GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**

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ANNUAL REPORT

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
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Front cover: Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN) staff Nikki Francis conducting point-intercept cover survey in native grassland on Muntulgura Guruma country, Pilbara region, for the WA Vegetation Extent (WAVE) project. Photo: Kirrily Blaycock (TERN Australia)

Statement of compliance

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Hon Don Punch MLA
Minister for Water;
Climate Resilience

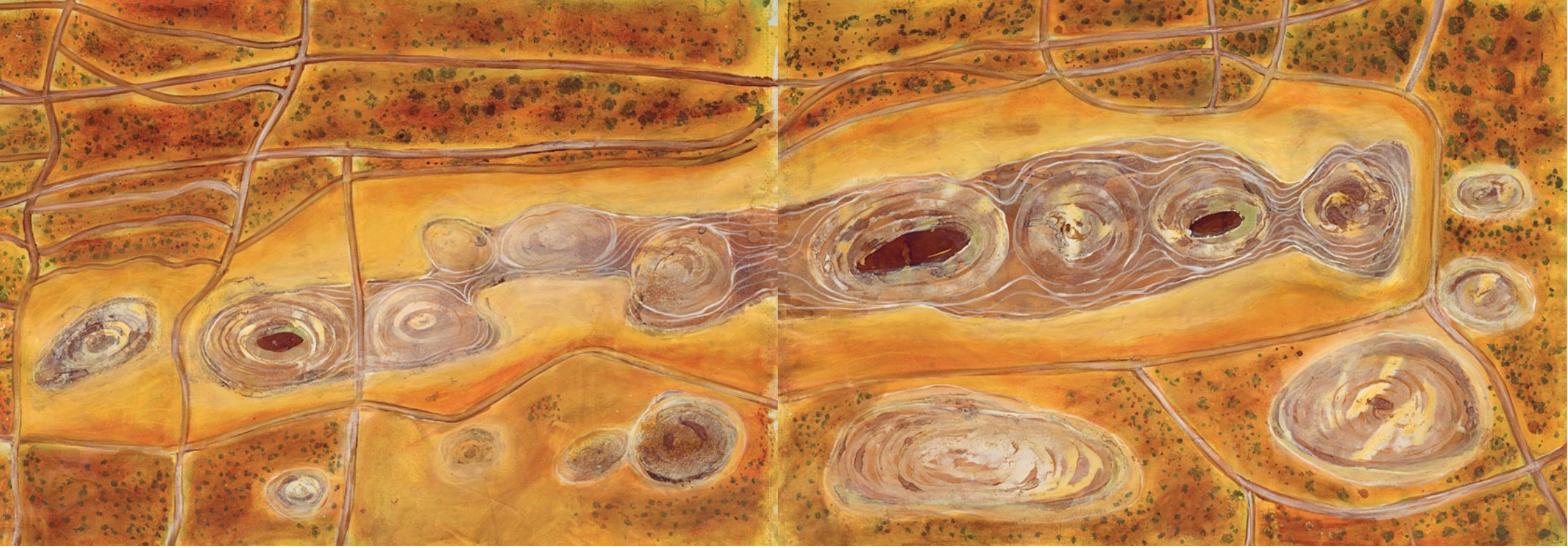
Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Minister for the Environment

Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA
Minister for Energy and
Decarbonisation

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 2025.

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

Alistair Jones
Director General
14 October 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

DWER acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work throughout Western Australia and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. DWER recognises the practice of intergenerational care for Country and its relevance to our work and working with the community. DWER continues to move forward with a shared commitment to protect and conserve Country for our future generations.

'Water and Pathways' by Sharyn Egan
Water to me is the source of all life. Water provides a focus around which life can take on meaning and social interactions as well as the interactions with all the other creatures that are around us. The lines around the lakes represent the ancient paths and the modern roads and highways. (Source: Words taken from 'Water and Pathways' artwork commissioning plaque DWER head office Prime House Joondalup)

Contents

Agency performance

Outcome-based management framework

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 owns, operates and maintains a statewide water measurement and monitoring network.

We use the network to collect hydrological information to support our sustainable water resource management programs, including water supply and allocation planning, regulation and compliance decisions. We make the data available free-of-charge to the community, where it supports a range of industrial development, academic research and recreational activities. The past few years have seen progressive upgrades to the telemetry of these systems using our own innovations, improving the reliability and security of water monitoring across the state.

As of 30 June, the network comprised 2,759 groundwater monitoring bores, 284 river gauging stations, 163 meteorological sites and 20 water quality buoys.

2,759 groundwater monitoring bores

284 river gauging stations

163 meteorological sites

20 water quality buoys

River gauging network

Work during the year included progression of the Replace and Maintain River Gauging Stations asset replacement program. This program maintains and upgrades the instrumentation and infrastructure at these sites to improve the accuracy of the data and increase efficiency and safety.

Groundwater monitoring network

We continue to upgrade, replace and expand the state's groundwater monitoring network. At present this network comprises more than 6,700 bores, which we maintain through the Replace and Maintain Monitoring Bores program.

This year we focused on the South West and Mid West regions, where we constructed 19 new deep bores with a cumulative total drilling depth of 6,647 metres. We installed 333 monitoring bore telemetry systems throughout the state and on Cocos Island in the Indian Ocean Territories, to provide near-real-time data to support sustainable water allocation, regulation, and compliance decisions. As well as supporting modern water management and demonstrating transparency, telemetry vastly improves the efficiency and reduces the costs and risks associated with manual field measurement programs.

Water information

We are the state's authority on water resources. It is our role to ensure water data is collected and freely available to other agencies, industry, consultants, scientists and the public.

The Water Information Reporting portal, otherwise known as WIR, provides instant access to more than 150,000 water monitoring sites. This year's requests via WiR were up on last year, with 9,192 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.

Water Information Reporting data use

Purpose	21/22 FY	22/23 FY	23/24 FY	24/25 FY	
Environmental assessment	2,547	3,051	2,713	2,782	↑
Research and investigation	2,242	2,622	2,880	3,330	↑
Other	364	435	462	554	↑
Mining and exploration	573	653	644	696	↑
Agriculture	269	430	316	488	↑
Domestic supply	194	153	134	153	↑
Water source protection	292	551	493	410	↓
Infrastructure	335	382	384	337	↓
Property dev./land use planning	223	249	163	266	↑
Industry and commerce	78	99	91	141	↑
Recreation	29	32	27	33	↑
Totals	7,146	8,657	8,307	9,192	↑

Water and land use planning

The Department provides 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 support sustainable development. 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.

DWER continued to play a key role in the assessment of Significant Development Applications by providing expert environmental and water management advice and technical input to support informed decision-making. The Department contributed to early significance testing, streamlined regulatory processes, and improved efficiency through risk-based workflows and digital tools. We also worked to improve the quality of referrals and scoping documentation, ensuring timely and transparent environmental assessments aligned with EPA expectations.

In 2024–25 we assessed and responded to 2,718 requests for water and environment advice. Of these:

- 1,511requests were from the DPLH
- 814 requests were from LGAs
- 124 requests were from DEMIRS
- 51 requests were from the EPA
- 218 requests were from other stakeholders, including other State Government agencies and utilities, and industry
- 19 requests related to the new Part 11B (*Planning and Development Act 2005*) Significant Development Application pathway.

This also included advice on 90 water management reports associated with land planning.

Drainage planning and floodplain modelling

We produce catchment scale flood models for priority development areas and major state projects and deliver guidance on stormwater and shallow groundwater management. We also provide strategic 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.

We resolved a total of 105 enquiries during the year, providing advice to members of the public, industry and government on water resources, flood risk management and drainage, and modelling as part of the land planning process.

Floodplain mapping and advice

We are the leading authority for the state's floodplain mapping and mitigation design.

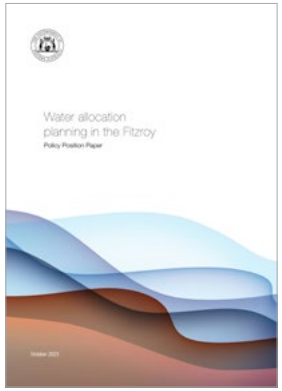
During the year, we partnered with DPIRD and the Shire of Carnarvon to deliver updated flood modelling for the Gascoyne River. The study incorporates the latest flood modelling techniques, detailed survey of the river and floodplain, and information on climate change to provide a clearer understanding of the current and future flood risks in the Carnarvon region.

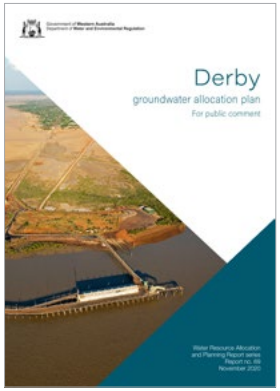
Outputs from the study will support future land use planning, emergency response and ongoing preparedness and community resilience efforts in this important regional town and food bowl.

Water allocation plans

Water allocation plans are our key water resource management documents. These plans establish how much water is available in an area, how much water is set aside for the environment and public drinking water supply, and how much can be licensed to businesses and individuals sustainably. They provide water users and the public with a transparent and detailed picture of how much water is available from aquifers and rivers in plan areas, how the resource is managed and what can be accessed through water licences.

We regularly review and update the plans in priority areas using the latest licensing and scientific investigation data and models, helping to maintain water security and adjust to climate impacts and influences.





Fitzroy and Derby

The Fitzroy River and catchment in the Kimberley region has major significance for surrounding Aboriginal populations and Traditional Owners, as well as industries and agricultural and tourism interests. It also supports a rich biodiversity and threatened ecological communities.

The State Government remains committed to protecting the Fitzroy River and providing sustainable economic opportunities for Kimberley communities. We are working with the Kimberley Land Council to engage Traditional Owners on a combined draft Fitzroy–Derby water plan for public consultation.

Allocation planning for the Fitzroy is being guided by the government's policy position paper *Water allocation planning* in the Fitzroy, published in October 2023, which reaffirms its commitment not to dam the Fitzroy River and its tributaries. The position paper allows for the allocation of groundwater for future use and development, with no additional surface water to be made available. The paper is supported by scientific studies across the Fitzroy catchment, reflects extensive discussions held across the Fitzroy planning area, and will feed into a draft Fitzroy water allocation plan. This work builds on extensive stakeholder consultations held in 2020 and 2021.

Exmouth

Salinity, increased demand and climate change all need to be managed in Exmouth to account for population growth, tourism and potential defence expansions, while protecting the area's essential groundwater-dependent values. We published our groundwater allocation limits review in June, further ensuring the sustainable management of the region's groundwater resources into the future to support Exmouth's community, environment and economic growth.

Using existing knowledge and new investigations, the review focused on understanding the effects of climate change, assessing the impacts of existing groundwater use, and identifying the key groundwater-dependent ecosystems and cultural values that require protection. It has informed the work of the Minister for the Environment's Exmouth Gulf Taskforce to underpin its recommendations for protecting and enhancing the key values of the gulf and its surrounds.

Work on the review has also furthered engagement on the aspirations and intents of Traditional Owners toward the use and allocation of groundwater resources for cultural and heritage protection, as well as for economic purposes. Through the taskforce, we are consulting with the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation to improve our understanding of the Cape Range Subterranean Waterways and identify key groundwater-dependent ecological, cultural and social values.

The Water Corporation is also using our review to guide future water source planning for Exmouth town's drinking water supply. We are actively working with Water Corporation as it develops options to meet the town's drinking water needs, with a focus on those that are sustainable and consider future climate.

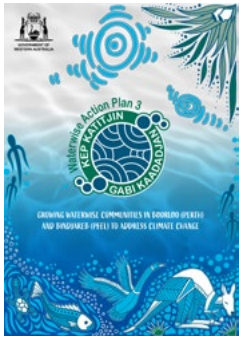
As a result of the review, there were no changes to existing licences for supply of groundwater to local businesses, tourism and industry, green parks and ovals, and premises not connected to scheme water.

La Grange

La Grange is a key area for water investigation in the West Kimberley because of its high ecological and cultural values. Groundwater use in the *La Grange groundwater allocation plan* area has increased with agricultural development and other economic opportunities. We have put a comprehensive licence assessment and water management approach in place to meet the plan's principles and objectives and ensure sustainable water use.

This year we prepared the *La Grange groundwater allocation statement* to update what we know about the Broome sandstone aquifer and update local licensing policies. This statement reflects ongoing discussions with water users, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders, as well as our improved understanding of the aquifer in the La Grange plan area and the economic, cultural and ecological values it supports. The statement adds to and replaces parts of the allocation plan, but does not review or change allocation limits.

Jandakot – Perth South



As part of delivering Action 26 of *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Perth Action Plan 3* to 'review allocation limits across the Boorloo and Bindjareb regions to manage groundwater levels for its sustainable use in line with the impacts of climate change', we are reviewing allocation limits across the Jandakot and Perth South groundwater areas. Groundwater in these areas is an important source of drinking water, while also being used for garden and public space irrigation, horticulture and industry.

To prepare for the review, the Department's Perth Regional Aquifer Modelling System (PRAMS) was updated to version 3.6 in July. Our scientists used industry leading, automated parameter estimation techniques to allow a significant increase to model parameterisation, resulting in the best model fit to observed data seen so far in PRAMS.

Gnangara

In December, we released the first biennial progress report of the *2022 Gnangara groundwater allocation plan*, continuing our commitment to safeguarding Perth's vital groundwater resources in response to the challenges of climate change.

We published the *Gnangara groundwater allocation plan* in June 2022 as part of new measures to protect Perth's largest and most valuable groundwater resource. The plan responds

to ongoing groundwater-level declines across aquifers of the Gnangara groundwater system to address environmental health and water quality issues. The groundwater declines have been caused by a combination of groundwater abstraction, dense pine plantations which affect rainfall recharge, and a long term reduction in rainfall because of climate change. The Gnangara plan sets forth a series of strategies and actions to reduce groundwater use by 2032.

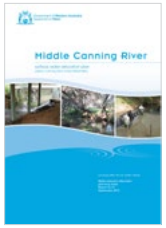
The *Gnangara groundwater allocation plan – 2024 progress report* highlights the achievements of the Gnangara plan's first two years and provides updates on:

- recent climate and rainfall
- recent groundwater-level trends
- licensing statistics
- the status of plan actions
- other work with key stakeholders and industry partners.

Implementing the Gnangara plan is part of our broader effort to safeguard water supplies in the face of climate change and decreasing rainfall. The work is key to transforming Perth into a leading waterwise community, and we will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Gnangara groundwater system.

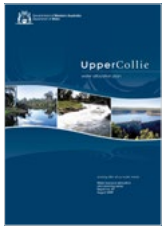
Learn more about the *Gnangara groundwater allocation plan* on YouTube

Middle Canning



The *Middle Canning River surface water allocation plan – 2024 evaluation statement* updates the 2012 plan and highlights the challenges of maintaining minimum river flow criteria under hotter and drier conditions due to climate change. In response, we reduced allocation limits for the middle Canning River and adjusted the long-standing river release arrangements without affecting current water users. We also updated the river release arrangements to provide for additional water to support the river's values in very dry years.

Upper Collie



The Collie area of the South West region is undergoing a significant industrial transition. This will provide new priorities for water management in the Upper Collie and further opportunities to adapt to changing rainfall, streamflow and groundwater recharge as the climate changes.

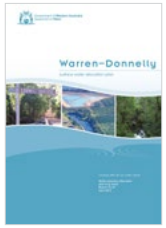
Our scientists are carrying out studies under the State Groundwater Investigation Program to support future economic and environmental planning in the Collie Coal Basin.

The 2009 *Upper Collie water allocation plan* manages groundwater and surface water resources in the Collie Coal Basin and the Collie River catchment, including the Wellington Reservoir. More than a hundred years of coal mining, which has supported the state's power demands, has altered the scientifically complex water resources in this area.

Recently we evaluated the plan and found it could continue to provide the basis for managing groundwater and surface water in the Upper Collie catchment and Collie Coal Basin until further scientific investigations are complete.

We are also working with other government agencies to provide hydrological and hydrogeological technical information for the Collie area, including projections about future water supply from the Wellington Reservoir.

Warren-Donnelly



The Warren-Donnelly area is one of Australia's premier agricultural regions, supporting diverse businesses and communities. The region's pristine environment and food production attracts thousands of tourists every year.

