



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**

Assurance program

2025-26

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
July 2025

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July 2025

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1. Purpose

As Western Australia's primary water and environmental regulator, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has wide-ranging statutory and regulatory responsibilities across the environment and water legislative portfolios.

The department manages and monitors compliance with relevant legislation through the delivery of assurance activities. Assurance activities form a critical part of the department's regulatory cycle and provide our stakeholders with confidence that our legislation is achieving the anticipated environmental and water outcomes for Western Australia.

This document sets out the department's assurance program for 2025-2026.

2. Scope

This document outlines the department's assurance focus areas, sub programs and targets relating to the legislation listed in section four for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

This document does not address the department's response to any breaches of legislation identified through assurance activities, which is guided by the department's [Compliance and enforcement policy](#).

3. Context

The department's Strategic plan 2022-2026 sets out how we work and outlines three primary goals to:

1. Improve our regulatory capability
2. Better manage the environment
3. Pursue strategic solutions to our big environmental challenges.

Assurance monitoring is an important component of improving our regulatory capability. Information obtained from assurance activities, such as inspections and audits, are vital input into the regulatory cycle, providing valuable data to encourage continual improvement and enhance public health, environmental and water resource outcomes.

Information from assurance monitoring may be used to identify emerging issues and risk, to improve statutory instruments and to guide development and modification of policies, guidelines and regulations.

Assurance promotion and monitoring are both elements of the department's strategy to ensure stakeholders meet their regulatory requirements and support better management of the environment. The department works to ensure we educate and support stakeholders in understanding their obligations as well as undertaking activities to improve and modify compliance behaviours. Assurance promotion and

monitoring may assist in the effective implementation of strategic solutions to environmental challenges.

Find more information about our compliance and enforcement policy and our Strategic plan 2022-2026 on our website (www.dwer.wa.gov.au).

4. Legislation

This program outlines compliance monitoring activities related to the following legislation:

- *Environmental Protection Act 1986 (EP Act)*
- *Contaminated Sites Act 2003 (CS Act)*
- *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 (WARR Act)*
- *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 (RiWI Act)*
- *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*
- *Metropolitan Arterial Drainage Act 1982*
- *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909*
- *Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984*
- *Water Corporations Act 1995*
- *Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2006*
- *Water Services Act 2012*
- *Waterways Conservation Act 1976*
- *Environmental Protection (Darling Range Bauxite Mining Proposals) Exemption Order 2023*

5. Developing our program

Our assurance focus areas, sub programs and targets are selected to achieve the best environmental and water resource outcomes while making the most beneficial use of available resources.

Development of our assurance program includes several key steps to ensure effective management and monitoring of compliance with relevant legislation. The primary components include:

1. **Risk assessment:** Identify potential non-compliance and operational risks to prioritise assurance activities.
2. **Prioritisation:** Focus on high-risk areas to allocate resources efficiently and effectively.
3. **Continuous monitoring and review:** Regularly review the effectiveness of assurance plans and adjust as needed to address new risks.

In addressing these components, the department's [Guideline: Operational risk assessment for assurance activities](#), provides further detail on how risk will be embedded into planning our assurance activities. We use risk assessment to inform

the scope, frequency and type of compliance monitoring activities and priorities for the development of our annual program.

The assurance program is developed using the best information available at the time of its preparation but it is not possible to predict all emerging issues or risks which will occur throughout the year. The program is continually reviewed and the focus areas, targets and sub programs it outlines may be amended to reflect shifting priorities or the redirection of resources during the year.

6. 2025-2026 Assurance program

This program outlines our proposed assurance activities for 2025-2026 and provides transparency to both regulated entities and the community. It contains general assurance sub programs and targets, strategic assurance activities and focus areas.

Table 1 outlines the general assurance programs related to activities that are subject to approvals or requirements under relevant legislation.

Table 2 provides a summary of strategic assurance activities.

Table 3 outlines our selected focus areas for 2025-26.

