

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

APRIL 2023 - NOVEMBER 2024

A **Coordinator General function** has been established within the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation over 2024. This function will coordinate approvals reform efforts across the Council of Regulators, improve customer service and cross agency collaboration, provide for better oversight and accountability and a strong link to key projects also requiring access to industrial land.

In response to an independent review of environmental approvals (2023), led by Dr Paul Vogel and David McFerran, **over 75% of the 39 recommendations** to Government has been progressed or completed to transform approvals processes, systems, structures and stakeholder management.

Key actions completed include:

- A new Perth CBD hub for the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) providing improved engagement with the Board and the Agency.
- A renewed graduate program, recruitment strategy, training pathway and mentoring program at the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation ensuring high quality assessment officers who have clear priorities, a collaborative approach and the ability to make risk-based decisions.
- Removal of barriers for the processing of minor regional and local planning scheme amendments.

The Coordinator General is overseeing the establishment of **cross-sector triage teams** to improve customer experience, collaboration between key agencies and facilitate approvals. **76% of recruitment** to these teams has been completed.

The ***Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2024*** came into effect on the **28 November 2024** and delivers on several Vogel/McFerran recommendations.

This legislation enables:

- parallel processing, allowing proponents to obtain other approvals while environmental impact is assessed, noting that planning decisions are not included
- expansion of the EPA Board to nine members with the skills and specific disciplines important to the functions of the EPA
- empowers the Minister for Environment to issue a Statement of Expectation to the independent EPA helping it to better understand the Government's priorities
- reduces unnecessary appeals while retaining reasonable rights of appeal across the system
- maintains strong environmental protections with penalties to double for carrying out works without approval.

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Parts of the *Planning and Development Amendment Act 2023* came into effect on **1 March 2024** and **1 July 2024**. A key change from 1 March 2024, saw a new permanent significant development pathway introduced, with the Western Australian Planning Commission as the decision maker. The implemented changes focus on streamlining processes, reducing unnecessary red tape, improving efficiencies in planning processes and decision-making to support the delivery of housing.

Environment Online – introduced Industry Regulation (IR) services to the platform in November 2024, providing functionality for IR that will lead to full integration in future releases.

Fast Track Mining Approvals Strategy 2 (Resources Online) – Resources Online

is a new and secure digital solution designed to improve the efficiency of the environmental applications under the *Mining Act 1978* and State petroleum legislation.

In November 2024, Resources Online was launched, featuring a comprehensive first release aimed at enhancing both internal and external portals. This release introduced key functionalities, including Programme of Work applications, and integration with DEMIRS spatial services. Additionally, it incorporated the WA Relationship Authorisation Manager to facilitate smoother user transitions. The solution delivers significant quality-of-life improvements for both industry stakeholders and the DEMIRS system. The release will also enable a trial of Eligible Mining Activity notices to commence in early 2025, which will allow certain mining activities to proceed after notice is served, avoiding the need for an environmental assessment.

CONTRIBUTIONS

This report is a collaboration between:

Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Department of Health

Small Business Development Corporation

Department of Treasury

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