We are continuing to collaborate with the Warren Donnelly Water Advisory Committee to develop a new Warren Donnelly surface water allocation plan. This plan will guide future water management in the region and address the impacts of climate change.

In November, the State Government announced that local horticulture businesses will receive $4.28 million from the $10 million Southern Forests Infrastructure Support Scheme, which was launched by the Minister for Water and Minister for Regional Development in April 2024. This funding will be used to upgrade a range of on-farm irrigation systems and devices to improve water security and climate resilience. A total of 70 local businesses will benefit from this support.

Water investigations

Under the State Groundwater Investigation Program we undertake targeted groundwater investigations to ensure government and industry have timely and accurate knowledge of water resources suitable for drinking, agriculture, horticulture, mining and industry. This year $4.9 million of capital funding supported 14 active groundwater investigation projects.

Case study 01

La Grange groundwater-dependent ecosystems

This year we completed the most remote drilling campaign to date in the West Kimberley region (south of Broome), installing 23 monitoring bores at 11 sites, with a total drilling depth of 718 metres. Data collected from the new bores will improve our understanding of how groundwater in the area supports sites with high ecological and cultural values, such as wetlands, springs and nearshore marine habitat. Our collaboration with Traditional Owners from Nyamba Buru Yawuru and the Karajarri Traditional Lands Association will significantly enhance the project's outcomes.

Case study 02

West Canning Basin project

This year we updated the hydrogeological conceptual model for the West Canning Basin, using new drilling data, geological and geophysical interpretations, and recent monitoring and abstraction data. These additions have refined our understanding of groundwater and surface water interactions, groundwater flows, recharge and discharge dynamics. The updated model will support licensing decisions and help with reviewing water allocation limits.

Case study 03

East Midlands Project

This year we completed the final hydrogeological report for the East Midlands investigation, focusing on the southern Dandaragan Plateau area about 40 to 150 km north of Perth, extending from Muchea to Moora. Groundwater for agriculture, mining and public water supply is in high demand, and important ecological and social values – Gingin Brook and Moore River – are also sustained by groundwater. The improved understanding of groundwater recharge, fresh groundwater availability, and the risk and distribution of salinity will inform our future water management decisions.

We receive capital funding to develop numerical models for assessing water availability, flood risk, planning for urban drainage, and to guide catchment management actions to improve water quality in rivers and estuaries.

▶ Highlights of this year's water modelling program include:

- completing estuary response models for Wilson Inlet and Hardy Inlet to help decision-makers develop and operate sandbar-opening protocols and to support estuary management
- developing a catchment water quality model for Wilson Inlet to support managers to plan for and evaluate on-ground management to improve water quality in the inlet and waterways
- updating our urban water quality planning tool UNDO (version 2.0) to support water quality planning in urban development.

Water source protection

We take great care to identify and protect areas from where drinking water is sourced. These public drinking water source areas include the catchments of surface water sources (dams, reservoirs) and the recharge areas of groundwater sources (aquifers, bores). We protect these valuable drinking water sources and help ensure good quality water is available now and into the future.

Adhering to the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, we prepare drinking water source protection reports, designate public drinking water source areas, provide expert advice to support land use decisions in these areas, publish best-practice management guidance, and engage stakeholders in our planning processes.

▶ Water supply planning

This year we carried out a rapid assessment of water demand and source options for the West Pilbara (Karratha), East Pilbara (Port Hedland) and Onslow public water supply schemes and nearby strategic industrial areas, including Maitland and Boodarie. The assessment found that aquifer recharge in 2023 and 2024 was limited because of a lack of cyclonic rainfall, but demand for water was increasing. Potential new water source options include seawater desalination, additional groundwater resources and mine dewatering surplus.

Other work under our regional strategy program included starting a water supply and demand assessment for the South West planning region and a risk assessment approach for regional town water supply schemes.

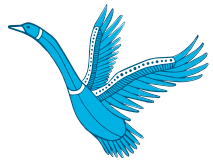
We maintained our state water use datasets and Water Supply Demand Model, enabling us to provide water use information to a variety of stakeholders, both within the Department and externally, to help inform water resource management.

As part of our local supply planning program, we completed a review of the 2014 *North West corridor water supply strategy*, which found the strategy was meeting its objective to achieve water-efficient public open spaces. However, the reduced volume of groundwater allocated for public open space irrigation has challenged the ability of local governments to provide enough irrigation water to maintain these spaces.

We also prepared a discussion paper to review water planning in Western Australia, worked with water service providers on source development planning for public drinking water supply schemes, and provided advice on water source options for green energy project planning.

We maintained our state water use datasets and Water Supply Demand Model, enabling us to provide water use information to a variety of stakeholders, both within the Department and externally, to help inform water resource management.

Waterwise programs and plans



Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan program

Declining rainfall and rising temperatures due to climate change, combined with an increasing population and urbanisation pressures, are significantly impacting our water resources.

Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan 3 (2024–2027) is the third of successive plans in the national award-winning Waterwise Action Plan program, part of the response to the impacts of climate change in Boorloo (Perth) and Bindjareb (Peel).

The State Government's Waterwise Action Plan program began in October 2019 and is now delivered by 11 State Government agencies. This third plan includes 43 actions and and targets to 2030 to conserve water resources, engage water users, support urban greening, biodiversity, the tree canopy and urban cooling to create climate-resilient communities.

It also has a new action to scope how we can apply the learnings and experience gained over the previous plans to selected regional urban centres, recognising the pressures of climate change impacts across Western Australia, not just Boorloo and Bindjareb.

Waterwise Councils

Water Corporation and local governments are key partners in this long-standing program and action in *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan*, with a record 47 councils statewide endorsed through the Waterwise Councils program since it began in 2009.

Waterwise Councils upgrade, maintain and redevelop parks using waterwise principles, making open spaces more resilient and increasing vegetation and tree cover. They also implement stormwater harvesting and look at the potential for alternative water sources, including wastewater reuse to make our towns and cities more climate resilient and sustainable.

Waterwise and urban greening projects are also much closer aligned through the work of state agencies and local governments on Waterwise programs.

Achievers in the program are recognised each year at the annual Waterwise recognition event hosted by the Department and Water Corporation.

Representatives from the Cities of Nedlands (centre) and Armadale (right) and Shire of Capel (left) receive Gold Waterwise Council recognition at the annual Waterwise Recognition event hosted by the Department and Water Corporation

Drainage for liveability

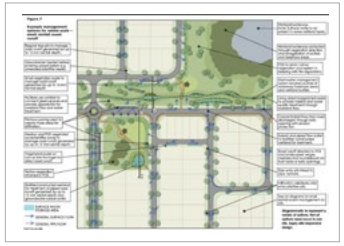
The Drainage for Liveability program is an action in *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan* and a joint initiative with Water Corporation that creates more sustainable, productive, resilient and liveable waterwise communities.

Working with interested community groups, local government and the development industry, we are improving stormwater drains and basins to increase the social and environmental value of these spaces in our urban environment. This program looks at transforming drains into living streams to enhance local water quality, biodiversity and community landscapes in urban areas.

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

This year guidance on spoil banks and flood levees was released, aligning with the regional expansion of Waterwise programs. This guidance supports developers in rural areas to engage early in the land planning process to determine where potential spoil bank failures pose flood consequences. Where potential flooding from spoil bank failures is identified, Water Corporation and the Department can advise on the appropriate methodology to assess flood extent and associated consequences.

The intention is to promote a considered, collaborative and consistent approach to drainage design.



Example management options for estate scale – small rainfall event runoff

Rural Water Planning

The Rural Water Planning program seeks to improve non-potable water supplies for broadacre agricultural and community use and ensure the best use of water resources in dryland agricultural regions.

The program is working to:

- improve the management of water resources
- develop reliable and sustainable water supplies
- increase water use efficiency
- safeguard local governments and regional communities against serious water shortages
- provide reliable emergency water supplies for rural communities for livestock and emergency firefighting.

The program has four priority areas that support dryland farming communities and towns:

- Community Water Supplies Partnership (CWSP) program.
- Agricultural area (AA) dams and Strategic Community Water Supplies (SCWS) programs.
- Management of strategic community water supplies through non-potable strategic community water supply plans.
- Water deficiency declarations.

Community Water Supplies Partnership program

The Western Australian and Australian Governments have committed $5 million to the CWSP program through the Water Infrastructure for Sustainable Efficient Regions (WISER) initiative under the National Water Grid Fund. Funded from 2024–25 to 2026–27, this program is improving community amenity, reducing reliance on scheme water and providing emergency water supplies for dryland towns and communities.

Due to the increased drying trend across the southern half of the state, the government is extending support beyond the dryland agricultural regions. Meantime the program continues to support local governments in the South West and Great Southern regions. To date more than $569,000 has been committed from the $1.5 million announced in April 2024.

Emergency water tanks installed at the Shire of Williams CBH site through the CWSP program. This National Water Grid project was funded by the Australian and Western Australian governments and delivered in partnership with DWER

Some projects funded during the year include:

- City of Albany – $73,302 for water tanks to support firefighting and irrigation AA dams Shire of Westonia Warralackin Tank Upgrades.
- Shire of Carnarvon – $100,000 to connect an artesian water source to irrigate key green spaces.
- Shire of Plantagenet – $38,709 for a rainwater harvesting system at the Rocky Gully Bush Fire Brigade.
- Shire of Kondinin – $131,678 for two projects for new pipelines and pumps to move water from CBH town site to the town's dams for irrigation of the Kondinin Sporting Precinct.
- Shire of Perenjori – $57,600 to drill a new bore and install tanks and solar-powered pumps for emergencies such as firefighting and livestock deficiencies, reducing reliance on the scheme water system and further enhancing the ability for the Shire to manage the drying climate.

Agricultural dams and strategic community water supplies

Through the Agricultural Areas (AA) dams and Strategic Community Water Supplies (SCWS) capital works programs, the Rural Water Planning team has upgraded and developed a network of dams and water supply sites across the state's dryland agricultural areas. These are providing an important source of non-potable water for farming and firefighting needs.

The State and Australian governments have committed $8 million towards the AA dams and SCWS program from 2024–25 to 2026–27 to continue to construct and upgrade these important assets.

Strategic community water supplies

We have compiled 10 new non-potable strategic community water supply plans for relevant local government areas. These provide a clear description of the strategic community water supplies available for firefighting purposes, as well as for farmers and farming communities in times of emergency. (*See map of strategic community water supplies in the Wheatbelt region on pg 59)

Water deficiency declarations

The State Government makes deficiency declarations during dry periods in our agricultural regions to address emergency animal welfare needs. Under a declaration, the government will provide water for livestock needs at a central storage point, within a 40 kilometre radius of the farms impacted. During the year three water deficiencies were declared in the Shire of Esperance (Salmon Gums, Grass Patch and Cascades). More than $500,000 has been spent on water carting during this time.

River health

Looking after the health of the state's inland rivers and waterways is a key function of the Department. We have several coordinated programs that specifically focus on river and inland waterways health.

Healthy Rivers program

Our Healthy Rivers program assesses the biodiversity, water quality, and habitat condition of rivers across south-west Western Australia to support our water and environmental planning and licensing decisions. We routinely monitor around 200 sites, as well as investigate new locations each year as required. This work helps us to identify ecosystem values, understand requirements for protection, assess threats and impacts, and evaluate ecosystem responses to our management decisions to enable us to adapt and evolve.

This year the Healthy Rivers team carried out more than 50 detailed site investigations between Dongara in the north and Donnelly River in the south. This included significant work to understand the effects of our drying climate. While climate change has resulted in some significant changes to flow regimes, our work revealed the remarkable ability of ecosystems to withstand or recover from changes. This work is critical in adapting management to support ecosystems in a drying climate.

Fish kill response – inland waters

We lead the response to fish deaths in inland waters of Western Australia, working cooperatively with the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD), Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Department of Health (DoH) and local governments.

Our work includes collecting and analysing water, phytoplankton and fish; gathering information from the public; and notifying the community about causes of fish deaths and any public safety risks.

This year we responded to around 20 fish kill reports across Western Australia, and supported DPIRD in their response to events in marine waters, including significant impacts due to the marine heatwave. Our work in inland waters also involved responding to the ongoing strandings of the threatened

DWER officer rescuing a threatened sawfish in the Kimberley

freshwater sawfish in the Fitzroy River. Through a partnership with Murdoch University, Traditional Owners and local landholders, we were able to successfully relocate 76 stranded fish to protected waters, all of which would have otherwise perished in this year's extreme dry conditions.

Priority research – developing water quality guidelines for local rivers

Our long-term project on new water quality guidelines to support local native wetland and waterway species is almost complete. These guidelines will provide increased confidence for environmental protection, while also reducing the time taken to assess new proposals and monitor responses supporting regulatory timeframes. This work will include new standard tests available to everyone for generating locally relevant guidelines for any contaminants of interest in inland waters of Western Australia.

Priority research – managing farm dams to support environmental values

We are partnering with universities to improve the management of farm dams and water points to optimise their value in supporting endemic species. This includes improving habitat within dams and the efficient management of water to support connected environments.

Country Areas Water Supply Act

Licensing

We administer the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (CAWS Act) to regulate clearing controls within gazetted water resource catchments for salinity mitigation. This includes:

- issuing clearing licences and advising the government and private sector on salinity and water resource management
- preserving historic government investment in protecting native vegetation for salinity management purposes
- managing the CAWS Act Land Estate.

During the year we:

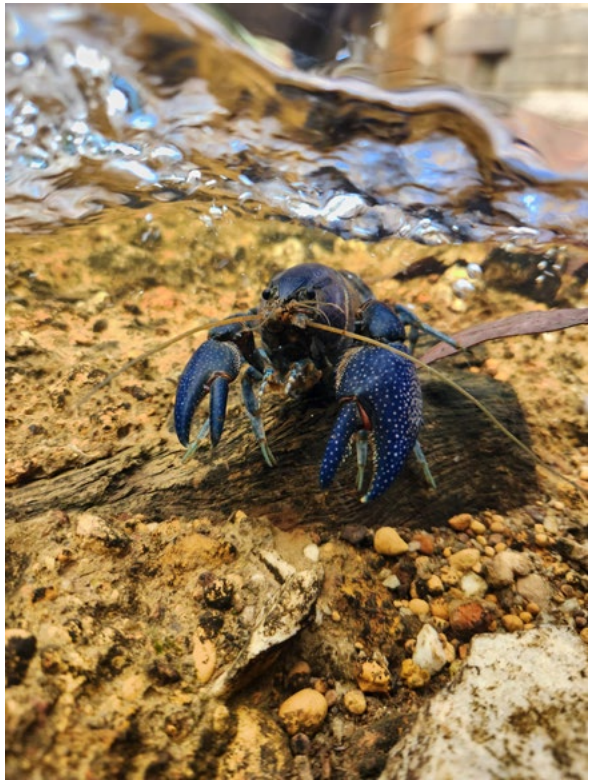
- issued six CAWS Act licences to clear
- assessed eight EP Act referrals
- assessed 14 Western Australian Planning Commission planning advice referrals.

Bushfire management

Seven bushfires occurred within our Land Estate during this year's bushfire season. We work collaboratively with bushfire response agencies (Bushfire Volunteers and DBCA) on fire control and provide resources and logistical support when bushfires occur within the estate. Our response activities are guided by our Bushfire Management Strategy.

Plantations

We continued work with the Forest Products Commission (FPC) to establish pine plantations for commercial harvest in suitable areas. Plantation coverage within CAWS Act catchment areas not only reduces saline water discharge to river systems but also expands the state's softwood supply capacity. A total of 2,980 hectares of our Land Estate has been placed under leasehold with the FPC to date.



Our work supports local native wetland and waterway species

Service 3 – Water regulation, licensing and industry governance

Water licensing

Through the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* we license water to more than 14 types of business activities and categories. These include water for:

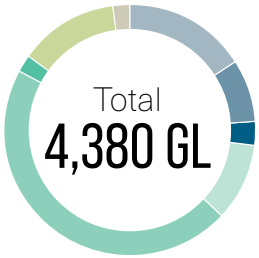
- horticulture, parks and gardens
- bottling and dairy production
- cleaning and food processing
- mine and construction dewatering
- public water supply.

Water licences 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.

