to support proponents to develop high-quality submissions.

A Green Energy Major Projects group has also been established in the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI). The Council of Regulators will oversee the Green Energy Approval Initiative, facilitating collaboration across agencies and informing the State Government of its progress.



EPA Services
Executive Director
Kathleen Lowry
with Green Energy
Executive Director
Shaun Meredith



Fitzroy floods

The Kimberley floods were caused by significant rain from 29 December 2022 to 6 January 2023. The flooding caused damage to Fitzroy valley and catchment, and more broadly across the West Kimberley. It significantly impacted communities, roads, housing and the pastoral industry.

The department's river level monitoring network played a key part in the emergency response. Our floodplain engineering staff in Perth are integral to analysing field data, in real time, to support Bureau of Meteorology and state emergency decisions and responses during flood events.



Watch our flood response on [YouTube](#)

On 4 January 2023 our gauging station at Fitzroy Crossing bridge reached a peak 1.5 m higher than previously recorded. This event inundated the bridge and washed it away, along with the gauging station. Four gauges – at Dimond Gorge, Fitzroy Crossing, Looma and the Fitzroy Barrage – all reached peaks ranging 1–5 m higher than previously recorded. These well exceeded the one-in-100-year levels they are designed to record.

Our North West Region team worked hard during the flood to take measurements. This included assessing damage and providing emergency repairs to our monitoring infrastructure in extremely difficult conditions, with strong support from staff at the Hydrologic Technology Centre in Welshpool. We also conducted other important work



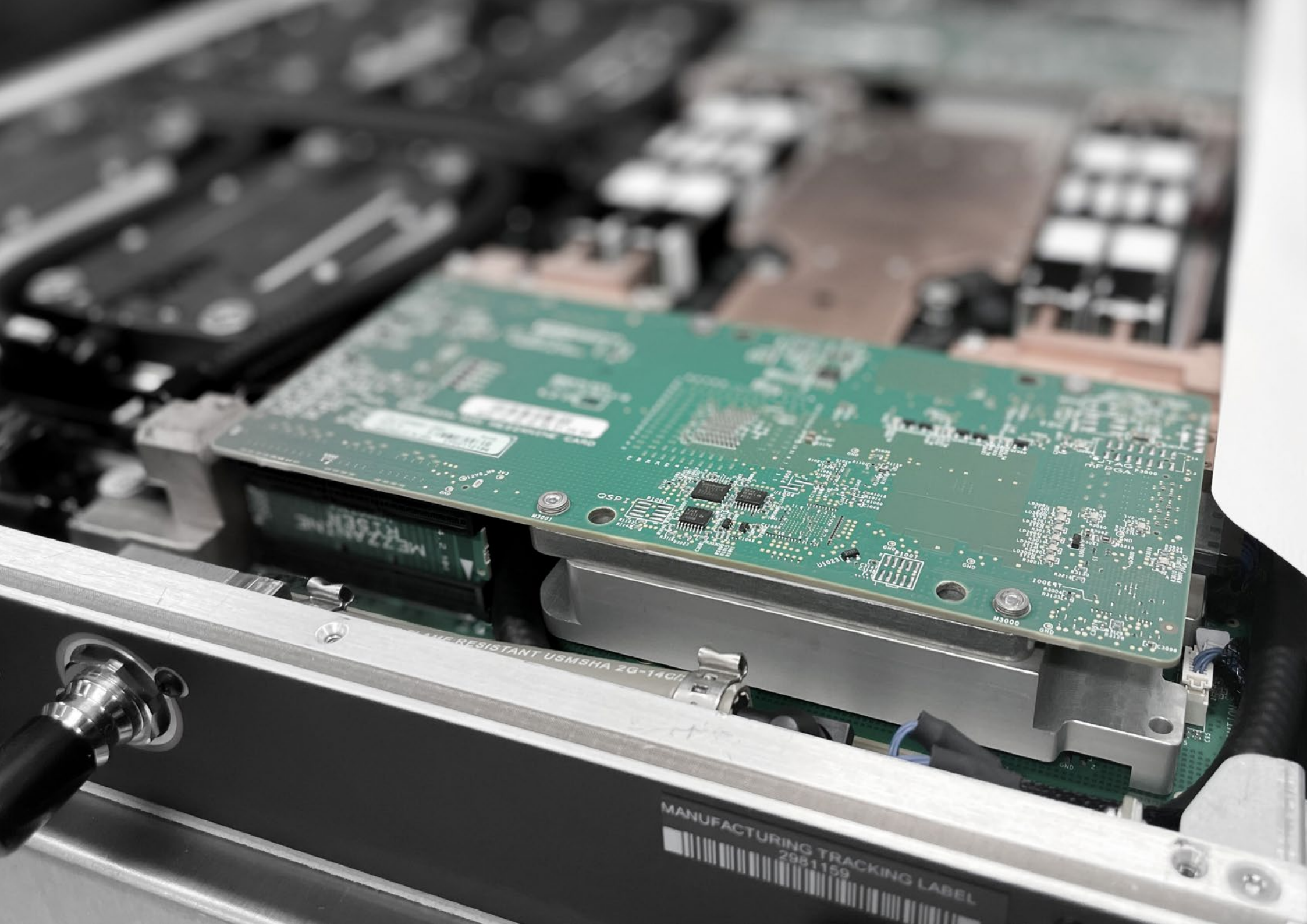
in response to the emergency, providing support to the Derby-West Kimberley Shire and Water Corporation for waste management, urgent sewer repairs, permits for bed and banks disturbance, and strategic planning for landfills.

Following the floods, we continued repairs to ensure the river-level monitoring network worked for the rest of the wet season and into the future. This includes a partnership with Main Roads Western Australia to build a gauge upstream of Fitzroy to report river levels, which will assist construction of the new and improved Fitzroy Crossing Bridge.

We have also played a critical role in floodplain mapping to support roads and infrastructure reconstruction, and we are supporting the state recovery effort.



Previous page: North West measurement staff Dean Pegoraro and Scott Zahn assess flooding in the Kimberley's Kupungarri Community.



WIRELESS NETWORK CARD

OSP1

FLAME RESISTANT USMSHA 2G-14C

MANUFACTURING TRACKING LABEL
2981159

Pawsey supercomputing grant for climate projections

Understanding our variable and changing climate is critical to developing and implementing solutions for a resilient, low-carbon Western Australia.

The Climate Science Initiative is being led by the department in partnership with Murdoch University, the New South Wales Government's Department of Planning and Environment via the NSW and Australian Regional Climate Modelling Project (NARCIIM), and the Pawsey Supercomputing Research Centre.



Senior Manager Climate Risk and Resilience Kelly Barnes explains more about the Pawsey supercomputer

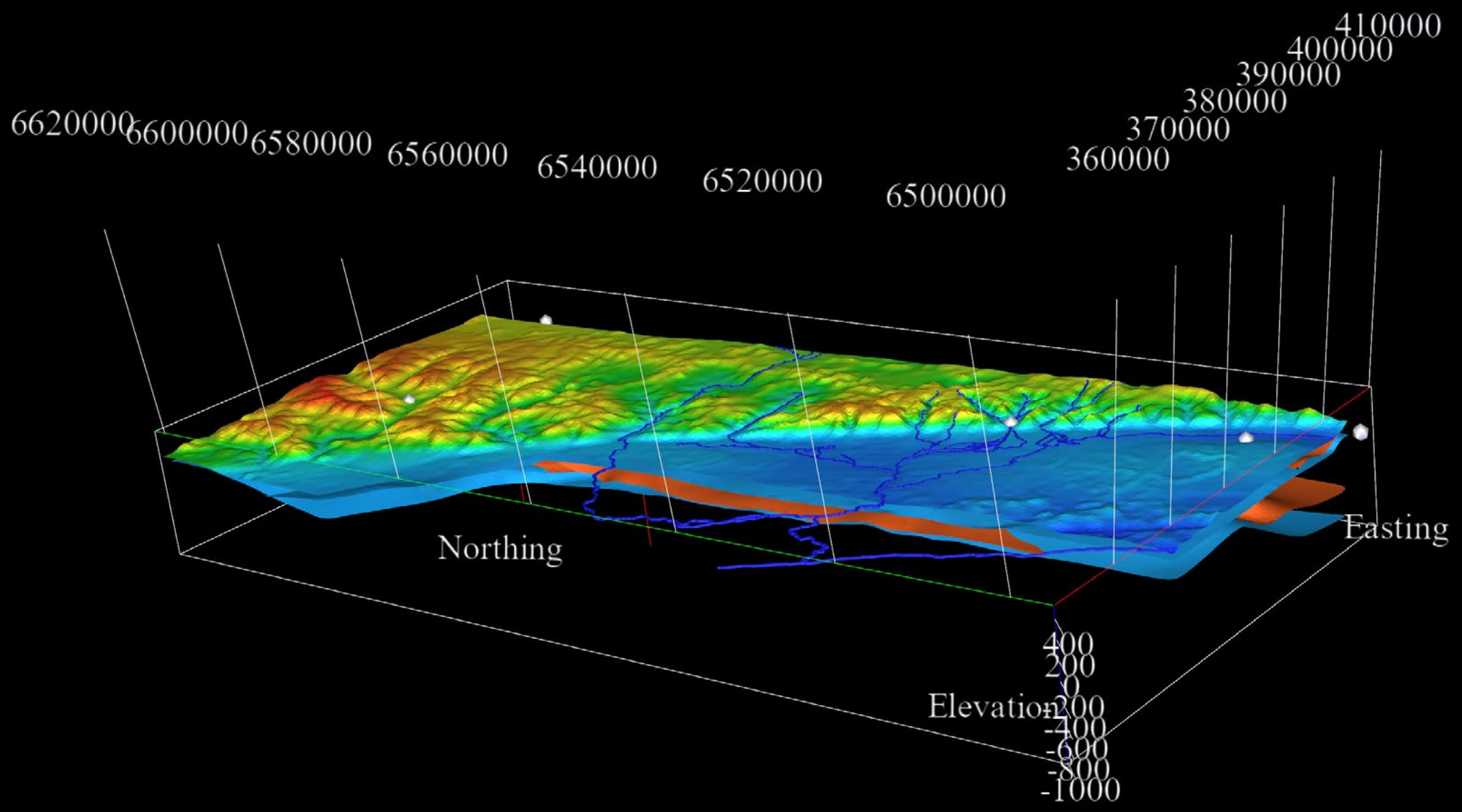
It aims to produce the most detailed and comprehensive Western Australian climate change projections ever, extending 75 years into the future.

These state-of-the-art projections started at the Pawsey Supercomputing Research Centre's Setonix supercomputer in Perth this year. Setonix takes just one second to do a calculation that would take a human 1.5 billion years to achieve. It weighs 45 tonnes and contains 12 km of optical cable. Its power is equivalent to 150,000 laptops working in unison.

This work will produce our most detailed projections to date, at a grid scale of 4 km initially for the state's south-west, with the localised information used to guide policy and decision-making. The north-west of the state will continue to be covered by national climate projections at a grid scale of 20 km.

The projections will allow the State Government to prepare for the anticipated impacts of climate change, including more extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods and bushfires. They will also enable us to better protect Western Australia's unique biodiversity and ecosystems, and support major investment decisions in energy infrastructure, planning and regional development.





State-of-the-art models keeping us ahead of change

Groundwater is Western Australia's main source of water supply for horticulture, viticulture, parks and gardens, and for public drinking water. It is also vital for lakes, wetlands and liveability.

In 2009 the National Water Commission reported Western Australia's work on modelling aquifers used for public and private water supply as world leading. Along with our science partners such as Curtin University, we have continued to evolve the understanding that underpins advanced groundwater management.

We are developing 3-D geological and hydrogeological conceptual models of how water moves through our aquifers and interacts with rivers, the ocean and the environment. This includes developing dynamic numerical models to predict risks to our groundwater such as saltwater interface movement, cumulative abstraction impacts and the influence of climate change.

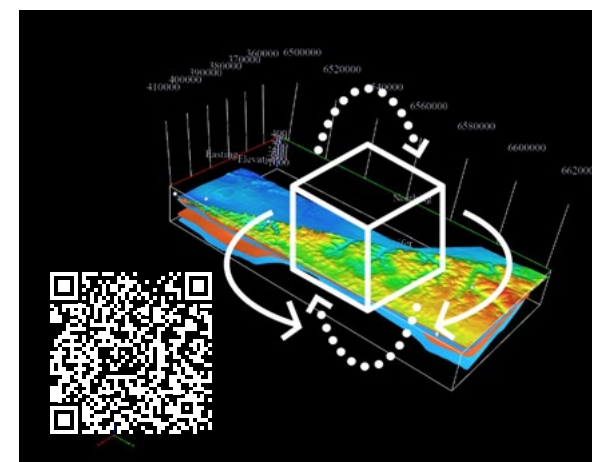
For the East Midlands Groundwater Investigation we have incorporated bore data, airborne survey data, geophysical data, existing spatial datasets, petroleum wells, monitoring data, images and chemistry.

We are also working to make our science more accessible to the public. This includes turning our data into spatial layers that can be accessed through the [Shared Location Information Platform](#), and updating the publicly available [Perth Groundwater Map](#).

This work allows us to identify locations and rates for taking groundwater that have less impact on our environment and other water users. It also helps us identify the best locations where water can be put back – replenished or recharged – into the deeper aquifers, to optimise pumping for scheme supply. It has been used to support Water Corporation's groundwater replenishment scheme.

► How to enable 3-D model PDFs

1. Click on the link below then download PDF on your local drive.
2. Open PDF using Acrobat Reader.
3. Acrobat will give you warning 'Multimedia and 3D content has been disabled. Enable this feature if you trust this document'. From 'Options' drop-down menu, choose the option you prefer.
4. Click on the black space (watch icon will appear). It may take a few seconds to load the interactive 3-D content.



[3-D model](#) of Aquifers in the East Midlands Groundwater Investigation created by Senior Hydrogeologist Sheryl Ryan



[Environment Online](#) went live in August 2022. This was a landmark moment for water and environmental regulation in Western Australia and a significant step forward for the digital delivery of government services for the state.

In conjunction with implementing the reforms of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act), and the proposed reforms of our water resource management legislation, Environment Online is a major part of the transformation in how we deliver our regulatory services, and how we interact with our regulatory stakeholders.

Release 1 focused on delivering information and services to **support environmental impact assessment activities** under Part IV of the EP Act.

It is a secure digital platform with a vision of providing a single gateway for all water and environmental regulatory activities, automated case management, and an integrated data management system.

Release 1 focused on delivering information and services to support environmental impact assessment activities under Part IV of the EP Act. Importantly, Release 1 also delivered a foundational platform that will be built on in future releases and allows for integration with a wide range of information, geospatial, financial and identity management systems.

Minor releases have continued to be deployed, introducing a range of product enhancements and features, as well as addressing bug fixes.

An independent external review of Environment Online was completed during the year. The review provided evidence-based recommendations to the department to inform the direction and ongoing development and design of the platform.

Guided by the review recommendations, Environment Online is being repositioned as an enabling project within our larger Reform Roadmap, rather than being the driver of business reform, and will support service integration and enable digital transformation.

We are also assessing the functionality to be built in future releases, to ensure alignment with our Reform Roadmap as well as State Government priorities including the Green Energy Approvals Initiative and [Streamline WA](#).

Current work includes the analysis and design of core regulatory capabilities including fees and payments, geospatial services, data analytics, expert advice, subscriptions, data migration from legacy systems and further development of the foundational platform.

Increased opportunities for stakeholder involvement and co-design will be developed, and we look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders in future developments of our online services.

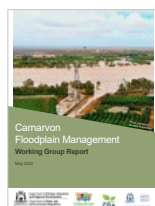
Waste in the regions – Carnarvon horticultural waste initiative

The Gascoyne is home to one of the state's major food bowls, and the flows of the Gascoyne River are the lifeblood of the horticultural industry that makes Carnarvon its home.

Waste that has been inappropriately disposed of poses a high risk to this water resource, the horticultural industry and the community.

Over time the combination of floods and industry waste, along with other waste streams, has created a problem for the local environment.

In 2020, our Mid West Gascoyne region team initiated a working group to understand and address the concerns raised by local stakeholders about poor waste management practices. Recognising that waste management is a shared responsibility, the working group included representatives from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Shire of Carnarvon, Carnarvon Growers Association, and Vegetables WA.



In May 2022 the [Carnarvon Floodplain Management Working Group Report](#), endorsed by then Minister of Water Dave Kelly and then Minister for Agriculture and Food Alannah MacTiernan, identified waste management as one of the five key focus areas to improve floodplain management.

Key stakeholders are now working together to implement the recommendations from the Working Group Report. Some of the initiatives underway include:

- community involvement through education drives and waste collection for disposal through the Containers for Change program
- identification of greener initiatives through a two-year biodegradable horticultural 'plastics' research project
- investigation into reduction in plastics generation through a 'closed system' plastics recycling business that generates new jobs for the town to support unskilled workers
- expansion of the types of chemical drums accepted at the landfill for collection and redirection

- development of a 'best practice land management' approach within the horticultural community
- a horticultural clean-up campaign, including a three-month exemption of waste disposal fees for Carnarvon growers.

A second waste audit was planned for September 2023.

The ongoing commitment shown by key partners is a testament to the region's initiative, collaboration and desire to make a positive difference on waste issues within Carnarvon. With the broader community on board, we are jointly solving the problem and changing mindsets and behaviours for the future.



Chemical drums found during the Gascoyne waste audit

WA Plan for Plastics

single-use plastic bans

2022–25

Plastic waste poses a significant threat to the health of marine, freshwater and land-based wildlife and ecosystems.










Single-use plastics contaminate recycling waste streams and mostly end up in landfill or as litter, and are a problem waste stream being addressed through [Western Australia's Plan for Plastics](#).

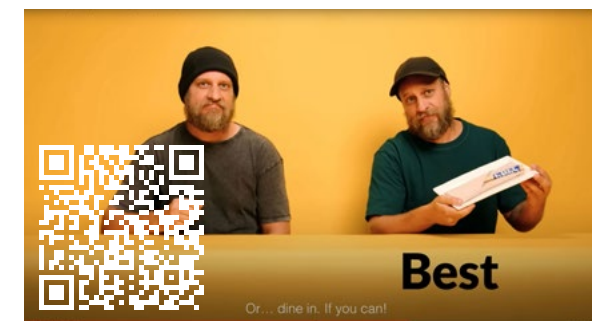
Staged bans of sale or supply of these items started in 2022 and there are now penalties for the sale and supply of banned single-use plastic items.

These first stage changes alone are estimated to save up to 181 million plastic cups, 300 million plastic straws, 50 million pieces of plastic cutlery and more than 110 million thick plastic shopping bags from landfill every year.

More problem plastic products have been targeted in [Stage 2 of the Plan for Plastics](#), which came into effect on 27 February 2023, following consultation with key stakeholders and the community from September to November 2022.

This second set of single-use or disposable plastic items and materials will be phased out between 1 September 2023 and 1 July 2025. The Stage 2 regulations ban the sale and supply of:

	loose and moulded expanded polystyrene packaging		coffee cups and lids
	degradable plastics (plastics designed to break up more rapidly into fragments under certain conditions)		produce bags
	lids for cups, bowls, trays, plates and takeaway food containers		cotton buds with plastic stems
	expanded polystyrene cups and food trays for raw meat and seafood		microbeads
	trays for food not covered in the Stage 1 ban		



Watch our Plan for Plastics campaign on [YouTube](#)

Containers for Change

[Containers for Change, the container deposit scheme, continues to transform the way Western Australians recycle drink containers.](#)

Launched in October 2020, the scheme is helping to reduce litter and increase recycling as well as creating new business and employment opportunities across the state.

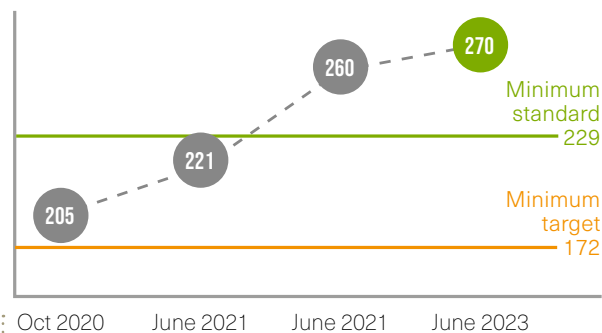
Containers for Change is run by WA Return Recycle Renew Ltd, a not-for-profit company, with the department administering the legislative framework to support the scheme.



The collection network comprises 270 refund points, from Kalumburu in the far north to Esperance on the south coast. More than 820 jobs have been created by the scheme, with about 30 per cent of employment going to people living with disability, Indigenous Australians or long-term unemployed.

By the end of June 2023 more than 2.39 billion containers had been recovered for recycling and more than \$8.8 million donated to more than 6,200 registered charities and community organisations.

Increased numbers of refund points



By the end of June 2023 **more than 2.39 billion** containers had been recovered for recycling and **more than \$8.8 million** donated to **more than 6,200** registered charities and community organisations.

Consultation is now underway to expand the scheme to include glass bottles containing grape wine and spirits up to 3 litres, and all containers up to 3 litres containing fruit and vegetable juice, flavoured milk and cordial.



Learn more about Containers for Change on [YouTube](#)

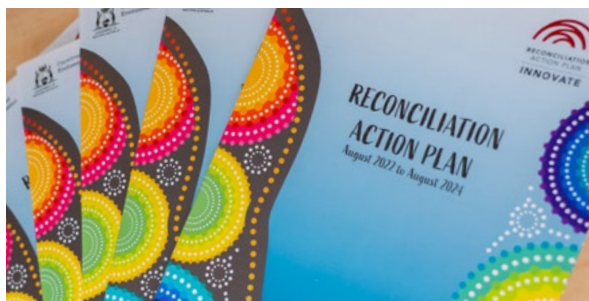


Aboriginal engagement and advancement

Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group member Dr Anne Poelina at Doondalup (Lake Joondalup)

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022–24

The launch of the department's second *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP) took place on 30 August 2022 with a Noongar smoking ceremony and a Welcome to Country performed by Nick Abraham, owner and lead guide at Warrang-Bridil.



Nygarie Goyal, Jillian Collard, Minister Reece Whitby, Colleen Hayward, Carol Innes, Nick Abraham, Lincoln Abraham and Michelle Andrews

Our RAP is the result of extensive consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders, including our Aboriginal staff and members of our Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group (AWEAG).



Nick Abraham conducts the smoking ceremony

Our key RAP focus areas

Strengthen our relationships with First Nations peoples, communities, councils, corporations and relevant Traditional Owners through greater understanding and mutual respect.

Increase the department's representation of First Nations staff and provide career development pathways and leadership opportunities.

Participate in and contribute respectfully to native title negotiations.

Develop an Aboriginal Cultural and Native Title Learning Framework, and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Strategy.

Review governance arrangements for Aboriginal outcomes that clarify accountabilities and ensure they are fit-for-purpose.

KEP KATITJIN
GABI KAADADJAN
Waterwise Perth Action Plan 2



Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Perth Action Plan 2

We share a vision with our state’s First Nations peoples, to heal the waterways and develop an approach to delivering enduring waterwise outcomes on Noongar Country.



Michelle Andrews, Bindjareb Elders Franklyn Nannup and George Walley, then Water Minister Dave Kelly, Danjoo Koorliny Co-Director Richard Walley and Water Corporation CEO Pat Donovan

Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan is our new strategy for Boorloo (Perth) and Bindjareb (Peel) which builds on our first Waterwise Perth Action Plan and focuses on an increased partnership with Noongar people. It has been co-designed with Bindjareb Elders and the leadership group of [Danjoo Koorliny](#), an Aboriginal-led initiative which looks to improve the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

Transforming Boorloo and Bindjareb into Waterwise communities is a huge task.

To achieve it, we want to strengthen our collaboration with Aboriginal groups and, specifically, work on delivery of the ‘Walking Together’ initiatives within *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan*.



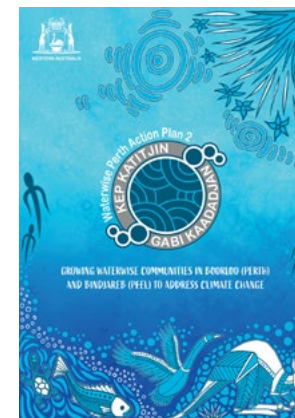
Waterwise team members Patrick Ridley, Winsome MacLaurin and Penny Jackson

► The Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan water story

The artwork for *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan* was designed by Darryl Bellotti, a Yamatji and Noongar man.

‘Without water we cannot survive. We, as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike, now have a shared responsibility of carrying out that obligation for the survival of culture, the people, and all living things,’ says Darryl.

[Listen to Darryl's story behind the artwork.](#)



Listen to Darryl's story behind the artwork.



Designer Darryl Bellotti

The \$60.3 million [Green Jobs Plan](#) created projects and initiatives which had a strong focus on Aboriginal jobs, advancement and working on Country.

It was coordinated by the department and, from July 2020 to December 2022, more than 600 jobs were created.

Green Jobs was part of the State Government's \$5.8 billion [WA Recovery Plan](#) to help drive economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

While these initiatives have now finished, many Green Jobs projects will continue with environmental outcomes such as revegetation, weed control, and stock exclusion fencing.



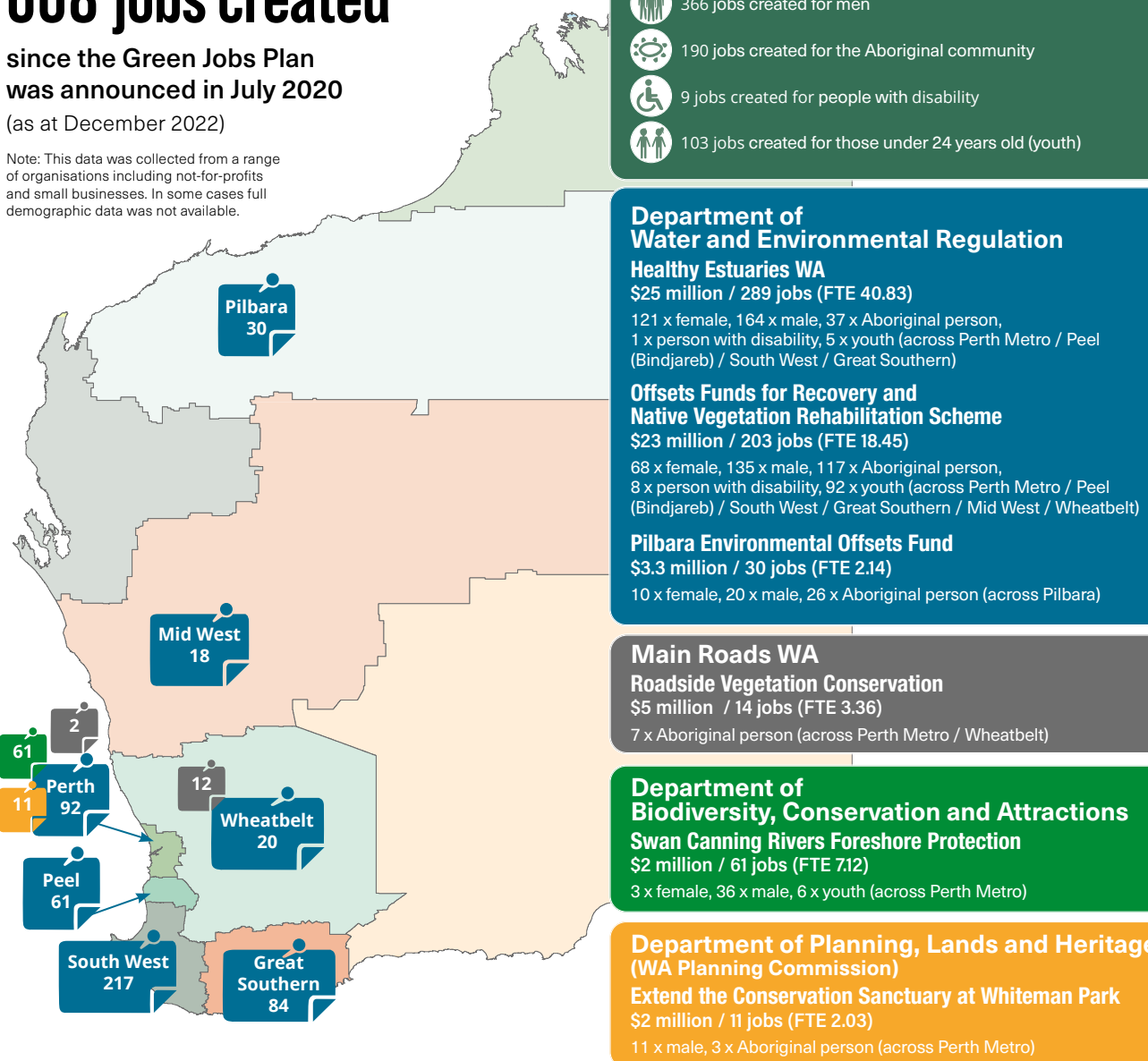
The Mt Barker Aboriginal Ranger team with Greening Australia staff at a revegetation project site near Cranbrook

608 jobs created

since the Green Jobs Plan was announced in July 2020

(as at December 2022)

Note: This data was collected from a range of organisations including not-for-profits and small businesses. In some cases full demographic data was not available.



Breakdown of jobs created under the Green Jobs Plan
July 2020 - December 2022

- 608 jobs created** including:
 - 202 jobs created for women
 - 366 jobs created for men
 - 190 jobs created for the Aboriginal community
 - 9 jobs created for people with disability
 - 103 jobs created for those under 24 years old (youth)

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Healthy Estuaries WA
\$25 million / 289 jobs (FTE 40.83)
121 x female, 164 x male, 37 x Aboriginal person, 1 x person with disability, 5 x youth (across Perth Metro / Peel (Bindjareb) / South West / Great Southern)

Offsets Funds for Recovery and Native Vegetation Rehabilitation Scheme
\$23 million / 203 jobs (FTE 18.45)
68 x female, 135 x male, 117 x Aboriginal person, 8 x person with disability, 92 x youth (across Perth Metro / Peel (Bindjareb) / South West / Great Southern / Mid West / Wheatbelt)

Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund
\$3.3 million / 30 jobs (FTE 2.14)
10 x female, 20 x male, 26 x Aboriginal person (across Pilbara)

Main Roads WA

Roadside Vegetation Conservation
\$5 million / 14 jobs (FTE 3.36)
7 x Aboriginal person (across Perth Metro / Wheatbelt)

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Swan Canning Rivers Foreshore Protection
\$2 million / 61 jobs (FTE 7.12)
3 x female, 36 x male, 6 x youth (across Perth Metro)

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (WA Planning Commission)

Extend the Conservation Sanctuary at Whiteman Park
\$2 million / 11 jobs (FTE 2.03)
11 x male, 3 x Aboriginal person (across Perth Metro)

Aboriginal empowerment and governance

The department's commitment to Aboriginal engagement and empowerment manifests itself in the new Aboriginal Engagement and Partnership Branch.

In its first full year of operation the branch:

- championed State Government priorities and initiatives to maximise outcomes for First Nations peoples in business planning and direction setting
- identified and led opportunities for statewide government collaboration in Aboriginal engagement, and delivery of the State Government [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy](#) and Western Australia's [Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan](#)
- monitored progress and delivery of the department's second RAP.

In addition, the Aboriginal Empowerment Board was established in August 2022. It leads and guides the department's commitment and vision for ongoing reconciliation and the engagement and empowerment of Aboriginal peoples and communities through our business activities.

The Board meets quarterly and is made up of our Corporate Executive and Aboriginal staff, and includes Jason Barrow who is Co-Chair of AWEAG. Jason is a Noongar man from the south-west of

Western Australia and a member of the Danjoo Koorliny leadership team.

To contribute to Aboriginal empowerment and ensure that cultural values and economic, social and spiritual wellbeing are respected, the department has four principles:



Michelle Andrews and Jason Barrow are Co-Chairs of AWEAG

► New role of Director Aboriginal Engagement and Partnerships



Jillian Collard with Grant Rigney, Co-Chair of the Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Interests

The appointment of Jillian Collard to the new role of Director Aboriginal Engagement and Partnerships reflects the department's priorities of greater inclusion of First Nations Australians and women in leadership roles.

Jillian is a Noongar leader with connections to the Whadjuk, Ballardong and Wilman groups. It was announced during Reconciliation Week, on 29 May 2023, that Jillian would be joining the department's Corporate Executive, for 12 months from 1 July, as part of the Public Sector Commission's Women in Executive Leadership Development Experience Initiative.

Danjoo Koorliny Social Impact Summit

We continue to strengthen our relationship with [Danjoo Koorliny](#), and were represented at the annual two-day Danjoo Koorliny Walking Together Social Impact Summit from 30 November 2022.

The theme was 'Caring for Boodja: By Us, For Us, With Us', which focused on the environment and connecting with and healing Boodja (Country). Hosted by The University of Western Australia, many members of our staff attended this opportunity to meet, learn, share and collaborate.

Our shared vision for reconciliation and delivering better outcomes for Aboriginal people and our environment provides a strong basis to move forward together. We have a firm commitment for a longer-term strategic partnership through a secondment opportunity for a department employee to work with Danjoo Koorliny through the Centre for Social Impact. Our Waterwise Cities Program Manager, Winsome MacLaurin, became the first person to take up this opportunity in December 2022.



Artists connecting with Country

Doondalup meet a shared water interest

In May 2023 the department hosted a meeting with members of the [Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Interests \(CAWI\)](#) and representatives from AWEAG.

CAWI advises the National Water Reform Committee and identifies and prioritises national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander water reform directions. It has 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members from across Australia.

The meeting started with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony conducted by Noongar Elder Kevin Fitzgerald, followed by a cultural immersion on the banks of Doondalup, the Noongar name for Lake Joondalup which means the lake that glistens.



Jason Barrow and Michelle Andrews present a message stick to Rene Woods and Grant Rigney at the Doondalup meet

Along with representatives from the Australian Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, our staff offered insights on water management in Western Australia.

There were also discussions about opportunities through native title and the proposed modernisation of the state's water legislation, through the Water Reform Bill, to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to water and participation in water management.



Noongar Elder Kevin Fitzgerald



Our capabilities

Graduate Program

The department launched a new [Graduate Program](#) in 2022 to attract some of the brightest young minds in the country to work for us. In February 2023 we were delighted to be included as a Top Graduate Employer by the Australian Association of Graduate Employers.

Our 12-month Graduate Program aims to build the skills, experience and networks required for a successful career in the Western Australian public sector. It has a customised rotation plan designed around our needs and graduate interests, providing opportunities to experience and work on statewide projects and initiatives.

Recruitment for our 2023 Graduate Program, and our new [Aboriginal Graduate Program](#), began in June 2023.

This new campaign benefited from support by the Public Sector Commission's [A place of opportunity](#) graduate campaign, which brought more than 25 graduate and internship programs into a single State Government initiative.

It partners with leaders in the mining, engineering, transport, resource, urban and regional planning and development, tourism, construction, and agricultural sectors to help attract graduates. Our very own 2022 graduate officer Chelsea Wenden featured in the promotion.



Watch graduate Chelsea Wenden's testimonial on [YouTube](#)

► Carbon literacy

Carbon literacy is a big part of our Graduate Program. This initiative is aligned with the UK-based [Carbon Literacy Project](#), which describes it as: 'An awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis'.

Our training has been developed with Edith Cowan University's School of Business and Law. It recognises and supports our lead role in delivering the *Western Australian Climate Policy* and is tailored for Western Australia. It is the first of its kind to be delivered in our state's public sector.

Our Reform Roadmap, spurred by the Public Sector Commission Agency Capability Review, drives us to build capability in our workforce and embed a carbon focus across all aspects of our operations.

We have also extended the training to non-graduate staff.

► Empowering our young staff

Findings from a 2022 International Youth Day survey project, conducted by the department's inaugural graduate cohort, prompted the creation of a networking group aimed at empowering young staff members.

Those surveyed expressed a desire for enhanced engagement, a stronger sense of community, improved recruitment and retention processes, and opportunities for training and upskilling.

The Youth Outreach, Understanding, and Networking Group (YOUNG) was officially launched during Youth Week WA celebrations in April, and is intended to cater to staff members aged 30 and below.

YOUNG operates as a peer-led support system across the agency, providing a platform for young staff members to voice their opinions and express their concerns.

The group's objective is to foster a supportive environment for all young employees with a plan to provide opportunities for intergenerational connection, knowledge sharing, upskilling and volunteering.



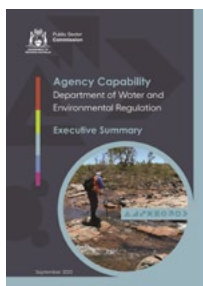
The YOUNG networking group launched in Youth Week 2023



YOUNG is organised by Chelsea Wenden and Nick Gibb

Governance

Agency Capability Review report



A review of the department was carried out between November 2021 and June 2022 as part of the Public Sector Commission’s sector-wide [Agency Capability Review Program](#).

The [review](#) was published in September 2022. It acknowledged our committed and values-based workforce with strong science knowledge and policy skills, and our effective relationships across government and with our statutory boards and committees.

The review	Our response
<p>Improvements were suggested for us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become the lead agency in climate action • integrate the delivery of our services to increase regional development and effectively partner with Traditional Owners • get better at building and recruiting staff capacity • strengthen communications with our customers • restructure and strengthen our executive’s capability in strategic planning and decision-making. 	<p>The department has embarked on a Reform Roadmap, and is pursuing a new portfolio-based operating model which will enable us to collectively focus our efforts into three key areas: Climate and Sustainability, Approvals, and Strategy and Performance.</p> <p>While some elements of the new portfolios were still in staff consultation at June 2023, Dennis O’Reilly was appointed Deputy Director General Strategy and Performance in January 2023, and Emily Briggs was appointed Deputy Director General Climate and Sustainability in April 2023.</p> <p>Implementation of the new structure progressed from 1 August 2023.</p>

Office of the Auditor General report



In 2022 the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) undertook a performance audit of our compliance and enforcement program for environmental conditions surrounding mining approvals. [Report 11: 2022–23 Performance Audit: Compliance with Mining Environmental Conditions](#) was published on 20 December 2022.

[2022–23 Performance Audit: Compliance with Mining Environmental Conditions](#) was published on 20 December 2022.

This audit looked at our department and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) and considered whether we were meeting public expectations in the performance of our regulatory function in the resources sector.

The Auditor General made six recommendations for us and DMIRS jointly to improve compliance activities. We are committed to addressing the matters raised in the report and have developed an implementation plan for the recommendations.

The OAG report also assists us to prioritise and accelerate the changes underway to improve our regulatory capabilities.

Matters raised in the report will be addressed by our progress in merging software systems, increasing our digital capability and improving online service delivery through Environment Online.

The reform of our processes and business practices is now central to every business unit. This work is progressing in response to the Agency Capability Review and through our Reform Roadmap.

We are committed to greater evaluation of our practices and programs. As part of our reform, a new Governance, Risk and Audit branch has been created.



The department's Prime House head office. Picture: Davin Storey

Stakeholder, customer and community insights

Stakeholder research

The department undertakes annual surveys of our stakeholders and customers to fulfil our key performance indicator reporting requirement about the proportion of stakeholders (and customers) who perceive the department to be effectively managing the state's water as a resource for sustainable productive use. It also helps inform our assessments of program effectiveness.

Overall stakeholder and customer sentiment towards the department was more positive this year. Improved customer perceptions of our decision-making, timeliness of outcomes and communications have contributed to this.

We also received a high rating for 'positive interactions' compared with other State Government organisations, which means the majority of our survey sample rated business and engagement with the department equal to or better than with other state agencies.

Our key performance indicator results are discussed in full from page 158.



More than half of those surveyed who have used **Environment Online** say it has improved interactions with the department.



Water priorities

Water-related issues are still priorities for our stakeholders and the public.



Waste management

Sentiment **waste management** effectiveness was strong among stakeholders but weakened among customers and community.

Stakeholder
'I've had good dealings in the past two years and there have been improvements. We regularly meet them and work together.'

Public
'The department has become extremely positive to deal with. Their vision and attendance to issues are flawless. Having dealt with many government departments over the years in different fields, we find this department and its direction and implementations, above par.'

The graphic features two stylized human figures. On the left, a man with a beard and a teal shirt has a teal speech bubble above him containing a stakeholder quote. On the right, a woman with black hair and a red shirt has a red speech bubble above her containing a public quote. The background is white with a faint grid pattern.