Table 1: 2025-2026 General assurance programs and targets

Sub program	Target description	2025-26 Target
Ministerial statement compliance for approved proposals under Part IV EP Act	Number of ministerial statement audits completed	40 audits
	Review of Compliance Assessment Reports (CARs)	40 reviews
	Review of Compliance Assessment Plans (CAPs)	90 per cent of CAPs received are reviewed
Environmental licences and works approvals for works approvals and licences granted under Part V EP Act	70 inspections or audits completed	100 per cent of audits completed
	Rectification of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring	40 per cent of identified non compliances rectified within two months
Waste levy compliance for premises that are subject to levy requirements or exemptions under the WARR Act	100 inspections or audits of premises subject to waste levy and associated industries	100 per cent of inspections completed as planned
	Rectification of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring	40 per cent of identified non compliances rectified within two months
Native vegetation clearing compliance For activities that are subject to regulation or exemption under Part V Division 2 of the EP Act	Investigation and close out of reported instances of illegal clearing	100 reports investigated and addressed
Alcoa assurance program Compliance with the <i>Environmental Protection (Darling Range Bauxite Mining Proposals) Exemption Order 2023</i>	Inspections completed to check compliance with exemption order and mining and management program 2023-27 conditions	Inspections completed in accordance with approved plan
	Number of Alcoa's self-reported notifications responded to	100 per cent of notifications responded to and addressed
Environmental statutory notice compliance Statutory notices issued under the EP Act	Assess compliance with active Environmental Protection Notices (EPN) and Prevention Notices (PN)	80 per cent of active EPN and PN audited

Sub program	Target description	2025-26 Target
Water licence compliance	Desktop audits of water licences impacting high risk or regionally significant water resources	60 audits
	Field-based audits of water licences impacting high risk or regionally significant water resources	60 audits
	Compliance reviews at licence renewal	90 per cent of renewals have compliance review

Table 2: 2025-2026 Strategic environmental and water assurance programs

Program	Target description	Outcome reported
Environmental response	Provision of 24/7 service to report pollution Environmental and pollution response services and support to the state under the <i>Emergency Management Act 2005</i> .	Number of reports made to Environment Watch Number of incidents responded to by the emergency response team
Light industry program LIP webpage	Target of 60 inspections undertaken in partnership with participating local governments.	Number of inspections completed
Minor pollutants program	Target of 24 unannounced inspections undertaken.	Number of inspections completed
Controlled waste for activities under the regulations	Investigation of potential breaches of the Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004	Number of investigations
Single use plastics WA Plan for Plastics webpage	Investigation of complaints received from members of the public regarding single use plastics program compliance.	Total number of complaints received Total number of complaints responded to
	Proactive contact of businesses and individuals subject to exemption from the regulations.	Number of businesses contacted
	Target of 28 unannounced audits to monitor compliance with Stage 1 and 2 items.	Number of unannounced audits undertaken
Container deposit scheme Scheme website	Investigations or inquiries commenced following receipt of referrals alleging supply of beverages without a current supply agreement with Western Australia Return Recycle Renew Limited (WARRRL) Audits of retail outlets in metro and regional areas	Number of referrals received Number of investigations or inquiries undertaken

Program	Target description	Outcome reported
E-waste ban E-waste ban website	Target of 20 audits or inspections undertaken to monitor compliance with the prohibition of the disposal of regulated e-waste to landfill	Number of audits or inspections undertaken
Water assurance – south coast region	Compliance monitoring of licences issued under Rights in Water and Irrigation Act (RiWI) in the following priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esperance town water supply scheme • Lower Great Southern town water supply scheme (includes Albany groundwater, Angove weir, Denmark River weir and Quickup dam) • Bremer Bay town water supply scheme 	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
Water assurance – South West region	Compliance monitoring of licences issued under RiWI in the following priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myalup irrigated agriculture precinct • Yarragadee aquifer in the Busselton-Capel and Blackwood groundwater areas 	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
	Investigation of authorised and unauthorised construction of surface water storage and take of water in Warren-Donnelly area	Number of investigations undertaken
Water assurance-Swan Avon region	Compliance monitoring of licences issued under RiWI focusing on over-abstraction in the following priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gngangara plan area – focusing on fully or over-allocated groundwater areas within Wanneroo and Swan groundwater areas • Gingin plan area – focusing on fully or over-allocated groundwater areas and surface water resources of the Lennard and Gingin brooks 	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
Water assurance-Kwinana Peel region	Audit of compliance with daytime sprinkler restrictions in the following rural residential areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serpentine • Byford 3 • Perth – Leederville boundary 	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
	Audit of licences held by schools to identify over abstraction	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
	Audit of licences in proximity to Bibra Lake (e.g. City of Cockburn, Adventure World, Murdoch University)	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken

Program	Target description	Outcome reported
	Audit of licences under 26D-licence to construct wells in the North Dandalup rural residential area	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
Water assurance – Mid West Gascoyne region	Compliance monitoring of licences issued under RiWI in the following priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subarea A Gascoyne groundwater area (Carnarvon) • Arrowsmith groundwater area • Jurien and Exmouth groundwater area 	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
Water assurance – North West region	Compliance monitoring of licences issued under RiWI in the following priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Pilbara water supply scheme • Port Hedland water supply scheme • Rio Tinto Iron Ore Yandi and Hope Downs 1 • La Grange irrigation area • Broome Town water supply • Derby Town water supply • Liveringa surface water licence 	Number of desktop and on-site audits undertaken
Water assurance – Compass	Implement system improvements for Compass alerts. Implement improved processes to triage and manage water incidents. Address the backlog of water incidents.	Number of water incidents in backlog Number of water incidents actioned

Table 3: 2025-2026 Assurance focus areas

Focus area	Description
Contaminated sites	Continue implementation of planning review recommendations from the Streamline WA project. Implement a project to progress outstanding Form 1s – reports of a known or suspected contaminated site. Implement a project to assess compliance of high priority 'possibly contaminated investigation required' or contaminated 'remediation required' – with site classifications.
Noise	Provision of expert support to relevant state and local government departments for advice and support relating the <i>Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997</i> . Progress outstanding Regulation 17 applications to exceed noise limits.

Focus area	Description
Air quality	<p>Investigate ambient air quality in a range of settings, including community areas that are in the vicinity of industrial premises. The following surveillance monitoring campaigns and related work are planned for 2025-26:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinjarra air quality campaign – reporting of monitoring campaign results and community engagement • North-West survey – remote sensing survey of gaseous pollutants close to industrial premises • Kwinana Industrial Area monitoring to measure priority pollutants in the airshed • Regional particle monitoring – implement technology updates for regional stations. • Deployment of cutting-edge remote sensing technology – portable LiDAR and gas sensing and imaging (SIGIS). <p>In addition, the department's statewide network of permanent monitoring stations that measure <i>National Environment Protection Measure</i> (NEPM) criteria pollutants will continue to provide continuous data for community benefit.</p>
Illegal dumping	<p>Proactive campaigns focusing on identified illegal dumping hotspots.</p> <p>Continued engagement with charitable bins and recycled clothing industry.</p> <p>Assistance to regional local governments to combat increasing illegal dumping trends.</p>
Water assurance – West Pilbara	Review approvals associated with the Millstream/Harding Dam and the Bungaroo aquifer to assess compliance with RiWI Act and EP Act approvals and determine whether expected environmental outcomes of approvals are being achieved.
Water Assurance – West Pilbara	Review approvals associated with Karijini to assess compliance with RiWI Act and EP Act approvals and determine whether expected environmental outcomes of approvals are being achieved.
Water Assurance – Kimberley	Ord Irrigation Area – review construction of irrigation levee and potential for increased flood risk in the area, including into the Northern Territory. Assess compliance with RiWI Act and EP Act approvals and whether risks are being adequately mitigated.
Water Assurance – Alcoa exemption order (Willowdale and Huntley mines)	Undertake on-site and desktop audits of Alcoa's mining operations to determine compliance with the Environmental Protection (Darling Range Bauxite mining) Exemption Order 2023 and represent the department at relevant bauxite strategic committees, contributing to oversight and policy development related to bauxite mining practices.
Water Assurance – Alcoa Pinjarra, Wagerup and Kwinana refineries.	Desktop and on-site audit of water use associated with RiWI Act surface and ground water licences associated with the Alcoa's Pinjarra, Wagerup and Kwinana refineries.

7. Reporting

The department provides an overview of the outcomes of assurance activities quarterly in its [Regulatory performance reports](#). Additionally, the 2025-26 Assurance program close out report will be published at the conclusion of the program detailing the department's assurance achievements and outcomes.