As at 30 June 2025, we managed 12,653 water licences across 773 groundwater and 427 surface water resources. These licences authorise the taking of 4,380 gigalitres (GL) of water – 3,377 GL from groundwater resources and 1,003 GL 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. As at 30 June 2025, there were 1,027 licences to construct and alter groundwater wells and 478 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 totalled) in each of these charts have been subject to rounding.



Total licensed volume by sector

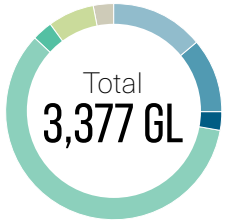
- Agriculture: 692 GL (16%)
- Commercial and institutional: 363 GL (8%)
- Industry and power generation: 124 GL (3%)
- Irrigation scheme supply: 424 GL (10%)
- Mining: 2,000 GL (46%)
- Parks, gardens and recreation: 108 GL (2%)
- Public water scheme supply: 573 GL (13%)
- Other*: 96 GL (2%)

*Other contains environment and conservation, and stock and domestic.

Groundwater licensed volume by sector

- Agriculture: 484 GL (14%)
- Commercial and institutional: 363 GL (11%)
- Industry and power generation: 103 GL (3%)
- Mining: 1,975 GL (59%)
- Parks, gardens and recreation: 108 GL (3%)
- Public water scheme supply: 253 GL (7%)
- Other*: 91 GL (3%)

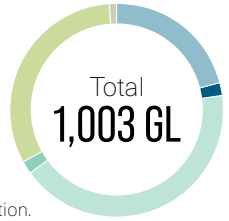
*Other contains irrigation scheme supply, environment and conservation, and stock and domestic.



Surface water licensed volume by sector

- Agriculture: 208 GL (21%)
- Industry and power generation: 21 GL (2%)
- Irrigation scheme supply: 424 GL (42%)
- Mining: 24 GL (2%)
- Public water scheme supply: 321 GL (32%)
- Other*: 5 GL (<1%)

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



In 2024–25 the water licensing targets for average application processing times (65 days low-risk, 75 days medium-risk and 95 days high-risk) were met for the low and high-risk licence applications. The average assessment timeliness performances for low, medium and high-risk water licence applications were 47 days, 58 days and 71 days, respectively.

We have also continued implementing the statewide water licensing backlog program, which includes longer-term approaches to maintaining the backlog within a target threshold of fewer than 350 applications

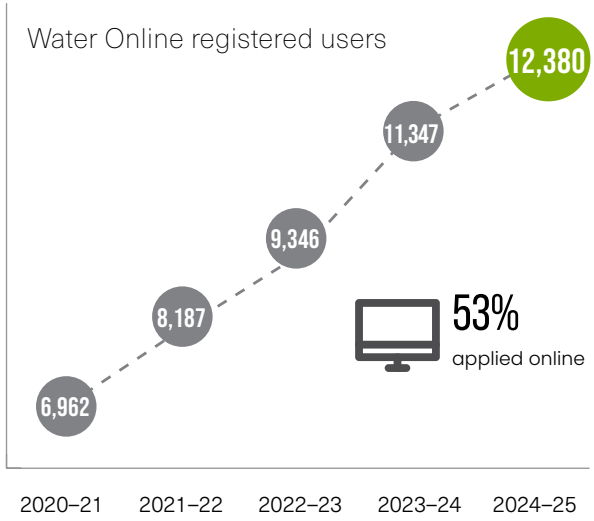
As of 30 June 2025, there was a 16 per cent decrease in the water licence application 'backlog' on the previous year, largely driven by the Department's implementation of a Statewide Water Licensing Backlog Strategy in February 2024. Initiated in response to a sustained increase in the backlog of water licence applications, the backlog strategy leveraged $1.03 million in State Government funding over two years to deliver a targeted reduction in the number of applications that had been open for more than 65 days. The associated increase in water licensing capacity also saw the Department finalise the highest number of water licence applications in 10 years in 2024–25 (3,519), representing a 10 per cent increase in applications resolved compared to the 2023–24 year.

Water Online

Water Online enables users to lodge licence and permit applications and licensees and permit holders to submit reports and meter readings.

In 2024–25, the portal remained a consistently utilised tool, with 53 per cent of all applications submitted online and the total active user base reaching 12,380.

While Water Online has served us well it will transition into Environment Online as part of our broader strategy to integrate and enhance online service, delivering a more seamless digital experience for our users across water and environmental services.



Water compliance and enforcement

As of 30 June 2025, 5,839 water licences were subject to metering and alternative measurement requirements under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Regulations 2000. The total volume of water subject to metering and alternative measurement represents 97 per cent of all water licensed across the state. In 2024–25 we undertook 60 compliance inspections and water meter audits, conducted 1,144 desktop water use surveys and completed 396 reviews of submitted compliance reports. We also processed 2,418 abstraction volume submissions and meter reading submissions.

5,839 water licences

1,144 desktop water use surveys

396 reviews of reports

As an outcome of these monitoring activities, we undertook 223 incident reviews and investigations, and responded to 194 confirmed incidents of non-compliance with a combination of statutory and non-statutory enforcement actions. We issued 110 letters of education, 60 warning notices and six infringement notices, and gave 18 statutory directions.

Our regulatory work includes educational and behavioural support as well as compliance and enforcement activities to ensure licensees are adhering to the legal requirements. 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 our online services, licensees can receive reminder notices of due dates for report submissions and input meter details to keep track of monthly and annual water use. Compliance monitoring consists of onsite visits and remote monitoring activities.

Office of the Auditor General water compliance audit

During the year, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) assessed how the Department monitors and enforces water licence conditions. In June the OAG tabled a report to parliament which included recommendations on new approaches to water compliance.

Before the audit, we had identified and prioritised ongoing improvements to our water assurance functions. In early 2024, we established a dedicated Water Assurance Division in the Assurance Directorate, which provides centralised expert capacity to support operational compliance delivery in the regions.

Our Assurance Program for 2025–26 sets out specific targets for water assurance to ensure we continue to uplift our delivery. Partnership with regions and across different business areas will be critical to delivery of this important regulatory function.

Our Water Assurance and Statewide Delivery staff are working together to explore ways to improve the effectiveness, accuracy and efficiency of our water compliance activities, including the enhanced use of technology such as high-resolution satellite imagery, telemetry, drones, and digital elevation models. Each of these can support the identification of non-compliance and help inform any on ground response.

The OAG report found the Department had appropriate probity controls in place, with committed staff who were facing challenging circumstances – particularly where they needed to set and enforce licensing conditions that might have significant impacts on the communities in which they live.

ALCOA assurance program

In December 2023 the State Government announced the Alcoa Transitional Approvals Framework (ATAF). The ATAF has been designed to mitigate the social and economic impacts of curtailment of Alcoa's mining operations and afford a reasonable level of risk mitigation as the company transitions its operations to contemporary regulation, under Part IV of the EP Act.

To sustain local economic and social benefits, while ensuring Alcoa meets strict environmental standards, the government issued a conditional exemption under section 6 of the EP Act which allows Alcoa to continue mining while the EPA assesses its operations. The government expects Alcoa to meet its environmental obligations and continue to ensure that public drinking water supplies in Serpentine Dam are protected and safe for use.

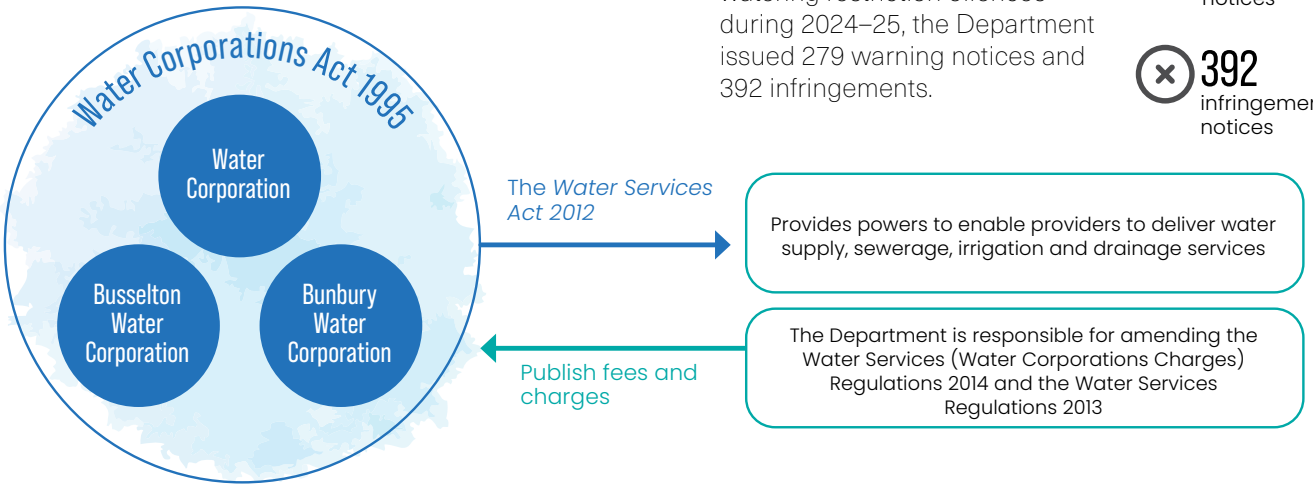
During the year we continued to implement a robust assurance program to ensure conditions in the Environmental Protection (Darling Range Bauxite Mining Proposals) Exemption Order 2023 were being met, along with the expectations of government and the community, to ensure the protection of drinking water resources and key environmental assets. In 2024–25 we conducted 452 inspections across both the Huntly and Willowdale mine sites. Our engagement with Alcoa on drainage control management plans has seen a significant reduction in drainage-related incidents, down from 60 or more in previous years to around 20 reportable incidents in the last winter season. We did not identify any Exemption Order non-compliances.

Water services

The State Government has three water utilities established under the *Water Corporations Act 1995* – Water Corporation, Busselton Water Corporation and Bunbury Water Corporation (Aqwest). The *Water Services Act 2012* provides powers to enable licensed service providers, including the government's water corporations, to deliver water supply, sewerage, irrigation and drainage services, and establish areas of service operation.

There are 19 other licensed water service providers in Western Australia, comprising local governments, irrigation cooperatives, mining companies, developers and the Rottnest Island Authority.

The Water Services (Water Corporations Charges) Regulations 2014 and the Water Services Regulations 2013 are amended each year to publish customer fees and charges for Aqwest, Busselton Water and Water Corporation.



We make the amendments in consultation with the corporations, to take effect in the following financial year.

We continue to work with Water Corporation as required to support the improvement of water services to regional Aboriginal communities. This includes support for licensing, permits and public drinking water source protection.

Garden bore restrictions

Most garden bores in Western Australia are not licensed but are subject to sprinkler restrictions under the Water Agencies (Water Use) By-laws 2010. The Department, in partnership with Water Corporation, regulates domestic garden bore sprinkler restrictions. In Perth and Mandurah, domestic garden bore sprinkler restrictions align with scheme water users, allowing watering on two rostered days a week. Elsewhere in the state, garden bore owners can water once a day between 6pm and 9am.

For alleged garden bore watering restriction offences during 2024–25, the Department issued 279 warning notices and 392 infringements.

279 warning notices

392 infringement notices

Managing public water supply

The Department manages surface water and groundwater used by the State Government's water corporations for public water supply through water licences issued under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*. We continue to work with Water Corporation and other providers to ensure abstraction is sustainable and protects the health and integrity of the resource. The work on abstraction to support resource health has been particularly active and ongoing for the Gnangara groundwater resource. We also ensure that sources of drinking water are protected from potential contamination risks through the Water Source Protection program.

This year we continued to work with water service providers on source development planning for regional schemes including the Lower Great Southern, Busselton, Esperance, Exmouth, West Pilbara, Port Hedland and Warren-Blackwood. We are also working with Water Corporation on planning for Perth's integrated water supply scheme. From 2028, the Alkimos seawater desalination plant will supply 50 billion litres of safe drinking water to millions of Western Australians each year via this scheme.

Water fees

We collect fees from water licence and permit applications from the mining and public water supply sectors.

In 2024–25, we spent $19,437,405 on the assessment of all water licence and permit applications and collected $1,574,190 in fees from 172 licensees for 536 application assessments.

Water policy

The Department's water policy staff continue to prioritise the review and development of state water resource policies. The focus of this work during the year has been on ensuring community needs are met for the timely processing of licence applications and investigations.

We continue to work with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions to develop a new National Water Agreement to replace the existing National Water Initiative. The new agreement is being developed to provide a nationally consistent framework for water reform and policy.

Warren Donnelly Water Advisory Committee

The Warren Donnelly Water Advisory Committee provides advice to the Minister for Water and the Department regarding surface water management in the Warren and Donnelly River catchments. The committee is made up of community, local Aboriginal Corporations, government, and the Southern Forest Community Landcare representatives. The Committee provides a critical link between water users, the broader community and government agencies and will be instrumental in the development of the updated Warren Donnelly surface water allocation plan currently being prepared. The committee meet four times a year to discuss important water resource management issues relevant to the Warren Donnelly catchments and community. The Department provides executive support service to the committee.

Healthy estuaries

Our initial four-year program to improve the health of regional estuaries throughout south-west Western Australia concluded in December. The Healthy Estuaries program entered its second phase in 2025 with nearly $10 million in funding awarded to regional environmental groups for continued delivery of programs in the Peel-Harvey, Leschenault, Vasse-Wonnerup, Hardy Inlet, Wilson Inlet, Torbay Inlet and Oyster Harbour catchment areas.

In these catchments, we regularly sample 175 sites to monitor water quality. Our programs will continue through Healthy Estuaries WA, Revitalising Geographe Waterways, and the Bindjareb Djilba (Peel-Harvey estuary) Protection Plan.

During the year we recorded more than 1,000 seagrass observations across the Peel-Harvey estuary, Leschenault Estuary and Oyster Harbour, marking a huge effort from the team to map seagrass distribution. In addition, for the first time we used aerial imagery to help estimate shallow-water seagrass cover in the Peel-Harvey estuary. These monitoring efforts contribute to detailed seagrass distribution maps in each estuary, informing management action on improving water quality and reducing nutrient inputs into waterways.

We continued innovative trials with hydrotalcite clay (HT-clay) in Mandurah, investigating its effectiveness when used after applying a commercially available product called Phoslock. Both products bind with phosphorus to make it unavailable to algae, and form clumps of algae that sink to the bottom of the lake.

Given sources of phosphorus to the lake are ongoing, we must try to reduce the severity of the resulting algal blooms. Our applications of the combined clays in December reduced algae in the lake by 84 per cent and associated total phosphorus by 74 per cent. Monitoring bores were installed in May to help us identify nutrient sources to the lake and evaluate the effectiveness of the water treatment trials.

At the end of 2024, farmers and volunteers had fenced 207 kilometres of waterways and exceeded our target with 122 hectares revegetated. Fencing and revegetation helps reduce the nutrient load from stock and improves the natural filtration and ecosystem benefits in local waterways.

Our Dairy for Healthy Estuaries project, part of the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, partnered with Western Dairy to reduce dairy effluent entering waterways. Unmanaged effluent can drive algal blooms, fish kills and, in extreme instances, completely undermine water quality or use.

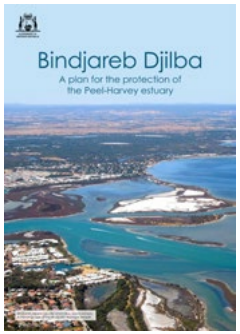
As a part of the project, our team established an effluent demonstration trial to showcase smart reuse and effluent management benefits, and encourage industry adoption of improved practices. We also helped install four new concrete manure storage pads and shared efforts with local government officers in a two-day workshop.

A total of 172 farms participated in our annual fertiliser management program. It is estimated the farms could collectively reduce the amount of phosphorus they apply by 668,000 kilograms,

while saving a total of $3,084,000, if their fertiliser application rates were based on their soil test results.

There has been an estimated 46 per cent reduction in the amount of phosphorus applied on participating farms since 2020.

Bindjareb Djilba (Peel-Harvey Estuary) Protection Plan



The Bindjareb Djilba (Peel-Harvey Estuary) Protection Plan is in its fourth year of implementation, with strong positive engagement from stakeholders and continued State Government funding support. The Policy and Planning Committee – co-chaired by the Member for Mandurah and the Member for Dawesville – meets regularly to progress priority actions to protect the estuary as the area develops.