Agency performance

Outcome 1	48	Outcome 2	71	Local government waste plans	92
Service 1 Water information and advice	49	Service 4 Environmental regulation	72	Roads to Reuse	92
Water measurement and monitoring	49	Industry regulation	72	Food and garden organics	93
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▶ Key achievements from July 2022 to June 2023	51	Waste-related investigations	75	from July 2022 to June 2023	95
Floodplain mapping and advice	52	▶ Feature story: Tyre dumper	76	Household Hazardous Waste program	96
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Waterwise actions and plans	58	EP Act amendments	82	Planning schemes and scheme amendments	100
Drainage for Liveability	58	Western Australian Climate Policy	83	Completed assessments	101
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from October 2019 to June 2023	59	Clean Energy Future Fund	83	Consultation	102
Rural water planning	60	Regional Climate Alliance project funding	84	Service 8 Environmental management services to the EPA	103
▶ Feature story:		Electric Vehicle Strategy	84	Greenhouse gas guidance	103
Stormwater harvest brings Narrogin turf to life	61	Native vegetation policy	85	Aboriginal cultural heritage	103
Rivers and estuaries	62	Advisory groups	86	Greater Brixton Street Wetlands	103
Estuary protection	64	Outcome 4	88	Stakeholder Reference Group	104
Service 3 Water regulation, licensing and industry governance	66	Service 6 Waste strategies	89	Outcome 6	105
Water licensing	66	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030	89	Service 9 Compliance monitoring services to the Minister for Environment	106
Water Online	67	Australian Government waste export ban and recycling modernisation	90	Compliance and audit activity	106
Water compliance and enforcement	67	E-waste ban to landfill	90		
Garden bore watering restrictions	68	Review of the waste levy	91		
Water services	69	Waste infrastructure planning	91		
Managing public water supply	69	Waste data collection and reporting	91		
Water fees	70				
Water policy	70				



Outcome 1

Western Australia's growth and development is supported by the sustainable management of water resources for the long-term benefit of the state.

Service 1 Water information and advice

Water measurement and monitoring

The department has built, and operates, a statewide water measurement and monitoring network.

This data contributes to water allocation and licensing, water resource development controls and health management, and floodplain risk assessments and advice. It is the backbone of the state emergency flood warning service.

The network is a combination of about 2,800 groundwater monitoring bores, 270 river gauging stations and 170 meteorological sites. This year we started a three-year \$4.2 million implementation of groundwater monitoring telemetry to about half of the state's bore network.

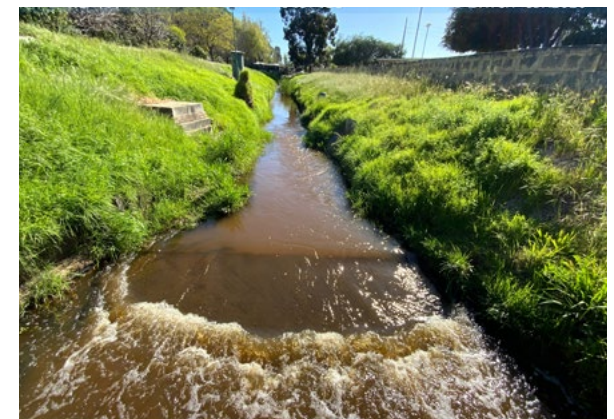
This technology will automatically collect groundwater data hourly and be available daily for our scientists, planners and the community via our [Water Information Reporting](#) (WIR) portal. This will enable better understanding and management

The network is a combination of about **2,800 groundwater monitoring bores, 270 river gauging stations and 170 meteorological sites.**

of our valuable groundwater resources against a backdrop of a changing climate and increasing demand.

The remote collection will also reduce the 140,000 km of driving required by the department each year to measure groundwater levels manually. This contributes to reductions in emissions, potential environmental impacts and risks for our team.

We are also converting our streamflow and meteorological site telemetry systems from 3G mobile and soon-to-be-obsolete satellite networks to new mobile and satellite systems. This will increase bandwidth and allow for new technical opportunities such as on-site power monitoring, cameras and velocimetry (estimating streamflow rate using automated video imagery analysis).



Water information

Our WIR portal provides instant access to more than 150,000 water monitoring sites. The 2022–23 year was the biggest ever for WIR data, with 8,657 requests for water information and an average turnaround time of less than five minutes.

Analysis of data use shows most of these requests relate to environmental assessment, research and investigation. There was an increase in all categories except domestic water supply in 2022–23, compared with the previous year.

Water Information Reporting data use

Purpose	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	
Environmental assessment	2,670	2,467	2,547	3,051	↑
Research and investigation	1,035	1,444	2,242	2,622	↑
Other	505	393	364	435	↑
Mining and exploration	435	495	573	653	↑
Agriculture	309	286	269	430	↑
Domestic supply	248	172	194	153	↓
Water source protection	231	216	292	551	↑
Infrastructure	226	350	335	382	↑
Property development/land use planning	212	187	223	249	↑
Industry and commerce	39	92	78	99	↑
Recreation	15	81	29	32	↑

Water and environment planning advice

We provide advice to local governments and land planning agencies on water and environmental regulation, and water resource management in urban areas, to protect our natural systems and to support sustainable development.

In alignment with the [Draft State Planning Policy 2.9 Planning for Water](#) and the [Draft State Planning Policy 2.9 Planning for Water Guidelines](#), we direct that water resources should be considered at each planning stage.

We also encourage early consideration of flood, drainage and environmental factors, and planning for water supply, infrastructure, waterwise systems and service provision options that meet regulatory requirements.

This role extends to pre-emptively scoping regulatory processes under Part V of the EP Act and *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* (Contaminated Sites Act) to ensure development proponents are informed of other legislative requirements.

Our new Environment Online portal will facilitate data-informed decision-making and more streamlined processes for environmental and water regulation. The first release of this business transformation flagship went live on 16 August 2022 and focused on delivering information and services to support environmental impact assessment activities under Part IV of the EP Act.

In 2022–23, the department assessed and responded to:

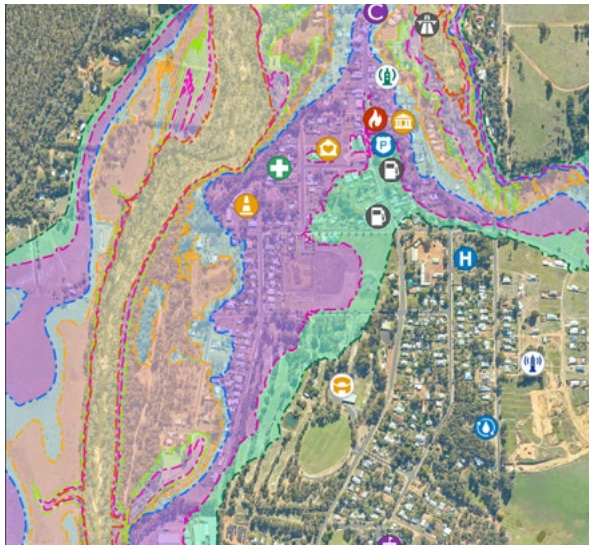
- 878 requests for water advice from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH)
- 881 requests from local government authorities (LGAs)
- 204 requests from DMIRS
- 49 requests from the EPA
- 418 requests from other stakeholders, including other State Government agencies and utilities, and industry.

We also advised on 107 water management reports associated with land planning.

Drainage planning and floodplain modelling

The department works with local governments, other State Government agencies, service providers, the community and natural resources management agencies to support better water and environmental outcomes in the urban environment.

We do this by producing catchment-scale flood models for priority development areas and major state projects, and delivering guidance on stormwater and groundwater management. This assists developers and decision-makers to identify and resolve issues early.



A catchment-scale flood model

Key achievements

from July 2022 to June 2023

Provide advice

We continued to provide flood risk management and land capability advice for development areas identified in the Western Australian Planning Commission's Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million frameworks.

53 enquiries

We responded to 53 enquiries, with advice provided to members of the public, industry and government on water resources, flood risk management and modelling as part of the land planning process.

New work for catchment modelling

We produced new work on catchment drainage modelling, and stormwater and groundwater management issues for urban development.

Streamlining existing guidance

We streamline existing guidance that aligns with national standards.

Engagement

Our capacity-building program included a presentation to the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia in November 2022, and a June 2023 'Modelling Masterclass' workshop for local governments in the southern Perth-Peel areas which are subject to flooding in the Palusplain wetlands.



Floodplain mapping and advice

Since the floods in the Fitzroy River in January 2023, the department has been working with local government and across the State Government on floodplain development strategies to guide recovery activities and new development within affected communities.

Central to these strategies is our flood mapping for the January 2023 event. This extends from the Great Northern Highway crossing at Willare, near the mouth of the Fitzroy River, to the remote community of Kupungarri more than 450 km upstream.

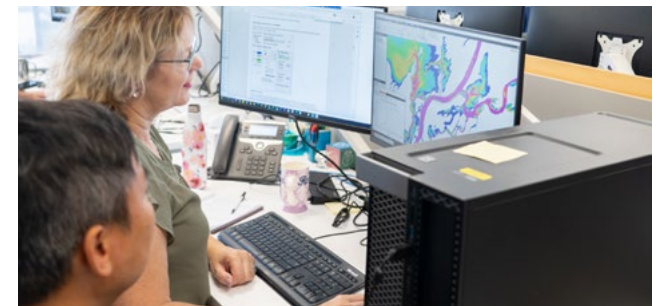
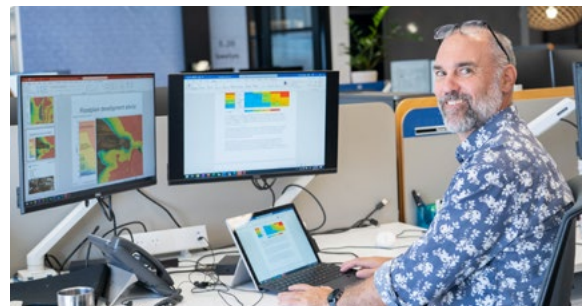
The extensive flooding in both the West Kimberley region and across the Eastern States this year has again highlighted the need for proactive management of floodplains to mitigate the risk of flooding to people, property and infrastructure.

In 2022–23 the department responded to more than 700 requests for floodplain management advice.

 **700+** requests for floodplain management advice responded to



Inundation mapping of Cambellin townsite prepared by Andrew Watson, Senior Spatial Analyst



Supervising Engineer Simon Rodgers and his team provided floodplain advice during the Kimberley floods emergency

Service 2 Water planning, allocation and optimisation

Water allocation plans

Water allocation plans are the department's key water policy documents. They establish how much water is available from rivers and aquifers in an area, how much is set aside for the environment and public drinking supply, and how much can be licensed sustainably to businesses and individuals.

The department prioritises allocation plans for key resources and conducts reviews of plans and allocation limits to reflect the climate, and the use and health of the resource.

► Gngangara groundwater allocation plan

Our [Gngangara groundwater allocation plan](#) is actively being implemented since its launch on 3 June 2022. It aims to rebalance the amount of water we take from the Gngangara groundwater system with the amount recharged by rainfall, which is being impacted by climate change.

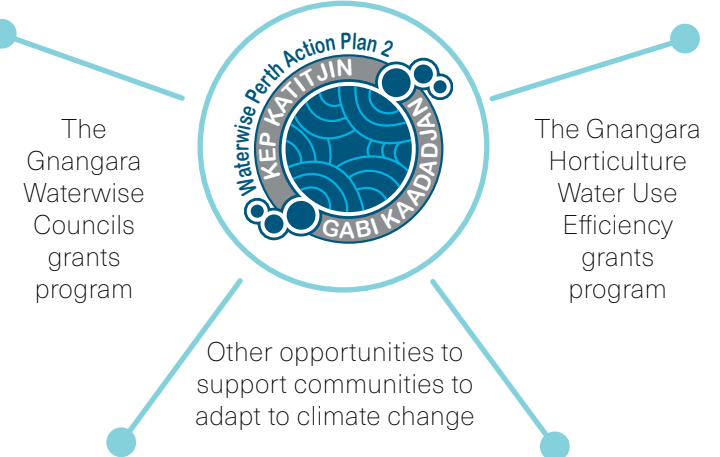
This will be achieved by Water Corporation reducing its baseline abstraction by 27 per cent and most other licensed groundwater users receiving a 10 per cent reduction, which will start in the first water year after 1 July 2028. The department continues to work closely with Water Corporation in planning for this.

Many aspects of the Gngangara plan are implemented through [Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan](#).

These include:

New waterwise standards for nurseries and tree farms

Seasonal Be Groundwater Wise campaigns helping garden bore users to adapt their gardens to the sprinkler roster change

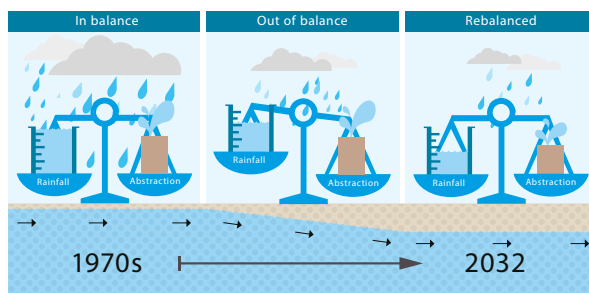


Learn more about the *Gngangara groundwater allocation plan* on [YouTube](#)

The Gngangara Waterwise Councils grants program was announced on 19 October 2022 and offers a total of \$4 million to assist nine local governments in the Gngangara Plan area that are most impacted by the urban heat island effect.

The funding, starting in the second half of 2023, will assist them to carry out projects such as irrigation system upgrades and implementation of water sensitive urban design principles in public open spaces.

Under an expansion of the Gngangara Horticulture Water Use Efficiency grants program, announced on 20 October 2022, funding is available for eligible horticultural and viticultural businesses for a suite of water use efficiency activities. This consists of grants to implement water use efficiency infrastructure, grants to implement soil amelioration activities, and a voucher program to engage a water-efficiency expert for specialist advice. This project is in partnership with DPIRD.



The *Gngangara Groundwater Allocation Plan* aims to rebalance the amount of groundwater we take from the system

► Murray groundwater allocation statement

The [Murray groundwater area allocation statement](#), released in December 2022, describes our review of allocation limits in the Murray groundwater area. The statement sets new allocation limits for all Superficial aquifer resources in the area as well as the deeper Leederville and Cattamarra Coal Measures resources in the Nambeelup subarea.

The revised limits are based on information gathered since the 2012 Murray groundwater allocation plan was published, including technical studies completed as part of the [Peel Integrated Water Initiative](#). These studies recommended the 2012 allocation limits be reduced because of climate change and less recharge to aquifers in the area.

The *Murray groundwater area allocation statement* delivers on action 20 of Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan, which is to review allocation limits across Perth and Peel to manage groundwater levels sustainably.



Key outcomes of the Murray groundwater allocation review

- 1 Taking groundwater up to the limits set in the 2012 plan is no longer sustainable as the climate continues to become drier and hotter.
- 2 Allocation limits are reduced to lower the risks to groundwater-dependent ecosystems and cultural values while allowing supply to existing groundwater users to continue over the next 10 years in a sustainable manner.
- 3 The new limits do not affect current licensees; however, they will limit future groundwater availability.
- 4 We will review the Leederville and Cattamarra resources of the Coolup, Pinjarra and Waroona subareas after the Murray-Peel groundwater investigation is completed in late 2024.

► Warren and Donnelly river catchments

The Warren-Donnelly region, in the south-west of Western Australia, is one of the state's most important irrigated agricultural areas. The industry relies on reliable access to fresh surface water flows captured in farm dams for irrigation over drier periods.

The department supported the Southern Forests Irrigation Reference Group to look at measures to increase water security for the horticulture industry. We also work closely with the Warren Donnelly Water Advisory Committee to explore resilience to climate change.

We are undertaking investigations to identify climate-resilient habitats for aquatic species and improve our understanding of how flow regimes support environmental values. This includes a three-year project with the National Environmental Science Program exploring ecological and Indigenous values in the Donnelly River.

Other important work in the area includes:

- expanding the known ranges for aquatic species through our [river health assessments](#)
- understanding the dry-season habitat and movement of the vulnerable, conservation-listed mud minnow in the Manjimup Brook catchment.

This work will be important for developing the next Warren-Donnelly surface water allocation plan.

► Exmouth

The department has begun the technical work to review groundwater allocation limits and how we manage the take of water from the Exmouth peninsula. This work supports the Exmouth Gulf Taskforce, which will advise the Minister for Environment on the environmental management of Exmouth Gulf and its surrounds.

Through the Exmouth Gulf Taskforce we are talking with Traditional Owners, represented by the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation, to recognise and integrate their views on cultural values and connection to water and sea in our work.

We are working with Water Corporation to better understand the groundwater resources of the Exmouth peninsula and guide its investigations into future sources of water to supply drinking water for the town of Exmouth.

Our allocation limit review will apply a risk-based approach using updated climate projections and our improved understanding of the fresh and saline groundwater resources. Part of the review will be recognising the unique and interconnected water-dependent ecological, cultural and social values, and ensuring enough water remains underground to protect or restore these values.

► Derby

The comprehensive submissions received on the [Derby groundwater allocation plan: For public comment](#), released in November 2020, showed us the value of continuing conversations with Traditional Owner groups, Water Corporation, licensees and the community to improve knowledge sharing and further shape the plan before it can be finalised.

A public forum was held in Derby, in collaboration with the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley and Water Corporation, on 27 October 2022 to share our technical science and what we heard from the public submissions.

We are also working with Water Corporation to improve seawater interface monitoring on the Derby peninsula. This will support the continued use of groundwater. It will help us identify when action may be needed to reduce abstraction to maintain the naturally occurring interface which protects the town's drinking water supply.



Senior Natural Resource Management Officer Mark Williams sets up measurements at Warren River

Water investigations

The department investigates, measures and quantifies the state's surface and groundwater resources. This information is used in water allocation, licensing and source protection, as well as in the setting of environmental water provisions.



► State Groundwater Investigations Program

The State Groundwater Investigations Program (SGIP) undertakes targeted groundwater investigations to ensure government and industry have timely and accurate knowledge of water resources suitable for drinking, agriculture, horticulture, mining and industry.

A competitive job market for groundwater professionals has resulted in employment challenges for the department. While this has delayed delivery on several projects, the SGIP has still achieved significant outcomes.

In 2022–23 it spent \$2.986 million supporting 12 active groundwater investigation projects.

Water investigations: highlights

Pawsey supercomputer

Development of the Perth Regional Aquifer Model version 3.6 to run on the Pawsey supercomputer; more than 600 different groundwater management scenarios can be run in the time it previously took for a single model run, providing better management outcomes for the high-priority Gnangara, Jandakot and Serpentine groundwater areas.

Groundwater telemetry

Completion of a successful three-year trial of groundwater telemetry to select technical solutions for upgrades to 1,300 high-priority monitoring bores.

Swan Valley program

Progression of the Swan Valley – North-East Corridor drilling program, with implications for future water allocation in this mixed rural and urban development front. A key output of this is to support managed aquifer recharge prospectivity mapping, to evaluate alternative water supplies in this water-constrained development front in response to demand and the drying climate.

Aboriginal collaboration

Continued collaboration with the Karajarri Traditional Lands Association (KTLA), including ecological fieldwork and co-authoring a presentation at the Australasian Groundwater Conference in November 2022. The SGIP also sponsored KTLA Rangers to attend and co-present at the 2023 Western Australian Wetland Conference.

Seawater interface projects

Continuation of three seawater interface projects in La Grange (Kimberley), and Myalup and Bunbury-Busselton (South West) to understand the extent of seawater intrusion into some of our most important coastal freshwater aquifers.

Water source protection

The department is responsible for protecting about 140 public drinking water source areas from contamination. We work with different groups including State Government agencies, local governments, Traditional Owners, landowners, mining, industry and the community to make sure that our drinking water drawn from these sources is safe and reliable.

Drinking water source protection reports help us do this. These reports tell us where the boundaries are for each water source, which areas are most important to protect, and what we need to do to keep them safe. Currently all active drinking water source areas are covered by protection reports.

Water supply planning

The department is leading a Stage 2 assessment for the Perth and south-western coast water security initiative, which was added to Infrastructure Australia's Infrastructure Priority List in 2020–21.

The listing recognises that growth in water demand and the impacts of climate change across the Perth Groundwater Basin is a problem but also an opportunity of national significance. The Stage 2 assessment completed in 2022–23 included consulting across government on a strategic review and benefit-cost analysis of infrastructure and non-infrastructure options to

meet the non-potable water needed for the Perth and Peel region by 2050.

This work is helping to guide government and industry in preparing non-potable water supply proposals to be ready for investment according to the [Infrastructure Australia assessment process](#).

The department also works with local government and industry to resolve future non-potable water demands where there is limited groundwater available for urban development, peri-urban agriculture and heavy industry.

In 2022–23 we completed the Serpentine-Jarrahdale water supply-demand situation assessment, which estimates the shortfall in groundwater to irrigate future green spaces after demand management and water entitlement transactions are undertaken.



The assessment is the initial step to identifying preferred options for additional water supplies.

An evaluation of the [Mid West regional water supply strategy](#) was also undertaken in 2022–23, in consultation with Mid West Regional Development Commission and Water Corporation.

This reviewed recent water use trends and updated long-term projections of demand based on scenarios for industry development and population growth. Long-term climate change projections indicate a continued reduction in the volume of groundwater that is sustainable to be taken in the Mid West region, so much of the projected growth in water demand will need to be met by alternative sources including seawater desalination.



Waterwise actions and plans

State Government agencies are supporting our efforts to expand the reach of our Waterwise programs and actively address the impacts of climate change. Along with our department, 10 other agencies are involved in [Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan](#).

These are the departments of Communities; Finance; Planning, Lands and Heritage; Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; plus Water Corporation; DevelopmentWA and METRONET. We also welcome new partners, the departments of Education; Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; and Primary Industries and Regional Development.



This group of agencies is delivering 41 actions in the plan. Our department leads 18 of these and supports a further eight.

In this work, we value the input of our country's Aboriginal Traditional Owners and Custodians.

Through the department and Water Corporation-managed Waterwise Councils program, the majority of local governments in Western Australia are now leaders and champions of waterwise behaviour. Along with the development industry, they work to design and implement steps to use water more efficiently, while maintaining the amenity and liveability our communities need, as we adapt to climate change.



► Be Groundwater Wise

The department's [Be Groundwater Wise](#) behavioural change campaign is part of Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan. It shows how far we have come as a community and the inroads we have made in conserving groundwater resources.

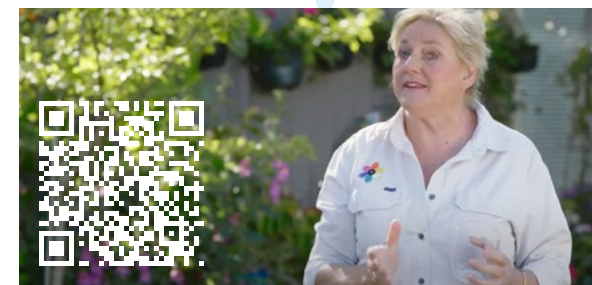
In 2022–23 our spring and autumn awareness campaigns for Perth gained more than 15 million online impressions. There were also more than 420,000 views of a series of videos created with gardening guru Sabrina Hahn to help garden bore owners get ready for summer.

Drainage for Liveability

The Drainage for Liveability Program is a joint initiative with Water Corporation that supports a waterwise Perth. We are working with community groups, local government and the development industry to transform stormwater drains and basins to increase the social and environmental value of these spaces in our urban environment.

We seek to provide joint positions and advice to stakeholders and develop agreed recommendations for technical and policy-related aspects of drainage management.

The Drainage for Liveability guidance note series provides an integrated approach to drainage management, focusing on opportunities to maximise community and environmental benefits.



Watch Sabrina Hahn discuss our precious groundwater on [YouTube](#)



Waterwise achievements

from October 2019 to June 2023



**179,000
waterwise
plantings**

creating biodiversity and cooling our suburbs.



**22
feasibility
studies**

completed to identify appropriate water supplies for urban green space in areas with limited or no groundwater availability.



**6,779
trees
planted**

reducing urban heat in our suburbs.



**31 Water
Corporation
assets**

and surrounding land transformed into neighbourhood green spaces, such as living streams, wetlands, community gardens, nature corridors or parkland.



**100%
Boorloo and
Bindjareb
councils**

recognised as waterwise and 88% recognised as gold waterwise councils.



**120,450
students**

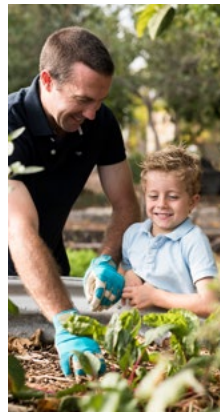
participated in the Waterwise Schools program.



**12,000 million + litres
of water saved**

which includes:

- ▶ **373 million litres** saved by retrofitting public housing with water-efficient fixtures
- ▶ **683 million litres** saved through programs to help households adapt to climate change
- ▶ **11,360 million litres** saved by business and industry by improving their water use practices.



Rural water planning

Ensuring our rural communities are resilient to climate change remains a major priority for the department. Our suite of programs is focused on providing secure and reliable emergency non-potable off-farm supplies for regional townscapes and emergency firefighting in the dryland agricultural region of Western Australia.

The department provides assistance through the following programs:

► Community Water Supplies Partnership Program (CWSP)

The program provides grants of up to \$100,000 to local governments or community groups for projects to improve non-potable water supplies in dryland agricultural areas receiving less than 600 mm average annual rainfall and for use in times of emergency for stock and fire fighting.

The CWSP program is supported by \$3.2 million in funding over four years by the Australian Government's National Water Grid Fund and the State Government.

In 2022–23 the State Government approved 26 CWSP grants, totalling \$2,181,245 in funding for regional communities. Contributions from LGAs amounted to \$1,111,361 for total funding of \$3,292,606.

Approved CWSP applications 2022–23

LGA	Number of projects	CWSP grant \$	LGA contribution	Total
Brookton	2	\$147,967	\$63,415	\$211,382
Dandaragan	1	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$170,000
Dowerin	1	\$88,509	\$37,887	\$126,396
Dumbleyung	1	\$100,000	\$47,425	\$147,425
Esperance	1	\$99,554	\$59,876	\$159,430
Gnowangerup	1	\$42,270	\$21,000	\$63,270
Irwin	1	\$100,000	\$54,401	\$154,401
Kondinin	1	\$90,331	\$38,713	\$129,044
Lake Grace	2	\$196,574	\$85,129	\$281,703
Merredin	2	\$199,021	\$115,643	\$314,664
Moora	2	\$200,000	\$129,917	\$329,917
Morawa	1	\$53,728	\$24,600	\$78,328
Narembeen	1	\$85,000	\$37,800	\$122,800
Narrogin	1	\$75,600	\$35,000	\$110,600
Perenjori	1	\$62,754	\$28,500	\$91,254
Pingelly	1	\$97,365	\$45,300	\$142,665
Toodyay	1	\$73,897	\$31,670	\$105,567
Victoria Plains	1	\$89,667	\$38,428	\$128,095
Wagin	1	\$78,593	\$37,010	\$115,603
Williams	1	\$24,372	\$12,186	\$36,558
Woodanilling	1	\$99,975	\$43,004	\$142,979
Yilgarn	1	\$91,068	\$39,458	\$130,525
Total	26	\$2,181,245	\$1,111,361	\$3,292,606

► Strategic and Agricultural Area Dams

This program is delivering a network of 70 strategic community water supplies across the dryland agricultural areas of our state to provide important emergency stock water supplies during dry seasons. This \$7.3 million program is supported by joint funding from the State Government and the Australian Government's National Water Grid Fund over four years.

► Water deficiency declarations

Water deficiency declarations are implemented by the State Government during dry periods in our agricultural regions, to address emergency animal welfare needs. Under a declaration, the State Government will provide water for livestock needs at a central storage point, within a 40 km radius of the farms impacted.

► Farm Water Supply Planning Scheme

This program provides a rebate to commercial broadacre farmers to fund an audit which can identify ways to improve the sustainability of their water supplies. Eligible farmers may apply for funding of up to \$1,000 to cover 50 per cent of the audit cost.

Feature story

Stormwater harvest brings Narrogin turf to life

Stormwater previously ran down May Street in Narrogin but a new stormwater catchment dam through the CWSP will top up existing irrigation wastewater supplies and transform the town's main sports oval.

The project harvests an additional 147.7 megalitres (ML) of water a year to the new dam, which has a 20 ML capacity. This water supplements the shire's treated wastewater irrigation scheme, which is used to irrigate the town sporting oval and other townscapes and recreational reserves.

The Narrogin community benefits from a quality oval with better useability, and a reduction in flooding on Eston and Federal streets.

The CWSP program is funded through a collaboration between the Australian Government's National Water Grid Fund and the State Government.



Water Minister Simone McGurk, third from left, at the opening of the catchment dam

Rivers and estuaries

► Healthy Rivers

Our Healthy Rivers program monitors more than 150 river and stream sites across south-west Western Australia, and undertakes additional assessments as required.

This work helps us identify the ecosystem values that need protection, monitor threats and impacts, and evaluate ecosystem responses.

In 2022–23 the Healthy Rivers team undertook assessments at 74 sites from as far north as Moore River down to the Warren River on the south coast. Details of these assessments will soon be available through the [Healthy Rivers website](#).



Healthy Rivers team undertook assessments at **74 sites**



► State fish kill response

In 2022–23 the department responded to 11 fish kill reports within inland waters and supported DPIRD with another 10 events recorded in marine waters.

Events were spread across Western Australia and included one in the North West, four in the Mid-West Gascoyne, and two each in the Peel, South West, and Swan Avon regions.

Most fish deaths were attributed to poor water quality occurring through the dry season, typically because of low dissolved oxygen. Rainfall events, which wash organic material into systems and stir up sediments, were linked to several of these events.

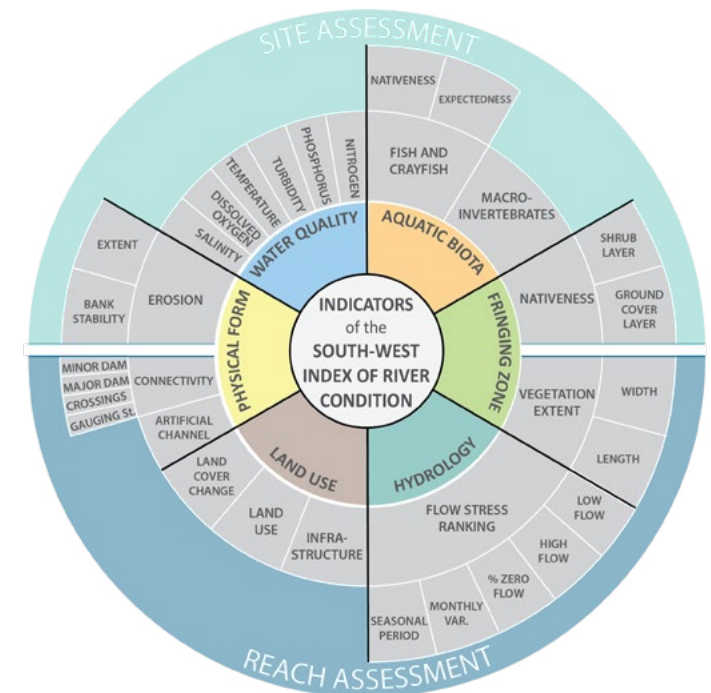


► River restoration partnership

The department has been supporting a significant restoration program to restore habitat to the Harvey River, and in doing so build ecosystem resilience to a drying climate.

A key part of the project is re-snagging, which is bringing large woody debris back to a system that was previously cleared and straightened to increase drainage.

Through careful design and flow-response modelling, the project has improved ecosystem health without increasing flood risk. The debris provides physical habitat for aquatic species,



promotes riffling (oxygenation) and creates deeper scoured areas which offer permanent cooler water refuges for aquatic species.

Our role has been in habitat design and supervision of the installation, as well as long-term monitoring of water quality response. We have been working closely with the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce under their Marron More than a Meal program, members of the Harvey Aboriginal Corporation, Murdoch University, Peel Harvey Catchment Council, Water Corporation and Greening Australia.

Biological monitoring by Murdoch University has already shown amazing results, with the return of marron along with large freshwater cobbler and nightfish, which were not previously found in the area.



► New species of crayfish identified

One of the key directions we have in environmental management is to protect biodiversity.

Through a collaboration with Edith Cowan and Curtin universities, we have been looking at genetics of the endemic crayfish found in rivers across the south-west of Western Australia. This information helps in setting management priorities and water regime requirements that will protect these species' habitats.

Through this work we have identified three new freshwater crayfish species which are part of the *Cherax* genus. We refer to them as '*Cherax nov (novel)*' as an interim name.



Introducing our new friend, '*Cherax nov (novel)*'

► Evaluation of discharge measurement structures

Measuring discharge in our rivers is critical for our management of waterways and water resources, and the ecosystems that rely on them.

Discharge management structures built by the department are important components of our data-gathering network, capturing information on water moving through the landscape. We undertake an ecological monitoring program to optimise the discharge measurement structures' design, minimising risk to ecological value and maximising accurate water measurement.



Manjimup gauging station

► Protecting freshwater species from toxins

During 2022–23 we progressed our pioneering work in the development of ecotoxicological tests to assess water quality risks to aquatic ecosystems in the state's south-west.

These tests are designed to assess the tolerance of local species, under local conditions, to specific chemicals or mixtures of chemicals in effluents.

This work enables the department and proponents to:

- better determine environmental risks from new development proposals
- establish relevant water quality guidelines and related licence conditions on discharges
- monitor ecosystem responses and adapt our management decisions accordingly.

In the past, this process was only achieved using information from species that occur in other parts of Australia or internationally, which carries a level of uncertainty regarding how local species will respond.

The south-west test suite will soon be available for commercial use. It is hoped that similar test suites can be developed for other Western Australian regions.

Estuary protection

Our work to improve the health of estuaries across south-west Western Australia continues through [Healthy Estuaries WA](#), [Revitalising Geographe Waterways](#) and the [Bindjareb Djilba \(Peel-Harvey estuary\) Protection Plan](#).

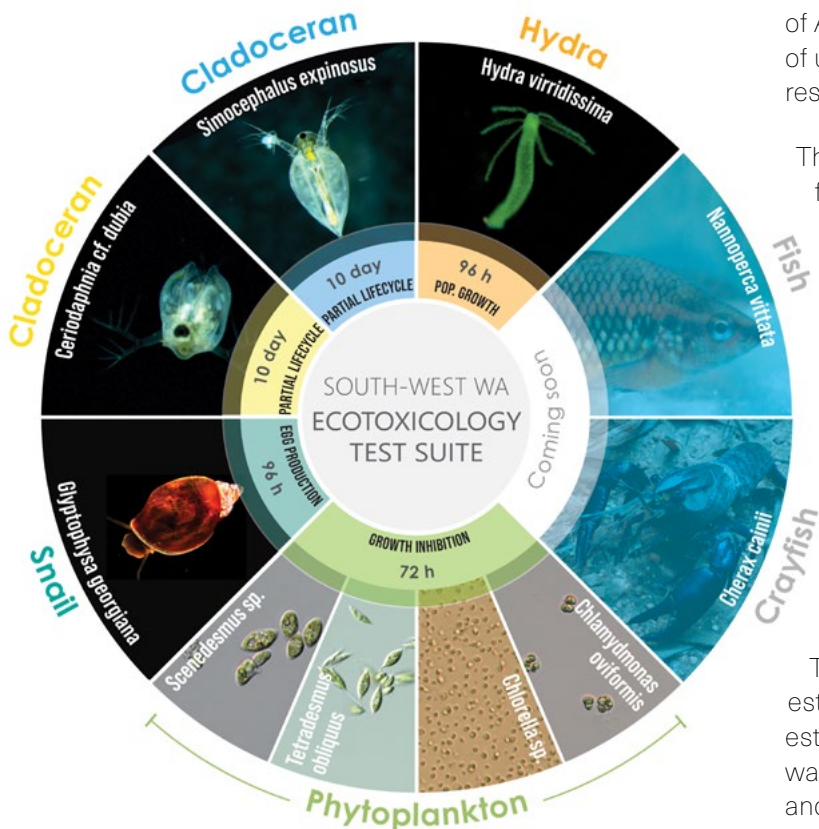
These programs work in seven priority estuaries and their catchments: the Peel-Harvey estuary, Leschenault Estuary, Vasse-Geographe waterways, Hardy Inlet, Wilson Inlet, Torbay Inlet and Oyster Harbour.

We monitor water quality regularly at 174 locations across our seven focus estuaries and their catchments. Since Healthy Estuaries WA began in 2020, we have completed 32 seagrass surveys. Along with catchment and estuary numerical modelling and ecological expertise, this monitoring effort directly informs management actions that are reducing nutrient inputs to our waterways.

Our innovative remediation work to address existing loads of nutrients is underway with 11 soil amendment trials on farms in progress, and two trials of phosphorus-binding clays in waterways in planning stages.

Our work on nutrient management on grazing farms, in partnership with local catchment groups and DPIRD, continues to have strong participation and outcomes from farmers. Since 2020 we have completed 501 whole-farm nutrient maps from soil testing and had more than 1,400 participants at sustainable agriculture events.

In 2022 we launched [Nutrient best management practices for grazing enterprises in south-west WA](#), which provides locally relevant, practical guidance to farmers to reduce nutrient loss, saving them money and reducing impacts on the environment. We are also progressing work with Western Dairy to support dairy farmers to implement the [Code of Practice for Dairy Farm Effluent Management WA](#).



► The collaborative [uPtake](#) project, supported by Healthy Estuaries WA and the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, concluded in 2023. Four years of on-farm fertiliser trials delivered through the project have validated that the national critical values which underpin phosphorus fertiliser recommendations are appropriate for soils in south-west Western Australia and contemporary pasture species. This builds farmer and industry confidence in nutrient management recommendations to support best practices that reduce nutrient loss to waterways and our estuaries from fertilisers applied on farms.

Our innovative remediation work to address existing loads of nutrients is underway with **11 soil amendment trails on farms in progress, and two trials of phosphorus-binding clays in waterways in planning stages.**

The Bindjareb Djilba (Peel-Harvey estuary) Protection Plan is in its second year of implementation, with strongly positive engagement from key stakeholders and funding support from a State Government election commitment. The Policy and Planning Committee – co-chaired by Hon David Templeman MLA, Member for Mandurah, and Lisa Munday MLA, Member for Dawesville – is established and meeting regularly to progress priority actions to protect the estuary. The Protection Plan is supporting partnerships with Bindjareb Noongar Traditional Owners, including through an Aboriginal-led yarning circle and cultural mapping.

Science communication about our estuaries is a critical part of these programs. We have published 20 science publications since 2020 along with up-to-date and interactive online information and presentations at annual community science forums. In 2022–23 more than 260 community members joined us to learn about estuary water quality and catchment management at community events.



Learn more about uPtake on [YouTube](#)



Dairy farmer Rob Giura and Senior Environmental Office Brad Degens inspect a soil amendment trial



Service 3 Water regulation, licensing and industry governance

Water licensing

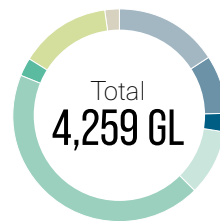
Administering the sustainable and equitable take of water through the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RIWI Act) ensures our water resources are protected. Water licences issued by us set the volume of water that can be taken, what water resource it can be taken from, where it can be used and for what purpose.

At 30 June 2023, we managed 12,767 water licences across 775 groundwater and 413 surface water resources. These licences authorise the taking of 4,259 gigalitres (GL) of water – 3,251 from groundwater resources and 1,006 from surface water resources.

In certain areas, the construction of water-use infrastructure including bores and dams, and the disturbance or interference of the beds and banks of watercourses, are also subject to authorisations requiring licences and permits. As at 30 June 2023, there were 870 licences to construct and alter groundwater wells and 422 permits to interfere with beds and banks granted across the state.

Western Australia's water users by sector (allocated volume)

Please note: The sector volumes (both individual and totaled) in each of these charts have been subject to rounding.



Total licensed volume by sector

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agriculture: 673 GL (16%) ■ Industry and power generation: 131 GL (3%) ■ Mining: 1,890 GL (44%) ■ Public water scheme supply: 580 GL (14%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commercial and institutional: 369 GL (9%) ■ Irrigation scheme supply: 440 GL (10%) ■ Parks, gardens and recreation: 109 GL (3%) ■ Other*: 68 GL (2%)
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*Other contains environment and conservation, and stock and domestic.

Groundwater licensed volume by sector

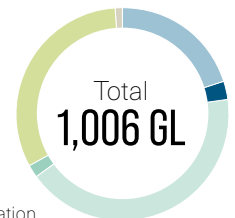
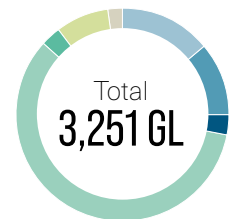
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agriculture: 467 GL (14%) ■ Industry and power generation: 101 GL (3%) ■ Parks, gardens and recreation: 107 GL (3%) ■ Other*: 81 GL (2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commercial and institutional: 367 GL (11%) ■ Mining: 1,871 GL (58%) ■ Public water scheme supply: 259 GL (8%)
---	--

*Other contains irrigation scheme supply, environment and conservation, and stock and domestic.

Surface water licensed volume by sector

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agriculture: 206 GL (20%) ■ Irrigation scheme supply: 425 GL (42%) ■ Public water scheme supply: 321 GL (32%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Industry and power generation: 30 GL (3%) ■ Mining: 19 GL (2%) ■ Other*: 6 GL (1%)
--	---

*Other includes stock and domestic, commercial and institutional, environment and conservation, and parks, gardens and recreation.



In 2022–23 the water licensing target timeframes for average application processing (65 days low risk, 75 days medium risk and 95 days high risk) were met for all application risk categories. The average assessment timeliness performances for low, medium and high-risk water licence applications were 44 days, 56 days and 85 days, respectively, remaining well under established targets.

As at 30 June 2023, there were 364 water licence applications in backlog. The 2021–22 backlog result was 265, meaning there was a 37 per cent increase in the backlog. This is above the target threshold of 350 applications. The department is exploring this growth in backlog and options available to address the increase, both in the immediate and long term.

Water Online

[Water Online](#) remains our one-stop portal for water licensing. It allows water users to lodge water licence and permit applications, and for licensees and permit holders to submit reports and meter readings.

The percentage of portal users continues to rise and 50 per cent of applications were submitted online in 2022–23, with 1,810 new users registering during the year for a total of 9,346 users.

Water compliance and enforcement

As at 30 June 2023, 6,204 water licences representing 4,171.4 GL of water were subject to metering and alternative measurement requirements under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Regulations 2000.

Our regulatory work includes educational and behavioural support as well as compliance and enforcement activities that ensure legal requirements are being followed. When necessary, formal action is taken for breaches of these requirements.

Support mechanisms are made available to licensees which promote self-regulation of the terms and conditions of water licences. For example, by using Water Online licensees can receive reminder notices of due dates for report submissions, and input meter details to keep track of monthly and annual water use.

The department licenses more than 227 types of business activities and categories. These include:



irrigation uses such as horticulture, parks and gardens



business uses such as bottling and dairy production



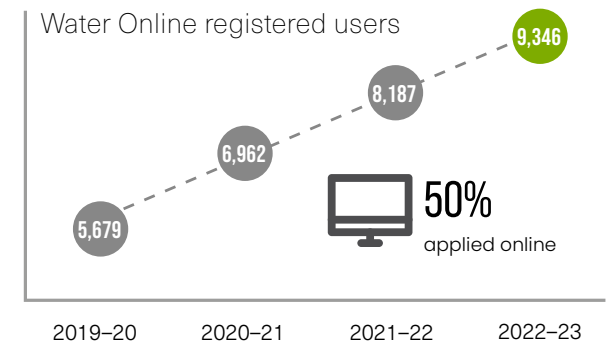
small business uses such as cleaning and food processing



mine and construction de-watering



public water supply




Compliance monitoring consists of on-site visits and remote monitoring activities. In 2022–23 we undertook 175 compliance inspections and water meter audits, and conducted 1,121 desktop water use surveys and 502 reviews of submitted compliance reports. We also processed 4,569 abstraction volume submissions and meter reading submissions.

As an outcome of these monitoring activities, 4,867 incident reviews and investigations were undertaken, and we responded to 303 confirmed incidents of non-compliance with a combination of statutory and non-statutory enforcement actions. We issued 202 letters of education, 60 warning notices and 36 infringement notices, and gave three statutory directions.


Garden bore watering restrictions

The department, in partnership with Water Corporation, regulates domestic garden bore use. In Perth and Mandurah, starting on

 **175**
inspections
and audits


 **1,121**
desktop
water use
surveys

 **502**
reviews of
reports

 **4,867**
incident
reviews and
investigations

 **202**
letters of
education

 **60**
warning
notices

 **36**
infringement
notices

September 1 2022, domestic garden bore owners were reduced from three rostered watering days to two rostered days a week to align with scheme water users. Elsewhere in the state, garden bores can be used once a day between certain times.

The department has worked with Water Corporation in educating users about the new sprinkler roster. The campaign started with no formal enforcement action undertaken for watering detected on a third rostered day. Education letters were issued instead to support behavioural changes, with 228 being issued from 1 September 2022 to 30 June 2023.

The change to the watering roster will reduce the amount of groundwater used each year by about 30 GL – the equivalent to 30 Optus Stadiums full of water – and will help to slow or reverse some of the groundwater level declines we have experienced in recent decades.

The change to the watering roster will reduce the amount of groundwater used each year by about 30 GL – **the equivalent to 30 Optus Stadiums full of water** – and will help to slow or reverse some of the groundwater level declines we have experienced in recent decades.

Over the next 12 months we will continue to focus on education to help garden bore owners adapt to the two-day-per-week roster change and allow them time to implement waterwise measures for their gardens.

Households and businesses across Perth, Mandurah and parts of the South West and Great Southern regions are also subject to the annual winter sprinkler switch-off. This is a permanent water-efficiency initiative requiring scheme and bore users to turn off garden reticulation from 1 June to 31 August.

For alleged garden bore watering restriction offences during the past financial year, not related to the reduction to two watering days a week, the department issued 104 warning notices and 170 infringements.

 **104**
warning
notices

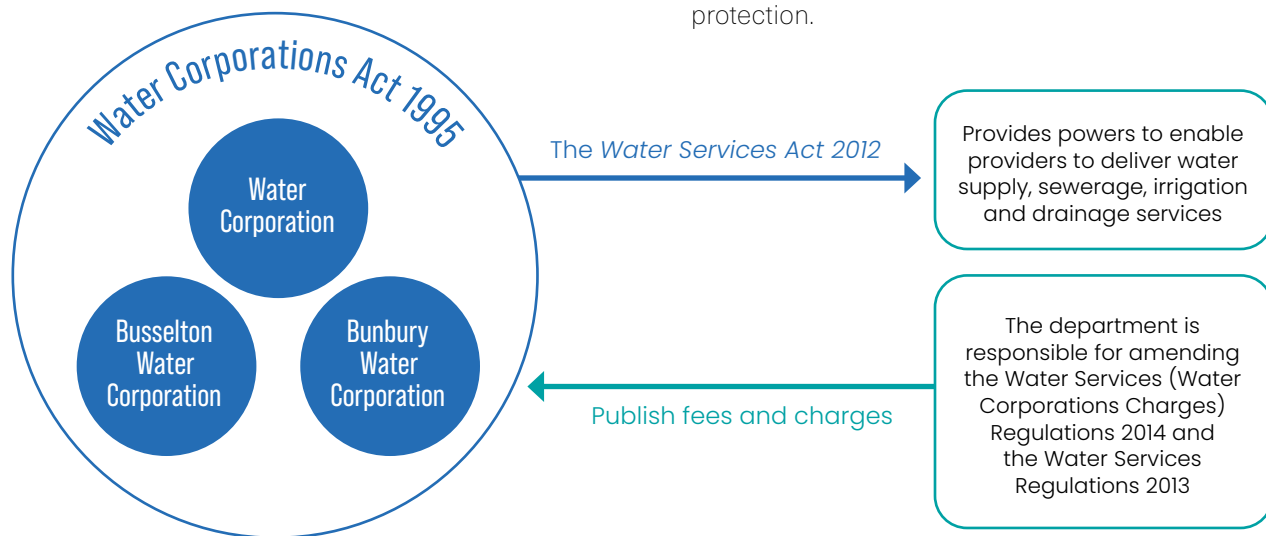
 **170**
infringement
notices



Water services

State Government-owned water utilities Water Corporation, Busselton Water Corporation and Bunbury Water Corporation (Aqwest) are established under the *Water Corporations Act 1995*.

The *Water Services Act 2012* provides powers to enable licensed service providers including the water corporations to deliver water supply, sewerage, irrigation and drainage services. In addition to the three utilities, there are 20 other licensed water service providers in WA comprising two local governments, four irrigation cooperatives, four mining companies, nine developers and the Rottnest Island Authority.



The Water Services (Water Corporations Charges) Regulations 2014 and the Water Services Regulations 2013 are amended annually to publish the fees and charges for Aqwest, Busselton Water and Water Corporation. The department is responsible for amending the regulations, in consultation with the three water corporations, so they take effect from the beginning of each financial year.

We continue to work closely with Water Corporation in its new role from 1 July 2023 as the water and sewerage service provider to regional Aboriginal communities, under the *Water Services Act 2012*. Water Corporation has started a program of service upgrades and we are assisting it to meet its regulatory obligations, including wastewater treatment plant licensing, native vegetation clearing permits, water resource licensing and public drinking water source protection.

Managing public water supply

The department regulates Water Corporation by licensing it under the RIWI Act to take groundwater from the Gnangara and Jandakot groundwater systems to supply Perth's Integrated Water Supply Scheme.

Under the 2022 *Gnangara groundwater allocation plan*, Water Corporation's abstraction from the Gnangara groundwater system for the Integrated Water Supply Scheme will be reduced by 30 GL per year in 2028. To supplement this reduction, Water Corporation has proposed a new 100 GL per year desalination plant at Alkimos, with the first 50 GL stage expected by 2028.

Water Corporation has proposed a **new 100 GL/year desalination plant at Alkimos**, with the first 50 GL stage expected by 2028.

The proposal comprises a seawater desalination plant and groundwater treatment plant next to the existing Alkimos Wastewater Treatment Plant, within the future Alkimos Water Precinct, and an associated 33.5 km pipeline connecting the desalination plant to Wanneroo Reservoir. On 24 May 2023, following a Public Environmental Review, the EPA recommended that the proposal may be implemented subject to conditions.

We continue to work with Water Corporation to annually revise and improve abstraction patterns, ensuring less groundwater is taken from the most sensitive areas of the Gnangara and Jandakot groundwater systems.

We have also supported Water Corporation to develop its groundwater replenishment scheme, which is a climate-independent water source. Groundwater replenishment involves treated wastewater being further treated to drinking water standards and then recharged into aquifers for later use as public water supply.

Water fees

Fees for water licence and permit applications have been in place for the mining and public water supply sectors since 2018.

In 2022–23, we spent \$14,635,920 on the assessment of all water licence and permit applications, and collected \$1,224,228 in fees from 2,165 licensees for 492 assessments of applications.

Water policy

► Spring exemptions guidelines

In April 2023 the department published the [Guideline: Spring exemptions](#) following a five-month public consultation period. All feedback was considered in finalising the guideline.

This guideline and associated field guide provide information for landowners or occupiers of land on the requirements for determining whether a spring rising on a property is exempt from regulation under the RIWI Act.

It clarifies interpretation of section 5(1)(a) of the Act by establishing a voluntary self-assessment process and is available for implementation by landowners or occupiers of land to guide self-assessment of the sometimes-complex hydrological considerations to determine a spring exemption.

► Water Reform Bill

The [Western Australian Climate Policy](#), released in November 2021, outlines the State Government's commitment to an improved legislative framework for water resources management, to address the challenges of climate change and to provide certainty for water users.

Industry has been engaged in the modernisation of water legislation since 2007 through numerous consultations. The Water Reform Bill will consolidate and replace six Acts, including Acts which are more than 100 years old.

The proposed legislation will play a key role in allowing the department to manage water more effectively and provide essential tools to manage water resources affected by climate change while also supporting State Government priorities such as jobs and economic growth.





Outcome 2

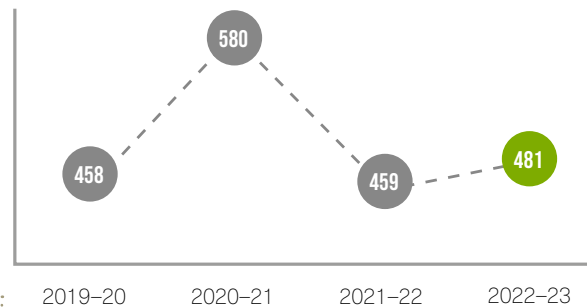
Emissions, discharges, and clearing of native vegetation are effectively regulated to avoid unacceptable risks to public health and the environment.

Service 4 Environmental regulation

Industry regulation

In 2022–23 the Industry Regulation Division received 612 applications for licences, works approvals and amendments, a 4.6 per cent increase when compared with the previous year. The department continues to experience a high application workload attributed to the growth in the state's mining, oil and gas, industrial, renewable, intensive agriculture, and food and beverage sectors. This continued the trend across the two preceding financial years.

Determined applications



This year there was a rise in the number of applications determined (481) compared with the previous year (459), indicating the success of several performance improvement initiatives introduced in late 2022. Consequently, open applications under assessment remained steady, with 276 as at 30 June 2023 compared with 280 at the same time last year.

 **481**
applications
determined

 **276**
open
applications
under
assessment

There was a continued focus on reducing backlog applications and assessment timeframes. Backlog applications reduced to 73 in 2022–23, down by 11 in 2021–22 and reaching some of their lowest levels since 2020. The average processing timeframe for the year was 78 working days, down on last year (80).

Labour shortages have continued to place pressure on all sectors, including Industry Regulation, and the department has observed

a high demand from the private sector for environmental professionals with regulatory approvals experience.

The agribusiness sector continued its growth, driven by market opportunities, State Government grants, incentives and support programs. Applications received are expected to continue to rise for premises such as cattle and sheep feedlots, piggeries, feed mills, abattoirs and rendering facilities, milk processing and beverage manufacturing. We are working closely with other departments in coordinating a cross-government regulatory response to surges in new and existing brewery and distillery facilities.

The Industry Regulation division's Major Projects team was established in the 2021–22 period to streamline assessments for applications referred through the Lead Agency Framework along with other applications of state or strategic significance.

In 2022–23 there were increases in both application assessment work and projects granted major approvals status under the framework,

particularly in sectors such as critical mineral mining and processing as well as projects within the iron ore and oil and gas industries. Continued growth is expected into 2023–24 and beyond, with more than 60 projects on track to lodge applications.

The division has finalised a number of initiatives, including a tailings storage facility (TSF) application checklist, providing further clarity for applicants proposing new TSFs, and the [Guideline: Better practice organics recycling](#).

The passing of the *Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2020* offers the opportunity for a reform of the regulation of emissions and discharges under Part V of the EP Act. The discussion paper [Environmental regulation reform – A strategic review of regulatory delivery and fees for Industry Regulation](#) was released in September 2022, inviting feedback. The department has



heard the feedback, gauged a strong appetite for change and considers this a basis and mandate for progressing the reforms. A position statement will be released later in 2023.

Port Hedland dust management

Implementation of the department’s 2021 [Port Hedland Regulation Strategy](#) continued in 2022–23. The department engaged with industry on its third-party consultant’s report, Port Hedland Dust Management Program: Best Practice Guideline, and progressed work on the development of the Dust Management Guideline, which is expected for release in the 2023–24 period to meet a key commitment of the strategy.

The department completed its first full year managing the ambient air quality monitoring network in Port Hedland after it was transferred



from the Port Hedland Industries Council. We are committed to continued regulatory activities to ensure the ongoing active management of dust in Port Hedland.

Native vegetation clearing

► Clearing permits

The department received 260 native vegetation clearing permit applications in 2022–23, about 13 per cent fewer than in 2021–22.

We have continued to work to reduce the number of backlog applications and improve response timelines. As a result, the percentage of applications decided within a timeframe of 60 working days has improved slightly, from 49 per cent in 2021–22 to 53 per cent in 2022–23. The average number of working days taken to make a decision has remained steady, at 71 days in 2021–22 and 2022–23.

The number of open applications has remained relatively steady over recent years. As at 30 June 2023, there were 193 open applications with the department.

193
open applications

Clearing permit applications in the South West, Perth-Peel and Wheatbelt regions made up 48 per cent of decisions made in 2023–23. Applications in these regions fall within the intensive land use zone, where

historic clearing has been extensive, resulting in increasingly complex assessments because of the high environmental value of remnant vegetation. The consideration of new and improved science and ongoing change in the environmental context is leading the department to place greater scrutiny on the necessity for clearing and the types of environmental offsets proposed for clearing permit applications in these areas in particular. This is reducing the likelihood of approval of some types of clearing proposals and increasing the use of appropriate offsets where suitable.

The average time applications are in 'stop the clock' has increased, up from an average of 80 business days in 2021–22 to 110 in 2022–23. This reflects the need for applicants to spend additional time filling information gaps in applications, for example providing further detail on avoidance, minimisation and mitigation measures, conducting biological surveys and identifying suitable environmental offsets.



► Clearing referrals

Stakeholder uptake of the clearing referral process has significantly increased, from 109 referrals in 2021–22 to 166 referrals in 2022–23. Clearing referrals now make up 39 per cent of all requests for clearing approvals submitted to the department under Part V of the EP Act.

Performance outcomes for the clearing referrals process are consistent with its function as a streamlined approval pathway for clearing with very low environmental impacts. On average the department finalises clearing referrals within 17 working days. However, of the 275 referrals submitted since the pathway was implemented, only 109 were determined to not require a clearing permit for the proposed clearing, equating to a cumulative total clearing of about 22.89 hectares.

 **275**
referrals
submitted

 **109**
determined
to not require
a permit

Environmental compliance and enforcement

The department has wide-ranging statutory and regulatory responsibilities directed at achieving improved outcomes for public health, the environment and our water resources. We are committed to being a responsive and credible regulator by consistently applying and enforcing the legislation we administer. We use a range of

regulatory tools to promote, monitor and enforce compliance, and respond to breaches of the law.

We delivered our 2022–23 compliance program using a new, more integrated approach to our service delivery. The program included a proactive component, a responsive component and a focus on targeted priority sites. Our compliance program includes compliance with Ministerial Statements, activities regulated under Part V of the EP Act and a range of subsidiary legislation including the Environmental Protection (Unauthorised Discharges) Regulations 2004 and the Environmental Protection (Rural Landfill) Regulations 2002.

The department conducted more than 190 inspections in the financial year. We managed non-compliances identified during our compliance monitoring programs, with 141 non-compliances identified from the waste levy and industry compliance inspections.

 **190**
inspections

 **141**
non-compliances
identified

Under the [Light industry program](#), a partnership with local government, 113 inspections were conducted focusing on educating light industry operators about ways to reduce the environmental impact of their activities to minimise discharges of minor pollutants into the environment.

Our [Pollution Watch](#) service received 3,922 reports in 2022–23. The Pollution Watch hotline (1300 784 782) provides a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week service for the community, industry and other parties to report pollution and a range of environmental matters.

 **3,922**
reports

 **220**
incidents

Reports to Pollution Watch provide significant intelligence to the department and enable us to identify and respond to emerging issues. Our Pollution Response Unit responded to 220 incidents of emissions and discharges to the environment, including hazardous material waste fires, fuel tanker rollovers, chemical spills, asbestos-impacted structure fires and impacts to wildlife. Our priority response to incidents mitigates further damage to the environment and leads to better environmental outcomes. We work closely with other local and State Government agencies providing support to emergency management arrangements across the state.



Investigations were undertaken in response to pollution and intelligence reports, and information gained through our compliance programs, resulting in 14 successful convictions, nine infringements and 23 letters of warning issued.

 **14**
successful convictions

 **9**
infringements

 **23**
letters of warning

Fines from prosecutions and modified penalties totalled \$1,296,500, along with \$15,979.30 in costs (court costs and other orders).

Thirteen statutory notices were issued in the reporting period. Six Vegetation Conservation Notices were given under section 70 of the EP Act where it was suspected on reasonable grounds that unlawful clearing of native vegetation is likely to take place, is taking place or has taken place on the land. Seven notices were issued to prevent emissions and discharges to the environment likely to cause pollution or environmental harm.



Waste-related investigations

The department has responsibility for investigating waste-related offences under the EP Act, the *Litter Act 1979* (Litter Act) and the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act).

The Waste Operations team has the capacity to investigate reports of illegal dumping and littering, and implements proactive initiatives including surveillance of illegal dumping locations. The department works with its program partners, including local governments, sharing intelligence and providing technical support and training in investigative techniques.

In 2022–23 investigations resulted in 25 people prosecuted for illegal dumping totalling \$187,400 in fines and \$131,537.95 in remediation costs. A total of 147 infringements and one letter of warning were also issued.

 **25**
people prosecuted

 **147**
infringements

 **1**
letter of warning



Tyre dumper

In 2022–23 our Waste Operations team started a major investigation into reports of large quantities of scrap tyres collected from mechanical workshops and tyre-fitting businesses around Perth being stored at rental properties and commercial storage facilities.

The department found more than 20,000 tyres were illegally stored at two properties in Wungong, storage units in Malaga and Maddington, and properties in Landsdale, Kenwick and Kewdale.

As a result of investigations, a Lockridge man pleaded guilty to 18 charges: one relating to causing pollution; six relating to the illegal discharge of waste; four relating to discharging waste without relevant approvals; and seven for transporting waste without relevant approvals.

The penalty was a fine of \$95,000, reparation costs (to pay property owners for the clean-up) of \$127,288.95 and court costs of \$12,826.60, a total of \$235,115.55.



As a result of investigations, a Lockridge man pleaded guilty to **18 charges**: one relating to causing pollution; six relating to the illegal discharge of waste; four relating to discharging waste without relevant approvals; and seven for transporting waste without relevant approvals.

Waste levy

The WARR Act provides for a levy to be paid on waste received at licensed landfills in the metropolitan region, and waste collected within the Perth metropolitan region that is disposed of to landfill. The waste levy plays a key role in achieving the objectives of Western Australia's [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030](#) (waste strategy) by providing a disincentive to dispose of waste to landfill and by generating revenue to fund programs which support the strategy.

The department investigates levy avoidance as it can undermine the development of a sustainable, low-waste and circular economy. The WARR Act provides for significant penalties, including treble the amount evaded or attempted to be evaded.

In 2022–23 the department identified three priority areas of waste levy compliance, levy avoidance, and compliance with levy exemptions. As part of our waste compliance program 131 inspections were conducted at landfills and associated waste industries, resulting in several ongoing investigations.

 **131**
waste
compliance
inspections

Controlled waste

The department regulates the transportation and storage of controlled waste in Western Australia through the Environmental Protection (Controlled

Waste) Regulations 2004 and the National Environment Protection (Movement of Controlled Waste between States and Territories) Measure. We license controlled waste carriers, drivers and vehicles transporting controlled waste on roads in Western Australia, and track controlled waste from waste holders to transit and waste facilities.

During the year more than 115,000 controlled waste tracking forms were used to track more than 1.3 million tonnes of controlled waste. A total of 828 new controlled waste licence applications were also assessed. All new licence applications were assessed within the 30-day statutory timeframe.

 **1.3 million**
tonnes of
controlled waste
tracked

 **828**
new controlled
waste licence
applications
assessed

Amendments to the Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004 are being progressed. Broadly, the amendments will implement the National Environment Protection (Movement of Controlled Waste between States and Territories) Measure, and require tracking of mixed waste to prevent liquid waste being inappropriately disposed of in landfills. They will also make amendments to licence requirements for controlled waste drivers, vehicles and tanks.

To support the proposed amendments, the department has undertaken a review of controlled waste to streamline its processes, reduce the administrative burden for stakeholders and


prepare enhancements to the Controlled Waste Tracking System.

A focus during the reporting period has also been on initiating the development of software to track controlled waste, and phasing out the use of paper tracking forms.

Environmental Noise

The department provides specialist environmental noise advice to key stakeholders including the EPA, local and State Government agencies, and the community. Environmental noise expertise also supports our policy, regulatory, and compliance and enforcement functions.

The department responded to 117 requests for noise advice or support this year. Of these, in its role of supporting LGAs to administer the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997, we responded to 86 requests for environmental noise advice, technical support or laboratory analysis.

 **117**
requests for
noise advice
or support

Specialist environment noise advice was provided 19 times relating to matters under EPA consideration, and in response to 12 requests from other Australian and State Government agencies. Further support was provided to LGAs in the form of two noise regulation training courses.

Reform Roadmap projects

Our Compliance and Enforcement directorate progressed an internal review of its service delivery, aligning with the department's Reform Roadmap initiatives and to address the recommendations of the Auditor General's Report 11, [Compliance with Mining Environmental Conditions](#).

It committed to reform initiatives including to:

- review, integrate and improve compliance and enforcement functions
- increase place-based delivery of compliance and enforcement activities across the state
- build our compliance and enforcement capability to ensure we have the right skills in place.

During the reporting period, two reviews of compliance and enforcement service delivery started: an internal compliance framework audit



and a review of the Pollution Watch service delivery. A reform plan identifying key work streams and deliverables was prepared to detail the delivery of the reforms.

Contaminated sites

In Western Australia we regulate contaminated sites through the Contaminated Sites Act and Contaminated Sites Regulations 2006.

The continually increasing number of reported and classified sites directly reflects the role of the Contaminated Sites Act in uncovering and managing the legacies of past industrial activities.

As our scientific understanding of contaminants expands along with residential, commercial and industrial development, so too does the complexity and technical nature of the contamination issues which we as a regulator are required to consider and manage.

A significant issue we are managing in Western Australia is the regulation of waste disposal sites and the number of proposed developments in or next to former landfills. Redeveloping land which has been used previously for activities ranging from agriculture and market gardening to industrial and even former landfill sites brings the focus directly back on to the management of contaminated land.

In 2022–23 the department aimed to classify reported sites within 45 days as required by section 14 of the Contaminated Sites Act. It has generally achieved this objective.

The majority of Mandatory Auditor's Reports (MARs) processed in 2022–23 that did not require referral to other agencies were processed within the target timeframe of 21 days.

► Key performance drivers and issues

There are increased transparency expectations and obligations of government to make contaminated sites information available to all parties, including the public. Our publicly reported KPIs reflect only a small part of the contaminated sites regulation function.

Sites classified as 'contaminated – remediation required' (254 at 30 June 2023) or high-priority 'possibly contaminated – investigation required' (293 at 30 June 2023)



254
remediation
required sites



293
investigation
required sites

need ongoing review to establish whether the actions specified in the site classification are being implemented and the risk, or potential risk, to human health or the environment is being mitigated.

Where appropriate action has not been taken, the department may serve statutory notices on relevant parties to complete the necessary actions.

There are also about 500 grace period sites (sites reported in the first six months following the Contaminated Sites Act commencement but not yet classified) which remain dormant on the department's records.

The present housing shortage and the resulting prioritisation of residential development has placed additional pressure on the department to provide statutory planning advice and respond to MARs submitted to fulfill planning conditions for development sites (some with complex contamination issues) in shortened timeframes.

We focused on statutory timeframes (including Form 1 reports of a known or suspected contaminated site) and MARs submitted to report on compliance with regulatory notices (served under Part 4 of the Act) or submitted to clear planning conditions. MARs for high-risk sites, or changed site conditions, were also prioritised.



Air quality

► Air quality monitoring

Western Australia is a signatory to the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure (AAQ NEPM) and is required to report annually on the results of air quality monitoring undertaken by the department. Changes to the AAQ NEPM were made in April 2021 and included the use of more stringent air quality standards.

The department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 16 permanent air quality monitoring sites in Western Australia. Ten of these sites – Armadale, Caversham, Duncraig, Mandurah, Quinns Rocks, Rolling Green, Rockingham, South Lake, Swanbourne and Wattleup – are within the Greater Perth region. There are six regional sites in Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Collie, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie.



Remote infrared monitoring of pollutants in Kwinana

Ambient air quality monitoring has shown that air quality in Western Australia is generally very good with only brief episodes of poor air quality, usually attributable to smoke from bushfires and prescribed burns.

A new campaign monitoring site was established in Como during January 2023, close to the intersection of Kwinana Freeway and Canning Highway. The objective of monitoring at this site is to understand the influence of motor vehicle emissions in areas close to major transport thoroughfares. The Como site will operate for up to 12 months.

The department's permanent and campaign air quality monitoring sites feed data into an extensive database, and a live public [Air quality index](#) is updated hourly.



Prescribed burning in West Kimberley

► Particle sensors deployed to the regions

In 2022 the department continued the deployment of low-cost air quality monitoring sensors to several regional areas that do not have permanent monitoring stations.

The regional network of sensors will provide timely assessment of smoke levels to enable people in those communities to better understand their potential exposure and manage their activities to minimise the impacts of smoke.

The regional towns and cities included in the program have been selected based on population density. The sensor data from these instruments can be viewed on [sensor manufacturer PurpleAir's website](#).

Recommendation 14.1 of the [Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report](#) (2020) emphasised the need for increased air quality information and health advice to communities, including vulnerable groups such as asthmatics. The recommendation also highlighted the use of low-cost sensors to accomplish this outcome.

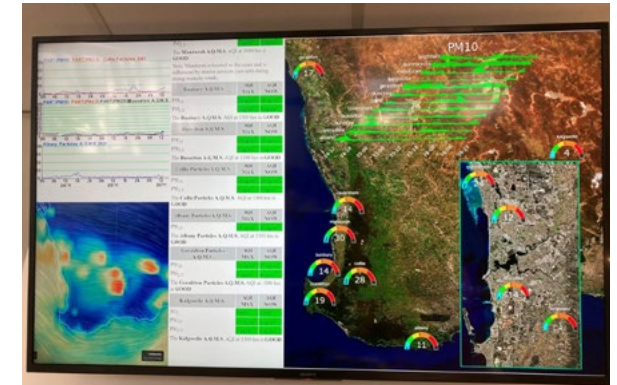
► High-resolution datasets to assess urban heat island effect in Perth

The urban heat island (UHI) effect occurs in Perth, as it does in many cities around the world. It is caused by increasing urbanisation and motor vehicle use and leads to increased temperatures that result in several negative impacts, including increased heatwave risk and higher air pollution levels.

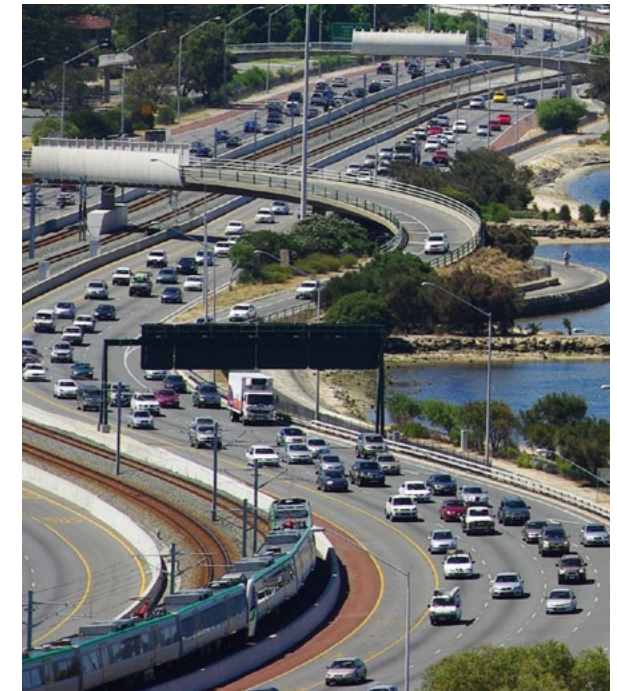
The department has received funding from the Climate Action Fund for a scientific program that will develop high-resolution datasets for Perth to enable assessment of the UHI effect. Products will include urban heat island scenarios and analysis tools to support future city planning activities, including assessment of climate change adaptation actions.

► Air quality technical advice

The department continues to provide strategic, technical and policy advice on air quality matters such as ambient air quality, industrial emissions, odour modelling, meteorology, health standards and air toxics. From July 2022 to June 2023, more than 100 technical reviews of industrial development proposals were undertaken, including for high-profile industry proposals in priority airsheds such as Port Hedland in the Pilbara and the Kwinana Industrial Area.



Real-time air quality information is displayed in our Prime House office





Outcome 3

Development and implementation of strategic policy and legislation that promoted sustainable environmental outcomes.

Service 5 Environmental and water policy

EP Act amendments

In 2020 the EP Act amendments were the most significant reforms of Western Australia's environmental legislation since the creation of the EP Act in 1986.

These amendments were part of a reform agenda to create more efficient, risk-based and flexible assessment and approval processes.

They support a focus on cumulative impacts and strategic assessment, and provide new and better tools to improve environmental management.

Over the past two years, we have started implementing the amendments through a staged approach.

To allow for the new 'prescribed activity' regime, we are making amendments to the Environmental Protection Regulations 1987 (EP Regulations).

In September 2022 the department released the discussion paper [Environmental Regulation Reform: A strategic review of regulatory delivery and fees for industry regulation](#). The feedback from that consultation is informing the drafting of amendments to the EP Regulations.

We expect a consultation draft of the amendments and an accompanying discussion paper will be released in mid-late 2023 for further consultation.

Stage 1: February 2021

Stage 1 started in February 2021 and included:

- modernising and streamlining provisions
- creating various head powers
- expanding enforcement and evidence-gathering powers
- implementing flexibility in serving infringement notices.

Stage 2: October 2021

Stage 2 started in October 2021 and included:

- facilitating the implementation of bilateral agreements with the Australian Government
- enabling regulations to declare Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- modernising, streamlining and creating more flexibility for referral, amendment and implementation of significant and strategic proposals under Part IV of the EP Act
- creating a new process for referrals of native vegetation clearing.

Stage 3: December 2023

Stage 3 is anticipated to be proclaimed in December 2023. This final stage will include:

- implementing the 'prescribed activity' regime under the new Part V Division 3 of the EP Act
- creating head powers for establishing environmental monitoring programs in regulations
- establishing provisions for the management of offset funds.

Western Australian Climate Policy

The department is leading implementation of the [Western Australian Climate Policy](#), with several key initiatives progressed in 2022–23. These included development of the [SERS](#), the [Climate Science Initiative](#) and the [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).

A commitment under the policy is to develop a Climate Risk Framework to monitor, assess and report on implications of climate change on the state's finances, infrastructure, physical assets and service delivery. As a result, the department established a Climate Risk Capability Initiative to provide support and guidance to government agencies on how to make climate risk assessments, and adaptation planning.

Climate risk management training workshops were delivered in early 2023 to develop public sector capability, and to understand impacts arising from a changing climate and associated hazard events. Collaboration and engagement is underway

with agencies participating in the [Climate Risk Framework pilot program](#), which is led by the Department of Treasury.

Climate legislation

In January 2023 the State Government announced plans to introduce climate change legislation in late 2023, to establish a framework for emissions reductions to meet Western Australia's goal of net zero by 2050.

Climate legislation will give industry, business and investors the certainty and stability needed to frame their decisions and actions. It will also create statutory requirements for the State Government to set interim emission reduction targets for government and the broader economy, and require strategies to be developed to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

This is expected to encourage investment in clean energy technologies, and enhance business confidence, stimulating change to accelerate the state's clean energy transition.

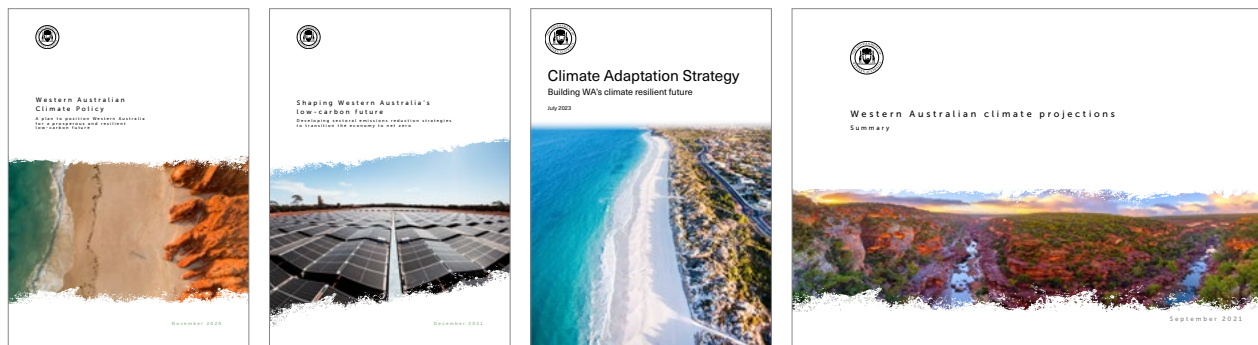
Clean Energy Future Fund

The department administers the \$19 million [Clean Energy Future Fund](#) to support projects that demonstrate significant, cost-effective emissions reductions and could lead to broader adoption.

In March 2022 the first Clean Energy Future Fund project was completed by Nomadic Energy, with 5 megawatts of modular, redeployable solar panels being installed at Carosue Dam gold mine. The Fund contributed \$1 million to the pioneering project, with the system generating more energy than was modelled.



Redeployable solar panels at Carosue Dame gold mine



Regional Climate Alliance project funding

In December 2022 Western Australia's two Regional Climate Alliances were granted \$100,000 to deliver collaborative climate action projects.

This is the final funding round of the two-year \$500,000 pilot program aimed at increasing connectivity and capacity between regional councils to address climate change.

A commitment under the *Western Australian Climate Policy*, the Regional Climate Alliance projects represent 13 local governments from the Great Southern and Goldfields, working to reduce carbon emissions and climate resilience.

The two partnerships, the South Coast Alliance and the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils, have taken action through various initiatives including:

- working with local businesses to assess their greenhouse gas emissions
- developing educational resources to help other businesses take action
- undertaking a regional climate risk assessment and action plan to strategically address issues and opportunities.

In June 2023, the department started a full evaluation of the program in collaboration

with participating alliances and the Western Australian Local Government Association. Findings will inform options for an expanded program.

Electric Vehicle Strategy

The department also leads the implementation of the [State Electric Vehicle Strategy](#) (EV Strategy) to facilitate increased adoption of electric vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our urban air quality.

A key deliverable of the EV Strategy is development of the WA EV Network. Construction of the \$23 million charging network started in November 2022 and will extend more than 6,600 km with 98 chargers across 49 locations.

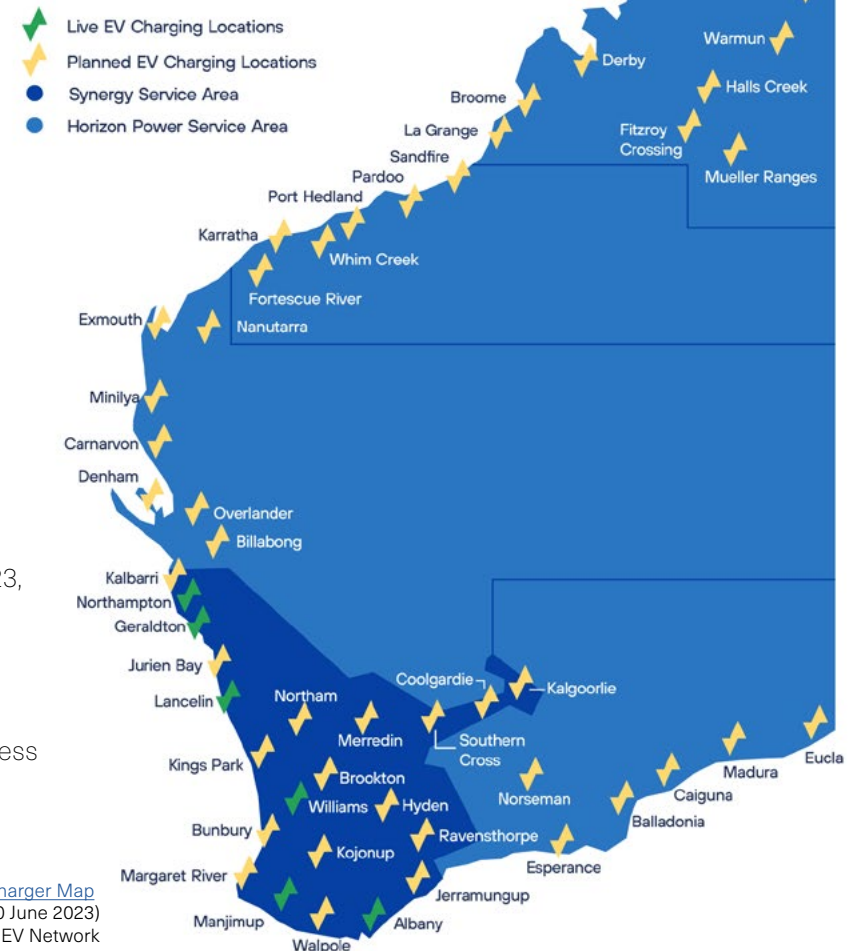


98
chargers
planned
across 49
locations

The first two charging stations opened in 2023, with the full network set for completion in the first half of 2024. The network will stretch along key travel routes from Kununurra in the north to Esperance in the south and east to Eucla. Charging stations will, on average, be less than 200 km apart.

Western Australia Electric Vehicle Charger Map

Intended charging station locations for the State Government's EV charging network.



[WA Electric Vehicle Charger Map](#)
(as at 30 June 2023)
© Synergy WA EV Network



Native vegetation policy

The [Native vegetation policy for Western Australia](#) was released in May 2022 with a focus on business certainty and conservation outcomes. The policy is critical to build the state's capability to respond strategically to cumulative environmental impacts.

Actions in the four-year [implementation roadmap](#) are progressing, with engagement across relevant government agencies for better-coordinated policies, practices, systems and data. These support business certainty, consistency, transparency and evidence-based decision-making. Through better coordination of regulatory and voluntary actions by many stakeholders, the policy aims to deliver a net gain in Western Australia's valuable native vegetation.

In 2022–23 the State Government allocated initial funding for the first two years of the policy's implementation. Through the 2023–24 budget process, an additional \$3.3 million over

three years was allocated to develop a pilot of a new mapping and monitoring system, which will enhance the state's capacity to track progress on net gain in native vegetation extent.

The State Government has also allocated funding of \$3.75 million over two years for an [Urban Greening Grants program](#), recognising the multiple biodiversity, amenity, climate and water benefits of urban canopy, including the potential for cockatoo-friendly landscaping. The department will be coordinating this program.