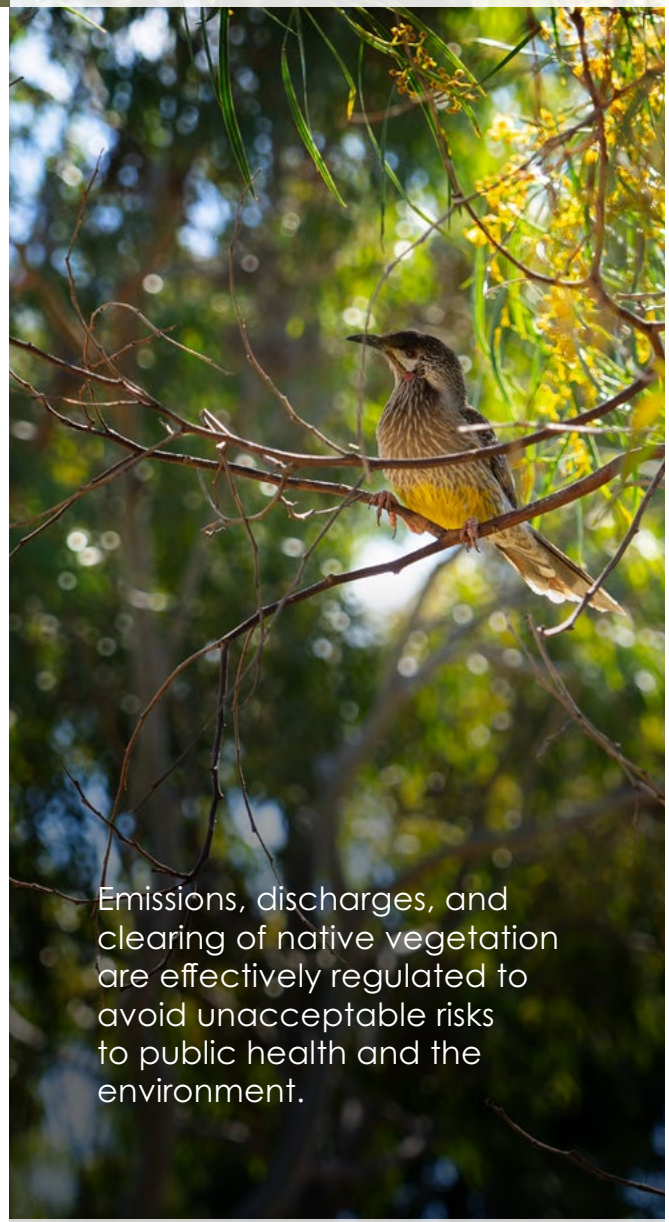
The protection plan supports a partnership with Peel-Harvey Catchment Council to expand the impact of fertiliser management and river restoration activities implemented through Healthy Estuaries WA. It also supports partnerships with local Aboriginal corporations to increase Traditional Owner involvement through Bindjareb-led yarning circles and cultural mapping.

GeoCatch

GeoCatch is a catchment management group that has worked in partnership with the Department and the local community for over 25 years to care for the Geographe Bay catchment. GeoCatch is a key partner with the Department in delivering the State Government initiatives Healthy Estuaries WA and Revitalising Geographe Waterways, working with farmers, the local community, industry and government agencies to deliver onground works and communication. The Department supports GeoCatch through project funding and support services, co-locating with GeoCatch in the the Department's Busselton Office.

We continued innovative trials with hydrotalcite clay (HT-clay) in Mandurah, investigating its effectiveness alongside a commercially available product called Phoslock, in making phosphorus unavailable to feed algal blooms

Outcome 2



Service 4 – Environmental regulation

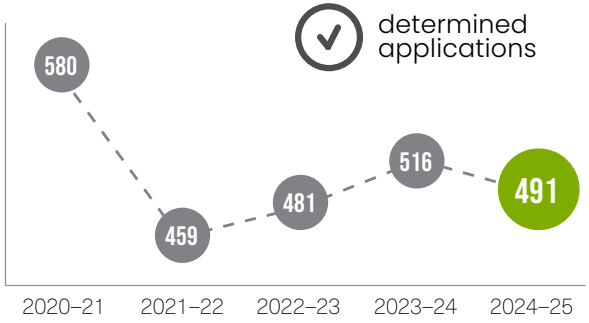
Industry regulation

In 2024–25, the Department received 636 applications for licences, works approvals, and amendments, closely aligned with the 646 applications received in the previous year. Western Australia continues to experience robust growth across the resource, industrial, energy, and agricultural sectors, which is reflected in the consistently high volume of applications.

During the year, 491 applications were determined, a slight decrease from the 516 processed in 2023–24. The number of open applications under assessment rose from 297 at the end of 2023–24 to 315 as of 30 June 2025.

315 open applications under assessment

491 applications were determined



Corresponding with the reduced number of determinations, the volume of applications exceeding target timeframes increased to 116 in 2024–25, 17 more than the 99 recorded at the same time last year.

The average processing time improved to 76 working days, down from 78 in 2023–24. Further performance enhancements are anticipated in 2025–26, driven by the Department's implementation of reforms across approvals, systems, and legislation.

Native vegetation regulation

Clearing permits

In 2024–25, the Department received 245 applications for native vegetation clearing permits, an increase of 8.1 per cent compared to the 228 applications received in 2023–24. A targeted effort to reduce the number of applications exceeding 60 business days under assessment led to a significant improvement, with these older applications decreasing from 107 at the end of 2023–24 to 62 as of 30 June 2025, a 42 per cent reduction.

245 applications were received

Despite this progress, the total number of open applications rose slightly to 150, up from 140 the previous year. The average time taken to reach a decision dropped markedly to 89 working days, down from 119 in 2023–24. The longer timeframe in the previous year reflected a deliberate focus on resolving the oldest applications.

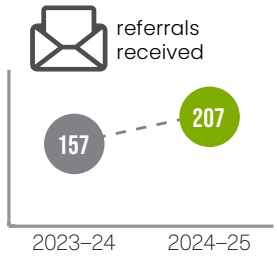
However, the proportion of applications decided within the target timeframe of 60 working days declined to 38 per cent in 2024–25, compared to 41 per cent in 2023–24. This shift is partly attributed to the increasing complexity of assessments and the growing use of environmental offsets or revegetation actions. As a result, more than 26 per cent of applications were withdrawn by applicants during the year. This trend is largely driven by a rise in applications from highly developed regions such as the South West, Perth, Kwinana-Peel, and Wheatbelt, where offset requirements are more common. Many applicants opted to withdraw rather than continue providing the necessary information or negotiating offset arrangements.

To support better outcomes, the Department continues to encourage proponents with projects on the Swan Coastal Plain or in the Wheatbelt to engage prior to submitting an application, and to identify potential issues and solutions earlier in the process.

The average duration that applications remained in 'stop the clock' status reduced slightly, from 134 business days in 2023–24 to 120 days in 2024–25. 'Stop the clock' reflects the additional time applicants require to address information gaps, including details on avoidance, minimisation, and mitigation measures, conducting biological surveys, and identifying suitable environmental offsets.

Clearing referrals

Stakeholder engagement with the clearing referral process, introduced in 2021–22, continues to grow, with 207 referrals received in 2024–25. This represents a 32 per cent increase compared to the 157 referrals submitted in the previous year. Clearing referrals accounted for 46 per cent of all requests for clearing approvals lodged with the Department under Part V of the EP Act.



The performance of the clearing referral process remains aligned with its purpose as a streamlined pathway for proposals involving minimal environmental impact. In 2024–25, the Department finalised referrals in an average of 24 working days. Of the total requests received, 86 referrals were assessed as not requiring a clearing permit, representing a cumulative proposed clearing area of approximately 23.62 hectares across the state.

Addressing native vegetation clearing reports

We are receiving an increasing number of reports relating to the potential illegal clearing of native vegetation across the state. In September 2024, we had yet to assess 526 outstanding reports. To rapidly manage these reports, we developed improved processes to evaluate environmental impact and investigative risk.

90 letters of education

40 letters of warning

Since we put these processes in place, the number of outstanding reports has reduced to 264 – nearly a 50 per cent decrease – while we have continued to receive and action new reports. We issued more than 90 Letters of Education and 40 Letters of Warning as part of this effort. The new processes enable a more balanced, risk-based approach, allowing for strategic allocation of resources, identification of previously unknown risks and timely departmental action.

Environmental compliance and enforcement

This year our environmental compliance teams carried out 467 inspections and identified 295 instances of non-compliance with site approvals which are being progressively resolved with approval holders. This on ground compliance activity included 229 inspections of prescribed premises, 108 landfill levy inspections and 130 inspections as part of our light industry program.

467 inspections

Further to this, 41 audits of Ministerial Statements were completed together with reviews of 94 Ministerial Statement Compliance Assessment Reports.

These compliance activities resulted in 59 infringements being issued,107 Letters of Education, 64 Letters of Warning as well as 20 convictions being recorded and 17 prosecutions commenced.

107 letters of education

64 warning notices

20 convictions

Environment WAtch

This year we launched Environment WAtch, a mobile-friendly website enabling the public and industry to use a simple form at any time to report pollution, illegal dumping and other environmental issues. It features an interactive map of selected ongoing incidents, hosts regularly updated information about environmental incidents of high community concern, and offers detailed information on common environmental issues.

We are committed to supporting the community, industry and other parties to report pollution and a range of other environmental concerns. Our Environment WAtch service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Reports to this service provide us with significant intelligence and enable us to identify and respond to active and emerging issues.

Environment WAtch website

In 2024–25 our Environment WAtch service received 11,352 reports, the highest on record. These reports prompted deployment of our Environmental Response Team 373 times to lead or assist with managing serious environmental incidents.

11,352 reports

Our Environment WAtch hotline remains in place, with the public able to report environmental incidents by phoning 1300 784 782. Life-threatening emergencies should be directed to 000.

You can report pollution, illegal dumping and other environmental matters using our online form or by calling our Environment WAtch hotline on **1300 784 782**.

Call 000 to report a life-threatening incident or emergency

Environmental noise

We responded to 183 requests for noise advice or support this year. Of these, in our role to support local governments to administer the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997, we responded to 96 requests for environmental noise advice, technical support or laboratory analysis. We provided specialist environmental noise advice 16 times relating to matters under EPA consideration, and responded to 15 requests from other Australian and State government agencies. We also further supported our local government partners with three noise regulation training sessions.

183 requests for noise advice or support

We are also working with local governments and other agencies to facilitate community sport by providing technical guidance and examining options for additional sport-focused noise regulations.

Odour emissions and management

Odour emissions and odour impacts from licensed facilities are managed under the EP Act.

There are several areas in the state where odour emissions and their impacts are the subject of extensive departmental investigations and significant community concern. These include:

- suburbs near the Nambeelup industrial area in the City of Mandurah including Secret Harbour, Mandurah, Singleton, and Lakelands
- suburbs in the City of Cockburn near Cockburn Cement Limited
- suburbs around the Tamala Park waste management facility in the City of Wanneroo.

Throughout this year the Department has responded to these odour impacts and their associated community complaints and is seeking to resolve the impacts as a top priority.

This work includes inspections of source sites, odour assessments in the local community and specialist technical assessments to more accurately identify odour sources, potential odour emission mitigation measures, and regulatory solutions.

Wind power

The State Government recognises the importance of wind power for enabling Western Australia to reduce its carbon emissions and address the impacts of climate change. As such, the Department is working closely with other key agencies to facilitate the development of wind farms in WA. To do this, we are looking at developing noise guidance for the site selection and assessment of windfarms, while investigating various options to amend the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 to better facilitate windfarm development and attract investment.

Contaminated sites

Contaminated land and water created by past industrial activities is managed under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* and Contaminated Sites Regulations 2006.

We are managing an increasing number of reported and classified sites each year, prompted by a better understanding of contaminants and the expansion of residential, commercial and industrial development.

This year we classified reported sites within 45 days, as required by section 14 of the Contaminated Sites Act, and 91 per cent of mandatory auditor's reports (MARs) not requiring referral to other agencies, were processed within the target timeframe of 21 days. As staffing pressures continue to ease, processing times for MARs have improved.

Sites classified as 'contaminated – remediation required' (246 at 30 June 2025) or high priority 'possibly contaminated – investigation required' (295 at 30 June 2025) need ongoing review to establish whether:

- the actions specified in the site classification are being implemented
- the risk, or potential risk, to human health or the environment is being mitigated.

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

1,631
possibly contaminated – investigation required sites

4,881
total sites classified

As of 30 June 2025, there were 1,631 sites classified as 'possibly contaminated – investigation required' and 4,881 sites classified overall. We are developing a significant work plan to finalise classifications for the remaining grace period sites i.e. sites reported in the first six months of the Contaminated Sites Act being enacted but not yet classified, which remain dormant on the Department's records.

Given the present housing shortage and resulting prioritisation of residential development, we are facing additional pressure to provide statutory planning advice and respond to MARs submitted to fulfil planning conditions for development sites, some with complex contamination issues, in shortened timeframes.

During the year we prioritised processing within 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 Contaminated Sites Act, or submitted to clear planning conditions. We also prioritised MARs for high risk sites or changed site conditions.

There are 16,234 parcels classified as 'decontaminated' or 'not contaminated – unrestricted use'. This reflects the number of residential lots that have been created through the Contaminated Sites Auditor and planning process, using evidence the sites are suitable for the proposed use.

Air quality

Western Australia is a signatory to the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure (AAQ NEPM), to which the results of our state's air quality monitoring must be reported each year.

We are responsible for the operation and maintenance of 15 permanent air quality monitoring stations in Western Australia. Nine of these sites – Armadale, Caversham, Duncraig, Mandurah, Quinns Rocks, Rolling Green, Rockingham, South Lake and Swanbourne – are within the Perth region. There are six regional sites in Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Collie, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie. These sites report air quality hourly to the Air Quality Index webpage on the State Government website.

15 permanent air quality monitoring stations

These real-time results allow the community to see immediate air quality in their area and to take appropriate action in response to air quality levels.

Since 2022, we have operated an air quality monitoring network in Port Hedland, where dust levels can be higher than other areas of the state. Reporting for the first two years of operation is currently being finalised.

Ambient dust monitoring campaign in Pinjarra

In response to community concerns about localised potential dust emissions from Alcoa's Pinjarra refinery operations, during the year we conducted a six-month monitoring campaign. From November to April, we operated an air quality monitoring station (AQMS) at a central Pinjarra location, situated to represent potential community exposure in the Pinjarra township. The monitoring campaign's objective was to assess levels of ambient dust and gaseous pollutants at the location, with a focus on considering likely worst-case conditions during summer, such as higher temperatures and frequent easterly winds. We are now reviewing the data and will issue a public report and host a community forum in Pinjarra to discuss the results.

A new air quality monitoring campaign in the Kwinana Industrial Area began in 2025. This campaign intends to monitor contemporary pollutants to inform future consideration of the Kwinana Environmental Protection Policy (EPP), including improved placement of monitors to better assess the potential for impact on the surrounding community.

Air quality technical advice

We continued to provide strategic, technical and policy advice on air quality matters during the year, including ambient air quality, industrial emissions, odour modelling, meteorology, health standards and hazardous air pollution. From July to June, we undertook more than 180 technical reviews and offered scientific advice for high-profile projects.

Our air quality scientists reviewed scientific reports for the Murujuga Rock Art monitoring program, and supported inspections by compliance and enforcement and industry regulation officers related to odour complaints around Tamala Park in Perth and Nambeelup in the Peel region. We also supported the Tamala Park Community Dairy Program by preparing odour forms and instructions, conducting engagement and training sessions, and analysing odour form data.

Murujuga rock art monitoring program

In May the State Government and the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) released Curtin University's latest report on the condition of the rock art on Murujuga in the Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago in the state's north.

Led by MAC and the Department, the Murujuga Rock Art monitoring program delivered the largest and most reliable dataset on rock art globally, tracking air quality, rock surface chemistry, rainfall, and pH levels affecting the area's ancient rock art.

This year, for the first time, the monitoring program has set air quality guidelines and standards for the Department to use to regulate emissions and protect the rock art. The first interim Environmental Quality Criteria (EQC) set levels of ambient air quality considered safe for the rock art. These EQC supported the World Heritage nomination for Murujuga by informing a management framework for long-term preservation of this internationally significant cultural landscape.