In December 2022 the State Government announced that the Perth and Peel regions would be prioritised for regional planning under the Native vegetation policy. This will complement the [Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million](#) land use and planning frameworks, helping to provide certainty, address cumulative impacts and reverse declining environmental values, and strike a balance between conservation and development.



Advisory groups

► Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group

[AWEAG](#) was established to ensure Aboriginal knowledge, values and needs are considered and appropriately addressed across the department's strategies, policies, programs and planning for the management and regulation of the state's environment and water resources.

It comprises Aboriginal members from across the state with skills, knowledge and experience in water and environment. This year was our first under a new arrangement, with Noongar member Jason Barrow joining Director General Michelle Andrews as Co-Chair of the group.

Our commitment to increase engagement and participation of First Nations Australians into the stewardship of the state's land and water is manifest in current programs of work across the agency.



Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group

Over the next 12 months there will be a sharper focus on implementing the outcomes of our RAP and enhancing the department's capability and capacity to deliver meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal people, through genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders.

AWEAG met four times in the financial year.

► Air Quality Coordinating Committee

The [Air Quality Coordinating Committee](#) comprises representatives from the State Government, industry, business and the community.

The committee oversees implementation of the Perth Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) which aims to ensure clean air is achieved and maintained throughout the Perth metropolitan region to 2030 and beyond. Members are finalising updates to the Perth AQMP to reflect contemporary air quality issues and management actions.

The committee met twice between July 2022 and June 2023.

► Cockburn Sound Management Council

The [Cockburn Sound Management Council](#) is an advisory council to the Minister for Environment established under section 25 of the EP Act.

One of the council's roles is to oversee and coordinate environmental monitoring of the Cockburn Sound marine area, consistent with the [State Environmental \(Cockburn Sound\) Policy 2015](#) published by the EPA.

Monthly water quality sampling was undertaken in the Cockburn Sound marine area to assist with the detection of environmental changes. The water quality sampling complements the department's continuous real-time water monitoring in the Cockburn Sound marine area. Seagrass surveys were also conducted in March 2023 to improve our understanding of seagrass health.



Cockburn Sound Management Council

The Cockburn Sound Management Council met three times during the financial year.

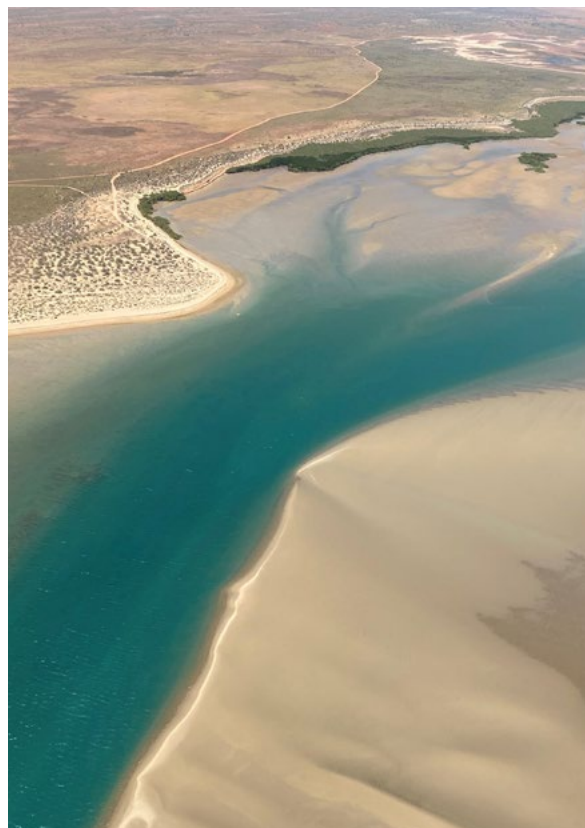
► Exmouth Gulf Taskforce

In August 2021 the EPA [published its strategic advice](#) to the Minister for Environment on the potential cumulative impacts of proposed activities and developments on the environmental, social and cultural values of Exmouth Gulf. The EPA report identified that the Exmouth Gulf was fragile and faces increasing pressures on its unique and globally significant environmental, social and cultural values.

One of the State Government's responses to the EPA report was for the Minister for Environment to establish the [Exmouth Gulf Taskforce](#) in September 2022, as an advisory body under section 25 of the EP Act. The department provides secretariat, policy and cross-government coordination support to the Taskforce.

The Taskforce, independently chaired by Laine Ashforth-McDonald, will be providing advice to the Minister for Environment on improving protection for Exmouth Gulf and its surrounds. Traditional Owners, various agencies, industry, community members and conservation groups are working together, with the common goal of protecting Exmouth Gulf. The involvement and membership of Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation is central to the Taskforce.

Over the next 12 months Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation and DBCA will progress marine and terrestrial reserves in the Exmouth Gulf area. The Taskforce will be investigating knowledge gaps, processes to protect subterranean waterways, options for ongoing integrated management of the Gulf, and consideration of the impacts of climate change.



Exmouth Gulf

► Waste Reform Advisory Group

The Waste Reform Advisory Group was established in 2019, following the release of the waste strategy. The group informs the development of waste and recycling policy and legislation in Western Australia as part of the waste strategy and state waste targets.

The group is chaired by the department's Director General and includes representatives from the Waste Authority, local government, peak industry and resource bodies, community groups, non-government organisations and material recovery operators.

The group met three times in 2022–23.





Outcome 4

Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised.

Service 6 Waste strategies

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030

The WARR Act sets out requirements for the Waste Authority to develop a waste strategy for Western Australia.

The waste strategy, and its annual action plan, provide the State Government, local government, industry and the community with a clear picture of current waste issues and a roadmap for the future. The aim of the strategy is for Western Australia to become a sustainable, low-waste, circular economy in which human health and the environment are protected from the impacts of waste.

The department works closely with the Waste Authority and the Minister for Environment to implement the waste strategy.

In 2022–23 the department and the Waste Authority continued to work collaboratively through these projects:



[Recycling modernisation](#)

[P90](#)



[E-waste ban to landfill](#)

[P90](#)



[Review of the waste levy](#)

[P91](#)



[Waste infrastructure planning](#)

[P91](#)



[Waste data collecting and reporting](#)

[P91](#)



[Waste plans](#)

[P92](#)



[Roads to Reuse](#)

[P92](#)



[Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO](#)

[P93](#)



[Food waste for healthy soils](#)

[P94](#)



[WasteSorted toolkit and GREAT Sorts](#)

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[WasteSorted Schools](#)

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[Household Hazardous Waste program](#)

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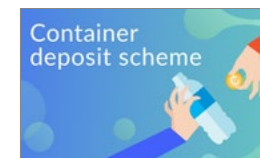
[WasteSorted grants](#)

[P96](#)



[Plan for Plastics, Stage 2](#)

[P96](#)



[Container deposit scheme](#)

[P97](#)

The waste strategy was released in February 2019 and will be reviewed in 2023–24. The first stage of consultation on the review began on 30 May 2023 with the release of a [directions paper](#) for public comment. Submissions will be considered in the development of a draft updated waste strategy, and this draft will then be released for public consultation with a view to releasing an updated waste strategy in 2024.

Australian Government waste export ban and recycling modernisation

The Australian Government’s *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020* banned the export of waste plastic, tyres, glass, paper and cardboard from 1 January 2021. This presented a range of opportunities and challenges for Western Australia. To become more resilient to fluctuating international markets and trends, the State Government has started working with the Australian Government and industry to create



appropriate local infrastructure and markets for recycled resources.

The State Government and the Australian Government are jointly funding recycling projects in Western Australia through the Australian Government’s [Recycling Modernisation Fund](#). The funding helps Western Australian industry build infrastructure to reprocess waste materials onshore and meet the waste export bans.

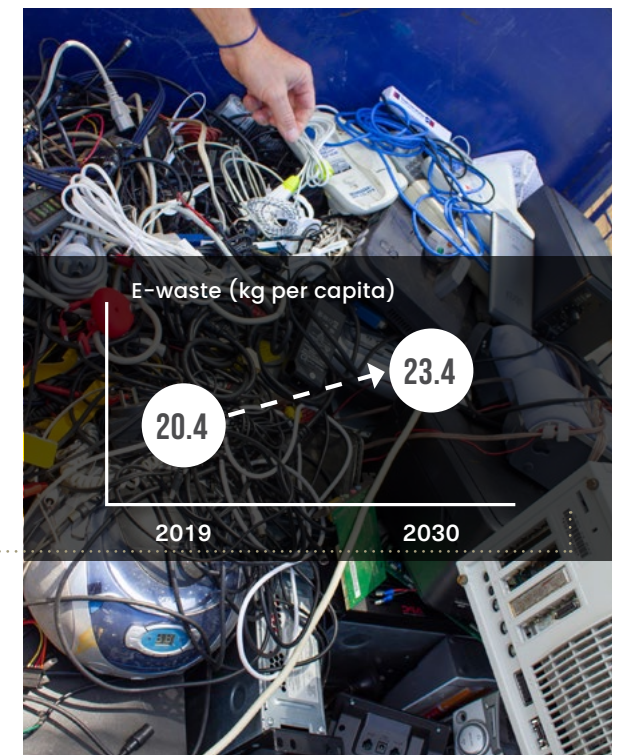
Eight projects were awarded funding for plastics and tyre recycling infrastructure. Six have started installing infrastructure, ordered machinery and applied for licences, and two of these have started processing (one tyres and one plastics). \$18.5 million in joint funding was awarded across these six projects.

Two projects initially offered funds have been withdrawn, and a paper and cardboard project also selected for funding has been withdrawn. A new paper and cardboard project is under consideration to replace it.



E-waste ban to landfill

Electrical waste or electronic equipment (e-waste) is one of the fastest-growing waste streams. According to the Australian Government’s [E-Product Stewardship in Australia Evidence Report](#), every Australian generated on average about 20.4 kg of e-waste in 2019 and it is predicted this will rise to 23.4 kg per capita by 2030. E-waste contains valuable materials including gold and silver, and may contain substances that are hazardous to the environment.



Following a 2021 election commitment, the State Government is delivering a ban on e-waste disposal to landfill by 1 July 2024. Funding of \$14 million has been committed to implementation of the ban, stakeholder consultation, a grant program and a community education campaign. The department will administer \$10.1 million in grant funding over the next two years, through a series of competitive grant rounds, to boost the state's e-waste collection and storage, processing and recycling network capacity.



From January to March 2023, the department released the [E-waste to landfill ban in Western Australia: Consultation Paper](#) for public comment. A regulatory impact statement and announcement of the first round of grant funding is expected in



the second half of 2023. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (E-waste) Regulations 2023 are being drafted and are anticipated to be published in late 2023, with implementation to start on 1 July 2024.

The ban will initially include televisions, mobile phones, computers, screens, data storage, white goods, batteries, medical devices, lighting and lamps. Photovoltaics, small household items, and monitoring and control equipment are being considered for future phases of the ban.

Review of the waste levy

The waste levy aims to influence waste management practices, including reducing waste to landfill, by increasing the price of landfill disposal. It also raises funds to support waste-related programs that reduce waste to landfill.

In 2022–23 the waste levy was set at \$70 per tonne for putrescible landfills and \$105 per cubic metre at inert landfills.

In May 2023 the Minister for Environment released the findings from the 2020 review of the waste levy in a [Consultation summary report](#). The announcement included the first increase to the levy since 2018. The levy will increase by \$15 per tonne from 1 July 2024, in line with inflation. Future increases will be published in a rolling five-year schedule of levy rates.

In the second half of 2023, the department will develop a consultation regulatory impact statement (RIS) to explore a proposal to expand the levy boundary. The Waste Authority will further consider the role of the levy in the review of the waste strategy which started this year.

Waste infrastructure planning

In April 2023 the department released the draft *State waste infrastructure plan* for public consultation. The plan seeks to provide a long-term information framework to guide decision-making for the planning and development of waste infrastructure in Western Australia. It models the built waste infrastructure needed in each region, to meet the 2030 targets of the waste strategy.

The public consultation period for the draft plan ended on 23 June 2023. The plan is now being finalised based on stakeholder feedback.

Waste data collection and reporting

Progress towards the avoidance, recovery and disposal targets in the waste strategy is assessed using data collected under regulation 18C of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008. In 2020, [Waste Data Online](#) was launched to enable lodgment of annual returns online. This year, 254 clients lodged annual returns with the department using Waste Data Online.

Local government waste plans

Waste plans provide local governments with a mechanism to align their waste services with the waste strategy and identify actions that contribute towards achieving its targets and objectives.

Local governments in Perth, Peel and major regional centres (the cities of Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Greater Geraldton) are required to prepare waste plans under section 40(2) of the WARR Act.

Local governments submitted their first waste plan annual reports to the department in late 2022.

The reports set out the progress that each local government has made with the implementation of waste plan actions during the 2021–22 financial year. The most implemented actions reported related to education and communications, infrastructure, the delivery of waste services, data, and litter and illegal dumping.

The reports also revealed that most of the 33 local governments across Perth and Peel are making progress towards delivering FOGO (food organics and garden organics) services. Nine local governments currently deliver FOGO services and a further 11 have committed to do so by 2025, consistent with the waste strategy. Thirteen are assessing the feasibility of delivering FOGO by 2025.

The department and the Waste Authority have worked closely with Main Roads WA, the Department of Health and the Waste and Recycling Industry Association of Western Australia to deliver the project. Main Roads WA has now used about 165,000 tonnes of RtR products since 2019 and has committed to use more in future projects.

RtR also delivers an independent audit of C&D recyclers' processes and products to ensure recycled products meet the RtR product specification. Five independent audits were conducted throughout the year.



About **165,000** tonnes of RtR products are used by Main Roads

Among Perth and Peel local governments

9 provided a FOGO service

11 are committed to FOGO by 2025

13 are assessing the feasibility



Roads to Reuse

The [Roads to Reuse](#) (RtR) program continues to encourage State Government agencies, local governments, regional councils and the private sector to use recycled construction and demolition (C&D) products in civil applications such as road construction. It does this by supporting the supply to market of recycled C&D products that meet a product specification, to protect human health and the environment.

Three accredited RtR recyclers were operating at four sites in the Perth and Peel regions in 2022–23.



An audit of Roads to Reuse material

Food and garden organics

The department is supporting the waste strategy target to roll out better practice three-bin FOGO services across Perth and Peel local governments by 2025.

The Waste Authority's annual FOGO rollout plans, informed by a FOGO Reference Group, identify actions across the themes of markets, local government services, education and engagement, and organics processing.

Key highlights to support the FOGO rollout include the \$20 million [Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO](#) program, the ongoing development of FOGO communication materials delivered through [WasteSorted](#), and four new case studies to promote the use of FOGO-derived products. The case studies feature FOGO used in agricultural settings, landscaping, land rehabilitation of transport infrastructure projects, and in the community (through local government sales of compost).

In three years, the Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO program has committed **\$5.186 million** towards the delivery of better practice three-bin FOGO services.

The department is also planning to publish guidance on better practice contracting, to support local governments and service providers to deliver high-quality and efficient FOGO services.

► Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO

The Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO program continues to support local governments to introduce FOGO services consisting of a:

- red-lid bin for general waste
- yellow-lid bin for recycling
- lime green-lid bin for FOGO.

In three years, the program has committed \$5.186 million towards the delivery of better practice three-bin FOGO services.

In 2023, two local governments applied for grants totalling \$1.58 million to introduce FOGO services to more than 100,000 households. At 30 June 2023, FOGO systems have been rolled out to close to 200,000 households throughout the Perth, South West and South Coast regions.



Red-lid bin for general waste

Yellow-lid bin for recycling

Lime green-lid bin for FOGO



► Education and engagement

Many local governments have adopted the [WasteSorted toolkit](#) materials to educate and engage the community in FOGO services.

► Improved capacity for organics processing

On 4 May 2023, the Australian Government and State Government announced co-investment totalling \$11.25 million for three new organics recycling infrastructure projects that will divert up to 275,000 tonnes of Western Australia's FOGO waste from landfill each year and convert it into compost.

The three projects are collectively valued at \$54 million and are distributed to the north, east and south of Perth. They are expected to be completed by June 2025. Not only will they assist Western Australian farmers with a reliable source of high-quality compost, they will also support 146 construction jobs and 98 ongoing positions.

Three new organics recycling infrastructure projects will divert up to **275,000 tonnes** of Western Australia's FOGO waste from landfill each year and convert it into compost.



A Waste Authority Program

WasteSorted behaviour change

The WasteSorted behaviour change campaign, [Be a GREAT Sort](#), launched in August 2020. The campaign targets five high-priority waste behaviours to encourage the community to take simple actions to 'make landfill the last resort'.

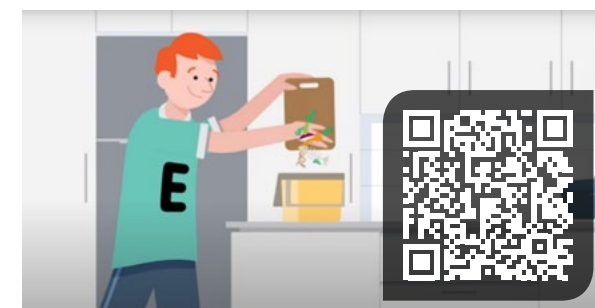
In 2022–23 the campaign was promoted statewide on television, cinema, radio, billboards, YouTube and social media channels, and in printed materials. The social media campaign reached just under 1.3 million users, and more than 800,000 people through television and cinema advertising, with more than a million views of online videos.



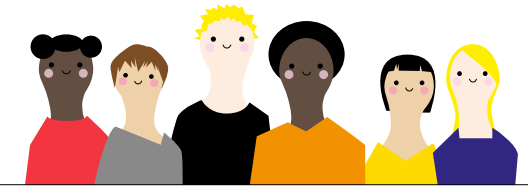
New campaign materials were developed to support the National Food Waste Strategy to halve food waste by 2030. The campaign encourages households to use up the ingredients they already have. The WasteSorted toolkit was also updated to align with changes to soft plastics collections, implementation of single-use plastic bans, the agreed list of materials accepted in FOGO bins and better alignment with Containers for Change.

The department has also expanded its organic social media presence with regular content and more than 5,000 followers. This [WasteSorted Facebook page](#) brings the five GREAT Sort behaviours to life by showing a variety of people sorting their waste. The repetition helps to establish the actions as socially normalised and inclusive.

The GREAT Sort messages and WasteSorted toolkit have been adopted by many local governments and regional councils, amplifying key messages and contributing to consistent waste messaging across the state.



Find out about WasteSorted on [YouTube](#)



WasteSorted Schools highlights

from July 2022 to June 2023

WasteSorted Schools

The [WasteSorted Schools](#) program is a key component of the WasteSorted behaviour change program. It is a free program that supports schools to make landfill the last resort through provision of curriculum resources and education strategies, along with hands-on learning experiences. The program helps schools to protect the environment, reduce their waste costs, and promote positive waste behaviours among students, teachers and the community.

Activities include:

- avoiding waste
- recycling
- composting and worm farming
- promoting waste-free lunches
- green canteens
- productive school gardens.

23 schools

recognised for 10 consecutive years of accreditation from a total of 141 accredited schools.

\$149,755 awarded

to 48 schools for projects that avoid and recover school waste, such as paper and cardboard, food waste, Containers for Change and general recycling.

New curriculum materials

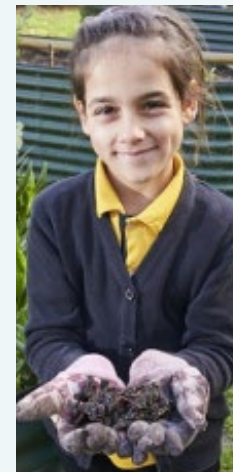
developed and a green canteen case study video published.

14 professional

learning workshops, webinars, networking and sharing sessions delivered to metropolitan and regional teachers, students and local governments.

80 educational

waste audits and incursions run with students



Household Hazardous Waste program

The [Household Hazardous Waste \(HHW\)](#) program helps with the storage, transport, treatment and recovery of HHW collected by local governments and regional councils.

HHW refers to products used in and around the home that are flammable, toxic, explosive or corrosive. If not disposed of correctly, HHW can pose a threat to human health and the environment.

The HHW program has nine metropolitan and six regional permanent local government facilities where householders can drop off unwanted household chemicals at no charge. Temporary collection events are also hosted throughout the year.

In 2022–23 a total of 485 tonnes of materials were collected for safe recovery or disposal, including gas bottles, batteries, flammable liquids and cleaning products.



WasteSorted grants

The [WasteSorted Grants – Organics Infrastructure Program](#) helped fast-track existing organics operators to align with the department's [Guideline: Better practice organics recycling](#) which was published in December 2022. The program supported projects from organisations that provide FOGO handling and processing sites. The emphasis was on projects that addressed odour, emissions to land and water, and other environmental aspects.

Five organics infrastructure projects were funded, totaling \$850,000.

The program funds organisations to develop and implement projects that support the waste strategy's objectives, address focus materials and align with the WasteSorted messaging and/or GREAT Sort behaviour change campaign.

Eleven community education projects were funded, totaling \$150,380. Since 2017, the department has administered waste grant funding programs which have provided \$8.4 million to Western Australian projects to improve the recovery and reuse of focus materials, including plastics, C&D waste, textiles and FOGO.



Plan for Plastics

Western Australia's [Plan for Plastics](#) continues its successful implementation by providing a pathway to address emerging environmental, waste and human health issues arising from disposable and single-use plastic items.

The plan includes bans on the sale and supply of a range of plastic items across two stages. Stage 1 bans, enforced from 1 July 2022, included plastic plates, cups, unlidged bowls and containers,

The Plan for Plastics Stage 2 regulations will save an additional **700 million** plastic items from landfill **annually**.

cutlery, straws, stirrers, shopping bags, expanded polystyrene food containers and helium balloon releases.

Preliminary usage data indicates that the consumption of plastic items was decreasing in advance of the Stage 1 enforcement deadlines, as businesses and people moved towards more environmentally friendly options and reusable products.

Stage 2 regulations came into effect on 27 February 2023 following extensive stakeholder consultation. Stage 2 addressed a further 12 highly problematic items: coffee cups and lids, produce bags, moulded and loose expanded plastic packaging, degradable plastics, expanded polystyrene cups and meat trays, unlined plastic trays, cotton buds with plastic stems, microbeads and lids for trays, plates, bowls, containers and cups.

Enforcement dates will be staggered from 1 September 2023 to 1 July 2025, allowing businesses time to use up supplies and transition to compliant alternatives. Stage 2 regulations will save an additional 700 million plastic items from landfill annually.

Community engagement campaigns to raise awareness of the bans used the catchphrase 'good, better, best' to emphasise the importance of our choices relating to single-use plastics.

The Minister for Environment launched the [Plastic Free Places](#) program on 14 April 2022. The program is being implemented by the Boomerang Alliance, in partnership with the department, and is a key strategy to support hospitality businesses and the events sector reduce their use of plastics. Businesses and organisations can continue to transition away from plastic and become champions of change by adopting reusable alternatives.

Container deposit scheme

[Containers for Change](#) started on 1 October 2020, providing incentives for communities to reduce litter and increase recycling as well as creating new business and employment opportunities across the state.

Containers for Change is run by WA Return Recycle Renew Ltd, a not-for-profit company responsible for developing and maintaining the collection network, recycling containers, community education and financial management. The department administers the legislative framework to support the scheme, including assessing container approval applications, monitoring scheme performance and providing regulatory oversight.

Before the implementation of Containers for Change the pre-scheme recycling rate for eligible beverage containers was 34 per cent. By the end of the 2022–23 financial year this had increased

to 62.7 per cent. A total of 918,728,036 containers were returned in 2022–23 – an increase of 19,136,341 from the previous financial year.

In December 2022 the Minister for Environment announced the start of a public consultation period to consider expanding the scheme to include wine and spirit bottles as well as all flavoured milk, juice and cordial containers up to 3 litres.

The department released the discussion paper [Container deposit scheme – Expanding the scope of eligible beverage containers](#) and undertook regional consultation in Bunbury, Margaret River and the Swan Valley.

At the close of consultation the department's online survey received 2,700 responses, with more than 98 per cent supporting expansion of the scheme.



Litter strategy

The department provides services to the Keep Australia Beautiful Council (KABC) to support the state's litter strategy.

The [Litter Prevention Strategy for Western Australia 2020–2025](#) is in its third year of implementation and sets a target of reducing litter by 30 per cent over the lifetime of the strategy.

KABC will implement the Litter Prevention Strategy 2020–25 through four strategic objectives:



KABC highlights

from July 2022 to June 2023

Litter surveys

Two litter surveys were conducted using the Australian Litter Measure (November 2022 and May 2023). Surveys included 265 transects at 57 sites in 10 local government areas across the Perth metropolitan area. An average of 17,196 items of litter were counted, with cigarette butts being the most common item, and plastic the most commonly found material.



Tidy Towns

KABC's longstanding Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities awards continued to draw strong applications, with 38 received in 2022. Gascoyne Junction was named the 2022 state winner and went on to win the overall 2023 Tidy Towns title at the National Tidy Towns Awards. Submitted projects recorded more than 93,000 hours of volunteer participation.



Adopt-a-Spot

The Adopt-a-Spot program was expanded to more than 2,000 registered groups, bringing the total number of program volunteers to more than 57,000 since 2009.



Litter Grants

Community Litter Grants to a total of \$43,363 were awarded to 10 recipients for projects to combat littering.



Clean Schools

Five Clean Schools program workshops were held, including three in partnership with WasteSorted Schools. Eighteen new schools registered for the Clean Schools program, bringing participating schools to 743.



New campaigns

Three new awareness and behaviour change campaigns were launched to increase community understanding of the impacts of litter on the environment. Material was developed to update KABC's 'Bin it you know it's the right thing to do' campaign, target roadside litter and increase program involvement.



Total solar eclipse

KABC worked on litter strategies with JTSI for the total solar eclipse in the state's North West in April 2023. More than 2,000 Outback Packs and additional car litter bags were handed out in the shires of Exmouth, Carnarvon and Onslow. These packs encouraged travellers to keep the scene clean and help protect land and marine biodiversity.



WA Beach Clean-ups

KABC partnered with Tangaroa Blue for WA Beach Clean-up activities, and visited Cervantes, Dongara, Geraldton and Kalbarri supporting local schools and community groups with beach clean-ups and audits. All data gathered was added to the Australia Marine Debris Initiative Database. Over four days, 3,716 items were removed from the environment, with a total weight of 113 kg.



An aerial photograph of a winding river in a dry, arid landscape. The river is a vibrant blue-green color, contrasting sharply with the surrounding brown and tan earth. The terrain is characterized by numerous small, interconnected water channels and a complex network of dry, branching paths, suggesting a highly eroded and water-scarce environment. The sky is a pale, overcast grey, and the overall scene conveys a sense of environmental fragility and the impact of water scarcity.

Outcome 5

Quality advice to the Environmental Protection Authority and Minister for Environment on significant proposals and environmental issues.

Service 7 Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA

The EPA is an independent authority that provides advice on environmental matters to the Minister for Environment. The department has continued to provide services to the EPA to conduct environmental impact assessments of significant development proposals and planning schemes.

Development proposals

In 2022–23 there were 48 development proposals referred to the EPA. This is a reduced number of proposals from the previous two years. The EPA may not necessarily make a determination on whether to assess a referred proposal in the same year the proposal is referred. Only when the EPA has sufficient information about the referred

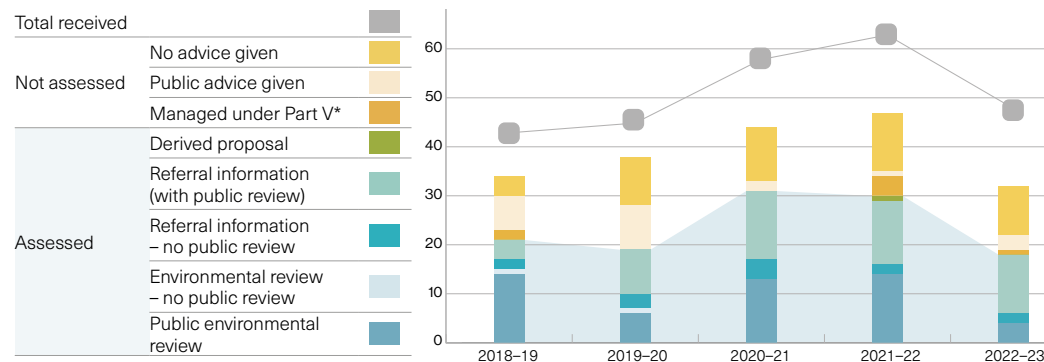
proposal can it make a determination on whether formal assessment is required.

► The EPA determined that 14 referred proposals did not require further assessment, and 18 referred proposals required formal assessment. Of the 14 that did not require further assessment, the EPA provided specific advice on environmental matters to the proponent on three of those proposals.

Planning schemes and scheme amendments

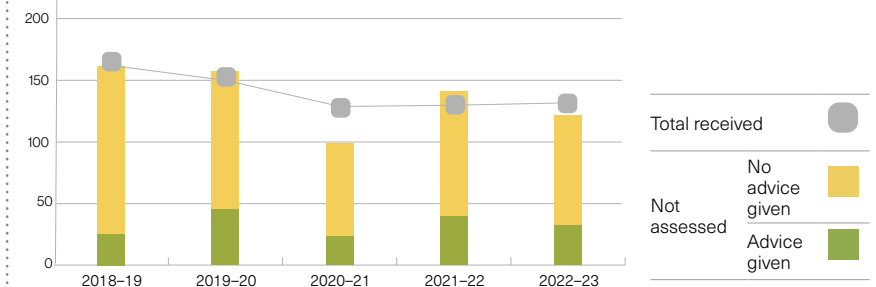
► In 2022–23 the EPA received 132 referred schemes. It determined that none required formal assessment and 121 did not require further assessments. The EPA provided advice and recommendations on environmental factors to the responsible authority on the environmental issues raised by 32 of the referred schemes that did not require further assessment.

Total development proposals referred to the EPA and decisions



* Descriptor now considered under 'Not assessed: No advice given'

Total schemes and scheme amendments referred to the EPA and 'not assessed' decisions



Completed assessments

In 2022–23 the department supported the EPA to complete 17 assessment reports to the Minister for Environment, of which 10 report on the assessment of significant proposals (see table). These included the Alkimos Seawater Desalination Plant accredited assessment, which considered eight key environmental factors impacted by the proposal and a complex environmental offsets strategy to counterbalance

Assessment reports completed

Type of assessment	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Formal assessments				
Public environmental review	7	5	5	4
Environmental review (no public review)	1	1	0	0
Assessment on referral information (no public review)	3	5	2	1
Assessment on referral information (with public review)	5	2	7	5
Strategic proposal	-	-	-	0
Subtotal	16	13	14	10
Changes to conditions				
s. 46 inquiry	24	8	9	7
Total	40	21	23	17

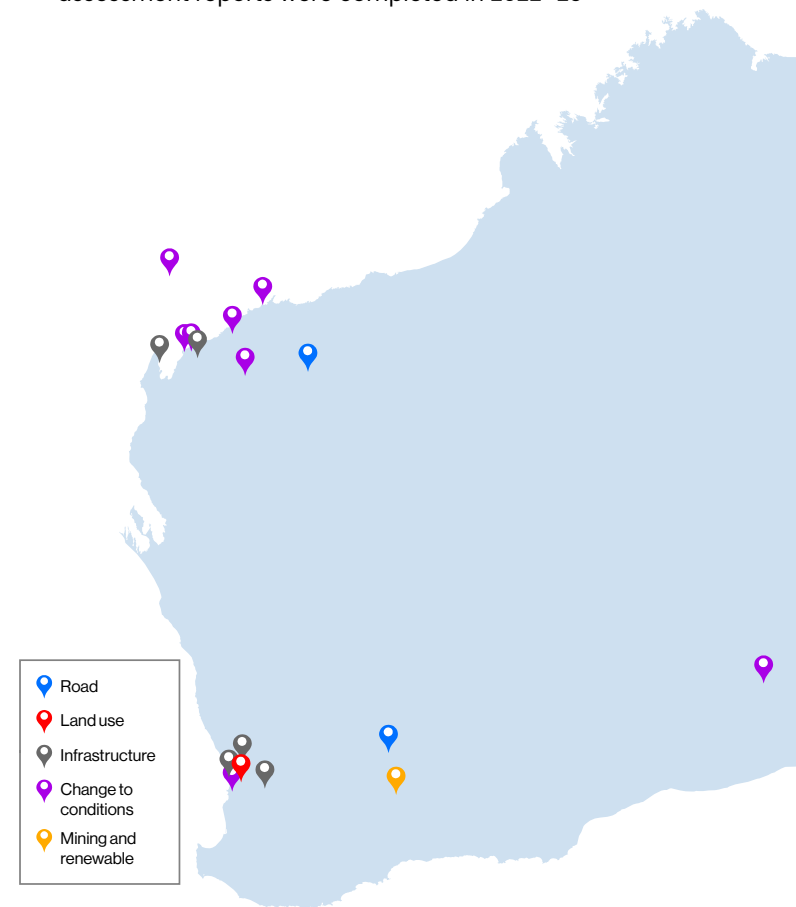
significant residual impacts. A further seven inquiries into changes to conditions of existing projects were also completed in 2022–23. These inquiries included the three investigations into the adequacy of greenhouse gas conditions relating to the Pluto LNG Gas Development, the Janz Feed Gas Pipeline and Gorgon Gas Development Revised Proposal, and the Wheatstone Development

The map shows the location and type of all the proposals for which assessment reports were completed in 2022–23.

Assessments this year included the Ningaloo Lighthouse Resort Project in Exmouth Gulf. This proposal was the first assessment completed since the release of the EPA's strategic advice to the Minister for Environment on the potential cumulative impacts of proposed activities and developments on the environmental, social and cultural values of Exmouth Gulf. The proponent was required to consider compatibility with the protection of the key values of this globally significant area, including turtle nesting in Lighthouse Bay, subterranean fauna, dark and clear skies, and Aboriginal heritage and culture. The EPA recommended strict conditions to protect these values.

The EPA also completed its assessment of the Earl Grey Lithium Project (Revised Proposal), which overlaps the south-west corner of the Great

Location and type of all proposals for which assessment reports were completed in 2022–23



Western Woodlands. These woodlands have faced historical pressures from mining and mineral exploration, and that pressure is increasing with the accelerating demand for critical minerals.

Other assessment work

Any amendments to a proposal or implementation conditions once a statement has been issued must be approved under section 45C of the EP Act. The EPA Chair is delegated to make decisions under section 45C on behalf of the Minister for Environment. In 2022–23 the department provided support to the EPA Chair to complete 12 amendments to existing proposals under section 45C of the EP Act, with 33 proposed amendments still under assessment.

Consultation

Providing opportunities for genuine public consultation is an important stage in the EPA's environmental impact assessments. Members of the public are invited to offer advice, identify omitted relevant information, provide local knowledge and propose alternatives during a number of stages. The first opportunity for the community to engage with the process is when the EPA initially publishes the details of a proposal at the referral stage, which allows a

seven-day public comment period. After this, the EPA considers submissions and advice obtained and makes a determination on whether or not to assess the proposal, and if so, the level of assessment. Relevant proponent information (such as environmental review documents) may then be published during the assessment on the EPA website for public review.

During the 2022–23 financial year, there were more than 7,000 submissions relating to 51 proposals via the [EPA Consultation Hub](#).



Service 8 Environmental management services to the EPA

The department provided services to the independent EPA to develop guidelines and strategic advice to manage environmental impacts and protect the environment.

Greenhouse gas guidance

Climate legislation and policy is rapidly evolving and climate science now demands the need for deep and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions this decade.

We supported the EPA's review of its *Environmental Factor Guideline – Greenhouse Gas Emissions* in 2022. The guideline outlines how greenhouse gas emissions are considered by the EPA in the environmental impact assessment process. Over a period of eight weeks, more than 1,000 submissions were received. This comprehensive engagement and feedback helped ensure the guideline is practical and consistent with the innovative approach needed to address climate change.

The [revised guideline](#) was published in April 2023, outlining EPA expectations for proponents to take all practicable measures to avoid and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It also reflects the EPA's ability to consider practicable measures to

reduce overlap and avoid duplication with existing frameworks, including reforms of Australian Government emissions-reduction legislation and policy.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Over the past year, the EPA contributed to DPLH's consultation on the proposed *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021*. The EPA made multiple submissions to this reform process, stating the desire for an integrated and comprehensive single cultural heritage assessment process.

In June 2023, the EPA reviewed and updated its *Environmental Factor Guideline – Social Surroundings* to reflect the new legislation that became operational on 1 July 2023. This update was designed to ensure proponents, Traditional Owners and stakeholders had clarity on the EPA's continuing statutory obligation to consider Aboriginal cultural heritage (ACH) in assessments under the EP Act.

Following the State Government's decision to repeal Aboriginal cultural heritage laws and restore the original *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*, the EPA is now reassessing the extent to which it must consider how direct impacts to physical or biological surroundings affect ACH values. Changes to the ACH legislation framework will be carefully considered by the EPA before guidance and policy is adopted

Greater Brixton Street Wetlands

In October 2022 officers from the department responded to a request from the EPA to develop advice, under section 16(j) of the EP Act, on the environmental values and pressures on one of the Swan Coastal Plain's last remaining and most important wetlands – the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands.

The wetlands cover about 215 hectares at the base of the Darling Scarp, about 20 km south of the Perth CBD within the cities of Gosnells and Kalamunda, between Roe and Albany highways and Kenwick Road.

Home to more than 650 plant species, the wetlands include a number of rare and restricted species that no longer exist anywhere else, and

more carnivorous plants than in all of Europe. They also provide habitat for conservation-significant fauna, including the Carnaby's and forest red-tailed black cockatoos, and the quenda.

The EPA report found there were multiple threats to the significant environmental values of the wetlands and that continued piecemeal development may result in further degradation of

the area's unique and significant environmental values.

This advice will ensure future activities and development are carried out in a way that minimises the impact on this valuable environmental asset and gives a clear expectation that proposals and planning schemes must be compatible with protecting the environmental values of the wetlands.

Stakeholder Reference Group

The department supported the EPA's Stakeholder Reference Group, which invites representation from key external stakeholders and peak industry bodies. Members have the opportunity to provide input to guidelines, processes and performance. During the year, the group met quarterly.



The Greater Brixton Street Wetlands provide habitat for conservation-significant fauna.



EPA Services staff at an information session



Outcome 6

Compliance with Ministerial Statement implementation conditions are monitored effectively.

Service 9 Compliance monitoring services to the Minister for Environment

In accordance with section 48(1) of the EP Act, the department may monitor proposals approved by the Minister for Environment, for the purpose of determining whether the implementation conditions set out in the Ministerial Statement are being complied with.

If a proponent does not ensure implementation of the proposal is in accordance with the implementation conditions, the proponent commits an offence.

When non-compliance with an implementation condition or proponent commitment in a Ministerial Statement is identified, the proponent is issued with a 'notice of non-compliance', detailing actions required to rectify the issue and regain compliance. The Minister for Environment is informed of each non-compliance.

The department undertakes its environmental compliance activities through a structured annual program. The program incorporates a variety of proactive and reactive methods to monitor compliance including audits of proposals, reviews of compliance assessment reports, on-site inspections and stakeholder engagement.

The annual program enables resources to be effectively managed and achieve better environmental outcomes. The results from the compliance audits identify areas for improving

proponents' compliance and inform future annual programs and the environmental impact assessment process.

Compliance and audit activity

Under our 2022–23 Compliance program, we continued to monitor significant proposals

authorised under Ministerial Statements, completing 17 audits including iron ore mining activities, oil and gas facilities and large infrastructure projects.

A total of 140 compliance assessment reports were reviewed and seven notices of non-compliance were reported.



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Auditor General independent auditor's report



Auditor General

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

2023

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

To the Parliament of Western Australia

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation which comprise:

- the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023, and the Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended
- Administered schedules comprising the Administered assets and liabilities as at 30 June 2023 and the Administered income and expenses by service for the year then ended
- Notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In my opinion, the financial statements are:

- based on proper accounts and present fairly, in all material respects, the operating results and cash flows of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the year ended 30 June 2023 and the financial position at the end of that period
- in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (applicable to Tier 2 Entities), the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the Treasurer's Instructions.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Restatement of comparative balances

I draw attention to Note 8.2 to the financial statements which states that the amounts reported in the previously issued 30 June 2022 financial statements have been restated and disclosed as comparatives in these financial statements. My opinion is not modified in respect to this matter.

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7th Floor Albert Facey House 469 Wellington Street Perth MAIL TO: Perth BC PO Box 8489 Perth WA 6849 TEL: 08 6557 7500

Responsibilities of the Director General for the financial statements

The Director General is responsible for:

- keeping proper accounts
- preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (applicable to Tier 2 Entities), the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the Treasurer's Instructions
- such internal control as it determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Director General is responsible for:

- assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern
- disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern
- using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Western Australian Government has made policy or funding decisions affecting the continued existence of the Department.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

As required by the *Auditor General Act 2006*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements. The objectives of my audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website. This description forms part of my auditor's report and can be found at https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf.