Development of the interim EQCs could not have been achieved without the knowledge and support of the Murujuga Circle of Elders, the MAC Board, Rangers and other personnel, a large team of 55 expert scientists, a panel of independent expert peer reviewers, and the Murujuga Rock Art Stakeholder Reference Group.

A key focus of the monitoring program is two-way knowledge sharing and training. MAC Rangers are working with Curtin University's scientific team to take field measurements and monitor air quality. With MAC taking over the monitoring program, the Rangers and our Aboriginal Project Officer are completing specialist micro-credential qualifications delivered by Curtin University on Country to build their data collection and monitoring skills.

Rock Art Ranger Kasziem Bin Sali operates an air quality monitoring station. Photo credit Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation

Rock Art Monitoring Ranger Kasziem Bin Sali takes a spectrometry measurement on a rock art panel. Photo credit Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation

Cross Sector Triage Team

The State Government has established a Cross Sector Triage Team (CSTT) in response to the Vogel McFerran review recommendations 8b and 15, as part of a broader initiative to reform and streamline environmental approvals processes. The team was operationalised in January 2025 and situated within the Department's new Priority Approvals directorate.

The CSTT will provide an effective triage and front-end support to enable timely delivery of government priority projects.

This case management service will:

- provide proponents with access to a dedicated officer ahead of proposal referral or application submission to scope requirements in consultation and collaboration with relevant department and CSTT staff
- identify any issues that might delay assessment and facilitate early engagement across government agencies, including facilitating secondary approvals that the department administers
- have oversight, support and problem-solving capabilities in consultation and collaboration with relevant department and CSTT staff to address any barriers for project implementation.

Housing Approvals Unit

In October, the State Government established the Housing Approvals Unit to accelerate housing delivery across Western Australia. The unit will play a key role in streamlining environmental and water approvals for priority housing developments, ensuring that regulatory processes do not unreasonably delay projects while maintaining high environmental standards.

To enhance coordination and responsiveness, the unit has been co-located with the CSTT, forming a dedicated Priority Approvals directorate. This directorate now provides a key point of contact for the housing industry and works collaboratively across approvals agencies to address concerns around timeframes and processes.

The unit has begun case management for priority growth areas, including North East Baldivis and East Wanneroo, delivering integrated environmental and water advice to support timely project progression. For the North East Baldivis area, this has included the first development application considered through the Section 11B Significant Development Pathway. As urban development expands into more complex landscapes – such as areas with high groundwater tables, flood risk, or within public drinking water source areas – the team will work closely with DPLH and industry proponents to provide strategic guidance. This includes advice on hydrological modelling, and flood and inundation risk mitigation, to ensure future developments are resilient and sustainable.

The Housing Approvals Unit is a key enabler of the state's housing agenda, helping to unlock land for development and support population growth through coordinated, efficient, and environmentally responsible approvals.

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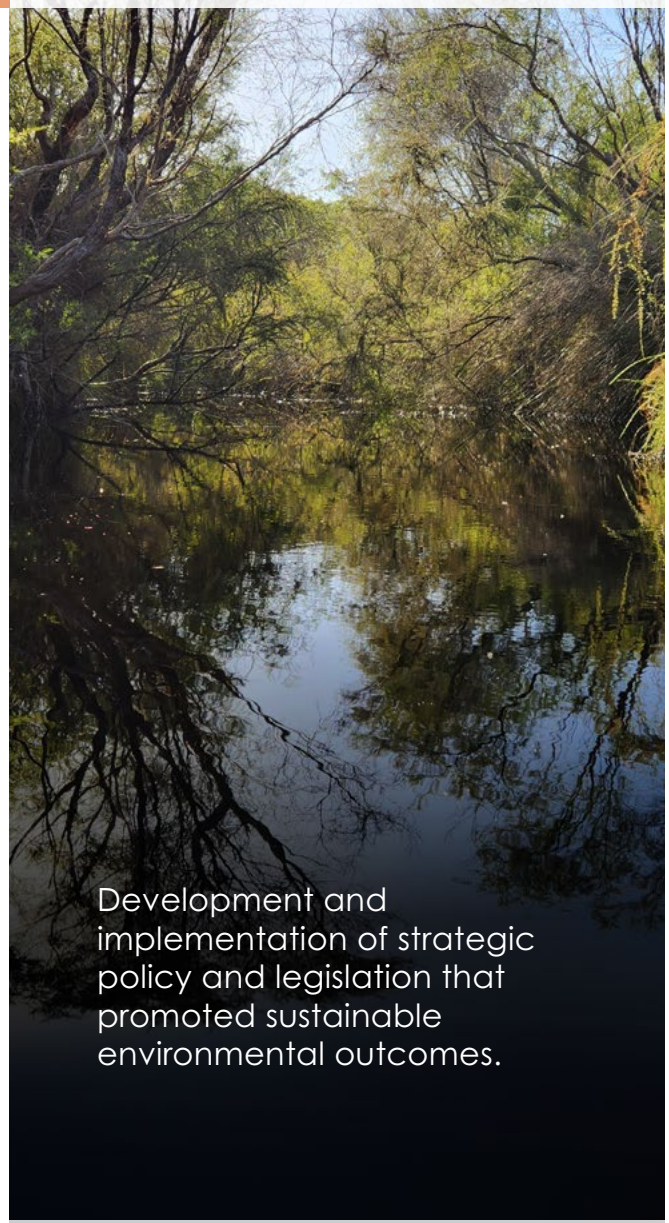
Outcome 3



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

Service 5 – Environmental and water policy

EP Act Amendments

During the year, work to implement the *Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2020* continued. The Act is the most significant reform of Western Australia's environmental legislation in more than 30 years, and its amendments are being introduced through a staged approach. We are developing regulations and guidance to support effective implementation of the amendments being proclaimed under each stage. Stages 1 and 2 are complete and we are investigating options to expedite the final stage and ease transitional arrangements for the new Part V Division 3 licensing regime.

Western Australian climate policy

Climate Adaptation Strategy

The 'Understanding how climate change impacts water in WA' communication and research initiative delivered sought after, up-to-date and regionally relevant guidance during the year. The initiative enables the best hydroclimate science to drive informed decisions about managing and protecting the state's water resources in our rapidly changing climate. It has funding of $4,153,000 from 2024 to 2028.

A major contribution of the initiative during the year was the *Guide to future climate projections for water management*. The new guide's practical framework facilitates a contemporary risk-based climate assessment. It helps water planners, scientists and decision-makers assess climate risk and opportunities for Western Australia's water resources using the latest climate science. We used the guide to:

- assess the potential impacts of changing climate and integrate the results into several departmental resource assessments and water allocation planning projects underway

in the Albany, Esperance, Exmouth, Jurien–Arrowsmith, Wellington, Jandakot–Perth South and West Canning Basin areas

- develop two National Hydrological Projections use cases – Myalup and Harding Dam (in conjunction with the Bureau of Meteorology and Water Corporation) – which, along with the guide, contributed to *Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan 3*.

Another highlight this year was gaining valuable insights into how south-west catchment dynamics have changed. Our first applied research project for the initiative, *Understanding and modelling hydrological non-stationarity in south west Western Australia*, used cutting edge techniques to:

- find that 65 per cent of the investigated catchments, over time, generated less streamflow from a given amount of rainfall
- identify how certain land uses in a catchment match up with the size of the rainfall response shift
- affirm the suitability of a rainfall-runoff model that the Department already uses
- suggest next steps to make hydrological simulations more robust, enhancing South West water planning projects.

Our research partner, the University of Melbourne, presented the project at the 2024 Hydrology and Water Resources Symposium – *Understanding and modelling hydrological non-stationarity in South-West Western Australia | 2024 Hydrology and Water Resources Symposium (HWRS 2024)*

Climate resilient rivers

This year marked the second year of our Climate Resilient Rivers project, funded under the state's Climate Adaption Strategy and delivered by the Department's Healthy Rivers teams. Through this project we are updating mapping of environmental values, condition, and climate threats for rivers across south-west Western Australia, and demonstrating on-ground actions to improve the resilience of rivers to the drying climate. This project is prioritising rivers for protection and/or enhancement, supporting planning and licensing decisions of government, as well as guiding work priorities and supporting investment by catchment management groups and research organisations.

The team supported several habitat enhancement projects through the Harvey and Collie rivers in 2024–25, working with catchment councils and the community, local Aboriginal groups, universities and schools, Ozfish West, other state agencies and local governments. This work has focused on improving climate refuges, which are areas that river species rely on to withstand dry season conditions. Many new projects are being planned for delivery in the next two years.

Building climate resilience for West Kimberley Traditional Owners

The Climate Action Fund has supported the Department to invest in developing an Aboriginal-led West Kimberley Climate Adaptation Strategy. This strategy aims to identify the risks and opportunities that climate change presents to Aboriginal communities and develop strategies to future-proof them under a changing climate.

The project is being delivered in partnership with the Nulungu Research Institute at the University of Notre Dame Australia (Broome) and the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council. By way of several initiatives the project has successfully engaged local Aboriginal people. For example, the Kimberley Traditional Owner Climate Forum was held in Broome from 20 to 22 May, bringing together Aboriginal leaders and young people, government officers and scientists to discuss the challenges that a changing climate poses to Aboriginal communities. The event was well-received and began an important discussion about how government and Aboriginal people could work together to build sustainable and resilient communities.

Two other complementary initiatives have brought on community researchers. University partners are providing training and on-ground research to strengthen workforce capacity to monitor impacts on fire patterns, food and energy security. These partnerships are providing key insights and learnings into how local Aboriginal communities can continue to sustain their lifeways and livelihoods while protecting the riverine ecosystems of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River.

These activities will inform the West Kimberley Climate Adaptation Strategy, which will be completed by the project partners in 2025–26.

Climate Adaptation Strategy implementation

During the year we delivered several key milestones under the *Climate Adaptation Strategy*. Since the plan's release in 2023, four actions have been completed, and 33 actions are in progress. The State Government created a dedicated Climate Resilience portfolio in March 2025 to focus on delivering core initiatives for enhancing the resilience of our communities, environment and economy. The portfolio will oversee implementation of the adaptation strategy, with almost $40 million allocated to deliver the 37 actions across 13 state agencies and government trading enterprises. We are leading 17 of the actions.

Climate Risk Capability Initiative

The Climate Risk Capability Initiative is a Department-led program that began in October 2022 to build climate risk capability in the public sector.

The program delivered three training workshops during the year, attracting more than 700 participants, mostly in-person but also online from around the state. One of the key strengths of these workshops is the opportunity to learn from peers through case studies presented by agencies and government trading enterprises, sharing insights and key learnings from their climate risk assessments, planning and management experiences.

The program also manages a dedicated online platform in the form of a Community of Practice, where members can find relevant guidance and tools, resources and recordings of training workshops.

A self-assessment tool, the Climate Risk Maturity Model, has also been developed to help agencies measure their climate risk capability and highlight areas for improvement. This guidance builds on the *Climate risk management guide (interim)* and climate risk assessment tool.

The focus for next year will be to produce an updated and more comprehensive version of the guide, as well as provide additional training workshops and more resources for state agencies to better manage climate risks.

Climate Science Initiative

Producing and communicating credible climate information and resources is a key direction of the state's Climate Adaptation Strategy.

The Climate Science Initiative is producing the most detailed climate projections to date for south-west and north-west Western Australia. These projections, extending to 2100, are being produced in partnership with the NSW Government, Murdoch University and the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre.

A suite of supporting climate change communication materials, including infographics, fact sheets and a regular newsletter, are being produced to support the understanding and application of climate science across sectors. In 2024–25, four editions of the newsletter reached more than 1,000 stakeholders across government, industry and the community.

Staff from the program collaborate with the National Environmental Science Program's Climate System Hub to ensure national climate science is effectively communicated to stakeholders in Western Australia.

Adaptation Research Hub

The Department-led Adaptation Research Hub is strengthening adaptation research and driving innovation to meet the needs of end users. Consultations with researchers and end users in 2023–24 resulted in a stocktake of existing research. Subsequent analysis found research gaps and potential trends for future research.

The program held a workshop in August to test findings, gather further feedback and connect stakeholders. Results will be circulated via a final report.

The Sector Adaptation Plan (SAP) program, which the Department will also coordinate, supports sector-level action to strengthen Western Australia's resilience to climate change. SAPs identify and address climate risks and opportunities specific to each sector, enabling coordinated adaptation across government, industry and the community. SAP development is led by several partner agencies and will be delivered for sectors such as:

- emergency management
- primary production
- health and human services
- natural environment
- infrastructure and built environment
- small-to-medium enterprises.

Water security

Key outcomes in water security under the adaptation program this year included:

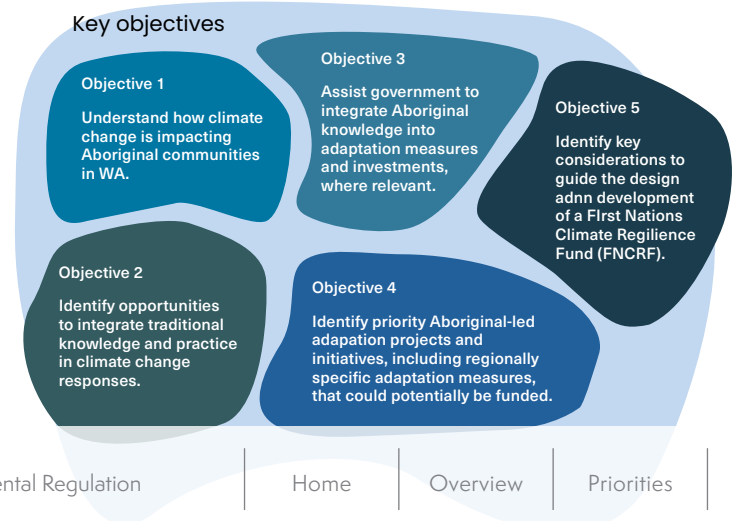
- developing guidance, tools and templates to support consistent SAP planning and delivery
- mapping interdependencies between sectors to identify shared risks and opportunities
- delivering program logic to improve the rigour and consistency of outcome and action development across sectors
- continuing sector engagement plans now underway and starting the primary production SAP.

These efforts are laying the groundwork for the delivery of robust, collaborative adaptation plans in the years ahead.

First Nations Climate Resilience Fund

Western Australia's Climate Adaptation Strategy recognises the vital role of Aboriginal experiences, knowledge systems, aspirations and leadership. The First Nations Climate Resilience Project aims to build trust, share knowledge and design a dedicated fund to support Aboriginal-led climate adaptation projects.

The First Nations Climate Resilience Project led by the Department will help government better understand the impacts of climate change on Country and communities, identify priority projects and inform design, governance and resourcing to support the Fund. In 2024–25 with the guidance of a Program Manager with lived experience, the Department engaged consultants, and planned the project's consultation phase with Aboriginal people and organisations in key regional centres, to be undertaken in the second half of 2025.



Climate Adaptation 2025 conference

Australia's premier conference on climate change adaptation – Climate Adaptation 2025 – was held in Perth for the first time from 22 to 25 July. The financial and in-kind support that we provided to secure the conference for Western Australia afforded state government agencies an unprecedented opportunity to collaborate with more than 350 climate adaptation practitioners, researchers and policymakers. These participants brought the latest knowledge and practice in climate risk and adaptation from across Australia and internationally. The research and findings presented at the conference provided a valuable boost for the state's communities, economy and environment toward adapting to the challenges of climate change.

Native vegetation policy

The Department continues to lead the delivery of the Native vegetation policy for Western Australia (the policy) and Implementation roadmap (the roadmap). After a foundational year focused on establishing the systems and frameworks necessary for delivery, the second year of implementation has marked a significant phase of progress.

Key achievements during the year included:

- Enhancing mapping and monitoring of native vegetation by generating updated vegetation statistics for the Perth and Peel regions and the Swan coastal plain.
- Progressing investigations into more automated vegetation extent mapping by the application of machine learning through the WA Vegetation Extent (WAVE) mapping pilot.
- Improving environmental information to support more timely decision-making under Parts IV and V of the EP Act, including investigations into conservation and restoration actions that best support priority environmental values in the Perth and Peel regions.
- Increasing the availability of spatial data, including updating the Environmental Offsets Register for the Perth and Peel regions and the Wheatbelt.
- Facilitating broad engagement with government agencies, local stakeholders and interstate representatives to advance actions within the roadmap.