Report on the audit of controls

Basis for qualified opinion

I identified significant weaknesses in the design and implementation of controls over the initiation and management of cost recovery fee payable by proponents as prescribed under the Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021. These weaknesses resulted in inconsistent income recognition that increase the risk of error and delays in the receipt of moneys. Consequently, the Department has not effectively administered the cost recovery fee in accordance with the Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021.

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Qualified Opinion

I have undertaken a reasonable assurance engagement on the design and implementation of controls exercised by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. The controls exercised by the Director General are those policies and procedures established to ensure that the receipt, expenditure and investment of money, the acquisition and disposal of property, and the incurring of liabilities have been in accordance with the State's financial reporting framework (the overall control objectives).

My opinion has been formed on the basis of the matters outlined in this report.

In my opinion, in all material respects, except for the possible effects of the matters described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion section of my report, the controls exercised by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation are sufficiently adequate to provide reasonable assurance that the receipt, expenditure and investment of money, the acquisition and disposal of property and the incurring of liabilities have been in accordance with the State's financial reporting framework during the year ended 30 June 2023.

The Director General's responsibilities

The Director General is responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining controls to ensure that the receipt, expenditure and investment of money, the acquisition and disposal of property and the incurring of liabilities are in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 2006*, the Treasurer's Instructions and other relevant written law.

Auditor General's responsibilities

As required by the *Auditor General Act 2006*, my responsibility as an assurance practitioner is to express an opinion on the suitability of the design of the controls to achieve the overall control objectives and the implementation of the controls as designed. I conducted my engagement in accordance with Standard on Assurance Engagement ASAE 3150 *Assurance Engagements on Controls* issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. That standard requires that I comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform my procedures to obtain reasonable assurance about whether, in all material respects, the controls are suitably designed to achieve the overall control objectives and were implemented as designed.

An assurance engagement involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the suitability of the controls design to achieve the overall control objectives and the implementation of those controls. The procedures selected depend on my judgement, including an assessment of the risks that controls are not suitably designed or implemented as designed. My procedures included testing the implementation of those controls that I consider necessary to achieve the overall control objectives.

I believe that the evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Limitations of controls

Because of the inherent limitations of any internal control structure, it is possible that, even if the controls are suitably designed and implemented as designed, once in operation, the overall control objectives may not be achieved so that fraud, error or non-compliance with laws and regulations may occur and not be detected. Any projection of the outcome of the evaluation of the suitability of the design of controls to future periods is subject to the risk that the controls may become unsuitable because of changes in conditions.

Report on the audit of the key performance indicators

Opinion

I have undertaken a reasonable assurance engagement on the key performance indicators of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the year ended 30 June 2023. The key performance indicators are the Under Treasurer-approved key effectiveness indicators and key efficiency indicators that provide performance information about achieving outcomes and delivering services.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the key performance indicators of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation are relevant and appropriate to assist users to assess the Department's performance and fairly represent indicated performance for the year ended 30 June 2023.

The Director General's responsibilities for the key performance indicators

The Director General is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the key performance indicators in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the Treasurer's Instructions and for such internal controls as the Director General determines necessary to enable the preparation of key performance indicators that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the key performance indicators, the Director General is responsible for identifying key performance indicators that are relevant and appropriate, having regard to their purpose in accordance with Treasurer's Instructions 904 *Key Performance Indicators*.

Auditor General's responsibilities

As required by the *Auditor General Act 2006*, my responsibility as an assurance practitioner is to express an opinion on the key performance indicators. The objectives of my engagement are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the key performance indicators are relevant and appropriate to assist users to assess the entity's performance and whether the key performance indicators are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. I conducted my engagement in accordance with Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3000 *Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information* issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. That standard requires that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements.

An assurance engagement involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the key performance indicators. It also involves evaluating the relevance and appropriateness of the key performance indicators against the criteria and guidance in Treasurer's Instruction 904 for measuring the extent of outcome achievement and the efficiency of service delivery. The procedures selected depend on my judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the key performance indicators. In making these risk assessments, I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the engagement in order to design procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.

I believe that the evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

My independence and quality management relating to the report on financial statements, controls and key performance indicators

I have complied with the independence requirements of the *Auditor General Act 2006* and the relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements. In accordance with ASQM 1 *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Reports and Other Financial Information, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements*, the Office of the Auditor General maintains a comprehensive system of quality management including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

Other information

The Director General is responsible for the other information. The other information is the information in the entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2023, but not the financial statements, key performance indicators and my auditor's report.

My opinions on the financial statements, controls and key performance indicators do not cover the other information and accordingly I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, controls and key performance indicators, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements and key performance indicators or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I did not receive the other information prior to the date of this auditor's report. When I do receive it, I will read it and if I conclude that there is a material misstatement in this information, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance and request them to correct the misstated information. If the misstated information is not corrected, I may need to retract this auditor's report and re-issue an amended report.

Matters relating to the electronic publication of the audited financial statements and key performance indicators

The auditor's report relates to the financial statements and key performance indicators of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the year ended 30 June 2023 included in the annual report on the Department's website. The Department's management is responsible for the integrity of the Department's website. This audit does not provide assurance on the integrity of the Department's website. The auditor's report refers only to the financial statements, controls and key performance indicators described above. It does not provide an opinion on any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the annual report. If users of the financial statements and key performance indicators are concerned with the inherent risks arising from publication on a website, they are advised to contact the entity to confirm the information contained in the website version.

Grant Robinson
Assistant Auditor General Financial Audit
Delegate of the Auditor General for Western Australia
Perth, Western Australia
13 October 2023

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Financial statements

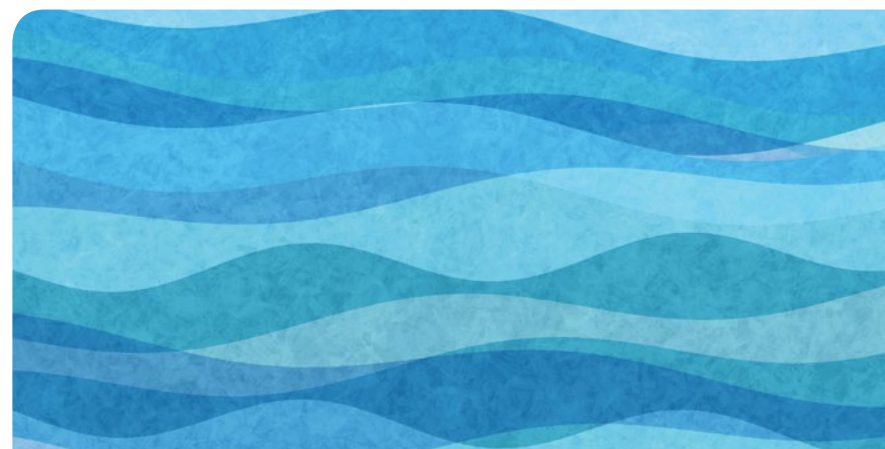
Certification of financial statements for the reporting period ended 30 June 2023

The accompanying financial statements of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation have been prepared in compliance with the provisions of the *Financial Management Act 2006* from proper accounts and records to present fairly the financial transactions for the reporting period ended 30 June 2023 and the financial position as at 30 June 2023.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render the particulars included within the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.

Hilary Manderson
Chief Finance Officer
13 October 2023

Michelle Andrews
Director General
13 October 2023



Statement of comprehensive income

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Cost of services			
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense	2.1(a)	120,752	102,180
Supplies and services	2.3	41,790	37,956
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	4.1.1, 4.2, 4.3.1	9,880	10,411
Finance costs	6.3	90	68
Accommodation expenses	2.3	9,938	9,339
Grants and subsidies*	2.2	21,384	12,985
Other expenses	2.3	6,904	4,795
Net loss on disposal of non-current assets	2.4	759	2,505
Total cost of services		211,497	180,239
Income			
User charges and fees*	3.2	48,719	34,023
Commonwealth grants	3.3	7,639	14,408
Waste levy	3.4	91,490	85,715
Interest revenue		-	365
Other income	3.5	11,393	4,717
Total income		159,241	139,228
Net cost of services		52,256	41,011

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Income from State Government			
Service appropriation	3.1	110,666	100,392
Income from other public sector entities*	3.1	3,526	6,650
Resources received	3.1	3,256	2,561
Royalties for Regions fund	3.1	7,990	10,515
Total income from State Government		125,438	120,118
Surplus for the period*		73,182	79,107
Other comprehensive income			
Items not reclassified subsequently to profit or loss			
Changes in asset revaluation surplus	8.10	61,434	11,512
Total other comprehensive income		61,434	11,512
Total comprehensive income for the period		134,616	90,619

* Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

The Statement of comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of financial position

As at 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6.4	11,448	23,785
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6.4	94,440	76,862
Receivables*	5.1	38,989	28,361
Amounts receivable for services	5.2	7,043	9,238
Other assets*	5.3	3,151	4,041
Total current assets		155,071	142,287
Non-current assets			
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6.4	3,308	2,513
Amounts receivable for services	5.2	81,852	72,840
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	4.1	429,961	367,252
Right-of-use assets	4.2	2,076	2,325
Intangible assets	4.3	31,482	26,765
Other assets	5.3	3	2
Total non-current assets		548,682	471,697
Total assets		703,753	613,984

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Payables	5.4	7,616	6,796
Lease liabilities	6.1	867	953
Contract liabilities	5.5	5,403	2,447
Employee related provisions	2.1(b)	26,714	25,339
Other current liabilities	5.6	2	3
Total current liabilities		40,602	35,538
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	6.1	1,274	1,440
Employee related provisions	2.1(b)	6,207	5,511
Total non-current liabilities		7,481	6,951
Total liabilities		48,083	42,489
Net assets		655,670	571,495
Equity			
Contributed equity	8.10	235,240	285,681
Reserves	8.10	97,930	36,496
Accumulated surplus*		322,500	249,318
Total equity		655,670	571,495

* Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

The Statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of changes in equity

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	Contributed equity \$'000	Reserves \$'000	Accumulated surplus \$'000	Total equity \$'000
Balance at 1 July 2021		327,896	24,984	170,211	523,091
Restated surplus*		-	-	79,107	79,107
Other comprehensive income	8.10	-	11,512	-	11,512
Restated total comprehensive income for the period*		-	11,512	79,107	90,619
Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners:					
Capital appropriations	8.10	11,841	-	-	11,841
Distribution to owners	8.10	(54,056)	-	-	(54,056)
Total		(42,215)	-	-	(42,215)
Restated balance at 30 June 2022*		285,681	36,496	249,318	571,495
Balance at 1 July 2022		285,681	36,496	249,318	571,495
Surplus		-	-	73,182	73,182
Other comprehensive income	8.10	-	61,434	-	61,434
Total comprehensive income for the period		-	61,434	73,182	134,616
Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners:					
Capital appropriations	8.10	12,316	-	-	12,316
Distribution to owners	8.10	(62,757)	-	-	(62,757)
Total		(50,441)	-	-	(50,441)
Balance at 30 June 2023		235,240	97,930	322,500	655,670

* Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

The Statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Cash flows from State Government		
Service appropriation	95,931	85,726
Capital contributions	12,316	11,841
Holding account drawdown	7,918	5,638
Distributions to owner	(60,456)	(54,044)
Net proceeds on sale of land remitted to consolidated account	-	(12)
Royalties for Regions fund	7,990	10,515
Funds from other public sector entities	2,531	8,184
Net cash provided by State Government	66,230	67,848

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Utilised as follows:			
Cash flows from operating activities			
Payments			
Employee benefits		(117,287)	(103,015)
Supplies and services		(41,329)	(33,620)
Finance costs		(90)	(67)
Accommodation		(9,637)	(9,172)
Grants and subsidies		(19,368)	(14,831)
GST payments on purchases		(8,610)	(7,432)
Other payments		(3,909)	(5,594)
Receipts			
User charges and fees		44,533	31,932
Commonwealth grants		7,639	14,408
Interest received		-	14
Waste Levy		84,105	83,562
GST receipts on sales		1,352	275
GST receipts from taxation authority		6,895	6,883
Other receipts		14,829	6,847
Net cash used in operating activities		(40,877)	(29,810)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments			
Purchase of non-current assets		(18,260)	(18,094)
Receipts			
Proceeds from sale of non-current assets		200	39
Loan repayments from WA Return Recycle Renew Ltd (WARRRL)		-	11,625
Net cash used in investing activities		(18,060)	(6,430)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Payments			
Principal elements of lease payments		(1,257)	(1,125)
Net cash used in financing activities		(1,257)	(1,125)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		6,036	30,483
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		103,160	72,677
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	6.4	109,196	103,160

The Statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Administered schedules

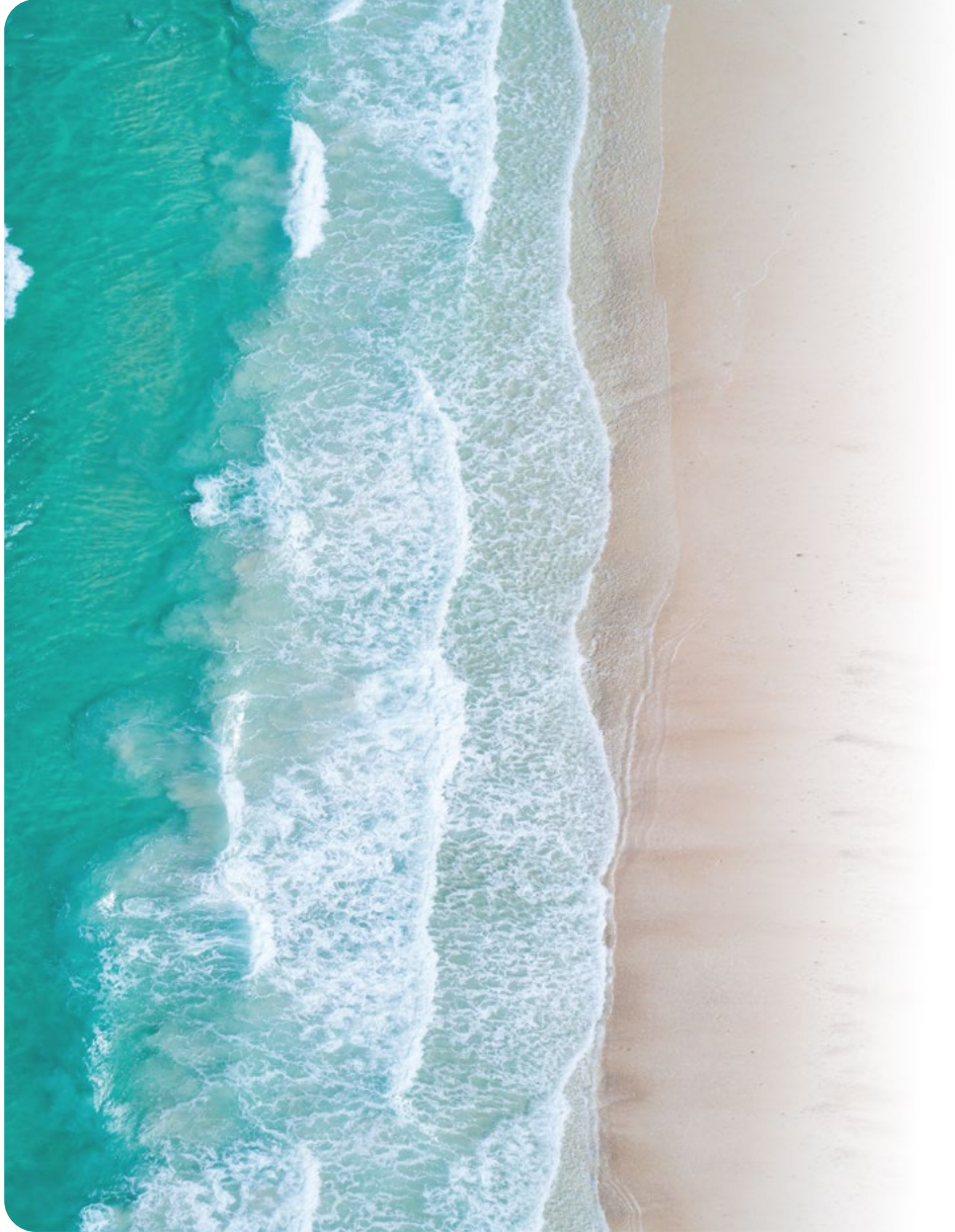
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Administered income and expenses		
Income		
For transfer:		
Regulatory fees and other charges ^(a)	46	57
Total administered income	46	57
Expenses		
Payments into the consolidated account ^(a)	46	57
Total administered expenses	46	57

(a) Payments into the consolidated account include water fines collected on behalf of the Water Corporation, and environmental infringement regulatory fees and fines collected on behalf of the State Government.

(b) Further explanations of variances are contained in [note 9.2](#) 'Explanatory statement for administered items.'

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Administered assets and liabilities		
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1	1
Total administered current assets	1	1
Total administered assets	1	1
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Payables	-	-
Total administered current liabilities	-	-
Total administered liabilities	-	-



Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2023

1. Basis of preparation

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) is controlled by the State of Western Australia (WA), which is the ultimate parent. The department is a not-for-profit entity (as profit is not its principal objective).

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities have been included in the 'Our performance' section which does not form part of these financial statements.

These annual financial statements were authorised for issue by the Director General of the department on 13 October 2023.

(a) Statement of compliance

These general purpose financial statements are prepared in accordance with:

- 1) The *Financial Management Act 2006* (FMA)
- 2) Treasurer's Instructions (TIs)
- 3) Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures
- 4) Where appropriate, those Australian Accounting Standards paragraphs applicable for not-for-profit entities have been applied.

The FMA and TIs take precedence over Australian Accounting Standards. Several Australian Accounting Standards are modified by the TIs to vary application, disclosure format and wording. Where modification is required and has had a material or significant financial effect upon the reported results, details of that modification and the resulting financial effect are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

(b) Basis of preparation

These financial statements are presented in Australian dollars applying the accrual basis of accounting and using the historical cost convention. Certain balances will apply a different measurement basis (such as the fair value basis). Where this is the case the different measurement basis is disclosed in the associated note. All values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$'000).

(c) Judgements and estimates

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements and estimates made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements and / or estimates are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

(d) Accounting for Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except that the:

- (a) amount of GST incurred by the department as a purchaser that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is recognised as part of an asset's cost of acquisition or as part of an item of expense; and
- (b) receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.

Cash flows are included in the Statement of cash flows on a gross basis. However, the GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are classified as operating cash flows.

(e) Contributed equity

Interpretation 1038 *Contributions by Owners Made to Wholly-Owned Public Sector Entities* requires transfers in the nature of equity contributions, other than as a result of a restructure of administrative arrangements, as designated

as contributions by owners (at the time of, or prior to, transfer) be recognised as equity contributions.

Capital appropriations have been designated as contributions by owners by TI955 *Contributions by Owners made to Wholly-Owned Public Sector Entities* and have been credited directly to Contributed equity.

(f) Comparative figures and information

Comparative figures are, where appropriate, reclassified to be comparable with the figures presented in the current reporting period.

Except when an Australian Accounting Standard permits or requires otherwise, comparative information is presented in respect of the previous period for all amounts reported in the financial statements. AASB 1060 provides relief from presenting comparatives for:

- Property, Plant and Equipment reconciliations;
- Intangible Asset reconciliations; and
- Right-of-Use Asset reconciliations.

(g) Administered items

The department administers, but does not control, certain activities and functions for and on behalf of Government that do not contribute to the department's services or objectives. It does not have discretion over how it utilises the transactions in pursuing its own objectives.

Transactions relating to the administered activities are not recognised as the department's income, expenses, assets and liabilities, but are disclosed in the accompanying schedules as 'Administered income and expenses', and 'Administered assets and liabilities'.

The accrual basis of accounting and applicable Australian Accounting Standards have been adopted.

2. Use of our funding

Expenses incurred in the delivery of services

This section provides additional information about how the department's funding is applied and the accounting policies that are relevant for an understanding of the items recognised in the financial statements. The primary expenses incurred by the department in achieving its objectives and the relevant notes are:

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Employee benefits expense	2.1(a)	120,752	102,180
Employee related provisions	2.1(b)	32,921	30,850
Grants and subsidies	2.2	21,384	12,985
Other expenditure	2.3	58,632	52,090
Net loss on disposal of non-current assets	2.4	759	2,505



2.1(a) Employee benefits expense

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Employee benefits	109,175	92,615
Superannuation - defined contribution plans	11,577	9,565
Total employee benefits expenses	120,752	102,180
Add: AASB 16 Non-monetary benefits (not included in employee benefit expense)	936	827
Less: Employee contributions (refer to note 3.5 Other income)	(131)	(117)
Total employee benefits provided	121,557	102,890

Employee benefits

Include wages and salaries, accrued and paid leave entitlements and paid sick leave; and non-monetary benefits recognised under accounting standards other than AASB 16 (such as cars, housing and free or subsidised goods or services) for employees.

Superannuation

Superannuation is the amount recognised in profit or loss of the Statement of comprehensive income comprises employer contributions paid to the GSS (concurrent contributions), the WSS, the GESBs or other superannuation funds.

AASB 16 Non-monetary benefits

AASB 16 Non-monetary benefits are non-monetary employee benefits, relating to the provision of vehicle and housing benefits that are recognised under AASB 16 and are excluded from the employee benefit expense.

Employee contributions

Are contributions made to the department by employees towards employee benefits that have been provided by the department. This includes both AASB 16 and non-AASB 16 employee contributions.

2.1(b) Employee related provisions

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Current		
Employee benefits provisions		
Annual leave ^(a)	11,241	10,412
Long service leave ^(b)	14,264	13,804
Purchased annual leave	151	131
Deferred salary scheme ^(c)	265	160
	25,921	24,507
Other provisions		
Employment on-costs ^(d)	793	832
Total current employee related provisions	26,714	25,339
Non-current		
Employee benefits provision		
Long service leave ^(b)	6,021	5,328
Other provisions		
Employment on-costs ^(d)	186	183
Total non-current employee related provisions	6,207	5,511
Total employee related provisions	32,921	30,850

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees, in respect of annual leave and long service leave for services rendered up to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

(a) Annual leave liabilities

Annual leave liabilities are classified as current as there is no unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

The provision for annual leave is calculated at the present value of expected payments to be made in relation to services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

(b) Long service leave liabilities

Long service leave liabilities are unconditional long service leave provisions and are classified as current liabilities as the department does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

Pre-conditional and conditional long service leave provisions are classified as non-current liabilities because the department has an unconditional right to defer the settlement of the liability until the employee has completed the requisite years of service.

The provision for long service leave is calculated at present value as the department does not expect to wholly settle the amounts within 12 months. The present value is measured taking into account the present value of expected future payments to be made in relation to services provided by employees up to the reporting date. These payments are estimated using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement and discounted using market yields at the end of the reporting period on national government bonds with terms to maturity that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

(c) Deferred salary scheme

Deferred salary scheme liabilities are classified as current where there is no unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

(d) Employment on-costs

Employment on-costs involve the settlement of annual and long service leave liabilities which gives rise to the payment of employment on-costs including workers' compensation insurance. The provision is the present value of expected future payments.

Employment on-costs, including workers' compensation insurance premiums, are not employee benefits and are recognised separately as liabilities and expenses when the employment to which they relate has occurred. Employment on-costs are included as part of 'Other expenses,' [note 2.3](#) (apart from the unwinding of the discount [finance cost]) and are not included as part of the department's Employee benefits expense. The related liability is included in Employment on-costs provision.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Employment on-costs provision		
Carrying amount at start of period	1,015	1,146
Additional / (reversals of) provisions recognised	358	374
Payments / other sacrifices of economic benefits	(406)	(435)
Unwinding of the discount	12	(70)
Carrying amount at end of period	979	1,015

Key sources of estimation uncertainty – long service leave

Key estimates and assumptions concerning the future are based on historical experience and various other factors that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

Several estimates and assumptions are used in calculating the department's long service leave provision. These include:

- expected future salary rates
- discount rates
- employee retention rates
- expected future payments.

Changes in these estimations and assumptions may impact on the carrying amount of the long service leave provision. Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of long service leave liabilities is recognised as employee benefits expense.

2.2 Grants and subsidies

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Recurrent			
Clean Energy Future Fund – Western Australia Recovery Program ^(a)		2,813	953
Commonwealth Grants – National On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme		-	5
Commonwealth Grants – Rural Water Planning Program ^(b)		47	-
Commonwealth Grants – Smart Farming Partnerships		-	135
Contaminated Sites Management Account Grants		255	110
Grants Other		101	146
Keep Australia Beautiful Council (W.A.)		177	112
Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation Resourcing		95	-
Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund		-	79
Royalties for Regions – Healthy Estuaries Western Australia		25	25
Rural Water Planning Program ^(b)		45	742
Small Grants Program – Greening our Community		169	279
State-wide Water Efficiency Measures		47	50
Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account*	3.4	5,933	7,560
Water Innovation Partnership		200	257
Water Sensitive Cities Australia		150	150
Western Australian Climate Policy		383	348

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Capital			
Commonwealth Grants – Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund ^(c)		750	-
Commonwealth Grants – National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure ^(d)		3,499	2,034
Commonwealth Grants – Rural Water Planning Program ^(b)		900	-
Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account ^(e)		231	-
Native Vegetation Rehabilitation Scheme ^(f)		981	-
Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund		16	-
Rural Water Planning Program ^(b)		318	-
Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account – Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund	3.4	750	-
Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account – Waste Export Ban	3.4	3,499	-
Total grants and subsidies		21,384	12,985

* The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account comparative balance for 2022 had been restated. Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

Transactions in which the department provides goods, services, assets (or extinguishes a liability) or labour to another party without receiving equal value in return are categorised as 'Grant or subsidy expenses.' Grants and subsidies can either be operating or capital in nature.

Grants can be paid as general purpose grants which refer to grants that are not subject to conditions regarding their use. Alternatively, they may be paid as specific purpose grants which are paid for a particular purpose and / or have conditions attached regarding their use.

Grants and other transfers to third parties (other than contribution to owners) are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are paid or payable. They include transactions such as: grants, subsidies, personal benefit payments made in cash to individuals, other transfer payments made to public sector agencies, local government, non-government schools, and community groups.

- (a) The Clean Energy Future Fund – West Australia Recovery Program supports the development of clean energy projects under a framework agreed by the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Energy, accelerating deployment of a broad range of clean energy solutions to decarbonise West Australia's regions and the mining sector. Investment is expected to drive the installation of clean energy infrastructure in regional and remote areas, increasing economic activity and employment.
- (b) The program changed its name in 2022 from the Rural Water Deficiency and Community Water Supply grant to the Rural Water Planning Program. Due to climate change, there has been an unprecedented number of Water Deficiency Declarations in the South East agricultural area, where the State Government provides water to farmers for emergency animal welfare needs during very dry periods, through the Rural Water Planning Program. A declaration requires the Government to arrange and pay for carting of water for livestock needs to a central storage point, which is made available to affected farmers. Twelve Water Deficiency Declarations have been declared since May 2019. Water deficiency declarations were in place for Salmon Gums and Grass Patch in 2022 and were revoked on 21 July 2022 due to improved water availability and local water supplies from sufficient rainfall. The department will continue to liaise with local farmers and shires to monitor the situation over the 2024 financial year. This program also supports the delivery of the Community Water Supply Program (CWSP). The CWSP provides larger-scale grant co-funding to allow rural communities in dryland farming regions of Western Australia to adapt to changing rainfall patterns by establishing infrastructure that maximises the efficient use of all available water resources.

- (c) As part of the National Soils Strategy, the Australian Government announced Commonwealth Grants – Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund. The fund is aimed at supporting the diversion of nutrient-rich household and commercial organic waste from landfill to soils by building new or enhancing existing organic waste processing infrastructure. Together with co-contributions from participating state and territory governments and industry, the fund will leverage over \$170 million of investment in organic waste recycling infrastructure to divert organic waste into nutrient rich compost and soil enhancers. Funded facilities will increase the quantity and quality of recycled organic waste available for use, especially in the agricultural industry.
- (d) The Western Australian and Australian Governments announced their joint commitment to improve recycling capacity in Western Australia through a joint commitment of \$70 million in funding. The Commonwealth contribution is through the Recycling Modernisation Fund to fund the Commonwealth Grants – National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure. This funding was in response to the former Council of Australian Governments' decision to ban the export of waste glass, tyres, plastics and paper/cardboard. The funding supports private investment in recycling infrastructure through grants administered by the department.
- (e) The Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account (Offsets Account) is a fund established for the purpose of establishing or maintaining native vegetation (also known as an offset) as a condition of a permit to clear native vegetation, granted under Part V Division 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. The requirement for an offset counterbalances the loss of native vegetation as a condition of a native vegetation clearing permit, after steps have been taken to avoid, minimise and mitigate the impacts of clearing, and allows for a more strategic approach to offsets. Land purchased or revegetation undertaken using contributions made to the offsets account are published on the Environmental Offsets Register website. The department liaises with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions to identify and acquire appropriate areas of native vegetation for addition to the conservation estate.

- (f) The Native Vegetation Rehabilitation Scheme program is a part of the COVID-19 recovery initiatives which will deliver environmental rehabilitation and revegetation projects across the Southwest land division. Conservation groups will work to improve vegetation condition and build on vegetation corridors through a range of work including fencing, seeding, planting, and managing threats to native vegetation. This will contribute to improving habitat for Western Australia's unique and important flora and fauna species, especially black cockatoos.

2.3 Other expenditure

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Supplies and services		
Communications	1,916	2,060
Consultants and contractors	30,317	28,206
Consumables	386	538
Materials	288	197
Travel	1,214	572
Vehicle expenses	593	496
Minor plant, machinery and equipment	1,809	1,836
Plant, machinery and equipment hire	162	75
Chemical analysis expense	888	810
Water carting and drought relief	-	75
Other supplies and services	4,217	3,091
Total supplies and services expenses	41,790	37,956

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Accommodation expenses		
Rental	8,127	7,623
Electricity and water	493	465
Rates and taxes	44	32
Security	76	29
Repairs and maintenance	503	567
Cleaning	695	623
Total accommodation expenses	9,938	9,339
Other expenses		
Audit fees	328	303
Bad debts	186	4,743
Equipment repairs and maintenance	513	552
Expected credit losses – (reversed) / expense	508	(4,143)
Employment on-costs	3,043	2,617
Impairment losses on measurement sites ^(a)	1,129	-
Insurance	802	542
Other operating expenses	395	181
Total other expenses	6,904	4,795
Total other expenditure	58,632	52,090

(a) Refer to [note 4.1.1](#), for details regarding impairment losses on measurement sites.

Supplies and services

Supplies and services are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred. The carrying amounts of any materials held for distribution are expensed when the materials are distributed.

Accommodation expenses

Repairs, maintenance, cleaning, security, electricity, water, rates and taxes costs are recognised as expenses as incurred.

Rental expenses include:

- (i) Included in rental expenses are Office rental costs of \$7.7 million (2021: \$7.2 million). Office rental is expensed as incurred as Memorandum of Understanding Agreements between the department and the Department of Finance for the leasing of office accommodation contain significant substitution rights.
- (ii) short-term leases with a lease term of 12 months or less.
- (iii) low-value leases with an underlying value of \$5,000 or less.

Other operating expenses

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

Equipment repairs and maintenance

Repairs and maintenance costs are recognised as expenses as incurred, except where they relate to the replacement of a significant component of an asset. In that case, the costs are capitalised and depreciated.

Expected credit losses

The allowance for expected credit losses of trade receivables is measured at the lifetime expected credit losses at each reporting date. The department has established a provision matrix that is based on its historical credit loss experience, adjusted for forward-looking factors specific to the debtors and the economic environment.

Employment on-cost

Employment on-cost includes workers' compensation insurance and other employment on-costs. The on-costs' liability associated with the recognition of annual and long service leave liabilities is included at [note 2.1\(b\)](#) Employee related provisions. Superannuation contributions accrued as part of the provision for leave are employee benefits and are not included in employment on-costs.

2.4 Net loss on disposal of non-current assets

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Proceeds from disposal of non-current assets		
Land	(202)	(14)
Plant, equipment and vehicles	-	(27)
Carrying amount of non-current assets disposed		
Infrastructure	11	-
Land	56	430
Leasehold improvements	8	-
Licences	1	-
Measurement sites	863	2,062
Plant, equipment and vehicles	22	54
Net loss on disposal of non-current assets	759	2,505

Realised and unrealised gains are usually recognised on a net basis. These include gains arising on the disposal of non-current assets and revaluations of non-current assets.

Gains and losses on the disposal of non-current assets are presented by deducting from the proceeds on disposal the carrying amount of the asset and related selling expenses. Gains and losses are recognised in profit or loss in the Statement of comprehensive income (from the proceeds of sale).

3. Our funding services

How we obtain our funding

This section provides additional information about how the department obtains its funding and the relevant accounting policy notes that govern the recognition and measurement of this funding. The primary income received by the department and the relevant notes are:

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Income from State Government	3.1	125,438	120,118
User charges and fees	3.2	48,719	34,023
Commonwealth grants	3.3	7,639	14,408
Waste levy	3.4	91,490	85,715
Other income	3.5	11,393	4,717

3.1 Income from State Government

	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Appropriation received during the period^(a):		
Service appropriation	110,666	100,392
Total appropriation received	110,666	100,392
Income from other public sector entities during the period^(b):		
Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account*	1,296	461
Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account	317	504
Grants	521	507
Interest revenue	1,131	204
Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund	175	-
Wooroloo Bushfire Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program	-	4,973
Other	86	1
Total income from other public sector entities	3,526	6,650

	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Resources received from other public sector entities during the period^(a):		
Services received free of charge		
Department of Finance – Accommodation lease and depreciation	159	171
Department of Health – Water source and contaminated sites assessment	-	198
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage – Spatial data	1	1
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Digital map	11	-
Landgate – Land information services	535	61
Main Roads Western Australia – Clearing permit assessment	190	150
State Solicitor's Office – Legal services	2,231	1,980
Water Corporation – Environmental Services	129	-
Total services received free of charge	3,256	2,561
Royalties for Regions fund^(d):		
Regional Infrastructure and Headworks Account	6,342	7,303
Regional Community Services Account	1,648	3,212
Total Royalties for Regions Fund	7,990	10,515
Total income from State Government	125,438	120,118

* The Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account comparative balance for 2022 has been restated. Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

(a) Service appropriation

Service appropriations are recognised as income at the fair value of consideration received in the period in which the department gains control of

the appropriated funds. The department gains control of appropriated funds at the time those funds are deposited in the bank account or credited to the Amounts receivable for services (holding account) held at Treasury.

Service appropriations fund the net cost of services delivered. Appropriation revenue comprises the following:

- cash component
- a receivable (asset).

The receivable (holding account – [note 5.2](#)) comprises the following:

- the budgeted depreciation expense for the year
- any agreed increase in leave liabilities during the year.

(b) Income from other public service entities

Income from other public service entities is recognised as income when the department has satisfied its performance obligations under the funding agreement. If there is no performance obligation, income will be recognised when the department receives the funds.

(c) Resources received from other public sector entities

Resources received from other public sector entities are recognised as income equivalent to the fair value of the assets received, or the fair value of those services that can be reliably determined and which would have been purchased if not donated.

(d) Royalties for Regions fund

The Regional Infrastructure and Headworks Account and Regional Community Services Account are sub-funds within the overarching Royalties for Regions fund. The recurrent funds are committed to projects and programs in WA regional areas and are recognised as income when the department receives the funds.

Summary of consolidated account appropriations For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 Budget estimate \$'000	2023 Supplementary funding \$'000	2023 Revised budget \$'000	2023 Actual \$'000	2023 Variance \$'000
Delivery of services					
Item 84 Net amount appropriated to deliver services	125,414	-	125,414	110,263	(15,151)
Amount authorised by other statutes – <i>Salaries and Allowances Act 1975</i>	403	-	403	403	-
Total appropriations provided to deliver services	125,817	-	125,817	110,666	(15,151)
Capital					
Item 150 Capital appropriation	14,277	-	14,277	12,316	(1,961)
Administered transactions					
Administered grants, subsidies and other transfer payments	155	-	155	46	(109)
Total administered transactions	155	-	155	46	(109)
Total consolidated account appropriations	140,249	-	140,249	123,028	(17,221)

No supplementary income was received by the department.

3.2 User charges and fees

	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Industry fees ^(a)	28,236	23,375
Controlled waste ^(b)	5,910	5,583
Contaminated sites	193	169
Clearing regulations	292	348
Water licences and regulatory fees ^(c)	1,754	988
Noise regulations	30	118
Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account ^{*(d)}	12,285	3,430
Other charges and fees	19	12
Total user charges and fees	48,719	34,023

* The Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account comparative balance for 2022 has been restated. Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

User charges and fees revenue are recognised at the transaction price when the department transfers control of the services to customers.

Revenue is recognised at a point-in-time for licences, works approvals, and tracking forms. The performance obligations for these user fees and charges are satisfied when the licence, works approval or tracking form is issued to the customer.

- (a) Licensing and registration fees relating to prescribed premises under Part V of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.
- (b) Fees for the licensing of vehicles transporting controlled public waste as per the Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004.
- (c) Water licences and regulatory fees under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*.

Revenue is recognised at a point in time being the earlier of cash receipt or when the department's right to receive consideration is established with regards to environmental impact assessments (EIA).

- (d) Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* states that the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) will conduct EIA in WA. The Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021 (Regulations) were developed to prescribe or provide for the determination of the fees and charges for the EIA processes under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. The Regulations were gazetted on 17 December 2021 and came into operation on 1 January 2022. A special purpose account was established to manage the funds recovered under the Regulations to be used for defraying the costs incurred by the department in receiving and assessing proposals and monitoring the implementation of proposals under Part IV (division 1 or 2) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Refer to [note 8.7](#) for additional information

3.3 Commonwealth grants

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Commonwealth grants – recurrent	7,639	14,408

Recurrent grants are recognised as income when the grants are receivable.

Capital grants are recognised as income when the department achieves milestones specified in the grant agreement.

Details of the department's Commonwealth grants are as follows:

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Environment Online	-	5,250
Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund	1,125	-
Indian Ocean Territories Account	1,180	464
National Pollutant Inventory	107	83
Smart Farming Partnerships – National Landcare Program	-	465
Smart Farms Small Grants – National Landcare Program	875	875
National On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme	-	2,682
National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure	1,727	3,276
National Water Grid – Community Water Supply Program	800	400
National Water Grid – Agricultural Areas Dams	1,825	913
Total Commonwealth grants	7,639	14,408

3.4 Waste levy

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Waste levy	91,490	85,715

The Waste levy transaction price is determined by legislation. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account (WARR Account) was established in 2008 under section 79 of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act). Under the Act, licensed metropolitan landfill operators are required to fund the operations of the WARR Account. The WARR Account holds revenue allocated from the levy to fund waste management programs. Under section 76 of the WARR Act a penalty applies to waste levy payments that are paid after the date on which they become due, calculated at a rate of 20% per annum on the amount of unpaid levy.

Waste levy income is recognised and accrued quarterly by the department based on estimated waste volumes and is subsequently adjusted to actual based on actual waste volume determined from the quarterly return submitted by the licensed landfill operators the following month. At the end of the financial year the waste levy income is adjusted to actual before the department's financial statements are signed.

3.5 Other income

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Services rendered		
Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account ^(a)	868	4
Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund ^(b)	3,295	1,501
Employee contributions ^(c)	131	117
Lease rentals – land and buildings	223	246
Gain on disposal of lease arrangement	-	4
Tree annuity	98	72
Tree harvest	49	53
Recoupment of expenses	620	397
Recoupment of grant funds	19	363
Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program – industry funding ^(d)	5,994	1,790
Other revenue	96	170
Total other income	11,393	4,717

(a) The department administers the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* which regulates the clearing of native vegetation. Clearing of native vegetation requires the authority of a clearing permit unless it is of an exempt kind. Clearing permits may include conditions requiring an offset to

counterbalance the impacts of clearing. Offsets requirements are imposed in accordance with the WA Environmental Offsets Policy (2011) and the WA Environmental Offsets Guidelines (2014). Certain offset requirements involve payment of a monetary contribution into the Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account, which is an account managed by the department.

Contributions into the Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account are made following the grant of the associated clearing permit, and after any related appeals have been received and determined. Revenue from the offsets is recognised at a point-in-time i.e., when the department issues an invoice to the permit holder requesting payment of the contribution into the fund.

(b) In 2012, the WA Minister for Environment mandated that proponents in the Pilbara region pay their environmental offsets into a strategic fund for conservation. In the same year, the Federal Minister for Environment gave proponents the option of doing so. This led to the establishment of the Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund. The fund combines money from individual offset payments required under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and may combine contributions required under part 9 or 10 of the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The establishment of the fund enables the State Government to combine offset money and partner with regional land management organisations to deliver projects that achieve better and more connected biodiversity conservation outcomes. The department is responsible for managing the fund to ensure that offset payments directly benefit vegetation and habitat impacted by mining.