The policy's first-year detailed progress report was released on wa.gov.au. We are now preparing the second-year progress report.

Nature programs

Urban Greening Grants Program

The Urban Greening Grant Program was created to expand tree canopy and vegetative cover across the 33 local government areas within the Perth and Peel regions. This will help address the impacts of climate change, provide for biodiversity, and improve the liveability of neighbourhoods.

We funded the program and worked with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) to roll it out. Twenty-six councils shared $3.75 million across three rounds of grants, which means more than 33,000 trees and 260,000 understorey plants will be planted throughout Perth and Peel.

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The Urban Greening Grants Program shows how well different levels of government can work together to create real environmental benefits for local communities.

WA Tree Recovery Program

In response to the loss of tree canopy due to the polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB), the State Government, through the Department, launched the WA Tree Recovery Program (WATR). WATR will provide $7.2 million in funding to replace tree canopy loss across local and residential lands.

Since coming into effect in January, $250,000 in funding has been provided to the Perth Zoo to develop a PSHB management strategy and remediation plan, and to progress remediation works in 2025–26 that focus on rectifying compromised animal welfare in the zoo's African savannah habitat due to removal of PSHB affected trees.

The first of two rounds of local government grants opened in May. These grants will support the planting of trees that enhance Western Australia's native biodiversity and help reduce the risk of further PSHB spread.

As part of the WA Tree Recovery Program, the residential rebate program will provide a rebate of up to $150 per tree removed to support residents to purchase a replacement tree and eligible tree establishment items. The planting of thousands of trees under this program will build on the State Government's urban greening initiatives – creating communities that are greener, healthier and more liveable.

Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund

The Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund (PEOF) delivers environmental offset projects in the Pilbara bioregion in partnership with Traditional Owners, conservation agencies, industry and government.

The fund combines money from individual offset payments required under Part IV of Western Australia's EP Act, and contributions required under Part 9 or 10 of the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

This year was the PEOF's most successful yet. Years of stakeholder engagement to develop trusted relationships in the Pilbara region were realised, and the fund quadrupled funding allocated to projects. The four additional projects total approximately $8.6 million and focus on protecting native fauna, managing fire and controlling invasive species to improve vegetation and habitats.

In October we published an independent evaluation of the PEOF's operation. The evaluation identified policy and program challenges, and gave recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness, to which the government has responded through a series of actions to reform PEOF. The fund continues to deliver against the evaluation actions at pace with industry, landholder and Aboriginal corporations support.

Environmental Revegetation and Rehabilitation Fund

We are delivering the Environmental Revegetation and Rehabilitation Fund (ERRF) in partnership with Greening Australia. Biodiversity restoration efforts are underway across eight sites throughout the South West and Wheatbelt, covering more than 500 hectares of land.

These projects prioritise collaboration with local delivery partners and incorporate traditional knowledge to develop employment, training, and business opportunities within the environmental restoration field. We have placed particular emphasis on creating pathways for First Nations people to engage in caring for Country.

Working alongside local stakeholders and delivery partners, these Department-funded projects have generated employment or training opportunities for 65 individuals to date. We have also partnered with nine regional nurseries for seedling production, creating a network of local suppliers supporting the restoration work.

Clean Energy Future Fund

Grant recipients for round three of the Clean Energy Future Fund were announced on 7 January with seven projects being awarded grants totalling $16 million.

The projects include hydrogen production, regional and remote solar generation, battery storage, and piloting the electrification of mining vehicles and retirement communities.

Of the total funding, $8.5 million went to three initiatives led by First Nations organisations: the Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation, the Jinparinya Aboriginal Community and Electric Power Conversions Australia. These projects will deliver ground-breaking business models that generate economic benefits and employment opportunities for First Nations people and communities.

When completed all the funded projects are expected to:

- avoid about 175,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year, equivalent to taking more than 56,000 cars off the road
- avoid about 3.7 million tonnes of emissions over the expected lifetimes of the projects, at a cost of $4.38 of Clean Energy Future Fund funds per tonne
- spend $336 million, much of it in Western Australia, or $21 per dollar of grant funds.

The successful projects are:

BOC Limited	$3 million to install a 1.25 MW alkaline electrolyser to produce up to 500 kg per day of renewable hydrogen at its Kwinana operations site and introduce new hydrogen packaging solutions for deploying hydrogen fuel cell power generators in remote areas.
Tesla Geraldton Pty Ltd	$3.5 million to convert a 10 MW diesel generator at Geraldton Airport to battery storage to provide grid services and electric vehicle charging.
Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation	$2.5 million to install 103 MW of solar power and 51.5 MWh of battery storage on Banjima country in the Central Pilbara.
Edenlife Communities Pty Ltd	$432,750 to support construction of a retirement village of fully electric houses, ahead of electricity grid connection availability, by installing 395 kW of solar and 300 kW/663 kWh of battery storage to power homes and building works.
Electric Power Conversions Australia	$3 million to convert a 150-tonne mining haul truck from diesel to battery electricity to prove the technology for wider deployment of electric conversions.
Pacific Energy	$574,400 contribution toward the installation of a 250 kW/1 MWh Vanadium Redox Flow Battery to test the performance of a high-capacity vanadium battery.
Pilbara Solar	$3 million for the Junja project to install 10 MW of solar near Port Hedland on Jinparinya Aboriginal Community land.

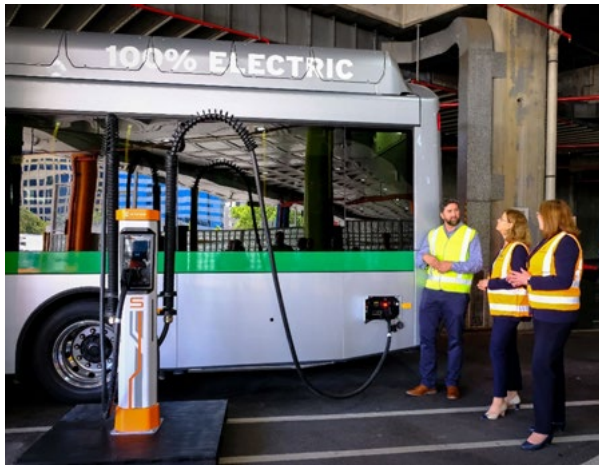
*Project funding is conditional on successful completion of a formal funding agreement.

Moora miocrogrid funded through the Clean Energy Future Fund

Electric vehicles

We are coordinating delivery of Electric Vehicle (EV) strategy and policy for Western Australia. About half of the strategy's actions have either been completed or are ongoing. All the remaining actions are underway and substantially progressed.

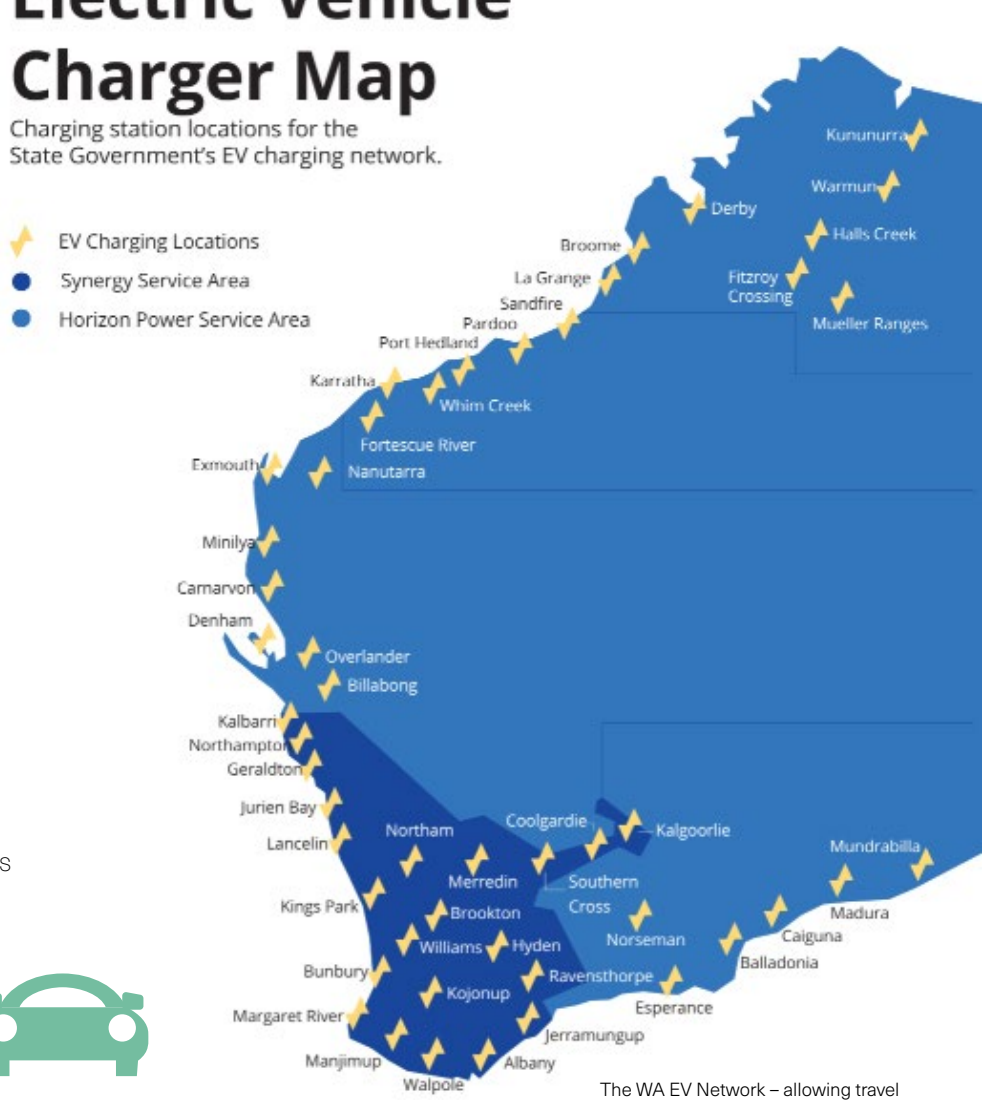
We will continue to coordinate implementation of actions from the EV Strategy and work with Australian governments to support Western Australian motorists to transition to zero emission vehicles.



Highlight – State EV network

Horizon Power and Synergy have built one of the world's longest charging networks. Western Australia's EV network is part of a $43.5 million investment to boost the state's EV infrastructure. The network includes 110 charging stations across 49 different locations facilitating travel north from Perth to Kununurra, along the south-west coast to Mundrabilla on the Nullarbor and east to Kalgoorlie.

The first sites were opened to the public at Geraldton and Northampton in April 2023, and the full network became operational in January this year. This infrastructure is key to boosting EV uptake in the state and will support the transition towards net zero emissions by 2050. The network also provides an important tourism boost, with *Time* magazine listing our EV network as one of the world's greatest places to visit in 2024.



The WA EV Network – allowing travel around Western Australia in an EV
© Synergy WA EV Network

Whole-of-government emissions tracking and reporting

Mature tracking and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions supports delivery of the State Government's climate change commitments, including its target to cut emissions from its operations to 80 per cent below 2020 levels by 2030.

In accordance with the Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy, we are leading the implementation of an emissions tracking and reporting software system across government to measure progress against whole-of-government targets.

Following a successful pilot of the system in 2024, we are now rolling out the software across all major government entities across the state, including departments, statutory authorities, government trading enterprises and other government bodies.

When complete, the emission reporting and tracking system will manage more than 60 emissions profiles encompassing around 140 government entities.

We will support the participating government entities to use the software to measure and report on their emissions and energy use from government buildings and operations. The data will be used to identify high-emissions facilities that can be prioritised for improvement and to develop emissions reduction plans.

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*, which aims to ensure clean air is achieved and maintained throughout the Perth metropolitan region to 2030 and beyond.

The committee met twice during the year.

Exmouth Gulf Taskforce

The Exmouth Gulf Taskforce was established in July 2022 under the EP Act and concluded in June 2025. The taskforce was the coordinating body assisting the government's consideration of strategic matters relating to the Exmouth Gulf and surrounds, in response to the EPA's 2021 strategic advice on the potential cumulative impacts of the proposed activities and developments on the environmental, social and cultural values of Exmouth Gulf.

Taskforce members, led by Independent Chair David McFerran, included representatives from Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC), the Exmouth community, environment groups, industry, and federal, state and local governments.

The taskforce met three times during the year, with two meetings held in Exmouth, including its final meeting in May. The Taskforce also hosted community information forums in Exmouth (August, May) and Onslow (May), and three workshops to address specific advice, recommendations and discussions on the severe marine heatwave events of February 2025.

The Taskforce Secretariat, hosted by the Department, also engaged with key stakeholders, including briefings to the Shire of Ashburton's community information session, the Department's Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group and the State Government's Exmouth Gulf Seniors Officers Group.

In September, the Taskforce Chair and NGTAC hosted a site visit for senior executives and key decision-makers from local, state and federal governments and the EPA to enhance their understanding of the globally significant and unique environmental, social and cultural values of the Exmouth Gulf and surrounds. This included visiting peak humpback whale migration sites and key places on Country with NTGAC custodians.

The Taskforce worked collaboratively to deliver its *Final report to the Minister for the Environment* in June, aligned with its terms of reference. The final report provided recommendations and strategic advice on options for future protections and integrated management for the Gulf and surrounds.

The final report complements the *Exmouth Gulf Taskforce Interim report to the Minister for Environment*, which recommended a jointly-managed whole-of-Gulf marine reserve supported by a tailored marine park planning process and the resourcing of the NTGAC as partners.

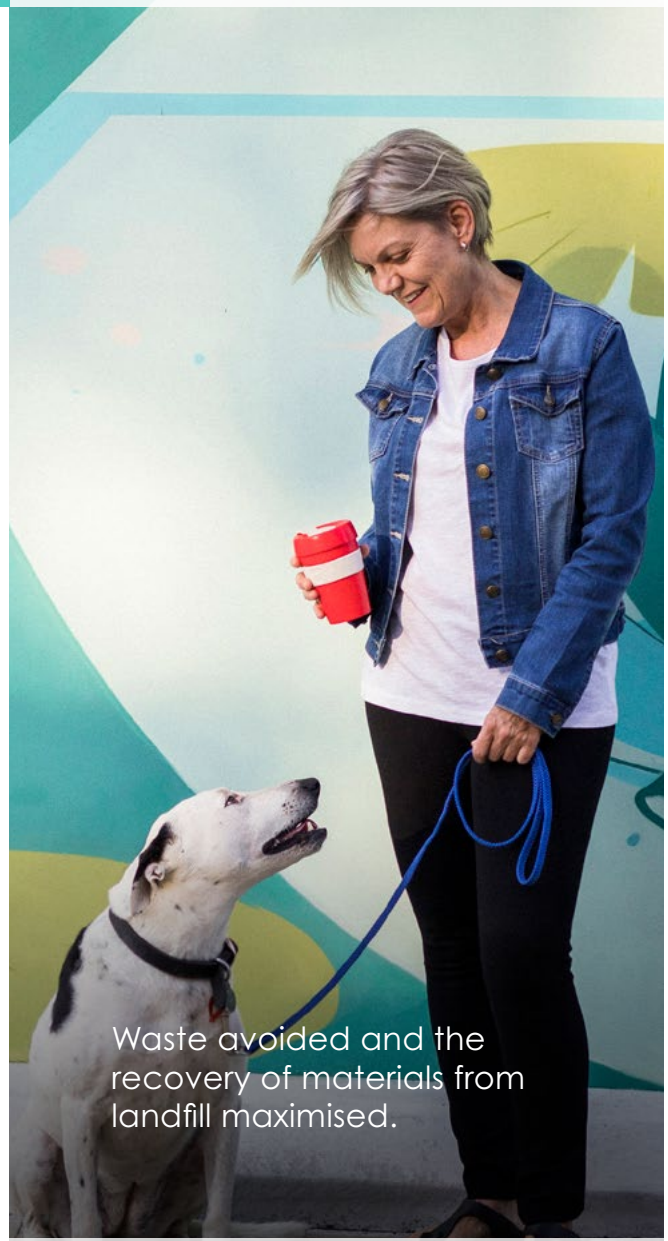
The Taskforce also delivered a knowledge review report to the Minister for the Environment, in partnership with the Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI), updating key knowledge on the Gulf and identifying future research priorities. The knowledge review was an extension of the WAMSI cumulative study, which informed the EPA's 2021 strategic advice on the Gulf.