Despite conditions being included in Ministerial Statements from 2012, the Pilbara Environmental Offset Fund was only established on 18 April 2018. The Ministerial Statements define the proponents of the fund. Implementation conditions within these Ministerial Statements require the preparation of an Impact Reconciliation Report to determine the quantum of money owed to the fund by proponents.

Revenue from Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund is recognised at a point-in-time, i.e., recognised when the department has the right to invoice the proponent. The department has the right to invoice the proponent following submission and acceptance of the proponent's Impact Reconciliation Report.

- (c) Income received by the department from sub-leasing of right-of-use assets to lease payments from operating leases. The department has leased several right-of-use asset from the Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) and State Fleet (SF), which it subleases out to employees at a subsidised rate. Information on the department's leasing arrangements with GROH and SF can be found in [note 2.1\(a\)](#).
- (d) In terms of the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program memorandum of understanding (MoU) dated 7 February 2020, industry participants have agreed to contribute to the estimated costs associated with the program until the earlier of five years from the MoU date of execution; the parties ending the relationship by mutual consent or any statutory obligations that come into effect by an amendment to *the Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

4 Key assets

Assets the department utilises for economic benefit or service potential

This section includes information regarding the key assets the department utilises to gain economic benefits or provide service potential. The section sets out both the key accounting policies and financial information about the performance of these assets:

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	4.1	429,961	367,252
Right-of-use assets	4.2	2,076	2,325
Intangible assets	4.3	31,482	26,765
Total key assets		463,519	396,342



4.1 Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment

	Capital works in progress	Works of Art	Computer equipment	Vehicles and Boating	Infrastructure	Plant and equipment	Measurement sites	Leasehold improvements	Buildings	Land	Total
Year ended 30 June 2023	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
1 July 2022											
Gross carrying amount	15,267	116	925	231	1,335	6,118	172,589	492	4,703	169,418	371,194
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	(827)	(159)	(237)	(2,680)	-	(39)	-	-	(3,942)
Carrying amount at start of period	15,267	116	98	72	1,098	3,438	172,589	453	4,703	169,418	367,252
Additions	10,537	-	88	-	-	49	-	-	95	-	10,769
Transfers in / (out) ^(a)	(4,176)	-	28	-	70	361	3,179	538	-	-	-
Transfer as distribution to owner ^(b)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,101)	(2,101)
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(11)	(22)	(863)	(8)	-	(56)	(960)
Revaluation increments	-	-	-	-	-	-	37,289	-	292	24,635	62,216
Impairment losses ^(c)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,909)	-	-	-	(1,909)
Depreciation	-	-	(89)	(32)	(70)	(583)	(4,380)	(34)	(118)	-	(5,306)
Carrying amount at end of period 2023	21,628	116	125	40	1,087	3,243	205,905	949	4,972	191,896	429,961
Gross carrying amount	21,628	116	1,010	231	1,393	6,059	207,814	1,019	4,972	191,896	436,138
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	(885)	(191)	(306)	(2,816)	-	(70)	-	-	(4,268)
Accumulated impairment losses	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,909)	-	-	-	(1,909)

(a) Transfers in / (out) from tangible capital works in progress to completed assets.

(b) Refer to [note 8.10](#), land transferred to Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH).

(c) Refer to [note 4.1.1](#) for details regarding impairment losses.

Initial recognition

Items of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment costing \$5,000 or more are measured initially at cost. Where an asset is acquired for no cost or significantly less than fair value, the cost is valued at its fair value at the date of acquisition. Items of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment costing less than \$5,000 are immediately expensed to the Statement of comprehensive income (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

The cost of a leasehold improvement is capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the remaining term of the lease or the estimated useful life of the leasehold improvement.

Subsequent measurement

Subsequent to initial recognition of an asset, the revaluation model is used for the measurement of:

- land
- buildings
- measurement sites.

Land is carried at fair value.

Buildings and measurement sites are carried at fair value less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

All other property, plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

Measurement sites are normally independently valued every five years by an external services valuer. In the intervening years, the measurement sites are revalued internally by use of other heavy and civil engineering construction building cost index provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Groundwater measurement sites were independently valued by Ernst & Young at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022. The department decided that an

independent valuation should also be completed at 30 June 2023 due to the emphasis of matter paragraph included in the 2022 audit report. The emphasis of matter paragraph stated that a number of groundwater measurement sites had not previously been recognised in the department's books of account. Fair value for measurement sites is determined by reference to the cost of replacing the remaining future economic benefits embodied in the asset, i.e., the current replacement cost.

Revaluation model:

Where the fair value of measurement sites is determined on the current replacement cost basis, the accumulated depreciation is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the net amount restated to the revalued amount.

Land and buildings are independently valued annually by the WA Land Information Authority (Landgate) and recognised annually to ensure that the carrying amount does not differ materially from the asset's fair value at the end of the reporting period.

Land and buildings were revalued as at 1 July 2022 by Landgate. The valuations were performed during the year ended 30 June 2023 and recognised at 30 June 2023. In undertaking the revaluation, fair value was determined by reference to market values for land: \$52,284,100 (2022: \$45,811,150) and buildings: \$2,823,500 (2022: \$2,677,500). For the remaining balance, unobservable (level 3) inputs were used to determine the fair value.

Revaluation model:

Where the fair value of buildings is determined on the current replacement cost basis, the accumulated depreciation is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the net amount restated to the revalued amount.

Unobservable (level 3) inputs used to determine fair values of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment are:

Land:	Fair value for restricted use land is determined by comparison with market evidence for land with low level utility. Relevant comparators of land with low level utility are selected by the Western Australian Land Information Authority (Valuation Services).
Buildings:	<p>Historical cost per square metre floor area</p> <p>The costs of constructing specialised buildings with similar utility are extracted from financial records of the department, then indexed by movements in consumer price index.</p> <p>Consumed economic benefit/obsolescence of asset</p> <p>The West Australian Land Information Authority (Valuation Services) estimate these.</p>
Measurement sites:	<p>Historical cost of the assets</p> <p>The costs of construction of the measurement sites are extracted from the financial records of the department and indexed by movement in construction costs by valuers.</p>

Significant assumptions and judgements: The most significant assumptions and judgements in estimating fair value are made in assessing whether to apply the existing use basis and in determining estimated economic life to assets. Professional judgement by the valuer is required where the evidence does not provide a clear distinction between market type assets and existing use assets.

4.1.1 Depreciation and impairment

Charge for the period

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Depreciation		
Buildings	118	110
Infrastructure	70	66
Plant and equipment	583	541
Vehicles and boating	32	32
Computer equipment	89	225
Leasehold improvements	34	15
Measurement sites	4,380	4,461
Total depreciation for the period	5,306	5,450

At 30 June 2023, the department recognised a \$1.909 million impairment loss on measurement sites. \$0.78 million was recognised in the revaluation reserve and \$1.129 million recognised in profit and loss to ensure that the impairment loss did not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for this class of assets. No impairments were recognised in 2022.

Useful lives

All infrastructure, property, plant and equipment having a limited useful life are systematically depreciated over their estimated useful lives in a manner that reflects the consumption of their future economic benefits. The exceptions to this rule include assets held for sale, land and investment properties.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life.

Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

Asset	Useful Life: Years
Buildings	20–40 years
Leasehold improvement ^(b)	20 years
Measurement sites	40 years
Plant and equipment	5–20 years
Computer equipment (hardware and software ^(a))	3–5 years
Infrastructure	20–50 years
Vehicles and boating	5–6 years

(a) Software that is integral to the operation of related hardware.

(b) Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives.

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments are made where appropriate.

Land and works of art, which are considered to have an indefinite life, are not depreciated. Depreciation is not recognised in respect of these assets because their service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

Impairment

Non-financial assets, including items of infrastructure, plant and equipment, are tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired. Where there is an indication of impairment, the recoverable amount is estimated. Where the recoverable amount is less than the carrying amount, the asset is considered impaired and is written down to the recoverable amount and an impairment loss is recognised.

Where an asset is measured at cost and is written down to its recoverable amount, an impairment loss is recognised through profit and loss.

Where a previously revalued asset is written down to its recoverable amount, the loss is recognised as a revaluation decrement through other comprehensive income.

As the department is a not-for-profit agency, the recoverable amount of regularly revalued specialised assets is anticipated to be materially the same as fair value.

If there is an indication that there has been a reversal in impairment, the carrying amount shall be increased to its recoverable amount. However, this reversal should not increase the asset's carrying amount above what would have been determined, net of depreciation or amortisation, if no impairment loss had been recognised in prior years.

The risk of impairment is generally limited to circumstances where an asset's depreciation is materially understated, where the replacement cost is falling or where there is a significant change in useful life. Each relevant class of assets is reviewed annually to verify that the accumulated depreciation / amortisation reflects the level of consumption or expiration of the asset's future economic benefits and to evaluate any impairment risk from declining replacement costs.

4.2 Right-of-use assets

Year ended 30 June 2023	Buildings	Computer Equipment	Motor Vehicles	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Net carrying amount at beginning of period	434	563	1,328	2,325
Additions	267	-	800	1,067
Disposals	-	(28)	(19)	(47)
Depreciation	(368)	(206)	(695)	(1,269)
Net carrying amount at end of period	333	329	1,414	2,076

The department has leases for vehicles, computer equipment, office and residential accommodations. The lease contracts are typically made for fixed periods of 1 to 6 years with an option to renew the lease after that date. Lease payments for buildings not leased through the Department of Finance are renegotiated when appropriate to reflect market rentals.

The department subleases residential housing to employees at a subsidised rate. The department recognises lease payments from operating leases as income on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

The department has also entered into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with the Department of Finance for the leasing of office accommodation. These are not recognised under AASB 16 because of substitution rights held by the Department of Finance and are accounted for as an expense as incurred.

Initial recognition

At the commencement date of the lease, the department recognises right-of-use assets and a corresponding lease liability for most leases. The right-of-use assets are measured at cost comprising of:

- the amount of the initial measurement of lease liability
- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received
- any initial direct costs, and
- restoration costs, including dismantling and removing the underlying asset.

The corresponding lease liabilities in relation to these right-of-use assets have been disclosed in [note 6.1](#).

The department has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases (with a lease term of 12 months or less) and low-value leases (with an underlying value of \$5,000 or less). Lease payments

associated with these leases are expensed over a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Subsequent measurement

The cost model is applied for subsequent measurement of right-of-use assets, requiring the asset to be carried at cost less any accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses and adjusted for any re-measurement of lease liability.

Depreciation and impairment of right-of-use assets

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful lives of the underlying assets.

If ownership of the leased asset transfers to the department at the end of the lease term or the cost reflects the exercise of a purchase option, depreciation is calculated using the estimated useful life of the asset.

Right-of-use assets are tested for impairment when an indication of impairment is identified. The policy in connection with testing for impairment is outlined in [note 4.1.1](#).

The following amounts relating to leases have been recognised in the statement of comprehensive income:

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Buildings	368	280
Computer equipment	206	178
Motor vehicles	695	684
Total right-of-use assets depreciation for the period	1,269	1,142

The total cash outflow for leases in the 2023 financial year was \$1.3 million (2022: \$1.2 million).

4.3 Intangible assets

	Capital Works in Progress	Analytical Products	Licences	Computer Software	Total
Year ended 30 June 2023	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
1 July 2022					
Gross carrying amount	19,434	9,831	127	23,148	52,540
Accumulated amortisation	-	(4,416)	(56)	(21,303)	(25,775)
Carrying amount at start of period	19,434	5,415	71	1,845	26,765
Additions	8,001	-	-	22	8,023
Transfers in/(out) ^(a)	(14,089)	213	59	13,817	-
Disposals	-	-	(1)	-	(1)
Amortisation expense	-	(983)	(34)	(2,288)	(3,305)
Carrying amount at end of period	13,346	4,645	95	13,396	31,482
Gross carrying amount	13,346	10,044	181	36,819	60,390
Accumulated amortisation	-	(5,399)	(86)	(23,423)	(28,908)

(a) Transfer in/(out) from capital works in progress to completed assets.

Initial recognition

Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost. For assets acquired at significantly less than fair value, the cost is their fair value at the date of acquisition. An internally generated intangible asset arising from development (or from the development phase of an internal project) is recognised if, and only if, all of the following are demonstrated:

- the technical feasibility of completing the intangible asset so that it will be available for use or sale
- an intention to complete the intangible asset and use or sell it
- the ability to use or sell the intangible asset
- the intangible asset will generate probable future economic benefit
- the availability of adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the development and to use or sell the intangible asset
- the ability to measure reliably the expenditure attributable to the intangible asset during its development.

Acquisitions of intangible assets costing \$5,000 or more and internally generated intangible assets costing \$5,000 or more that comply with the recognition criteria as per AASB 138 (as noted above), are capitalised. Costs incurred below these thresholds are immediately expensed directly to the Statement of comprehensive income. Costs incurred in the research phase of a project are immediately expensed.

Subsequent measurement

The cost model is applied for subsequent measurement of intangible assets requiring the asset to be carried at cost less any accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

4.3.1 Amortisation and impairment

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Charge for the period		
Analytical products	983	920
Computing software	2,288	2,875
Licences	34	24
Total amortisation for the period	3,305	3,819

Useful lives

The department held no goodwill or intangible assets with an indefinite useful life during the reporting period. At the end of the reporting period there were no intangible assets not yet available for use.

Amortisation of finite life intangible assets is calculated on a straight-line basis at rates that allocate the asset's value over its estimated useful life. All intangible assets controlled by the department have a finite useful life and zero residual value. Estimated useful lives are reviewed annually. The estimated useful lives for each class of intangible asset are:

Licences	3 years	(a) Software that is not integral to the operation of related hardware.
Software ^(a)	3–10 years	
Analytical products ^(b)	10 years	

(b) Analytical products are intangible assets such as geophysical datasets and surveys which are usually produced as part of project work. These products are used by the department to improve its understanding and management of water resources.

Impairment of intangible assets

Intangible assets with finite useful lives are tested for impairment annually or when an indication of impairment is identified. The policy in connection with testing for impairment is outlined in [note 4.1.1](#). As at 30 June 2023 there were no indications of impairment to intangible assets.

5. Other assets and liabilities

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the department's controlled operations and includes other assets utilised for economic benefits and liabilities incurred during normal operations:

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Receivables	5.1	38,989	28,361
Amounts receivable for services	5.2	88,895	82,078
Other assets	5.3	3,154	4,043
Payables	5.4	7,616	6,796
Contract liabilities	5.5	5,403	2,447
Other current liabilities	5.6	2	3

5.1 Receivables

	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Current		
Trade receivables	10,864	4,052
Allowance for impairment of trade receivables	(497)	(337)
Accrued revenue*	27,537	23,383
Allowance for impairment of accrued revenue	(486)	(138)
GST receivable	1,571	1,401
Total receivables	38,989	28,361

* The Accrued Revenue comparative balance for 2022 has been restated. Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

Trade receivables are initially recognised at their transaction price or, for those receivables that contain a significant financing component, at fair value. The department holds the receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less an allowance for impairment.

The department recognises a loss allowance for expected credit losses (ECLs) on a receivable not held at fair value through profit and loss. The ECLs based on the difference between the contractual cash flows and the cash flows that the entity expects to receive, discounted at the original effective interest rate. Individual receivables are written off when the department has no reasonable expectations of recovering the contractual cash flows.

For trade receivables, the department recognises an allowance for ECLs measured at the lifetime expected credit losses at each reporting date. The department has established a provision matrix that is based on its historical credit loss experience, adjusted for forward-looking factors specific to the debtors and the economic environment, please refer to [note 2.3](#) for the amount of ECLs expensed in this financial year.

5.2 Amounts receivable for services (holding account)

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Current	7,043	9,238
Non-current	81,852	72,840
Total amounts receivable for services at end of period	88,895	82,078

Amounts receivable for services represent the non-cash component of service appropriations. It is restricted in that it can only be used for asset replacement or payment of leave liability.

The amounts receivable for services are financial assets at amortised cost and are not considered impaired (i.e., there is no expected credit loss of the holding account).

5.3 Other assets

	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Current		
Prepayments*	3,151	4,041
Total current	3,151	4,041
Non-current		
Prepayments	3	2
Total non-current	3	2
Total other assets at end of period	3,154	4,043

* The Current Prepayments comparative balance for 2022 has been restated. Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

Other non-financial assets include prepayments which represent payments in advance of receipt of goods or services or that part of expenditure made in one accounting period covering a term extending beyond that period.

5.4 Payables

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Current		
Trade payables ^(a)	541	1,755
Other payables ^(a)	6	49
Accrued expenses	4,422	3,035
Accrued salaries ^(b)	2,647	1,957
Total payables at end of period	7,616	6,796

- (a) Payables are recognised at the amounts payable when the department becomes obliged to make future payments as a result of a purchase of assets or services. The carrying amount is equivalent to fair value, as settlement is generally within 15–30 days.
- (b) Accrued salaries represent the amount due to staff but unpaid at the end of the reporting period. Accrued salaries are settled within a fortnight of the reporting period end. The department considers the carrying amount of accrued salaries to be equivalent to its fair value.

The accrued salaries suspense account (see [note 6.4](#) Restricted cash and cash equivalents) consists of amounts paid annually, from department appropriations for salaries expense, into a Treasury suspense account to meet the additional cash outflow for employee salary payments in reporting periods with 27 pay days instead of the normal 26. No interest is received on this account.

5.5 Contract liabilities

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Reconciliation of changes in contract liabilities		
Opening balance	2,447	2,940
Additions	5,093	2,137
Revenue recognised in the period	(2,137)	(2,630)
Total contract liabilities at end of period	5,403	2,447
Current	5,403	2,447
Non-current	-	-

The department's contract liabilities primarily relate to user charges and fees yet to be performed as the licence, works approval or tracking form has not been issued to the customer.

5.6 Other current liabilities

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Stale cheque holding account	2	3
Total current liabilities at end of period	2	3



6 Financing

This section sets out the material balances and disclosures associated with the financing and cash flows of the department.

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Lease liabilities	6.1	2,141	2,393
Assets pledged as security	6.2	2,076	2,325
Finance costs	6.3	90	68
Cash and cash equivalents	6.4	109,196	103,160
Capital commitments	6.5	9,012	8,611

6.1 Lease liabilities

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Not later than one year	867	953
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,226	1,412
Later than 5 years	48	28
	2,141	2,393
Current	867	953
Non-current	1,274	1,440
Balance at end of period	2,141	2,393

Initial measurement

At the commencement date of the lease, the department recognises lease liabilities measured at the present value of the lease payments to be made over the lease term. The lease payments are discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease. If that rate cannot be readily determined, the department

uses the incremental borrowing rate provided by the Western Australia Treasury Corporation.

Lease payments included by the department as part of the present value calculation of lease liability include:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments), less any lease incentives receivable
- variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date
- amounts expected to be payable by the lessee under residual value guarantees
- the exercise price of purchase options (where these are reasonably certain to be exercised)
- payments for penalties for terminating a lease, where the lease term reflects the department exercising an option to terminate the lease
- periods covered by extension or termination options are only included in the lease term by the department if the lease is reasonably certain to be extended (or not terminated).

The interest on the lease liability is recognised in profit or loss over the lease term so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liability for each period. Lease liabilities do not include any future changes in variable lease payments (that depend on an index or rate) until they take effect, in which case the lease liability is reassessed and adjusted against the right-of-use asset.

Variable lease payments, not included in the measurement of lease liability, which are dependent on sales, an index or rate are recognised by the department in profit or loss in the period in which the condition that triggers those payments occurs.

Subsequent measurement

Lease liabilities are measured by increasing the carrying amount to reflect interest on the lease liabilities; reducing the carrying amount to reflect the lease payments made; and remeasuring the carrying amount at amortised cost, subject to adjustments to reflect any reassessment or lease modifications.

This section should be read in conjunction with [note 4.2](#).

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Lease expenses recognised in the Statement of comprehensive income		
Lease interest expense	90	68
Short-term leases	87	56
Low-value leases	1	-
Net loss on disposal of lease arrangement	2	1

Short-term leases are recognised on a straight-line basis with a lease term of 12 months or less.

Low-value leases with an underlying value of \$5,000 or less are recognised on a straight-line basis.

6.2 Assets pledged as security

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
The carrying amounts of non-current assets pledged as security are:		
Right-of-use asset vehicles	1,414	1,328
Right-of-use asset computer equipment	329	563
Right-of-use asset buildings	333	434
Total assets pledged as security	2,076	2,325

The department has secured the right-of-use assets against related lease liabilities. In the event of default, the rights to the leased assets will revert to the lessor.

6.3 Finance costs

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Lease interest expense	90	68

Finance cost includes the interest component of lease liability repayments.

6.4 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	11,448	23,785
Restricted cash and cash equivalents ^(a)	94,440	76,862
Total current	105,888	100,647
Non-current		
Restricted cash and cash equivalents – accrued salaries suspense account ^(b)	3,308	2,513
Total non-current	3,308	2,513
Balance at end of period	109,196	103,160

(a) Comprised of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account (\$41.9 million), Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account (\$12.4 million), Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account (\$10.7 million), Clean Energy Future Fund (\$8.8 million), Pilbara

Environmental Offsets Fund (\$7.9 million), Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program (\$3.1 million), Royalties for Regions (\$2.9 million), Agricultural Areas Dams (\$2.1 million) and other funds (\$4.6 million) that are restricted in their purpose and cannot be used in general operations.

- (b) Funds are held in the accrued salaries suspense account for the purpose of meeting the 27th pay in a reporting period that occurs every 11th year. This account is classified as non-current for 10 out of 11 years.

For the purpose of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents (and restricted cash and cash equivalent) assets comprise of short-term deposits with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and which are subject to insignificant risk of changes in value and the funds held in the suspense account for the purpose of meeting the 27th pay.

The accrued salaries suspense account consists of amounts paid annually into a Treasurer's special purpose account to meet the additional cash outflow for employee salary payments in reporting periods with 27 pay days instead of the normal 26. No interest is received on this account.

6.5 Capital commitments

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Capital expenditure commitments, being contracted capital expenditure additional to the amounts reported in the financial statements, are payable as follows:		
Within 1 year	2,529	7,873
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	6,483	738
Total capital commitments	9,012	8,611

7 Financial instruments and contingencies

This note sets out the key risk management policies and measurement techniques of the department.

	Notes
Financial instruments	7.1
Contingent assets and liabilities	7.2

7.1 Financial instruments

The carrying amounts of each of the following categories of financial assets and financial liabilities at the end of the reporting period are:

	2023 \$'000	2022 Restated* \$'000
Financial assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	109,196	103,160
Financial assets at amortised cost ^(a)	126,162	109,038
Total financial assets	235,358	212,198
Financial liabilities		
Financial liabilities at amortised cost ^(b)	9,759	9,192
Total financial liabilities	9,759	9,192

* The 2022 balance of Financial assets at amortised cost has been restated. Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

- (a) The amount of Financial assets at amortised cost excludes the GST recoverable from the ATO (statutory receivable).
- (b) The amount of Financial liabilities at amortised cost excludes GST payable to the ATO (statutory payable).

Measurement

All financial assets and liabilities are carried without subsequent remeasurement.

7.2 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Statement of financial position but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at the best estimate.

Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

7.2.1 Contingent assets

The following contingent assets are excluded from the assets included in the financial statements:

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Benefit potentially receivable in relation to a Supreme Court action involving a former tenant relating to rent recovery	-	120
Total contingent assets	-	120

The department is responsible for administering and regulating Waste Levy in Western Australia. Liability for Waste Levy is legislated through the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* and the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Act 2007* and regulated through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008 and the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Regulations 2008. The department conducts investigations on licensed and unlicensed landfill premises and the outcome of such investigations may be that the operator of the premises is liable for the payment of waste levy and applicable penalties. The department has determined that it is not practicable to estimate the financial effect of these

investigations at the end of the reporting period, due to the complex nature of the investigations and the lengthy period of time that may be taken to finalise the investigations.

7.2.2 Contingent liabilities

The following contingent liabilities are excluded from the liabilities included in the financial statements:

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Costs potentially payable in relation to Supreme Court action involving a former tenant	-	500
Costs potentially payable in relation to legal action taken against an entity relating to odour pollution	50	600
Costs potentially payable in relation to flood damage compensation	4,000	-

Contaminated sites

Under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*, state agencies are required to report known and suspected contaminated sites to the department. In accordance with the Act, the department classifies these sites on the basis of risk to human health, the environment and environmental values. Where sites are classified as contaminated – remediation required or possibly *contaminated – investigation required*, the department may have a liability in respect of investigation or remediation expenses.

There is an outstanding contingent liability in relation to the remediation of a liquid waste treatment facility in agreement with the Water Corporation	150	150
Total contingent liabilities	4,200	1,250

8 Other disclosures

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or other pronouncements for the understanding of this financial report.

	Notes
Events occurring after the end of the reporting period	8.1
Correction of prior year errors	8.2
Key management personnel	8.3
Related party transactions	8.4
Related bodies	8.5
Affiliated bodies	8.6
Special purpose accounts	8.7
Indian Ocean Territories Account	8.8
Remuneration of auditors	8.9
Contributed equity and reserves	8.10
Supplementary financial information	8.11



8.1 Events occurring after the end of the reporting period

There are no significant events that occurred after the end of the reporting period.

8.2 Correction of prior year errors

1. Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account – Revenue

During a review of Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account financial processes the department discovered that \$2.416 million revenue had not been recognised in the 2021–22 financial year, \$2.224 million related to commercial proponents and \$0.192 million related to State Government proponents. This was due to the operational decision made by the department to temporarily suspend the invoicing to prioritise the unprecedented number of environmental assessments needed to facilitate the state's booming economic growth and the staffing challenges faced by the department.

2. Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account – Grant expenses

\$2.134 million of Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account grants were incorrectly expensed in the 2021–22 financial year rather than being treated as current prepayments. The amount was not individually material enough to be considered for adjustment in the 2021–22 financial statements and was reported to the department as an uncorrected misstatement in the prior year audit.

The abovementioned two errors are material in aggregate and have been corrected by restating each of the affected line items of the prior year figures as at 30 June 2022 and for the year ended 30 June 2022 as follows, and noting the consequential impacts on the Statement of changes in equity for the year then ended is as per the impact on Accumulated surplus and Surplus noted below:

30 June 2022

Statement of financial position	Previously stated balance \$'000	Adjustment \$'000	Restated balance \$'000
Receivables ^(a)	25,945	2,416	28,361
Other Assets: Prepayments	1,907	2,134	4,041
Equity: Accumulated surplus	244,768	4,550	249,318

30 June 2022

Statement of comprehensive income	Previously stated balance \$'000	Adjustment \$'000	Restated balance \$'000
Income: User charges and fees ^(b)	31,799	2,224	34,023
Income from State Government: Income from other public sector entities ^(c)	6,458	192	6,650
Expenses: Grants and subsidies ^(d)	15,119	(2,134)	12,985
Surplus for the period	74,557	4,550	79,107

(a) 30 June 2022 Accrued revenue included in [note 5.1](#) Receivables has been restated from \$20.967 million to \$23.383 million.

(b) 30 June 2022 Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account included in [note 3.2](#) User charges and fees has been restated from \$1.206 million to \$3.430 million.

(c) 30 June 2022 Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account included in [note 3.1](#) Income from other public sector entities has been restated from \$0.269 million to \$0.461 million.

(d) 30 June 2022 Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account included in [note 2.2](#) Grants and subsidies has been restated from \$9.694 million to \$7.560 million.

8.3 Key management personnel

The department has determined key management personnel to include Cabinet Ministers and senior officers of the department. The department does not incur expenditures to compensate Ministers and those disclosures may be found in the *Annual Report on State Finances*.

The total fees, salaries, superannuation, non-monetary benefits and other benefits for senior officers of the department for the reporting period are presented within the following bands:

Compensation band (\$)	2023	2022
\$500,001 – \$550,000	1	1
\$200,001 – \$250,000	5	3
\$150,001 – \$200,000	3	2
\$100,001 – \$150,000	-	3
\$50,001 – \$100,000	3	3
\$0 – \$50,000	1	1
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Total compensation of senior officers	2,385	2,132

8.4 Related party transactions

The department is a wholly owned public sector entity that is controlled by the State of Western Australia.

Related parties of the department include:

- all Cabinet Ministers and their close family members and their controlled or jointly controlled entities
- all senior officers and their close family members and their controlled or jointly controlled entities
- other departments and statutory authorities including related bodies that are included in the whole-of-government consolidated financial statements (i.e. wholly owned public sector entities)
- associates and joint ventures of a wholly owned public sector entity
- the Government Employees Superannuation Board.

Material transactions with other related parties

Outside of normal citizen type transactions with the department, there were no other related party transactions that involved key management personnel and/or their close family members and/or their controlled (or jointly controlled) entities.

8.5 Related bodies

The department currently does not provide any assistance to other agencies which would deem it to be regarded as related bodies under the definitions included in TI 951 Related and Affiliated Bodies.

8.6 Affiliated bodies

The following bodies receive more than half its funding and resources from the department, but is not subject to operational control by the department and is therefore considered to be affiliated bodies under the *Financial Management Act 2006*:

	2023 \$'000			2022 \$'000		
	Funding	Services free of charge	Total assistance	Funding	Services free of charge	Total assistance
Government organisations:						
Cockburn Sound Management Council	488	-	488	516	-	516
Contaminated Sites Committee	311	-	311	299	-	299
Environmental Protection Authority	9,795	-	9,795	8,110	-	8,110
Exmouth Gulf Coordinating Body	293	-	293	-	-	-
Keep Australia Beautiful Council (W.A.)	1,138	230	1,368	996	251	1,247
Office of the Appeals Convenor	1,493	-	1,493	1,241	-	1,241
Warren Donnelly Water Advisory Committee	4	-	4	3	-	3
Waste Authority	21,662	-	21,662	21,252	-	21,252
Non-government organisations:						
Geographe Catchment Council ¹	621	-	621	691	-	691

- The department and Geographe Catchment Council entered into a partnership agreement whereby Geographe Catchment Council provides governance and management support to the department and the department provides support and links to the community and on-ground outcomes to achieve water quality improvements in the catchment area.

8.7 Special purpose accounts

Contaminated Sites Management Account⁽ⁱ⁾

The purpose of the account is to enable investigation or remediation of any site where the state or a public authority (excluding local government) is responsible for remediation. The account also funds the department's costs of investigation and ensuring compliance with notices.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Balance at start of period	467	380
Receipts	211	190
Payments	(255)	(103)
Balance at end of period	423	467

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account⁽ⁱ⁾

The purpose of the account is to encourage the conservation of resources and energy through waste reduction and recycling; to promote support and encourage viable alternatives to landfill disposal of waste; and to encourage applied research and the development of appropriate waste management, waste reduction, recycling infrastructure and markets. The account is used to fund nominated programs and other waste management initiatives approved by the Minister for the Environment on the advice of the Waste Authority of Western Australia.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Balance at start of period	40,604	29,324
Receipts – Repayments of loan to WARRRL	-	11,625
Receipts	21,662	21,252
Payments	(20,348)	(21,597)
Balance at end of period	41,918	40,604

Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

The purpose of the account is to deliver environmental offset projects in the Pilbara bioregion of WA in partnership with Traditional Owners, conservation agencies, industry and government.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Balance at start of period	5,424	1,091
Receipts	3,448	4,940
Payments	(1,007)	(607)
Balance at end of period	7,865	5,424

Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

The purpose of this account is to manage funds recovered under the Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021. The funds in this account are to be used for defraying the costs incurred by the department in receiving and assessing proposals and monitoring the implementation of proposals under Part IV Division 1 or 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Balance at start of period	1,475	-
Receipts	9,239	1,475
Balance at end of period	10,714	1,475

- (i) Established under section 16(1)(b) of the *Financial Management Act 2006*
- (ii) Established under section 16(1)(d) of the *Financial Management Act 2006*

8.8 Indian Ocean Territories Account

Indian Ocean Territories Account

The purpose of the account is to account for Commonwealth funds for service delivery arrangements by the department to the Indian Ocean Territories.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Balance at start of period	163	170
Receipts	1,230	509
Payments	(1,221)	(516)
Balance at end of period ^(a)	172	163

- (a) Under the terms of the Service Delivery Arrangement, the department is to provide a statement of operating and capital expenditure and revenue for the previous financial year to the Commonwealth by 31 August each year.

This notification enables adjustments to biannual payments to be made early in the financial year to take into account any under or overspends against budget estimates from the previous financial year.

8.9 Remuneration of auditors

Remuneration paid or payable to the Auditor General in respect of the audit for the current financial year is as follows:

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Auditing the accounts, financial statements, controls and key performance indicators	361	328

8.10 Contributed equity and reserves

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Contributed equity		
Balance at start of period	285,681	327,896
Contributions by owners		
Capital appropriation	12,316	11,841
Total contributions by owners	297,997	339,737
Distributions to owners		
Transfer to consolidated account	(60,656)	(54,056)
Transfer to other agencies:		
Land transferred to Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage	(2,101)	-
Total distributions to owners	(62,757)	(54,056)
Balance at end of period	235,240	285,681
Asset revaluation surplus		
Balance at start of period	36,496	24,984
Net revaluation increment:		
Land	24,635	10,543
Buildings	292	398
Measurement sites	36,507	571
Total net revaluation increment	61,434	11,512
Balance at end of period	97,930	36,496

8.11 Supplementary financial information

(a) Write-offs

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
The accountable authority	43	10
The Minister	143	-
The Treasurer	-	4,743
Total write-offs	186	4,753

(b) Losses through theft, defaults and other causes

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Losses of public money, other money and other property through theft or default	9	34
Amounts recovered	(7)	(34)
Total losses	2	-

(c) Forgiveness of debts

On 1 January 2022, the department commenced charging fees for proposals assessed under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* in accordance with the Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021. Item 15 of the Cost Recovery Regulations provides a fee to be charged for interest on outstanding amounts payable at the prescribed rate, being 3% higher than the cash rate target as determined by the Reserve Bank of Australia, in effect on the 1st day the amount became outstanding.

The Cost Recovery Regulations provide the Chief Executive Officer i.e. the Director General, with certain powers and duties in relation to imposing fees and charges. On June 2023, the Director General approved the waiving of fees for interest on outstanding amounts from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023 due

to the fact that the department currently does not have the resource capacity to determine the interest on the outstanding amounts payable for all invoices issued and the additional fact that charging proponents interest after a long delay could potentially put the reputation of the department at risk.

(d) Gifts of public property

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Gifts of public property provided by the department	-	-
Total gifts	-	-



9. Explanatory statements

This section explains variations in the financial performance of the department.

	Notes
Explanatory statement for controlled operations	9.1
Explanatory statement for administered items	9.2

9.1 Explanatory statements for controlled operations

This explanatory section explains variations in the financial performance of the department undertaking transactions under its own control, as represented by the primary financial statements.

All variances between annual estimates (original budget) and actual results for 2023, and between the actual results for 2023 and 2022 are shown below. Narratives are provided for key major variances which vary more than 10% from their comparative and that the variation is more than 1% of the following variance analyses for the:

- Estimate and actual results for the current year:
 - Total Cost of Services of the estimate for the Statement of comprehensive income and Statement of cash flows (i.e. 1% of \$276,432,000), and
 - Total Assets of the estimate for the Statement of financial position (i.e. 1% of \$560,769,000).
- Actual results for the current year and the prior year actual:
 - Total Cost of Services for the previous year for the Statements of comprehensive income and Statement of cash flows (i.e. 1% of \$180,239,000); and
 - Total Assets for the previous year for the Statement of financial position (i.e. 1% of \$613,984,000).

9.1.1 Statement of comprehensive income variances

	Variance note	Estimate 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual Restated* 2022 \$'000	Variance between actual and estimate \$'000	Variance between actual results for 2023 and 2022 \$'000
Expenses						
Employee benefits expense	a	120,098	120,752	102,180	654	18,572
Supplies and services	b	41,469	41,790	37,956	321	3,834
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	1	14,678	9,880	10,411	(4,798)	(531)
Finance costs		86	90	68	4	22
Accommodation expenses		8,746	9,938	9,339	1,192	599
Grants and subsidies*	2, c	76,439	21,384	12,985	(55,055)	8,399
Other expenses	3, d	9,733	6,904	4,795	(2,829)	2,109
Net loss on disposal of non-current assets	4	5,183	759	2,505	(4,424)	(1,746)
Total cost of services		276,432	211,497	180,239	(64,935)	31,258
Income						
User charges and fees *	5, e	33,862	48,719	34,023	14,857	14,696
Commonwealth grants	6, f	19,759	7,639	14,408	(12,120)	(6,769)
Waste levy	7	83,000	91,490	85,715	8,490	5,775
Interest revenue		850	-	365	(850)	(365)
Other Income	8, g	18,938	11,393	4,717	(7,545)	6,676
Total income		156,409	159,241	139,228	2,832	20,013
Net cost of services		120,023	52,256	41,011	(67,767)	11,245
Income from State Government						
Service appropriation	9, h	125,817	110,666	100,392	(15,151)	10,274
Income from other public sector entities*	i	3,485	3,526	6,650	41	(3,124)
Resources received		3,055	3,256	2,561	201	695
Royalties for Regions fund	j	9,833	7,990	10,515	(1,843)	(2,525)
Total income from State Government		142,190	125,438	120,118	(16,752)	5,320
Surplus for the period*		22,167	73,182	79,107	51,015	(5,925)
Other comprehensive income						
Items not reclassified subsequently to profit or loss						
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		-	61,434	11,512	61,434	49,922
Total other comprehensive income		-	61,434	11,512	61,434	49,922
Total comprehensive income for the period		22,167	134,616	90,619	112,449	43,997

* Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

Major estimate and actual (2023) variance narratives

1. **Depreciation and amortisation expenses** decreased by \$4.8 million (32.7%) mainly due to capital program deferrals and a lower than predicted depreciation expense.
2. **Grants and subsidies** decreased by \$55.1 million (72.0%) mainly due to deferrals relating to State and Commonwealth funding for the National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure, Clean Energy Future Fund, Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account, Clean Western Australia – Waste Paper and Cardboard Processing and delays in issuing grants.
3. **Other expenses** decreased by \$2.8 million (29.1%) mainly due to decreases in impairment losses, workers compensation insurance and other operational expenses.
4. **Loss on disposal of non-current assets** decreased by \$4.4 million (85.4%) mainly due to fewer than anticipated measurement sites being decommissioned.
5. **User charges and fees** increased by \$14.9 million (43.9%) mainly due to higher than estimated fees and charges relating to the Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account and industry fees.
6. **Commonwealth grants** decreased by \$12.1 million (61.3%) mainly due to a delay in funding for the National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure.
7. **Waste levy** increased by \$8.5 million (10.2%) mainly due to higher than estimated levy return and investigation income.
8. **Other income** decreased by \$7.5 million (39.8%) mainly due to a decrease in program income from Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund and Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account.
9. **Service appropriation** decreased by \$15.2 million (12%) mainly due to a budget roll-out correction, the reflow to future years of programs for National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure, Clean Energy Future Fund, Green Jobs Plan – Native Vegetation Rehabilitation Scheme and Carbon Innovation Grants Program, which was partially offset by the Public Sector Wages offer.

Major actual (2023) and comparative (2022) variance narratives

- a. **Employee benefits expense** increased by \$18.6 million (18.2%) mainly due to the 3% increase in the revised Public Sector Wages Policy and Cost of Living payments.
- b. **Supplies and services** increased by \$3.8 million (10.1%) mainly due to an increased expenditure on the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program and travel costs.
- c. **Grants and subsidies** increased by \$8.4 million (64.7%) mainly due to higher grant expenditure for the National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure following milestone achievement, Native Vegetation Rehabilitation Scheme, Clean Energy Future Fund, and Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account - Waste Export Ban.
- d. **Other expenses** increased by \$2.1 million (44%) mainly due to an impairment loss on measurement sites and an increase in employment on-costs and insurance.
- e. **User charges and fees** increased by \$14.7 million (43.2%) mainly due to an increase in fees and charges relating to the Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account and industry fees.
- f. **Commonwealth grants** decreased by \$6.8 million (47.0%) as no funding was received in the current financial year for the Environment Online Project and the National On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme, partially offset by grants received for Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund.
- g. **Other income** increased by \$6.7 million (141.5%) mainly due to an increase in income from Pilbara Environmental Offset Fund and Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program proponents.
- h. **Service appropriation** increased by \$10.3 million (10.2%) mainly due to the 3% increase in the revised Public Sector Wages Policy and Cost of Living payments.
- i. **Income from other public sector entities** decreased by \$3.1 million (47.0%) mainly due to the Wooroloo Bushfire Coordinated Residential Clean-up program substantial completion in the previous financial year, partially offset by additional income from Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account and interest revenue.
- j. **Royalties for Regions fund** decreased by \$2.5 million (24%) mainly due to the deferral of Watering WA, and less funding received this financial year for Bindjareb Djilba (Peel Harvey Estuary Protection Plan) and Rural Water Planning Program.

9.1.2 Statement of financial position variances

	Variance note	Estimate 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual Restated * 2022 \$'000	Variance between actual and estimate \$'000	Variance between actual results for 2023 and 2022 \$'000
Assets						
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents		11,773	11,448	23,785	(325)	(12,337)
Restricted cash and cash equivalents		45,605	94,440	76,862	48,835	17,578
Receivables *		27,303	38,989	28,361	11,686	10,628
Amounts receivable for services		6,338	7,043	9,238	705	(2,195)
Other assets *		2,145	3,151	4,041	1,006	(890)
Total current assets		93,164	155,071	142,287	61,907	12,784
Non-current assets						
Restricted cash and cash equivalents		2,713	3,308	2,513	595	795
Amounts receivable for services	1, a	91,585	81,852	72,840	(9,733)	9,012
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	2, b	323,016	429,961	367,252	106,945	62,709
Right-of-use assets		2,149	2,076	2,325	(73)	(249)
Intangible assets	3	48,119	31,482	26,765	(16,637)	4,717
Other assets		23	3	2	(20)	1
Total non-current assets		467,605	548,682	471,697	81,077	76,985
Total assets		560,769	703,753	613,984	142,984	89,769
Liabilities						
Current liabilities						
Payables		5,000	7,616	6,796	2,616	820
Lease liabilities		851	867	953	16	(86)
Contract liabilities		2,944	5,403	2,447	2,459	2,956
Employee related provisions		24,601	26,714	25,339	2,113	1,375
Other current liabilities		-	2	3	2	(1)
Total current liabilities		33,396	40,602	35,538	7,206	5,064

	Variance note	Estimate 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual Restated * 2022 \$'000	Variance between actual and estimate \$'000	Variance between actual results for 2023 and 2022 \$'000
Non-current liabilities						
Lease liabilities		1,266	1,274	1,440	8	(166)
Employee related provisions		6,196	6,207	5,511	11	696
Total non-current liabilities		7,462	7,481	6,951	19	530
Total liabilities		40,858	48,083	42,489	7,225	5,594
Net assets		519,911	655,670	571,495	135,759	84,175
Equity						
Contributed equity		245,749	235,240	285,681	(10,509)	(50,441)
Reserves		24,984	97,930	36,496	72,946	61,434
Accumulated surplus*		249,178	322,500	249,318	73,322	73,182
Total equity		519,911	655,670	571,495	135,759	84,175

* Refer to [note 8.2](#) for details regarding prior year errors.

Major estimate and actual (2023) variance narratives

1. **Amounts receivable for services** decreased by \$9.7 million (10.6%) mainly due to lower drawdown from the Holding Account to fund fixed assets, resulting from lower spend on capital works programs planned during the year.
2. **Infrastructure, property, plant, and equipment** increased by \$106.9 million (33.1%) mainly due to an increase in revaluation increments of land and measurement sites.
3. **Intangible assets** decreased by \$16.6 million (34.6%) mainly due to lower spend on analytical products, Environment Online and other computer software products.

Major actual (2023) and comparative (2022) variance narratives

- a. **Amounts receivable for services** increased by \$9.0 million (12.4%) mainly due to a deferment of planned capital programs.
- b. **Infrastructure, property, plant, and equipment** increased by \$62.7 million (17.1%) mainly due to an increase in revaluation increments of land and measurement sites.

9.1.3 Statement of cash flows variances

	Variance note	Estimate 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual 2022 \$'000	Variance between actual and estimate \$'000	Variance between actual results for 2023 and 2022 \$'000
Cash flows from State Government						
Service appropriation	a	105,956	95,931	85,726	(10,025)	10,205
Capital appropriations	1	16,755	12,316	11,841	(4,439)	475
Holding account drawdown	b	9,238	7,918	5,638	(1,320)	2,280
Distributions to owner	2, c	(41,973)	(60,456)	(54,044)	(18,483)	(6,412)
Net proceeds on sale of land remitted to consolidated account		-	-	(12)	-	12
Royalties for Regions fund	3, d	11,623	7,990	10,515	(3,633)	(2,525)
Funds from other public sector entities	e	1,007	2,531	8,184	1,524	(5,653)
Net cash provided by State Government		102,606	66,230	67,848	(36,376)	(1,618)
Cash flows from operating activities						
Payments						
Employee benefits	f	(120,048)	(117,287)	(103,015)	2,761	(14,272)
Supplies and services	g	(38,352)	(41,329)	(33,620)	(2,977)	(7,709)
Finance costs		(86)	(90)	(67)	(4)	(23)
Accommodation		(8,826)	(9,637)	(9,172)	(811)	(465)
Grants and subsidies	4, h	(76,439)	(19,368)	(14,831)	57,071	(4,537)
GST payments on purchases		(5,882)	(8,610)	(7,432)	(2,728)	(1,178)
Other payments	5	(6,725)	(3,909)	(5,594)	2,816	1,685
Receipts						
User charges and fees	6, i	33,862	44,533	31,932	10,671	12,601
Commonwealth grants	7, j	19,759	7,639	14,408	(12,120)	(6,769)
Interest received		850	-	14	(850)	(14)
Waste levy		83,000	84,105	83,562	1,105	543
GST receipts on sales		634	1,352	275	718	1,077
GST receipts from taxation authority		5,258	6,895	6,883	1,637	12
Other receipts	8, k	18,938	14,829	6,847	(4,109)	7,982
Net cash used in operating activities		(94,057)	(40,877)	(29,810)	53,180	(11,067)

	Variance note	Estimate 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual 2022 \$'000	Variance between actual and estimate \$'000	Variance between actual results for 2023 and 2022 \$'000
Cash flows from investing activities						
Payments						
Purchase of non-current assets	9	(29,065)	(18,260)	(18,094)	10,805	(166)
Receipts						
Proceeds from sale of non-current assets		-	200	39	200	161
Loan repayments from WARRRL	1	-	-	11,625	-	(11,625)
Net cash used in investing activities		(29,065)	(18,060)	(6,430)	11,005	(11,630)
Cash flows from financing activities						
Payments						
Principal elements of lease payments		(775)	(1,257)	(1,125)	(482)	(132)
Net cash used in financing activities		(775)	(1,257)	(1,125)	(482)	(132)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(21,291)	6,036	30,483	27,327	(24,447)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		81,382	103,160	72,677	21,778	30,483
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		60,091	109,196	103,160	49,105	6,036

Major estimate and actual (2023) variance narratives

- Capital appropriations** decreased by \$4.4 million (26.5%) mainly due to the deferral of part of the funds relating to the Climate Action Fund and less funding received to expand the asset base of the department.
- Distributions to owner** increased by \$18.5 million (44.0%) mainly due to the fact that the department calculated that they had adequate working cash available for normal business activities.
- Royalties for Regions fund** decreased by \$3.6 million (31.3%) mainly due to the deferral of Watering WA and Rural Water Planning Program, and less funding received this financial year for Bindjareb Djilba (Peel Harvey Estuary Protection Plan) and Healthy Estuaries Western Australia.
- Grants and subsidies** decreased by \$57.1 million (74.7%) mainly due to deferrals relating to State and Commonwealth funding for the National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure, Clean Energy Future Fund, Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account, Clean Western Australia – Waste Paper and Cardboard Processing and delays in issuing grants.
- Other payments** decreased by \$2.8 million (41.9%) mainly due to decreases in workers compensation insurance and other operational expenses.

6. **User charges and fees** increased by \$10.7 million (31.5%) mainly due to higher than estimated fees and charges relating to the Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account and industry fees.
7. **Commonwealth grants** decreased by \$12.1 million (61.3%) mainly due to a delay in funding for the National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure.
8. **Other receipts** decreased by \$4.1 million (21.7%) mainly due to a decrease in services rendered income for Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Accounts and the Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund.
9. **Purchase of non-current assets** decreased by \$10.8 million (37.2%) mainly due to lower spend in Replace and Maintain Monitoring Bores and Gauging Stations, Land Acquisition – Land Purchase Priority 1 areas, Environment Online, Rebuild of Australind Jetty, State Groundwater Investigation Program and the Rural Water Planning Program.

Major actual (2023) and comparative (2022) variance narratives

- a. **Service appropriation** increased by \$10.2 million (11.9%) mainly due to the 3% increase in the revised Public Sector Wages Policy and Cost of Living payments.
- b. **Holding account drawdowns** increased by \$2.3 million (40.4%) mainly due to funding for the Rebuild of Australind Jetty, offset by \$0.9 million reduction in funding for Replace and Maintain Monitoring Bores.
- c. **Distributions to owner** increased by \$6.4 million (11.9%) mainly due to the fact that the department calculated that they had adequate working cash available for normal business activities.
- d. **Royalties for Regions fund** decreased by \$2.5 million (24.0%) mainly due to the deferral of Watering WA and less funding received this financial year for Bindjareb Djilba (Peel Harvey Estuary Protection Plan) and Rural Water Planning Program.
- e. **Funds from other public sector entities** decreased by \$5.7 million (69.1%) mainly due to the Wooroloo Bushfire Coordinated Residential Clean-up program substantial completion in the previous financial year, partially offset by additional income from Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account and interest revenue.
- f. **Employee benefits** increased by \$14.3 million (13.9%) mainly due to the 3% increase in the revised Public Sector Wages Policy and Cost of Living payments.
- g. **Supplies and services** increased by \$7.7 million (22.9%) mainly due to an increased expenditure on the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program and travel costs.
- h. **Grants and subsidies** increased by \$4.5 million (30.6%) mainly due to higher grant expenditure for the National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure following milestone achievement and Clean Energy Future Fund following increased successful grant applications.
- i. **User charges and fees** increased by \$12.6 million (39.5%) mainly due to an increase in fees and charges relating to the Environmental Protection Part IV Cost Recovery Account and industry fees.
- j. **Commonwealth grants** decreased by \$6.8 million (47.0%) as no funding was received in the current financial year for the Environment Online Project and the National On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme, partially offset by grants received for Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund.
- k. **Other receipts** increased by \$8.0 million (116.6%) mainly due to an increase in income from Pilbara Environmental Offset Fund, Establishing and Maintaining Vegetation Offsets Account and Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program.
- l. **Loan repayments** from WARRRL decreased by \$11.6 million (100.0%) because the loan facility was fully repaid in the 2022 financial year.

9.2 Explanatory statement for administered items

This explanatory section explains variations in the financial performance of the department undertaking transactions that it does not control but has responsibility to the government for, as detailed in the administered schedules.

All variances between annual estimates and actual results for 2023, and between the actual results for 2023 and 2022 are shown below. Narratives are provided for key major variances which vary by more than 10% from their comparative and that variation is more than 1% of Total Administered Income for the following variance analyses for the:

1. Estimate and actual results for the current year (i.e. \$100,000).
2. Actual results for the current year and the prior year actual (i.e. \$57,000).

	Variance note	Estimate 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual 2022 \$'000	Variance between actual and estimate \$'000	Variance between actual results for 2023 and 2022 \$'000
Income from administered items						
Income						
For transfer:						
Regulatory fees and other charges ^(a)	1	100	46	57	(54)	(11)
Total administered income		100	46	57	(54)	(11)
Expenses						
Payments into the consolidated account ^(a)	2	100	46	57	(54)	(11)
Total administered expenses		100	46	57	(54)	(11)

- (a) Payments into the consolidated account included water fines collected on behalf of the Water Corporation, and environmental infringement regulatory fees and fines collected on behalf of State Government.

Variance narratives

1. The variance between the estimate and the actual results for 2023 and the variance between the actual results for 2023 and 2022 are explained below:

Major estimate and actual (2022) variance narratives

- The department is required to estimate a dollar value on how many people are going to commit an environmental offence that results in either an infringement or a modified penalty notice being issued. Infringement notices have a penalty of either \$250 or \$500 and Modified Penalty Notices have a penalty of 10% or 20% of the maximum penalty (i.e., Material Environmental Harm under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* has a maximum penalty of \$250,000, 10% of which is \$25,000). The bulk of the infringement estimated value comes from modified penalty notices and to be eligible for a modified penalty notice one must meet certain legislative requirements under section 99A of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. The variation is simply that we have issued less infringements or modified penalty notices for offences than estimated.

Major actual (2023) and comparative (2022) variance narratives

2. The variance between the estimate and the actual results for 2023 and the variance between the actual results for 2023 and 2022 are explained in the abovementioned number 1.

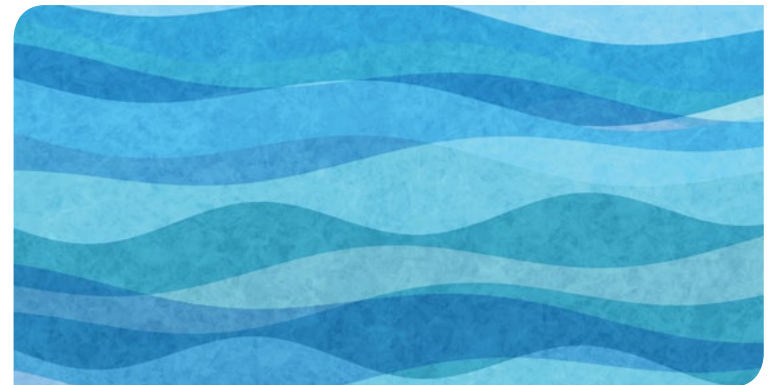


Certification of key performance indicators

I hereby certify that the key performance indicators are based on proper records, are relevant and appropriate for assisting users to assess the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's performance, and fairly represent the performance of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Andrews'.

Michelle Andrews
Director General
13 October 2023



Outcome-based management framework

Government goal – Investing in WA's Future: Tackling climate action and supporting the arts, culture and sporting sectors to promote vibrant communities.

	Agency outcome	Key effectiveness indicators	Page	Agency services	Key efficiency indicators	Page
Outcome 1	Western Australia's growth and development is supported by the sustainable management of water resources for the long-term benefit of the state	Proportion of stakeholders who perceive the department to be effectively managing the state's water as a resource for sustainable, productive use	161	1. Water information and advice	Proportion of statutory referrals from decision-making authorities where advice is provided within target timeframes	168
					Average cost per referral assessment	168
					Average cost per water measurement site managed	169
		Proportion of priority growth areas that have a water supply planning strategy	161	2. Water planning, allocation, and optimisation	Average cost per plan, report, or guidance document to support water planning, allocation, and optimisation	170
					Average cost per hour of scientific support for water planning, allocation, and optimisation	171
		3. Water regulation, licensing, and industry governance	Average cost of assessing a water licence application by risk assessment category	171		
Average time taken (days) to assess a licence application by risk assessment category	172					
Average cost of compliance monitoring and enforcement action	173					
Outcome 2	Emissions, discharges and clearing of native vegetation are effectively regulated to avoid unacceptable risks to public health and the environment	Percentage of regulatory compliance activities completed as planned	162	4. Environmental regulation	Average cost per works approval and licence application	174
		Percentage of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring program that are rectified within two months	163		Average cost per native vegetation clearing permit application	174
Outcome 3	Development and implementation of strategic policy and legislation that promotes sustainable environmental outcomes	Percentage of advice and recommendations that met Ministerial approval, without the need for significant modification	163	5. Environmental and water policy	Average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations	176

	Agency outcome	Key effectiveness indicators	Page	Agency services	Key efficiency indicators	Page
Outcome 4	Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised	Percentage of municipal solid waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to waste strategy target in the Perth metropolitan region	164	6. Waste strategies	Cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected	177
		Percentage of commercial and industrial waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the state-wide waste strategy target	164			
		Percentage of construction and demolition waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the state-wide waste strategy target	165			
Outcome 5	Quality advice to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Minister for Environment on significant proposals and environmental issues	The EPA's satisfaction with the department's environmental impact assessment (EIA) service, during the year, in line with best practice principles of EIA	165	7. Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of assessment output	178
		Percentage of project-specific conditions which did not require significant change following the appeal process	166	8. Environmental management services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of environmental management services output	179
		Percentage of assessments that met agreed timelines	166			
		The EPA's satisfaction with the department's provision of environmental management services during the year	167			
Outcome 6	Compliance with Ministerial Statement implementation conditions are monitored effectively	The number of Ministerial Statements audited compared to targets	167	9. Compliance monitoring services to the Minister for Environment	Average cost per environmental audit completed	180

Following the machinery of government changes, the Department of Water, the Department of Environment Regulation, and the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority were amalgamated and formed the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) on 1 July 2017. This is the sixth reporting period for the department post amalgamation.

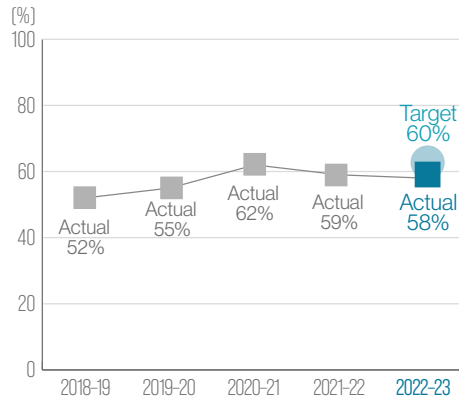
Results with significant variances of 10% or more compared with the Target and prior year results are explained. Most of the movements between the 2022–23 Target and the 2022–23 Actual are due to changes in resource cost allocations.

Key effectiveness indicators

Proportion of stakeholders who perceive the department to be effectively managing the state's water as a resource for sustainable, productive use^(a)

(a) The 2022–23 survey results have a confidence interval of +/-4.31% at 95% confidence level. Other survey statistics include:

- population size: 1,191 stakeholders
- population character: stakeholder contacts provided by the department
- stakeholders invited to participate: 1,191 stakeholders
- number of respondents: 361
- response rate: 30%
- how sample was selected: Total population as provided by the department contacted by email or mail (for those without email contact details). The initial contact sought assistance with an online survey. Phone follow-up interviews were sought with stakeholders who did not respond to the online self-completion invitation.



The management of the state's water resources to enable growth and development is a core objective for the department, and this occurs within the context of ensuring the sustainability of the resources and their dependent environments.

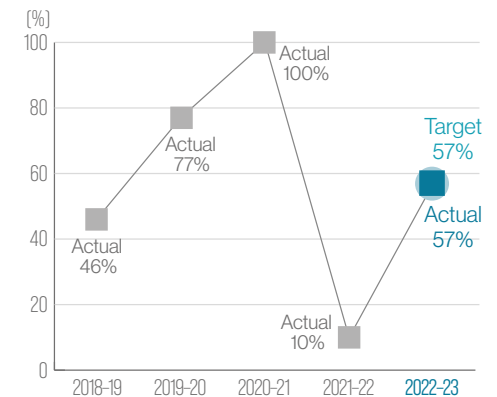
The department has many stakeholders with competing interests, including those from industry, investment, community, and environmental sectors.

A survey was conducted between 13 October 2022 and 14 December 2022 with the intent to determine the extent to which stakeholders perceive the department to be effectively fulfilling the statutory and other obligations that form its core role rather than satisfaction with a particular decision or handling of a specific issue.

The indicator is based on feedback received from the stakeholders through the survey. It is calculated as a percentage of respondents answering 'very effective' or 'quite effective' to a question in the survey about their perception of the department effectively managing the state's water as a resource for sustainable productive use. The other options for selection included 'neither one nor the other', 'quite ineffective', 'very ineffective' or 'don't know.'

Proportion of priority growth areas that have a water supply planning strategy

'Priority growth areas' refers to a list of significant projects and water resources areas. For each priority growth area, the department, or key stakeholders in collaboration with the department, develops a water supply plan or strategy to identify current and future water resource and supply options to meet demand for industry and population growth over the long-term. This supports the timely development of resource and supply options to meet demand in areas of state priority.



Projects included in the priority growth areas have strategic significance for the state; and include areas identified through the Water Supply-Demand Model as having a gap between future water demand and water availability.

The indicator is calculated as a percentage of the priority growth areas with a water supply planning strategy (or advisory report for key stakeholders) out of the total priority growth areas that the department is currently working on. Following the completion of the planned program of projects in 2020–21, the indicator was re-set to zero in 2021–22 with a 100% completion target set for 2023–24 based on delivery of seven water supply planning projects.

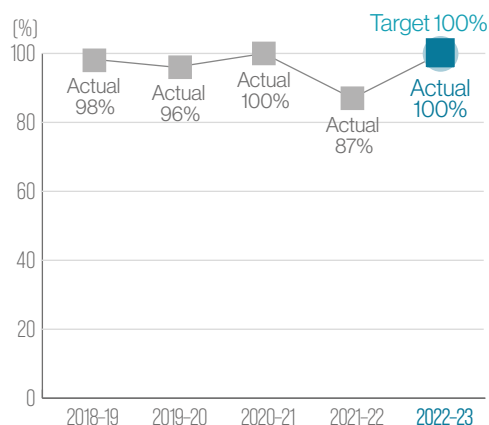
Variance analysis

2022–23 budget target of 57% relates to delivery of a total of four water supply planning strategies from a total of seven over three years ending 2023–24.

Percentage of regulatory compliance activities completed as planned

Compliance activities are an integral part of the department's regulatory work and include promotion, monitoring, and enforcement. Information gathered and assessed through compliance activities is also used to inform and revise both regulation and policy frameworks as well as to inform legislative reform programs.

The department is a risk-based regulator that focuses its resources to address the areas of greatest risks to public health, the environment and water resources and is responsive to emerging risks and issues.



The prescribed premises compliance monitoring program is focused on the assessment of emissions and discharges from premises to ensure they are managed appropriately by the current instrument and relevant legislation. The program identifies premises and targets activities based on a risk assessment informed by environmental and operational risk including type of activity, compliance history and intelligence gathered, including from complaints and incidents.

The waste sector compliance monitoring program assesses compliance at landfills and associated industries with the requirements of the landfill levy.

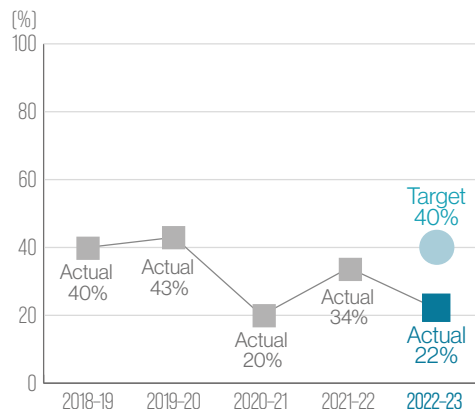
Variance analysis

The department conducted 140 of the 140 planned inspections for the Waste and Industry Compliance Program in 2022–23. During the year, delivery was also focused to address issues on priority premises that present the greatest risk. In addition, a further 31 unplanned inspections were completed for the levy compliance monitoring program and 13 unplanned inspections were completed for the Industry Compliance monitoring program.

Percentage of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring program that are rectified within two months

Non-compliances identified through inspections undertaken as part of the prescribed premises compliance monitoring program and the waste sector compliance monitoring program are recorded and the length of time taken for these non-compliances to be rectified is tracked.

Non-compliances vary in nature, they may be administrative, technical, or operational. Administrative and technical non-compliances generally pose a low risk to public health, the environment or water resources, whereas operational non-compliances and emissions may pose a higher risk.



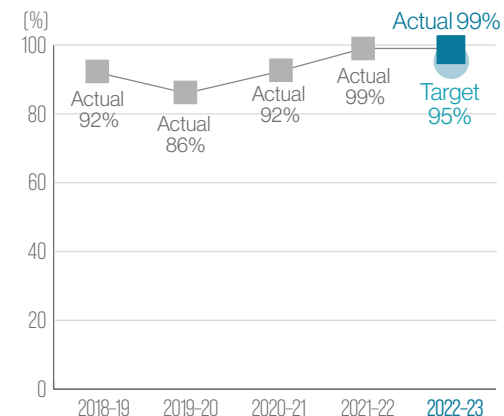
Variance analysis

During 2022–23, a total of 141 non-compliances were identified from inspections under the waste sector and the prescribed premises compliance monitoring programs.

The target of 40% of non-compliances being closed within two calendar months was not achieved, with 22% of non-compliances closed within the specified timeframe. A further 8.5% were closed in the reporting period; however, not within the target timeframe. The resolution of the identified non-compliances is often protracted depending upon the complexity of the non-compliance identified and take longer than the two-calendar-month target timeframe to resolve.

Percentage of advice and recommendations that met Ministerial approval, without the need for significant modification

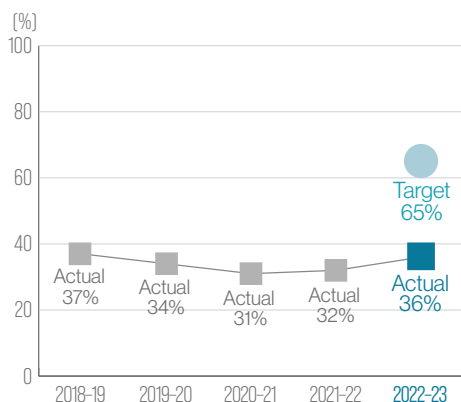
This indicator seeks to ensure that the advice provided by the department is consistent with the State Government's policy direction by measuring how well it meets the Minister for Environment's expectations.



Percentage of municipal solid waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to waste strategy target in the Perth metropolitan region

The indicator relates to the State Government's waste management target of recovering 67% of municipal solid waste (MSW) by 2025, as described in the waste strategy.

Due to the significant time required to gather the relevant information, 2021–22 data, as reported in *Waste and recycling in Western Australia 2021–22*, was used to calculate this indicator for 2022–23. From 2021, the data is derived from annual returns submitted under regulation 18C of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008 and composition data submitted with waste levy returns. Data was sourced from voluntary surveys prior to 2019–20.



Variance analysis

The 2022–23 Target was not met due to lower-than-expected performance of local government services. Two-bin kerbside waste services typically only recover about 20% of waste from landfill, while three-bin GO (garden organics) services can recover more than 50%. To meet the Target, every local government will need to provide a three-bin kerbside collection system that includes separation of food organics and garden organics (FOGO). During the data collection period, eight of the 33 local governments had implemented kerbside FOGO collection systems. Two more local governments have implemented FOGO following the data collection period and 10 have committed to implementing it in their waste plans.

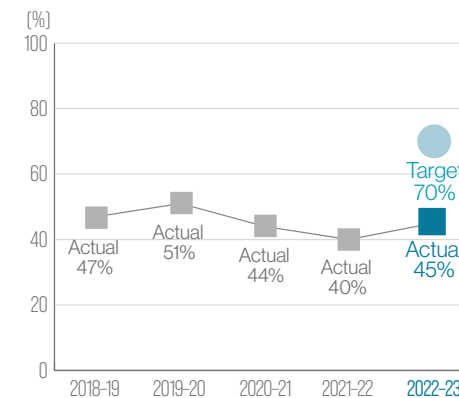
The waste strategy sets a target for three-bin FOGO (food organics garden organics) services in the Perth and Peel regions by 2025. These services can recover 65% or more of kerbside waste collections. Increased adoption of FOGO services is expected to lead to increased recovery rates.

The overall diversion rate has increased by 4% from the 2021–22 Actuals to 2022–23 Actuals with three more local governments implementing FOGO collections systems during 2022–23.

Percentage of commercial and industrial waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target

The indicator relates to the State Government's waste management target of recovering 75% of commercial and industrial (C&I) waste by 2025, as described in the waste strategy.

Due to the significant time required to gather the relevant information, 2021–22 data, as reported in *Waste and recycling in Western Australia 2021–22*, was used to calculate this indicator for 2022–23. From 2021, the data is derived from annual returns submitted under regulation 18C of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008 and composition data submitted with waste levy returns. Data was sourced from voluntary surveys prior to 2019–20.



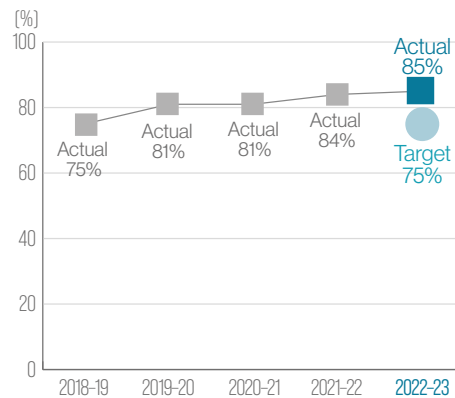
Variance analysis

Waste recovery in the C&I sector increased by five percentage points in 2022–23. C&I waste recovery performance was higher due to a 176,000-tonne increase in the amount of recovered materials reported from 2021–22 to 2022–23. Recent, and future investments in recycling infrastructure by the State and Federal governments will help to minimise reliance on international markets. A review of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 is currently underway to identify further actions to improve the recovery rates in the C&I waste sector.

Percentage of construction and demolition waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target

The indicator relates to the State Government's waste management target of recovering 77% of construction and demolition (C&D) waste by 2025, as described in the waste strategy.

Due to the significant time required to gather the relevant information, 2021–22 data, as reported in *Waste and recycling in Western Australia 2021–22*, was used to calculate this indicator for 2022–23. From 2021, the data is derived from annual returns submitted under regulation 18C of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008 and composition data submitted with waste levy returns. Data was sourced from voluntary surveys prior to 2019–20.



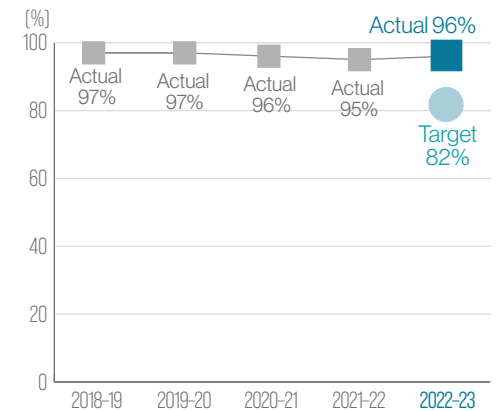
Variance analysis

Relatively higher scheduled increases in the waste levy, compared to those that applied to the MSW and C&I streams since 2015, have made C&D waste landfilling more cost prohibitive.

The variance between the 2022–23 Target and the 2022–23 Actual is most likely due to the ongoing stockpiling of C&D waste in lieu of disposal, which acts to inflate the reported recovery rate. Waste levy avoidance may also contribute to the reported diversion rate.

The EPA's satisfaction with the department's environmental impact assessment (EIA) service, during the year, in line with best practice principles of EIA

The indicator is determined through surveys of the EPA's members (service recipients) who rate the quality of each service against best practice principles (currently, the International Association for Impact Assessment's Principles of EIA Best Practice).

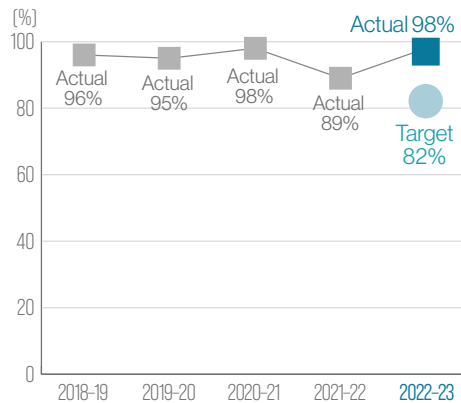


Variance analysis

The department strives to ensure that all advice provided to the EPA is as practical, efficient, rigorous, participative and fit-for-purpose as possible. In line with this goal, this year the EPA considered the EIA services provided by the department were of a very high standard, which resulted in the KPI Target being exceeded by more than 10%.

Percentage of project-specific conditions which did not require significant change following the appeal process

The indicator assists stakeholders in ascertaining the quality of conditions recommended by the department's EIA services. The department provides periodic reports to the EPA outlining the results of the appeals process and drawing attention to significant changes to the recommended conditions. This provides an important part of the State Government's expectation of a 'continuous improvement loop' in the appeals process.



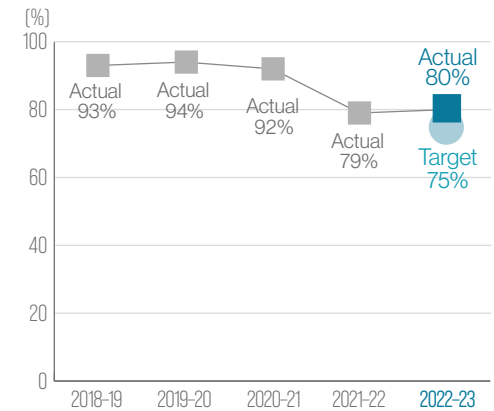
A significant change can be deemed as a substantial change to the form of a condition, the deletion or addition of a new condition, or a substantial change to the outcome or objective specified in a condition. A substantial change to the specified requirements of an environmental management plan or environmental monitoring plan and a change to a prescribed action are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Variance analysis

The department strives to ensure the conditions recommended to the EPA are as robust and comprehensive as the project requires and therefore does not require substantial change by the Office of the Appeals Convenor. In line with this goal, this year the department's recommended conditions required minimal substantial changes and therefore exceeded the KPI Target by more than 10%.

Percentage of assessments that met agreed timelines

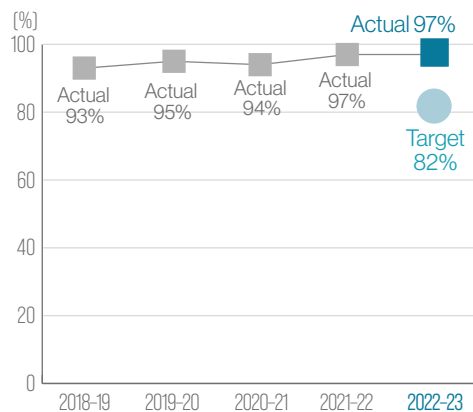
This indicator measures the department's effectiveness in completing the assessment and providing the assessment report to the Minister in a timely manner. The timeline for an assessment may vary according to the complexity of the project and is usually agreed with the proponent soon after the level of assessment is determined. The assessment timeline is stated in the EPA's Report. The timeline refers to the time between the receipt of the final information (that has been endorsed by the EPA) for the assessment and providing the assessment report to the Minister (12 weeks).



The EPA's satisfaction with the department's provision of environmental management services during the year

The level of quality is determined by the EPA with reference to the desirable underlying qualities of good environmental management advice. The EPA rates the quality of advice on strategic advice, statutory policies or guidelines provided by the department.

Each of the EPA members who participate in a decision rates the product on a scale of one to five (poor to excellent) and the scores of each member are averaged, combined, and proportionally adjusted to a percentage. The final indicator is the average rating awarded to all environment management services endorsed by the EPA during the period.



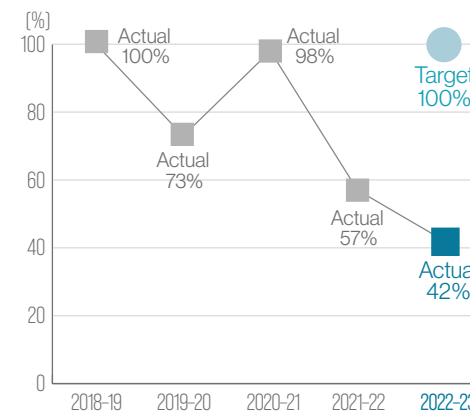
Variance analysis

The department strives to ensure that all environmental management services provided to the EPA have a clear purpose, are rigorous, readable, applicable, and consistent, and informed by stakeholder input as possible. In line with this goal, this year the EPA considered the EIA services provided by the department were of a very high standard, which resulted in the KPI Target being exceeded by more than 10%.

The number of Ministerial Statements audited compared to targets

Compliance monitoring is managed through a structured annual compliance management program. The annual program sets out the number of audits to be undertaken and using a priority matrix, identifies the Ministerial Statements to be audited.

The Minister imposes conditions on proposals to ensure that they are managed in an environmentally acceptable manner.



Variance analysis

The variance from the 2021-22 Actual and 2022-23 Target to 2022-23 Actual is due to some compliance resources being refocused on high-risk compliance matters which resulted in a number of complete audit reports not being approved prior to the end of 2022-23.

Key efficiency indicators

Service 1: Water information and advice

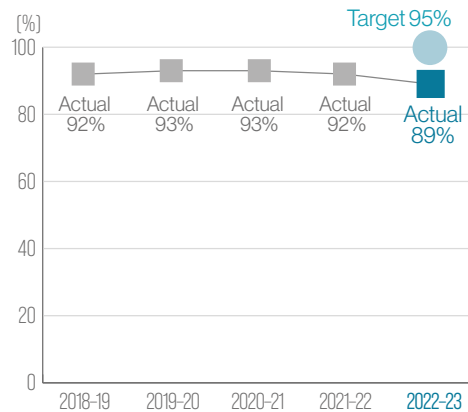
The department enables investment decisions of regional and state significance through the provision of data and information on the quantity, quality, location of, and demand for, water across the state. The information also underpins policy advice for consideration by State Government and supports other government agencies and stakeholders in their planning for future economic growth, and urban and rural development.

► Proportion of statutory referrals from decision-making authorities where advice is provided within target timeframes

Technically proficient, reliable, and timely advice on the state's water resources enables effective decision-making by decision-making authorities (DMAs) that directly supports growth, development, and investment for the long-term benefit of the state. DMAs include the:

- Environmental Protection Authority
- Other State Government agencies
- Local government authorities

This includes advice about water availability; the avoidance, management, and mitigation of impacts on water resources; and the protection of public drinking water sources.



This indicator represents a measure of the department's timeliness with respect to the provision of advice on various statutory referrals from DMAs. It demonstrates the efficiency with which the department is meeting statutory timeframes in providing water information and advice.

A statutory referral is a formal request for water advice from a DMA that has a statutory timeframe associated with the provision of that water advice. This indicator is calculated as a percentage of the total number of statutory referrals from DMAs to the department for advice that met the 35-business-day timeframe within the period.

► Average cost per referral assessment¹

Actual 2018-19 \$	Actual 2019-20 \$	Actual 2020-21 \$	Actual 2021-22 \$	Target 2022-23 \$	Actual 2022-23 \$
11,442	7,182	5,125	5,418	7,960	6,046

Note1 – The description of the key efficiency indicator has been changed from 'Average cost per statutory referral assessment' to 'Average cost per referral assessment' to more accurately reflect the current methodology. There has been no change to the cost allocation methodology. The change was approved by the Under Treasurer on 23 June 2023.

This measure provides information on the amount of operational expenditure being used for statutory referrals that enable decisions on proposals that support the state's growth and development.

The indicator is relevant to the service because it is a directly attributable operational cost incurred in service delivery to meet the desired outcome.

An assessment is generated from both a formal request for water advice from a DMA or proponent such as under the Better Urban Water Management Framework. The indicator is calculated using the total cost of the water information and advice service divided by the total number of assessments conducted within the period.

Variance analysis

The reduction in the average cost per referral assessment in 2022–23 from the 2022–23 Target is driven by a reduction in the total costs of service resulting from workforce priorities for resourcing of regulatory approvals. The increase in the average cost per referral assessment from the 2021–22 Actual to the 2022–23 Actual is due to an increase in the total costs of service, more than compensated by an increase in the number of assessments compared to the 2021–22 Actuals.

► Average cost per water measurement site managed

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
7,118	9,437	7,437	5,944	9,389	6,638

Access to reliable and current information about water resources – quantity and quality – is a core input to decision-making by State Government and water-dependent businesses that enables growth and development of the state.

Stakeholders access water information and data to support investment and business decisions. It also supports accurate water resource management decisions and advice. To service this need, the department measures or holds water data for more than 116,000 groundwater and surface water field sites, verifies, and stores the data and makes it available as water information.

Regular or periodic field measurements are essential to maintain up-to-date data, and verification, storage and accessibility are essential to make data available as reliable information.

This indicator is calculated by dividing the annual cost of water measurement and water information functions by the number of active operational sites.

Variance analysis

The decrease in the actual average cost per water measurement site managed from the 2022–23 Target is mainly due to lower cost allocations, with the volume of water measurement sites remaining relatively consistent. The increase in the actual average cost per water measurement site managed from the 2021–22 Actual to the 2022–23 Actual is due to higher cost allocations more than compensated by an increase in the number of water measurement site managed compared to 2021–22.

The department undertakes and facilitates water planning, allocation, and optimisation to ensure the sustainable management of water resources for the long-term benefit of the state, which relies on good science. This includes planning and allocating water for sustainable productive use, protecting public drinking water sources, and ensuring the sustainability of water resources and their dependent ecosystems.

► Average cost per plan, report, or guidance document to support water planning, allocation, and optimisation

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
431,338	348,488	233,709	268,753	282,257	243,074

Water resources need to be sustainably managed to achieve sufficient water quantity and quality for current and future needs. Increasingly precise, systematic, and transparent management is produced in science-based water allocation and optimisation plans, reports, and guidance documents. They guide and define management decisions to meet demand and avoid, mitigate, or minimise unsustainable impacts on resources. With this in place sufficient good-quality surface and groundwater will remain an ongoing part of future water supply for economic and population growth and the liveability of towns and cities.

Average cost is calculated by dividing the cost of the services by the total number of the following types of documents or advice produced:

1. Plans

- Water allocation plan
- Drinking water source protection plan
- Statement of response to public submissions

2. Plans for public comment

- Water allocation plan for public comment
- Water source protection plan for public comment

3. Technical reports

- Drinking water source protection area assessments
- Environmental water requirements report, or provisions report
- Allocation limits methods report

4. Guidance documents

- Water quality protection notes and information sheets
- Local water licensing strategy (e.g. Indigenous Land Use Agreement, allocation statement)

5. Status reports including:

- Annual or tri-annual compliance Jandakot, and Gnamangara compliance reports
- Water allocation plan evaluations
- Drinking water source protection reviews
- State-wide planning reports (e.g. water resources inventory)
- Pre-planning or implementation phase status reports (e.g. discussion paper, review of allocation limits or components)
- Communication products (or sets of communication products) (e.g. water availability outlooks, website text, fact sheets).

Variance analysis

The decrease in the Actual from the 2022–23 Target to the 2022–23 Actual is mainly due to lower cost allocations to support water planning, allocation, and optimisation with the actual total number of documents being delivered remaining the same as planned.

Service 3: Water regulation, licensing, and industry governance

► Average cost per hour of scientific support for water planning, allocation, and optimisation

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
145	161	172	185	178	197

The sustainable management of water resources for the long-term benefit of the state relies on quality and contemporary water science. The indicator will enable judgement about the efficient application of the department's science capacity.

This indicator shows the average cost of providing scientific support for the achievement of water planning, allocation, and optimisation outcomes.

This indicator is calculated by dividing annual cost of full-time equivalent (FTE) and operational expenses by total hours worked by employees directly supporting scientific outcomes for this service.

Variance analysis

The increase in the actual average cost per hour of scientific support for water planning, allocation, and optimisation from the 2022–23 Target is due to higher cost allocations, further impacted by lower number of hours for scientific support for water planning, allocation and optimisation.

Responsible, proportional regulation ensures investment, growth and development is underpinned by sustainable management of the state's water resources for the long-term benefit of the state. This service includes the management of water licensing. It also includes the management of the legislation governing the operations of water service providers.

► Average cost of assessing a water licence application by risk assessment category:

Risk assessment category	Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
Low	3,788	3,284	3,412	3,348	3,782	4,018
Medium	5,051	4,378	4,549	4,464	5,043	5,357
High	6,313	5,473	5,686	5,580	6,303	6,697

Responsible, proportional regulation gives confidence that Western Australia's water resources are being sustainably managed for the long-term benefit of the state.

Water licensing is the main tool for sharing and allocating the state's water resources. A licence to take water authorises a licensee to take a specified volume of water from a particular water resource and is the principal tool for ensuring sustainable productive use of water in Western Australia. Other licences and permits administered by the department authorise the construction and alteration of water access infrastructure, such as wells and dams, as well as activities that interfere with the beds and banks of watercourses.

This indicator enables judgement about the costs of the department's water licence application assessments, within a risk-based assessment framework.

The indicator shows the average cost to assess a licence or permit application by risk category grouping. The indicator includes applications for permits to interfere with bed and banks, licences to construct a well, licences to access water, and renewal of and amendments to existing licences to access water, trades, transfers, and agreements.

The indicator is calculated by dividing the departmental cost of providing the water licensing service per application risk category, by the total number of licence and permit applications assessed within each risk category, within the period.

Variance analysis

The increase in the average cost of assessing a water licence application across all water licence application risk categories from the 2021–22 Actual to the 2022–23 Actual is mainly due to higher cost allocations, further impacted by lower volumes.

► Average time taken (days) to assess a licence application by risk assessment category:

Risk assessment category	Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
Low	57	46	30	35	65	43
Medium	133	85	39	52	75	57
High	213	87	47	65	95	85

Water licences are one of the fundamental assets that support investment decisions in water-dependent industries. Investment decisions by licensees, existing and prospective, are also time-bound and require that applications for access to water are dealt with by the department in a timely manner.

The department ensures that the level of assessment effort applied to a water licence application is proportionate to the risk posed should a licence be granted, for example higher-risk licence applications are generally more complex and require more time to assess.

Risk categories for water licence or permit applications guide the level of assessment that is carried out by the department based on the risk should a licence or permit be granted. Risk categories are defined as low, medium, or high. Primary factors considered when assigning an assessment risk category are the volume of water being requested, how much water is available in the resource where the water is being requested, and potential impact of the proposed water use on other water users and/or the environment, including cumulative impacts.

This indicator enables judgement about the department's efficiency in decision-making for water licence and permit applications within this risk-based assessment framework.

The indicator shows the average time taken to assess a water licence or permit application by risk category. The indicator includes applications for permits to interfere with bed and banks, licences to construct a well, licences to take water, and renewal of and amendments to existing licences to take water, trades, transfers, and agreements.

The indicator is calculated by dividing the total time taken to assess all water licence and permit applications within each risk category, by the total number of licence and permit applications assessed within each risk category, within the period.

The measurement of assessment timeframes includes 'stop the clock'. When a water licence application assessment process is outside of the department's control, the time taken during this assessment process is not included when calculating application assessment times. The assessment clock is 'stopped' in these instances.

Variance analysis

The average time taken to process a water licence application has been significantly reduced in 2022–23 over the 2022–23 Targets across all water licence application risk categories, driven by the successful implementation of the water licensing backlog action plan and several other water licensing business performance initiatives. The 2022–23 Targets were outperformed across all risk categories (average 23% reduction).

Importantly, it should be noted that the average processing duration for low-risk applications, which represented more than 70% of the total water licence applications processed in 2022–23, is 22 days (or 33%) less than the target of 65 days.

The increase in average time taken to process a licence application by low and high-risk assessment category from the 2021–22 Actual to the 2022–23 Actual is due to complexity and variability of a range of factors including compliance monitoring and enforcement activities, and complexity of licence assessment processes undertaken for each application.

► Average cost of compliance monitoring and enforcement action

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
608	205	118	130	156	206

The department relies on water usage information for accurate water resource management advice and decisions. The department's compliance monitoring of licenced use provides accurate information on actual licenced water use to ensure the sustainable management of water resources for the long-term benefit of the state.

The department undertakes compliance monitoring and, where appropriate, enforcement action when licenced water use is found to be not in accordance with terms, restrictions, and conditions. Compliance monitoring within a risk-based framework ensures the department fulfils its legislative requirements, while ensuring efficient and sustainable productive water use.

Investment decisions by licensees, existing and prospective, are time-bound and require that applications for access to water are dealt with by the department in a timely manner. Water licences are one of the fundamental assets that support investment decisions.

Service 4: Environmental regulation

This indicator is calculated using the departmental cost of compliance and enforcement activities divided by the number of compliance and enforcement actions undertaken by the department during the year.

The enforcement actions include the following activities undertaken by the department when licenced water use is found to be inconsistent with the licence terms, restrictions, and conditions:

- educational letters
- licence amendments
- warnings, infringements, or direction notices
- prosecutions.

Variance analysis

The increase in the average cost of compliance monitoring and enforcement action from the 2022–23 Target and the 2021–22 Actual reflects a continued large amount of compliance activity associated with the final stage of the water metering regulation resulting in higher cost allocations, further impacted by a small reduction in the number of compliance monitoring and enforcement actions associated with water metering regulations.

The increase in the average cost of compliance monitoring and enforcement action from the 2021–22 Actual to the 2022–23 Actual is mainly due to higher cost allocations, further impacted by a decrease in the number of compliance monitoring and enforcement actions during 2022–23.

The department seeks to prevent, control, and abate activities with the potential to cause pollution or environmental harm. It has adopted a risk-based approach to delivering its regulatory role, which broadly fits into three main functions:

1. approvals and licensing
2. monitoring, audit, and compliance inspections
3. enforcement, including complaint and incident investigation.

► Average cost per works approval and licence application

► Average cost per native vegetation clearing permit application

Efficiency indicator	Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
Average cost per works approval and licence application	47,505	47,220	51,891	55,425	60,931	73,244
Average cost per native vegetation clearing permit application	29,865	17,644	33,217	30,353	35,895	33,764

These measures of efficiency were established to reflect the costs per regulatory action for an instrument for the department's industry regulation and

native vegetation regulation functions. These are considered relevant efficiency indicators as they:

- capture the primary regulatory functions of the department
- measure the amount of resources required to assess and determine an industry regulation instrument and native vegetation instrument
- are of interest to parties paying regulatory fees
- are relevant to the review and determination of the department's regulatory fees and charges.

The indicators are considered relevant to the service as they can track the efficiency of the assessment of regulatory instruments over time and provide a simple metric for users of the department's budget statements and annual report.

For works approvals and licences, the indicator is calculated by dividing the total group costs deemed relevant to the agency activity of carrying out and administering the function of works approvals and licences – being applications assessment and decision-making on works approval and licence applications under Part V Division 3 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* – by the number of work approvals, licences, licence renewals and amendments assessed to provide the average cost.

For clearing permit applications, the indicator is calculated using the same method, by dividing the total group costs deemed relevant to the agency activity of carrying out and administering the function of clearing permit applications – being assessment and decision-making on clearing permit applications and amendments to clearing permit applications under Part V Division 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* – by the number of clearing permit applications and amendment applications assessed, to provide the average cost.

Variance analysis

The increase in average cost per Works Approval and Licence Application from the 2021–22 Actuals and the 2022–23 Target is due to higher cost allocations, further impacted by a reduction in the number of Works Approval and Licence Applications decided during the year.

The increase in average cost per native vegetation clearing permit application from the 2021–22 Actual to the 2022–23 Actual is due to higher cost allocations, further impacted by a decrease in the number of native vegetation clearing permit applications decided during 2022–23.



Service 5: Environmental and water policy

Develop and implement policies and strategies that promote environmental outcomes.

► Average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
84	118	148	273	398	328

This measure of efficiency was established to reflect the cost per hour of policy advice. This is considered a relevant efficiency indicator as it:

- captures a significant function of the department
- measures the amount of resources required to develop and implement policies and strategies
- is of interest as it shows the cost of policy development
- is relevant to the use of funds being expended to develop and implement strategic policy and legislation that promotes sustainable environmental outcomes.

The indicator is relevant to this service as they can track the efficiency of the policy development and implementation over time and provide a simple metric for users of the department's budget statements and annual report.

The indicator is calculated by totaling the functional group costs associated with agency activity of carrying out and administering the function of providing policy advice and recommendations. The advice and recommendations relate to the development, review and amendment of environmental policy, national policy, primary and subsidiary legislation, and environmental programs,

providing advice to the Minister and the State Government in relation to legislation administration. The total number of available FTE hours for the services is divided into the costs to provide an average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations.

Variance analysis

The decrease in average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations from the 2022–23 Target is due to lower cost allocations more than offset by lower number of hours of policy advice and recommendations. The increase in average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations from the 2021–22 Actual to the 2022–23 Actual is largely due to higher cost allocations impacted by higher FTEs allocations.



Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised.

► **Cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected**

Actual 2018–19 %	Actual 2019–20 %	Actual 2020–21 %	Actual 2021–22 %	Target 2022–23 %	Actual 2022–23 %
2.10	1.94	1.60	1.87	1.50	1.64

This measure of efficiency was established to reflect the cost of levy compliance as a percentage of the landfill levy income collected. This is considered a relevant efficiency indicator as it:

- measures the number of resources applied to the waste avoidance strategies and landfill diversion strategies
- is of interest as it shows the cost of managing the waste strategies
- is relevant to the use of funds being expended to develop and implement strategic policy and legislation that promotes sustainable environmental outcomes.

The indicator is relevant to the service as it can track the efficiency of managing waste strategies and provides a simple metric for users of the department’s budget statements and annual report.

The cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected is determined by totaling those functional group costs deemed relevant to the department’s activity of carrying out and administering the function of providing landfill levy compliance – being the administration of the landfill levy returns, auditing of those returns, processing of exemptions and undertaking inspections at a range of waste facilities, and carrying out

unauthorised waste activity investigations. The indicator is calculated by dividing the cost of levy compliance by the amount of landfill levy income collected for the year.

Variance analysis

The increase in the cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected from the 2022–23 Target is due to a relatively small increase in dedicated resources monitoring and enforcing landfill levy compliance activities more than offset by an increase in landfill levy income. The decrease in the cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected from the 2021–22 Actuals is due to a small decrease in dedicated resources monitoring and enforcing landfill levy compliance activities with the landfill levy income collected relatively consistent.

Service 7: Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA

Conduct, for the EPA, environmental impact assessments of significant proposals and schemes.

► Cost per standardised unit of assessment output

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
33,082	39,924	62,466	45,444	58,209	79,177

While the variation in assessment complexity is reflected in the level of assessment set, several other factors affect how complex a proposal is to assess. To account for this range in difficulty, each assessment completed is assigned a weighting.

The difficulty often influences the amount of time spent dealing with a proposal, how the complexity weightings were allocated and trialled, in consultation with experienced officers, according to inherent proposal characteristics that cause a proposal to be more difficult rather than what causes an assessment to take more time to complete. This ensures that the indicator measures the efficiency of the department's provision of EIA advice to the EPA rather than the department's cost per hour. The total complexity is calculated by summing the individual complexities allocated to each assessment according to their inherent characteristics.

The cost per standardised unit of assessment output is calculated by dividing the total cost of assessments (including an allocation of post-approval costs and a portion of costs for policy and administrative support) by the total complexity weighting of assessments completed during the budget year.

Variance analysis

The increase in cost per standardised unit of assessment output from the 2021–22 Actual and 2022–23 Target to 2022–23 Actual is due to higher cost allocations to allocate costs to this service as well as a lower number of standardised units of assessment outputs delivered. Key reasons for lower assessment outputs include the increased complexity of proposals, the allocation of some experienced assessment staff to the development and implementation of Environment Online and delivery of *Environmental Protection Act 1986* Amendments, and also the ongoing training and development of new assessment staff as a result of high staff turnover rates.

Service 8: Environmental management services to the EPA

Develop, for the EPA, statutory policies, guidelines, and strategic advice to manage environmental impacts and protect the environment.

► Cost per standardised unit of environmental management services output

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
21,049	34,793	34,572	26,706	54,191	26,151

Due to the variation in complexity of environmental management services provided, an average cost per piece of advice provided would not fairly represent the department's efficiency in providing such advice to the EPA. In fact, such a measure could provide a perverse incentive to produce many straightforward pieces of advice rather than tackling more complex issues that are more difficult to investigate. To account for this range in difficulty, each assessment completed is assigned a weighting.

The difficulty often influences the amount of time spent investigating a matter, how the complexity weightings were allocated, in consultation with experienced officers, according to inherent characteristics that cause a piece of environmental management advice to be more difficult rather than what causes it to take more time to complete. This ensures that the indicator measures the efficiency of the department's provision of environmental management advice to the EPA rather than the department's cost per hour.

The cost per standardised unit of environmental management services output is calculated by dividing the total cost of environmental management services (including an allocation of administrative support) by the total complexity weighting of environmental management services endorsed during the period.

Variance analysis

Strategic advice and support for environmental management services to the EPA is provided by a dedicated EPA services directorate within the department with support from other functions of the department for specialist environmental services. The cost per standardised unit of environmental management services output is lower than the 2021–22 Actual and 2022–23 Target due to an increase in the number of environmental management services outputs to deliver the amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and the EPA procedure suite. Additional advice and support were provided by the department in 2022–23.



Service 9: Compliance monitoring services to the Minister

Audit the compliance with conditions set under Ministerial approvals and undertake enforcement action as appropriate.

► Average cost per environmental audit completed

Actual 2018–19 \$	Actual 2019–20 \$	Actual 2020–21 \$	Actual 2021–22 \$	Target 2022–23 \$	Actual 2022–23 \$
31,719	65,666	56,117	51,684	100,191	148,276

The indicator is calculated by dividing the total cost (including an allocation of administrative overheads) allocated to compliance monitoring services by the total number of audits (not including desktop scans) completed during the period.

Variance analysis

Compliance monitoring services to the Minister for Environment are provided by a dedicated compliance and enforcement directorate within the department with support from other functions of the department. The actual average cost per environmental audit completed in 2022–23 is higher than the 2021–22 Actuals and the 2022–23 Target due to lower number of environmental audits completed resulting from refocusing of resources to resolution of long-standing and high-risk compliance matters.



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Other legal requirements

Expenditure on advertising, market research, polling, and direct mail

In accordance with section 175ZE of the *Electoral Act 1907*, the department incurred the below expenditure in advertising, market research, polling, direct mail, and media advertising. Total expenditure for 2022–23 was \$1,620,958.13 (excluding GST).

Expenditure	Total	Expenditure paid to	Amount
Advertising agencies	Nil		Nil
Market research organisations	Nil		Nil
Polling organisations	Nil		Nil
Direct mail organisations	Nil		Nil
		Carat	\$1,259,792.47
		LinkedIn	\$2,292.46
		Facebook	\$39,259.88
		Google	\$125,855.48
Media advertising organisations	\$1,620,958.13	Initiative Media Australia	\$132,734.25
		Independent and general media	\$12,585.88
		Department of the Premier and Cabinet	\$12,117.71
		National Retail Association	\$36,320.00
		TOTAL	\$1,620,958.13

Unauthorised use of purchasing cards

In 2022–23 there were 33 instances where a State Government purchasing card was used for personal use. The aggregate amount of personal use expenditure was \$1,032.39. All expenditure was recovered by 30 June 2023. No disciplinary actions were instigated by the notifiable authority during the reporting period.

Act of grace payments

No act of grace payments were made in 2022–23.

Public sector standards and ethical codes

In accordance with section 21 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, the department complies with standards of merit, equity, and probity in relation to human resources activities. No breaches of the Western Australian Public Sector Standards in Human Resources (Employment Standard, Grievance Standard or Discipline Standard) were lodged in 2022–23.



Recordkeeping

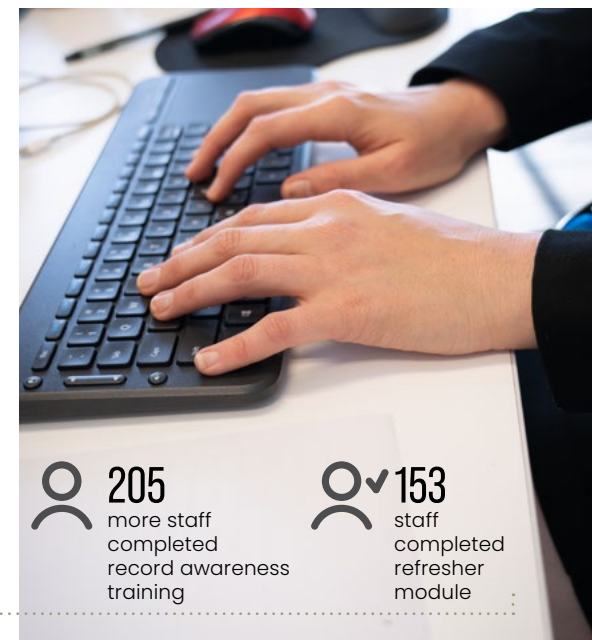
We are committed to continuously improving our recordkeeping culture, tools, and practices to ensure compliance with the *State Records Act 2000* and best business outcomes for the department. In line with the State Records Commission Standard 2, Principle 6, the following information is provided.

Our recordkeeping manual covers the broad range of recordkeeping requirements necessary to ensure staff create, manage, and maintain departmental records (regardless of format) to support business needs and ensure the



department and its staff meet the legislative requirements in our Recordkeeping Plan. In 2022–23 record awareness training across the department was completed by 205 staff, resulting in 1,062 department employees successfully completing this training to date.

These figures include regional staff and staff of the Office of the Appeals Convenor. A records awareness refresher training module is available. Once users have successfully completed recordkeeping awareness training, they will be required to complete the refresher module every two years. To date, 153 staff have completed this training.



Government policy requirements

Substantive equality

Our whole-of-department commitment to substantive equity is built into the way we deliver water and environmental management. All processes associated with our management tasks and planning practices are developed with diverse input from the community and stakeholders. This development process features broad public invitations across multiple platforms to comment on draft documents.

We aim to implement substantive equality measures across all operations and departmental



functions as well as make our services available to all in a form that meets diverse, individual, and cultural needs. Our equity and diversity panel provides oversight on developing and integrating substantive equality strategies into our overall equity framework.

We are committed to providing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people within the department and through our business. We are also strengthening sustainable relationships with Aboriginal communities and respect their knowledge and deep connection to Western Australia's land and waterways.

We continue to listen to, learn from, and build partnerships with Traditional Owners across the state. As part of our reconciliation commitment, we



incorporate and consider the social and cultural wellbeing as well as rights of Aboriginal people when working on Country with Traditional Owners. The department incorporates Acknowledgement of Country protocols into all official meetings and events to recognise Aboriginal peoples' spiritual and cultural connection to lands and waters.

► Jawun executive experience

The department encourages staff to deepen their experience and understanding of the state's Aboriginal culture and communities, and continues to support employee participation in the Jawun program.

Jawun provides a professional development opportunity for government sector staff to go on secondment and contribute their skills to support Aboriginal economic development while learning about Aboriginal culture and history.

In 2022–23 two secondments were completed by departmental staff – partnering with the Murujuga

Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) in Dampier in the Pilbara, and the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC) at Fitzroy Crossing.

One secondee joined MAC with a goal of ensuring all workplace health and safety (WHS) documents were fit for purpose across organisational operations. The secondee at KALACC focused on assessing its organisational capabilities and recommending new approaches to enhance governance and communications.

MAC, KALACC and both secondees spoke highly of the experience, with all parties gaining and sharing valuable skills and knowledge as a result of working together.

WA Multicultural Policy Framework

The department's inaugural [Multicultural Plan 2020–22](#) concluded this financial year, delivering tangible actions against three key outcomes: a welcoming and inclusive workplace culture, culturally appropriate services that meet our clients' needs, and engagement with culturally diverse communities

Guided by the principles and desired outcomes established in the State Government's [Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework](#), our plan committed to actions spanning policy, programs, and services areas of our business – seeking to promote economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation.

As of 30 June 2023, we were in the process of providing a full report on the outcomes of our first multicultural plan to the Office of Multicultural

Affairs. We were also working on our Multicultural Plan 2023–26.

Multicultural Policy Framework: Key achievements

Department-wide census

We worked closely with Edith Cowan University to run our first DWERiversity census – helping us to better understand our diverse workforce's experience with inclusion. The results of this census were published in our 2020–21 annual report.

In 2023, our census program was replaced by the WA Public Sector Census. This inaugural census ran from 13 March to 12 April 2023, with 753 departmental employees participating (equating to 76 per cent of our staff). This is the largest response rate by our workforce to a survey to date. Detailed analysis of the department's data will be undertaken later in calendar year 2023.

Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work Policy

During financial year 2022–23, the department released a revised Code of Conduct and a new Dignity at Work Policy – helping create inclusive and safe workspaces across our business. These documents also form part of our onboarding and performance discussions for all staff and underpin our training and development activities.

Digital dashboard

Our diversity dashboard was released as part of our corporate reporting in May 2023 and provides a daily snapshot of how we are progressing against our diversity employment targets (as set out by the Public Sector Commission).

In financial year 2022–23, we reached our diversity target of 15.5 per cent – with the number of staff identifying as culturally and linguistically diverse increasing from 119 to 164.

VegetablesWA partnership

The department is committed to providing targeted information packages in languages for key groups. Through a joint project with VegetablesWA, we produced a Vietnamese translation of the *Gnangara Groundwater Allocation Plan*, as well as a letter for licensees, with the documents distributed by VegetablesWA to Vietnamese growers in the Gnangara area.



Inclusive access

The ongoing delivery of our [Disability access and inclusion plan](#) demonstrates the department's commitment to an inclusive public service. The five-year plan, due for renewal after calendar year 2023, recognises the rights of all employees to access services, information, and facilities, and to participate in community consultation. It helps us to meet – and surpass – obligations under the *Disability Services Act 1993*, the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, and the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

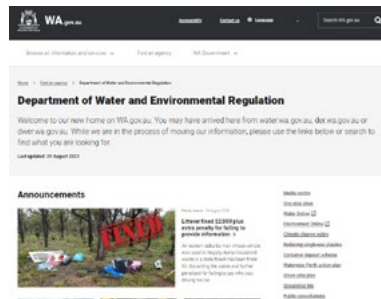
Over the year our workforce diversity continued to grow, with the number of people with disability increasing from 31 to 42 – representing 4 per cent of our workforce.

Inclusive access highlights

In 2022–23 the department undertook significant work across platforms and services, including:

Website migration

Migrated all digital content to the www.wa.gov.au platform – enhancing accessibility of our information and creating an inclusive digital environment.



New office

Facilities upgrades and office refits at our Prime House head office and new regional office in Bunbury to ensure accessibility, including additional elevators, wider walkways, adjustable desks, and accessible parking.



New Code of Conduct

Published our revised *Code of Conduct* and a new *Dignity at Work Policy* – helping create inclusive and safe workspaces across our business.



Occupational health, safety, and injury management

As a department, we take the health and safety of our staff seriously and we are committed to ensuring a safe and healthy workplace. Our Health and Safety Committee meets quarterly and regularly consults with regional offices through health and safety subcommittees comprising health and safety representatives, employee representatives, and management representatives.

These groups focus on resolving systemic safety issues and continuously improving our occupational safety and health systems, processes, and performance. Our Health and Safety Committee is also responsible for safety risk and hazard identification and awareness. This includes ensuring that our department-wide workplace health and safety (WHS) action plan is implemented and meets its targets.

The committees, which include employee representatives, are integral to effective WHS consultation within our department. The locations and details of our health and safety representatives, as well as associated documents and forms, are available to all staff through our intranet.

In 2022–23, we launched our [Thrive at work: Wellbeing strategy 2023–26](#). Supported by our senior executive team, the strategy addresses three key WHS areas comprising imbalanced job design, dignity at work, and job uncertainty.

► Manager and supervisor training in occupational health and safety, and injury management

In 2022–23 the department continued to provide onsite training for managers and employees. The high volume of managers trained in financial year 2021–22 meant training during 2022–23 was conducted on a case-by-case basis, with specific focus on issues associated with business units. About 50 managers were assisted under this training model.

All managers and employees are required to undertake WHS training every two years; this training is easily accessible through the department's online learning system.

Throughout the financial year, we continued to train our health and safety representatives to ensure efficient safety standards and appointed additional WHS representatives to work closely with management teams. These voluntary roles include work site inspections for potential hazards, incident investigation, and communications with department staff.

► Mechanisms for consultation with employees

Our primary mechanism for consultation with employees is through our health and safety committees and representatives. We also have an incident management reporting system in place which clearly articulates notification protocols and escalation points. Our online platforms are further means to ensure effective, timely and inclusive engagement with our staff, to ask for their feedback on department policy and procedures, and to update and announce events occurring in our safety and wellbeing areas.

► Commitment to return employees back to work after injury

Our comprehensive workers' compensation and injury management policy aligns with State Government guidelines, helping injured employees to return to work as soon as medically appropriate. This system ensures we can intervene promptly and effectively in injury management, enabling injured employees to remain at work or return to work at the earliest possible time. This system and our return-to-work programs are compliant with the requirements of the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981* and have been reviewed and approved by RiskCover, our department's insurer.

► Performance

Ensuring the health and safety of our workforce is paramount; our responsibilities are primarily set out under the Public Sector Commissioner's Circular [Code of Practice: Occupational Safety and Health in the Western Australian Public Sector](#), as well as the requirements of the *Work Health Safety Act 2020* and the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*. We comply with the code and the requirements of the Acts. Our performance against targets set in the code is demonstrated in the table below.



Measures	Results 2020-21	Results 2021-22	Results 2022-23	Targets	Comments towards targets
Number of fatalities	0	0	0	0	The department had 0 fatalities
Lost time injuries and disease incidence rate	0.3	0.1	0.2	0	While the number of lost time injuries is low, we are continuously reviewing better and more efficient ways of managing risk and injuries in the workplace to reach our target of zero time lost to injuries.
Lost time injury and severity rate	0	0.1	0	0	Severe claims are measured against those which have lost 60 days or more.
Percentage of injured workers returned to work within 13 weeks	100%	99.9%	100%	100%	Injured employees must return to work in some capacity before 13 weeks, with restrictions on work in the original area of employment or other meaningful work.
Percentage of injured workers returned to work within 26 weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	We have put strategies in place to ensure all claimants return to work within 13 weeks, as guided by the clinical advice.
Percentage of managers trained in occupational safety, health and injury management responsibilities, including refresher training within three years	Online training modules for managers 75%	Online training modules for managers 92%	Online training modules for managers 90%	100%	We will continue to provide injury management training, with all managers required to complete this. Refresher training will occur for online modules every two years.

Complaints procedure

Feedback on our service delivery is welcome and is used to improve our current offerings and ensure we consistently deliver the highest quality of service that meets the needs of our stakeholders and customers.

Our [service charter](#) guides our relationship with everyone we work with. We have a dedicated [feedback and complaints portal](#) where stakeholders and customers are encouraged to bring matters to the department's attention so we can action, track, and monitor trends.

In line with our service charter, we received 22 complaints via our online complaints and feedback mechanism from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

The complaints received ranged from:

- not relating to the department's service delivery
- providing direct feedback to faults in the department's website
- Water Online, Pollution Watch, and EPA submissions requiring redirection
- various operational matters including air pollution data and regulatory functions, including sprinkler rosters.

These submissions were actioned and closed. In the timeframe recorded, no items are yet to be finalised.

This data does not include complaints managed under statutory processes within the department's remit, such as noise, dust, and littering complaints.



Freedom of information

It is our commitment to make information available to the public as soon as possible and at the lowest possible cost.

In accordance with section 10 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (FOI Act), a person has a right to be given access to documents of an agency subject to, and in accordance with, the FOI Act.

For the 2022–23 period, we received 299 FOI applications. Seven of these applications progressed to an internal review and four were reviewed externally by the Office of the Information Commissioner.

This financial year:

- the average time taken to process FOI applications was 41 days (the mandatory requirement under the FOI Act is 45 days)
- we received five applications for personal information
- we received 294 applications for non-personal information
- in addition to the 299 FOI applications received by the department, we handled a further 46 consultations from other agencies.

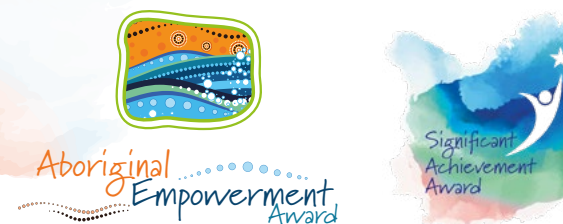


Woola Awards 2023

On 23 June 2023, the department held its third annual Woola Awards – coinciding with the United Nations Public Service Day. Woola – the Noongar word for ‘shout of praise’ – sets the tone for this event, with individuals and teams from across our organisation celebrated for their contributions.

Awards are presented across three categories, comprising:

- Significant Achievement Award
- Aboriginal Empowerment Award
- Recognition of Service Award.



This year, 147 staff members were recognised for their continuous service in the public sector, while the remaining awards highlighted outstanding contributions at work and for living our values. The awards were presented by our Ministers, Hon Simone McGurk MLA and Hon Reece Whitby MLA. The 2023 Significant Achievement Award was presented to our Kimberley Floods Recovery Program Team, acknowledging its tireless efforts to support those communities impacted by this devastating natural disaster.



We are committed to ensuring our employees feel valued as we know this directly impacts the level of service then delivered to our stakeholders, business units, and the community. We congratulate all nominees and winners of this year’s awards and look forward to the 2024 ceremony.

Appendices

Appendix A: Legislation

Legislation administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation as at 30 June 2023

Carbon Rights Act 2003

Contaminated Sites Act 2003

Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947

Environmental Protection Act 1986

Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2020

Environmental Protection (Landfill) Levy Act 1998

Litter Act 1979 (the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is the agency principally assisting the Minister for Environment in the administration of this Act assisted by the Keep Australia Beautiful Council [Western Australia])

Metropolitan Arterial Drainage Act 1982

Metropolitan Water Authority Act 1982

Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909

National Environmental Protection Council (Western Australia) Act 1996

Plumbers Licensing Act 1995 (except Part 5A which is administered by the Minister for Commerce principally assisted by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) – alternative citations are *Water Services Coordination Act 1995* and *Water Licensing Act 1995*

Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 (the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is the agency principally assisting the Minister for Environment in the administration of this Act assisted by the Waste Authority)

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Act 2007 (the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is the agency principally assisting the Minister for Environment in the administration of this Act assisted by the Waste Authority)

Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984

Water Agencies Restructure (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 1995

Water Corporations Act 1995

Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2006

Water Resources Legislation Amendment Act 2007

Water Services Act 2012

Water Services Coordination Act 1995

Water Services Licensing Act 1995 (also called *Plumbers Licensing Act 1995*) (except Part 5A, which the Department of Commerce administers)

Waterways Conservation Act 1976

Regulations administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation as at 30 June 2023

Clean Air (Determination of Air Impurities in Gases Discharged to the Atmosphere) Regulations 1983	Environmental Protection (Metal Coating) Regulations 2001	Noise Abatement (Noise Labelling of Equipment) Regulations (No. 2) 1985
Contaminated Sites Regulations 2006	Environmental Protection (NEPM-NPI) Regulations 1998	Plumbers Licensing and Plumbing Standards Regulations 2000
Country Areas Water Supply (Clearing Licence) Regulations 1981	Environmental Protection (NEPM-UPM) Regulations 2013	Rights in Water and Irrigation Regulations 2000
Environmental Protection (Abattoirs) Regulations 2001	Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment Regulations 2019
Environmental Protection (Abrasive Blasting) Regulations 1998	Environmental Protection (Packaged Fertiliser) Regulations 2010	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (Container Deposit Scheme) Regulations 2019
Environmental Protection (Bilateral Agreements) Regulations 2021	Environmental Protection (Petrol) Regulations 1999	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Regulations 2008
Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004	Environmental Protection (Plastic Bag) Regulations 2018	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008
Environmental Protection (Concrete Batching and Cement Product Manufacturing) Regulations 1998	Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018	Water Agencies (Entry Warrant) Regulations 1985
Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004	Environmental Protection (Recovery of Vapours from the Transfer of Organic Liquids) Regulations 1995	Water Agencies (Infringements) Regulations 1994
Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021	Environmental Protection (Rural Landfill) Regulations 2002	Water Corporations (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2013
Environmental Protection (Fibre Reinforced Plastics) Regulations 1998	Environmental Protection (Solid Fuel Burning Appliances and Firewood Supply) Regulations 1998	Water Services Regulations 2013
Environmental Protection (Goldfields Residential Areas) (Sulfur Dioxide) Regulations 2003	Environmental Protection (Unauthorised Discharges) Regulations 2004	Water Services Coordination Regulations 1996
Environmental Protection (Kwinana) (Atmospheric Wastes) Regulations 1992	Environmental Protection Regulations 1987	Water Services (Water Corporations Charges) Regulations 2014
	Litter Regulations 1981	Waterways Conservation Regulations 1981

Other subsidiary legislation affecting our activities

For all other subsidiary legislation including bylaws, notices, declarations, proclamations, approvals, exemptions, orders, policy, pollution control areas, vesting orders, irrigation districts, standards and guidelines, please visit

www.legislation.wa.gov.au.

Other key legislation affecting our activities

In the performance of our functions, the department complied with the following laws:

Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972

Auditor General Act 2006

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003

Disability Services Act 1993

Equal Opportunity Act 1984

Financial Management Act 2006

Freedom of Information Act 1992

Government Employees Housing Act 1964

Industrial Relations Act 1979

National Environmental Protection Council Act 1997
(Commonwealth)

Long Service Leave Act 1958

Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993

Native Title Act 1993 (Commonwealth)

Procurement Act 2020

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003

Public Sector Management Act 1994

Salaries and Allowances Act 1975

State Records Act 2000

Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981

Work Health and Safety Act 2020

Appendix B: Shortened forms

Term	Definition
AAQ NEPM	National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure
AWEAG	Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
C&D	Construction and demolition
CAWI	Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Interests
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i>
EV	Electric vehicle
E-waste	Electronic waste
FOGO	Food organics and garden organics
HHW	Household hazardous waste
KPI	Key performance indicator
FOI	Freedom of information
JTSI	Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation

Term	Definition
KABC	Keep Australia Beautiful Council
KALACC	Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre
KTLA	Karajarri Traditional Lands Association
LGA	Local government authority
MAR	Mandatory Auditor Report
MAC	Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
RIWI Act	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i>
SERS	Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategies
SGIP	State Groundwater Investigations Program
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RtR	Road to Reuse
UHI	Urban heat island
WARR Act	<i>Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007</i>
WHS	Work Health Safety
WIR	Water Information Reporting
YOUNG	Youth Outreach, Understanding, and Networking Group

Contact us

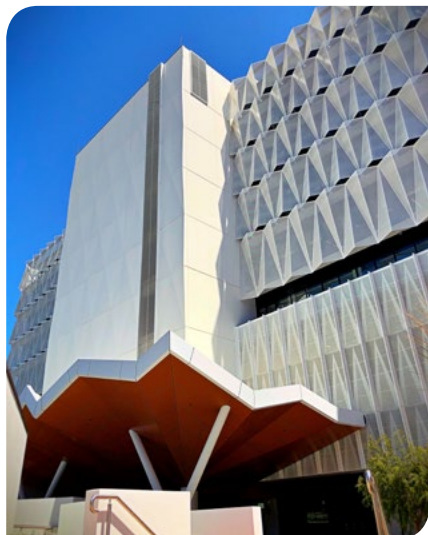
Head office

Prime House

8 Davidson Terrace
Joondalup WA 6027

Locked Bag 10
Joondalup DC WA 6919

Ph: 08 6364 7000
Fax: 08 6364 7001
info@dwer.wa.gov.au
wa.gov.au/dwer



Regional offices

Swan Avon region

► Victoria Park regional office

7 Ellam Street
Victoria Park WA 6100

Ph: 08 6250 8000

ellamreception@dwer.wa.gov.au



► Swan measurement office

105 Kew Street
Welshpool WA 6106

Ph: 08 9355 6263

swanavonmeasurement@dwer.wa.gov.au

Kwinana Peel region

► Kwinana Peel regional office

107 Breakwater Parade
Mandurah WA 6210

PO Box 332
Mandurah WA 6210

Ph: 08 9550 4222

peel@dwer.wa.gov.au



South West region

► Bunbury regional office

71 McCombe Road
Bunbury WA 6230

PO Box 261
Bunbury WA 6231

Ph: 08 9726 4111

bunbury.admin@dwer.wa.gov.au



► Geographe Capes district office

Suite 1A/72
Duchess Street
Busselton WA 6280

PO Box 269
Busselton WA 6280

Ph: 08 9781 0111

busselton.admin@dwer.wa.gov.au



► Warren Blackwood district office

c/o Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions
Brain Street
Manjimup WA 6258

Ph: 08 9726 4111

bunbury.admin@dwer.wa.gov.au

Goldfields region

► Kalgoorlie regional office

32 Brookman Street
Kalgoorlie WA 6430

(co-located with Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions office)

Locked Bag 10
Joondalup DC WA 6919

Ph: 08 9000 1806

info@dwer.wa.gov.au

Mid West Gascoyne region

► Geraldton regional office

20 Gregory Street
Geraldton WA 6530

PO Box 73
Geraldton WA 6531

Ph: 08 9965 7400

midwestgascoyne@dwer.wa.gov.au



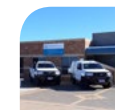
► Carnarvon regional office

211 Robinson Street
Carnarvon WA 6701

PO Box 81
Carnarvon WA 6701

Ph: 08 9965 7400

midwestgascoyne@dwer.wa.gov.au



Feedback form

Your feedback on our 2022–23 annual report would be greatly appreciated. We will use your comments to help improve the clarity and presentation of our publications. Thank you for your input.

- Did the report help you understand the department, its purpose, services and performance?

not at all | not really | somewhat | yes | absolutely

- Did you find the design and presentation functional and effective?

not at all | not really | somewhat | yes | absolutely

- Was the report clear, concise and easy to read?

not at all | not really | somewhat | yes | absolutely

- Did you find the structural format of the report simple and logical?

not at all | not really | somewhat | yes | absolutely

Please return completed feedback forms to:

Corporate Communications

Email: dwer.publishing@dwer.wa.gov.au

or

Mail to:

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
Locked Bag 10, Joondalup DC WA 6919



North West region

► Broome regional office

9 Napier Terrace
(co-located within Department of Transport office)

Broome WA 6725

PO Box 1993

Broome WA 6725

Ph: 08 9157 9810

info@dwer.wa.gov.au

► Karratha regional office

The Quarter
Level 2, 25 Sharpe Avenue
Karratha WA 6714

Locked Bag 10
Joondalup DC WA 6919

Ph: 08 9144 0200

karratha@dwer.wa.gov.au

► Kununurra regional office

27 Victoria Highway
Kununurra WA 6743

PO Box 625

Kununurra WA 6743

Ph: 08 9166 4100

kununurra@dwer.wa.gov.au



South Coast region

► Esperance regional office

92 Dempster Street
Esperance WA 6450

PO Box 234

Esperance WA 6450

info@dwer.wa.gov.au

► Albany regional office

5 Bevan Street
Albany WA 6330

PO Box 525

Albany WA 6331

Ph: 08 9841 0100

southcoast@dwer.wa.gov.au







Department of Water and Environmental Regulation | Prime House 8 Davidson Terrace Joondalup WA 6027 | Telephone: 08 6364 7000 | Fax: 08 6364 7001 | wa.gov.au/dwer



LinkedIn



X