Cockburn Sound Management Council

The Cockburn Sound Management Council is an advisory council to the Minister for the Environment established under s.25 of the EP Act. The scope of the council includes oversight and coordination of environmental monitoring of the Cockburn Sound marine area, consistent with the State Environmental (Cockburn Sound) Policy 2015 published by the EPA.

Annual monitoring in the Cockburn Sound marine area includes water quality sampling, realtime water monitoring and seagrass surveys. The Council is led by an Independent Chair and consists of representatives of the community, conservation interests, recreational interests and industry, as well as Australian, State and local government representatives. The Council met quarterly in 2024–25.

Outcome 4



Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised.

Service 6 – Waste strategies

Waste avoidance and resource recovery

Waste strategy

Western Australia's *Waste avoidance and resource recovery strategy 2030* (waste strategy) is supporting our move towards a sustainable, low-waste circular economy and allows performance to be monitored against baseline data. The Waste Authority has led a review of the waste strategy to reflect on performance, what is working, and what could be done differently. In 2024, a revised draft waste strategy was developed and underwent 12 weeks of public consultation. Feedback was gathered via surveys, workshops and written submissions from the waste industry, local and state governments, representative bodies, educational institutions and the community. This process informed the development of Beyond WAste 2030 (the modified waste strategy and five-year action plan).

Waste levy and funding

The waste levy is an economic instrument to influence waste management practices, including reducing waste to landfill, by increasing the price of landfill disposal. Some of the revenue generated by the levy supports waste-related programs that reduce waste to landfill. The application of funds, through the programs set out in the Waste Authority's annual business plan, is a key mechanism for delivering the waste strategy.

The waste levy is payable for all waste disposed of at category 63, 64 and 65 landfills within the metropolitan region, and for metropolitan waste disposed at landfills outside the metropolitan region. In 2024–25, $101.98 million in waste levy was collected, an increase on the $94.35 million collected during the 2023–24 financial year. The levy was paid in respect to 16 landfill premises, eight located in the Perth metropolitan region and eight in regional areas.

The waste levy rate was increased in 2023–24 to $85 per tonne for putrescible landfills and $129 per cubic metre at inert landfills, effective from 1 July 2024 (from $70 and $105 respectively). A further increase took effect on 1 July 2025, raising the rates to $88 per tonne for putrescible landfills and $133 per cubic metre at inert landfills, to maintain its value against inflation. The Department also published a five-year projection of the expected increases to the waste levy to offset inflation.

Waste reporting and plans

Under regulation 18C of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008 (WARR Regulations), local governments in Perth, Peel and major regional centres must report waste and recycling data to the Department each year. We use these reports to assess whether the local governments are delivering their waste services consistent with the waste strategy and making progress towards waste strategy targets. In 2024, 256 annual returns were lodged for the 2023–24 financial year. Data collected through the annual returns is published on the Waste Authority website annually and in the *Annual waste and recycling data reports*.

Waste projects

Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO

Through Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO, we continue to support the waste strategy target to roll out better practice three-bin FOGO services across Perth and Peel local governments. This means a red lid bin for general waste, a yellow lid bin for recycling and a lime-green lid bin for food organics and garden organics (FOGO). This year two local governments applied for grants totalling $1.037 million to introduce FOGO services and educate their community about correct sorting behaviours. In five years, the program has committed $7.176 million towards FOGO services, with close to 350,000 households throughout the Perth, South West and South Coast regions now having access to FOGO services. With the projected increase in recovery associated with the FOGO rollout and the establishment of two energy recovery facilities, we are on track to meet the 2030 target of no more than 15 per cent of all Perth and Peel waste landfilled.

Community Engagement

'Be a GREAT Sort' is the campaign under the WasteSorted behaviour change program launched in August 2020. It has a strong research base, supporting the waste strategy and aligning with other high-profile waste programs. The campaign targets five high-priority GREAT waste behaviours (Gifting, Recycling, Earth-cycling, Avoiding and Taking) to encourage the community to take simple actions to make 'landfill the last resort' and 'do better than the bin'. This year $997,942 was spent on a statewide advertising campaign between November and June by way of television, cinema, radio, billboards, YouTube, social media channels, and printed materials. Social media advertising reached 1.35 million Western Australians.

After the success of bringing the GREAT Sorts characters to life in 2023–24, the Taking behaviour was modelled by an expanded suite of individuals correctly disposing of their electronic waste by taking it to the right place, supporting awareness of the e-waste to landfill ban.

Households are encouraged to adopt five priority GREAT waste behaviours:

The WasteSorted toolkit continues to provide a suite of free resources for local governments and regional councils to communicate with residents about sorting waste correctly to reduce contamination in kerbside bins and increase material recovery and recycling. Stakeholders are regularly consulted about the ongoing development of the WasteSorted toolkit to ensure it meets their needs, including WALGA's Consistent Communications Collective. Promotional work included resources for Buy Nothing New Month (October), National Recycling Week (November), and Don't bin a Battery (December/January). This year more than 30 local governments and regional councils used the WasteSorted toolkit and 'Be a GREAT Sort' campaign materials.

During the year we worked towards taking on responsibility and ownership of Recycle Right – a waste and recycling education platform assisting the state's local governments, regional councils and residents to recycle, reduce their waste and live more sustainably. Ownership was completed in June, although the Waste Authority has been funding operations since July 2024, thus making access free of charge to all local governments to progress towards consistent statewide waste education communications and delivering Headline Strategy 1 of the waste strategy. Recycle Right is complementary to our WasteSorted Toolkit and is critical to waste sorting behaviour change efforts, particularly around the ban on e-waste disposal to landfill. Recycle Right's tools fulfill a critical role in community behaviour change – knowing which waste needs to be taken somewhere else for recycling, and where the drop-off points are.

A review of the statewide waste education resources is underway, involving local governments, regional councils, WALGA and the waste industry. This will help us to better understand stakeholder needs and expectations to inform future improvements to the WasteSorted platform and other behaviour change efforts.

Food awareness campaign

The Great Unwaste, launched by End Food Waste Australia (EFWA) in September, is a nationwide consumer behaviour change campaign empowering Australians to reduce food waste at home, save money and support a sustainable future. Informed by years of research, including specific insights into Western Australian practices around food planning, shopping, storage, preparation and disposal, the Department is actively working with EFWA to support implementation of The Great Unwaste campaign in Western Australia. This includes provision of in-kind support and a contribution of $50,000 to provide campaign resources to local governments. With the launch of The Great Unwaste Partner Hub, governments, not-for-profits, charities, food rescue organisations, schools and industry associations can access free resources to champion household food waste reduction and spread The Great Unwaste message.

WasteSorted Awards

The WasteSorted Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of Western Australians working towards a low waste and circular economy future, recognising projects that avoid waste, recover value from waste streams and protect the environment. A total of 105 nominations were received in 2024, with 13 winners announced at the Awards event in September, held to coincide with the Waste and Resource Recovery Conference, jointly hosted by the Department, the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia and WALGA.

Find out about the Community Waste Award winner, Incredible Edible Broome Inc. on Waste Authority site

WasteSorted Schools

WasteSorted Schools is a free program that engages students through curriculum-aligned resources and education strategies, along with meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. It delivers tangible benefits for participating schools by helping them to protect the environment, reduce school 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 and productive school gardens. A total of 269 schools achieved accreditation this year, including 15 schools that achieved 10 years of accreditation and six schools that were accredited for the 15th consecutive year.

269
schools achieved accreditation this year

Find out about the Schools Awards winner, Carine Senior High School on Waste Authority site

Program expenditure in 2024–25 was $550,617. During the year the program:

01
awarded grants totalling $211,165 (ex GST) to 72 schools for projects that avoid and recover school waste

02
delivered 17 professional development workshops and webinars for 445 teachers from 307 schools; the online professional learning module was completed by 93 teachers and students from 76 schools

03
collaborated with local government waste educators through regular communication, including the yearly local government webinar with 31 attendees from 24 metropolitan and regional local governments

04
visited 64 schools in the metropolitan and some regional areas to run educational waste audits, 51 schools to run incursions, seven schools to provide project support, and four schools to attend sustainability fairs and assemblies

05
provided support to regional schools including workshops, school visits and networking with local government, youth centres and waste providers in the South West, Wheatbelt, Mid West and Pilbara

06
supported high schools with a dedicated high school workshop for teachers, a student event attended by 206 students from 21 schools, and the development of high school specific resources.

07
participated in a project with the Department of Education and the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council to test the effectiveness of introducing multiple bins in schools to increase diversion rates of recyclable materials

08
trialled and produced resources to support waste avoidance and recovery in schools, including classroom games on organics recycling and making waste-free lunches, activities for incursions such as recycling cornhole, and updated curriculum resources for teachers.

WasteSorted Schools

Bin tagging

The Waste Authority been working with WALGA since 2014 to implement the WasteSorted Bin Tagging program (which provides feedback on individual kerbside bin contents to reduce contamination and improve material recovery rates). This year WALGA received $120,000 for activities as part of a three-year grant (2024–27) to deliver the bin tagging program. More than 12,000 households were provided with feedback this year, in conjunction with 10 local governments and two regional councils.

Waste grants

Since 2017–18, we have administered infrastructure and community education grant funding programs in association with the Waste Authority, providing more than $13.4 million to Western Australian projects to improve the recovery and reuse of focus materials, including plastics, construction and demolition waste, textiles and organics. The WasteSorted Grants – Community Education program funds organisations to develop and implement community education projects. In 2024–25, 19 projects were funded to a total of $254,742. Projects for the year included a series of regional workshops focusing on composting organic waste at home, low-waste cooking workshops for young people, and developing and promoting a fun waste sorting card game. The WasteSorted Grants – Infrastructure program supports investment in recycling and processing infrastructure. Three new projects expanding FOGO recycling infrastructure will soon get underway with grants totalling $3.66 million.

Waste priorities

E-waste ban

The e-waste ban came into effect on 1 July 2024, aiming to increase material recovery and manage e-waste responsibly. In this first phase, electronic items banned from landfill include: screens, information technology and telecommunications, lighting and lamps, large appliances when used in a home, office or professional environment, batteries, temperature exchange equipment and medical devices. Accompanying the ban was a statewide integrated media campaign demonstrating easy-to-adopt disposal habits for common e-waste items which ran from 7 July to 31 October 2024 across metropolitan and regional areas. Media included statewide radio and streaming audio sites, YouTube videos, digital advertising, social media, and shopping centre Shopalite panels.

To support entities to comply with the ban, we developed a series of fact sheets and frequently asked questions along with the e-waste exemption guidelines. We adopted an education-focused approach during the first year of the regulations but expect businesses and public entities to demonstrate reasonable efforts to comply with the ban.

The government also allocated more than $10 million in infrastructure grants to fund nine new processing projects and 26 collection, storage and reuse projects to recover e-waste. These grants supported small businesses, local governments, and charitable recyclers to recover up to 23,000 tonnes of e-waste and create 135 new jobs. The 35 funded projects included new battery and solar panel recycling plant investments by businesses; storage infrastructure and e-waste collection stillages for local governments; and tag and testing equipment for charitable recyclers to enable reuse of collected e-waste.

Household Hazardous Waste

The Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program funds local governments and regional councils to collect, store, recover and dispose of flammable, toxic, explosive or corrosive hazardous waste generated by households. If not treated or disposed of correctly, these products can pose a threat to public health and the environment. Since 2011, 7,541 tonnes of HHW materials have been collected from 15 permanent facilities (nine metropolitan, six non-metropolitan) and through temporary collection events. This year 550 tonnes of materials were collected for safe recovery or disposal including gas bottles, batteries, flammable liquids, aerosols and cleaning products, with $2,017,563 being directed to WALGA for administration and operation of this program.

Container deposit scheme

Western Australia's popular container deposit scheme, Containers for Change, has been operating since 1 October 2020. It continues to reduce litter and increase recycling, as well as create new business opportunities across the state. By the end of June, more than 4.4 billion containers had been recovered for recycling and more than $16.15 million donated to over 8,000 registered charities, schools and community groups. The recycling rate for beverage containers has increased from the pre-scheme rate of 34 per cent to more than 65 per cent.

The State Government has committed to expand the container deposit scheme to include wine and spirit bottles. We have consulted widely with all stakeholders, including the beverage industry, and are working to minimise costs and reduce administrative burdens, which will ultimately benefit consumers.

4.4 billion+
containers had been recovered

Plan for Plastics

Western Australia continues to lead nationally in tackling plastic waste through its Plan for Plastics, which bans 22 single-use and problematic plastic items. Since the program began in 2021, our state has removed hundreds of millions of plastic items from circulation. These changes were supported by a comprehensive communications campaign, including digital content, videos, and tailored support for businesses, community groups, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) audiences. We responded to more than 1,000 stakeholder enquiries during the year.

To assist the hospitality sector and local governments, the Boomerang Alliance, through the WA Plastic Free Places program, provided targeted support, including resources to promote reuse and compliant alternatives. The Plastic Ban Solution Finder website continues to help retailers identify compliant packaging options, with products independently verified by the Boomerang Alliance, helping to prevent greenwashing and streamlining retail compliance. The National Retail Association (NRA) delivered targeted support to more than 1,700 businesses, including 392 retailer visits across 55 precincts. The program supported culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and high-risk sectors and provided direct assistance to 55 Western Australian suppliers.

A mine site reuse project, launched in January in partnership with the Boomerang Alliance, is investigating the use of reusable food and drink containers in the resources sector. More than 100 sites have been engaged, with findings showing many have successfully transitioned to reusable systems. New guidance will be developed to support broader uptake.

We continued to work closely with other jurisdictions on national harmonisation of plastics regulation. Following endorsement of the *National Roadmap: Harmonising action for problematic and unnecessary plastics* in December, we are progressing work to align state actions with national priorities across 24 key plastic items. During 2024–25, the team worked with stakeholders to progress the ban on non compostable plastic barrier bags. A design standard for certified compostable barrier bags has been published and a suite of resources developed to help industry adapt.

In recognition of this work, the Plan for Plastics team was named a finalist in the 2024 Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) WA Achievement Awards, nominated in the Organisational Excellence category.

Recycled construction and demolition waste

The use of recycled construction and demolition (C&D) waste remains critical to achieving the state's material recovery targets.

The Roads to Reuse (RtR) program continues to encourage the use of recycled C&D products in civil applications (such as road construction) by supporting the supply to market of recycled C&D products that meet a product specification, and that protects human health and the environment. Three accredited RtR recyclers were operating at four sites in the Perth and Peel regions in 2024–25. The Department and the Waste Authority have worked closely with the transport portfolio to increase the use of RtR material in road and transport projects. Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA) has now used more than 220,000 tonnes of RtR products since 2019, with the Tonkin extension project presenting an opportunity to use about 300,000 tonnes of accredited materials. MRWA is working with contractors to ensure this supply is met through RtR accredited facilities.

We engaged Senversa Pty Ltd to conduct a scoping study to develop a suite of guidance protocols to support the use of recycled sand under a future recovered materials framework. The study will inform the development of a specification for sand that can be included in the existing RtR product specification document and will inform the development of a future declaration for aggregates under a recovered materials framework.

Waste infrastructure

National Partnership on Recycling Infrastructure

The federal and state governments are co-investing $70 million and $35 million respectively to boost local recycling capacity in plastics, tyres, paper and cardboard. Funding has been awarded to five plastics, seven tyre, and four paper and card projects. These support 386 jobs and process up to 378,850 tonnes of waste each year. These large and complex recycling infrastructure projects have faced delays, which is consistent with national trends. All projects are still expected to be completed within the agreed funding timeframe. A range of issues have contributed to delays including difficulties accessing the required expertise, cost escalations, labour shortages, and challenges securing suitable premises.

The federal and state governments have co-invested $11.25 million to divert up to 275,000 tonnes of Western Australia's FOGO waste from landfill each year and convert it into compost.

Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund

The federal and state governments through the Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund have co-invested $11.25 million to divert up to 275,000 tonnes of Western Australia's FOGO waste from landfill each year and convert it into compost. The three FOGO infrastructure projects have a total value of $54 million, with strong support from industry partners alongside government funding. There have also been delays in the delivery of these projects due to cost escalations and proponent management restructures that must be finalised before any government funding is provided.

Western Australian litter strategy

The Keep Australia Beautiful Council WA (KABC) vision is for a litter-free Western Australia. KABC received grant funding of $985,000 from the Waste and Resource Recovery Account (WARR Account) towards implementation of the *Litter prevention strategy for Western Australia 2020–2025*. The strategy has four strategic objectives:

Objective 1
Increase community understanding of the impacts of litter on the environment and support behaviour change

Objective 2
Contribute to the long-term prevention of litter and marine debris

Litter prevention strategy for Western Australia 2020–2025

Objective 3
Regulation and enforcement of the *Litter Act 1979*

Objective 4
Monitor the level of litter in Western Australia and its marine environment and evaluate the effectiveness of programs

The Litter Report Scheme enables registered members of the community to report littering from vehicles. This past year, an additional 981 Western Australians registered to become litter reporters. This brings the total number of registered litter reporters to 19,829 in 2024–25. Roughly consistent with the previous year, 1,047 reports were received resulting in the issue of 911 infringements, achieving an 87 per cent successful conversion rate to action. You can read the latest KABC annual report here.

Key litter strategy achievements in 2024–25

	Litter surveys	Conducted two full litter surveys using the Australian Litter Measure over 265 transects at 57 sites in 10 local government areas across Perth (November and May). An average of items of 119.2 litter per 1000 m^2 were counted, with cigarette butts the most common item found, and plastic the most common material.
	Adopt-a-Spot	Expanded the Adopt-a-Spot program by 173 to 2,455 registered groups, bringing the total number of registered program volunteers to more than 62,000.
	Tidy Towns	Received entries from 38 communities for the 2024 Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities Awards. Port and South Hedland were named the 2024 state winner and went on to represent Western Australia in the National Tidy Towns Awards, winning the Behaviour Change and Wellbeing Award, and the Biodiversity Conservation Award. Some 3,677 volunteers spent 25,832 hours participating in the projects entered in the awards.
	Litter Grants	A total of $52,324.00 of funding was provided to 10 recipients, through Community Litter Grants, for action and education on litter prevention projects.
	Clean Schools	Held six Clean Schools workshops, including two in partnership with WasteSorted Schools. Sixty-seven new schools registered for the Clean Schools program, bringing the total number of schools, day care centres and other educational organisations registered for the program to 797.
	Unseen Heroes	Continued the promotion of the Unseen Heroes campaign to increase community involvement in the Litter Report Scheme.
	Outback Packs	Released three special edition Outback Packs for the Kimberley, Goldfields and Coral Coast regions.
	39 events attended	Attended 39 events including a community clean-up event in Kununurra, Busselton Triathlon and the Shark Bay Fiesta, as well as events in Perth such as the Canning River Eco Education Centre (Creec) Earth Day Expo, Sealinks Rottnest Clean Up and World Environment Day with WAMSI at Scarborough Beach.
	20th anniversary of WA Beach Clean-ups	Partnered with Tangaroa Blue for the 20th anniversary of WA Beach Clean-up activities. KABC travelled to the Abrolhos Islands with DBCA, Midwest and Central Regional TAFE, and Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation. All data gathered was added to the Australia Marine Debris Initiative database. Over three days, 21 volunteers removed 5,232 items of debris weighing 1,352 kg from 24 islands within the Houtman Abrolhos archipelago.

Outcome 5

Service 7 – Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA

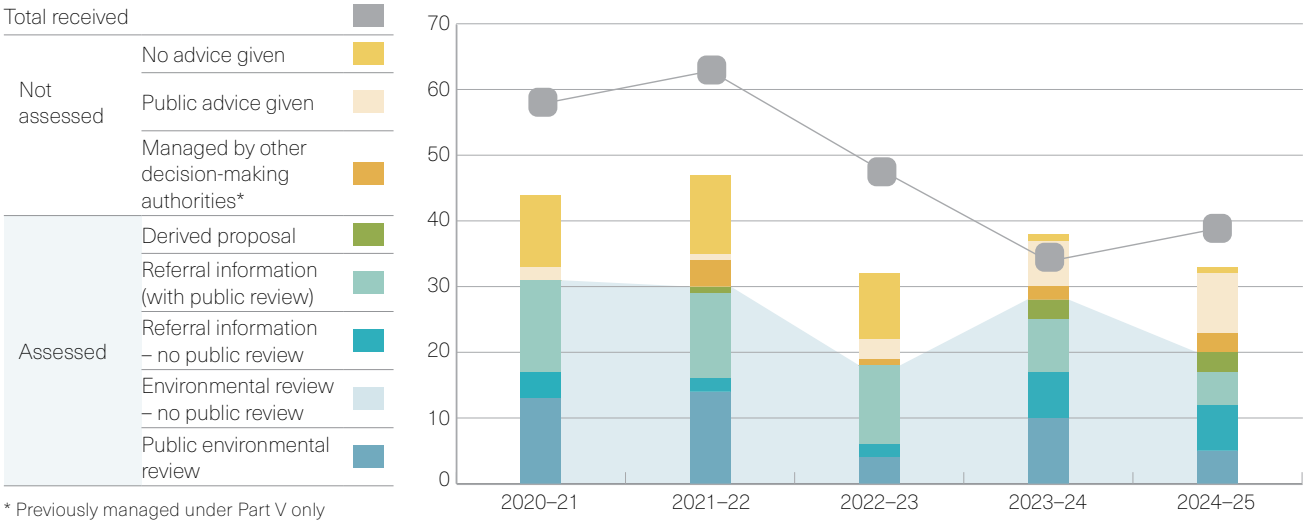
The EPA is an independent authority of up to nine members that provides advice on environmental matters to the Minister for the Environment. The Department has continued to provide services to the EPA to conduct environmental impact assessments of significant development proposals and planning schemes.

Referral of development proposals, planning schemes and scheme amendments

In 2024–25 the following were referred to the EPA:

- 38 proposals including one derived proposal
- 104 schemes or scheme amendments

Total development proposals referred to the EPA and decisions



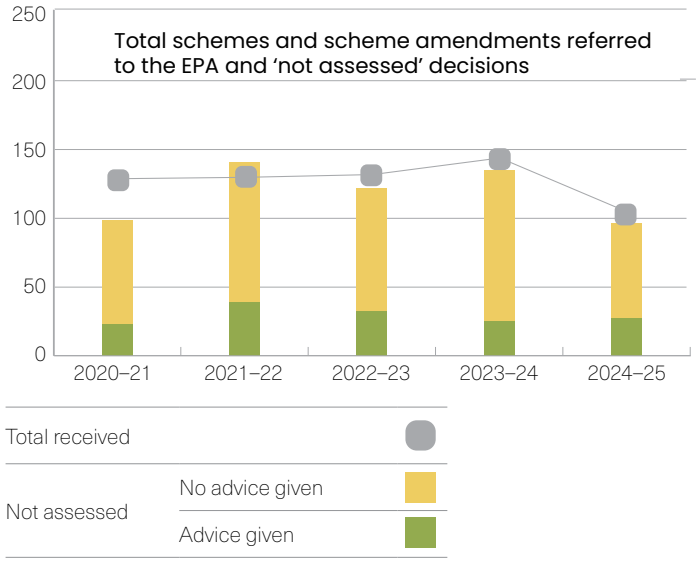
* Previously managed under Part V only

The EPA may not necessarily make a determination on whether to assess a referred proposal, scheme or scheme amendment in the same year the proposal or scheme is referred.

In 2024–25, the EPA determined that:

- 13 proposals did not require further assessment
- 17 proposals required formal assessment
- 3 proposals were derived proposals
- 96 schemes or scheme amendments did not require further assessment
- no schemes or scheme amendments required formal assessment.

The EPA provided advice and recommendations to the Responsible Authority under the EP Act, on the environmental issues raised by 27 of the referred schemes that did not require further assessment.



Completed assessments

In 2024–25 the Department supported the EPA to complete 20 reports to the Minister for the Environment. Of these, 18 were for the assessment of new proposals or significant amendments to existing proposals (section 38), and two were inquiries into changing the conditions of Ministerial Statements for existing proposals (section 46).

The map (right) shows the location and type of all the proposals for which assessment reports were completed in 2024–25.

Reports on development proposals completed

Type of assessment	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Formal assessments				
Public environmental review	5	4	9	7
Environmental review (no public review)	0	0	0	0
Assessment on referral information (no public review)	2	1	2	4
Assessment on referral information (with public review)	7	5	5	7
Strategic proposal	-	0	0	0
Subtotal	14	10	16	18
Changes to conditions				
s.46 inquiry	9	7	4	2
Total	23	17	20	**20**

Eighteen significant assessments were completed this year including the Tonkin Highway Grade Separated Interchanges project, the Gnarabup Tourism Development Resort and Beach Village proposal, and a proposal to extend the life of Kalgoorlie-Boulder's "Super Pit".

The s.46 inquiries into conditions in Ministerial Statements were for Subdivision (amalgamation) Lots 802, 804 and 4640 Mandurah Road, East Rockingham, and Gorgon Gas development.

Consultation

Providing opportunities for genuine public consultation is an important part of 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 several stages.

The first formal opportunity for the community to engage is when the EPA initially publishes the details of a significant 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 to assess the proposal and, if so, the level of assessment required.

Relevant proponent information, such as environmental review documents, may then be published during the assessment on the EPA website for public review, through which submissions and feedback can be made.

Service 8 – Environmental management services to the EPA

Green energy proponent guideline

In December 2024, the Department released the *Green Energy Proponent Guideline*. Developed to assist proponents referring green energy proposals under Part IV of the EP Act the guideline outlines key concepts and issues the EPA will consider when assessing these proposals.

The guideline explains and provides examples of environmental values that may be impacted by different kinds of green energy proposals, and ways to avoid, minimise, and mitigate impacts.

The guideline provides information relating to the following green energy industries:

- solar power generation
- onshore wind power generation
- offshore wind power generation
- renewable hydrogen manufacturing
- critical mineral mining and processing.

Providing clear and practical guidance and information to proponents is a key tool in streamlining assessments to enable government to reach its energy transition goals.

Statement of Expectation and supporting reforms

Vogel-McFerran reforms

Over the last year the State Government has overhauled the environmental approvals system following the Vogel-McFerran Review – the Independent Review of WA Environmental Approvals Processes and Procedure.

The Vogel-McFerran Review resulted in 39 recommendations, of which the independent EPA was required to address 13 and have oversight of multiple others.

As of 30 June 2025, all the recommendations for which the EPA have oversight have been completed. Some of which include the following:

- EPA to report to Council of Regulators on use of EP Act provisions s.38G and s.44 that enable other regulators to mitigate environmental effects for Aboriginal cultural heritage and greenhouse gas emissions – Presentation and agreement with Council of Regulators complete.
- Rapid analysis of Assessment on Referral Information level of assessment – Analysis completed and recommendations included in the EPA's update to its environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures suite.

- Proponents of significant proposals/projects to be offered opportunity to meet with the EPA Board at least once during the assessment process and potentially more for contentious or complex proposals – Proponent meetings offered as standard approach and EPA stakeholder engagement plan published.
- Review of EPA policy and decision-making procedures during assessments to ensure the extent to which the requirements or provisions agreed to by the EPA on referral prevail – Review of the procedures complete, with the EIA procedures suite currently being updated to incorporate the recommendations.
- Establishment of EPA Advisory Committees paid subject matter experts, including EIA practitioners, to provide advice to the EPA on technical and implementation aspects of draft Guidance – Environmental assessments panel is established and actively used by the Department to support the EPA.

Statement of Expectation

In October 2024, the EP Act was amended to provide for the Minister for the Environment to issue a Statement of Expectation to the EPA that specifies the Minister's objectives on matters relating to the Authority's functions.

The EPA welcomed the clarity on government's objectives and has taken steps to implement some of the State Government's key strategic priorities, including:

- reviewing and updating the EIA procedures suite to implement streamlined approaches for environmental assessments
- establishment of a Scientific Advisory Council and expert Advisory Committee and panels to provide advice on draft guidance
- review and publication of updated Environmental Factor Guidance - Greenhouse Gas Emissions to reflect the State Government's revised Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy for Major Project 2024
- the publication of the EPA Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which includes information on proponent roles and responsibilities.

As per the requirement of s.21B of the EP Act, the EPA is required to have regard to the Statement in the performance of its functions. A full report on how the EPA has considered the Statement can be found in the EPA's 2024–2025 Annual Report.

District Structure Plans

District Structure Plans (DSP) are important planning instruments delivering on higher order strategic planning objectives. DSPs refine broad land use planning proposals with site specific information and establish coordination of land and infrastructure planning to support future development. DSPs guide further detailed planning through subsequent stages of the planning system, including Regional and/or Local Planning Scheme amendments, structure plans, precinct plans, subdivision and development. The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) is responsible for considering and approving DSPs. Once approved, DSPs are WAPC documents.

In late 2024, the WAPC and EPA agreed to the preparation of joint guidance for environmental input into DSPs. The Joint Guideline is being prepared in accordance with s.16 of the EP Act. The intent of the Joint Guideline is to provide guidance on how the planning framework and the environmental framework are to work together to support environmental outcomes through the early identification of environmental values to inform the preparation and consideration of DSP.

Stakeholder Reference Group

The EPA's Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) invites representation from key external stakeholders and peak industry bodies. Members can provide input to our guidelines, processes and performance. During the year, the SRG met four times in the EPA hub in the Perth CBD.

The SRG provided valued feedback on several important EPA initiatives, including the Guideline on Cumulative and Holistic Impact Assessment, the EIA Practice Guide, the EPA Policy and Procedure Review, the revised Environmental Factor Guideline – Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and the Department's Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulatory Review.

At 30 June 2025, core membership of the SRG comprised:

Conservation

- Conservation Council of WA
- Environmental Defenders Office
- The Wilderness Society
- Natural Resources Management WA
- Environmental Consultants Association
- Environmental Institute of Australia & New Zealand
- Urban Bush Council
- National Environmental Law Association

Planning

- Urban Development Institute of Australia
- WA Local Government Association
- WA Planning Commission

Resources industry

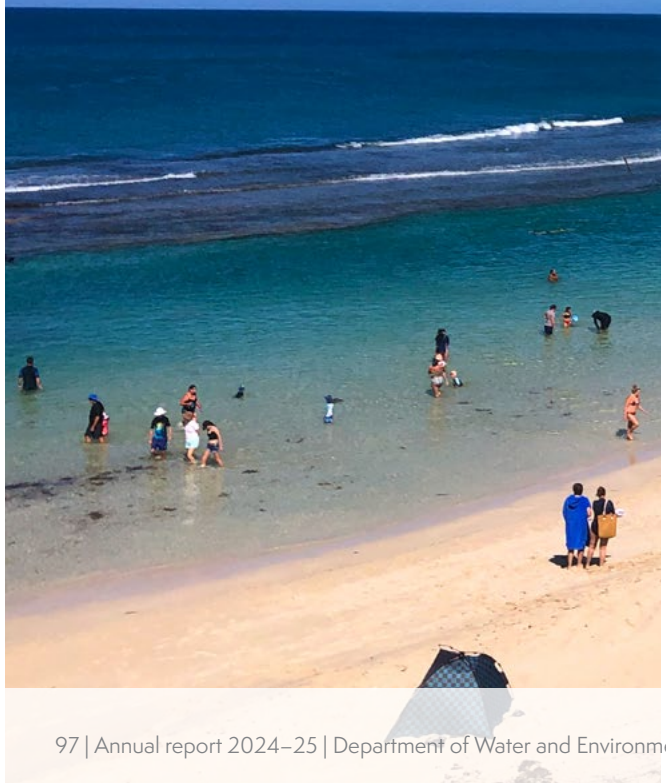
- Association of Mining and Exploration Companies
- Australian Energy Producers
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy

Agriculture

- WA Farmers Federation
- Recfishwest
- WA Fishing Council

Outcome 6

Compliance with Ministerial Statement implementation conditions is monitored effectively



Service 9 – Compliance monitoring services to the Minister for the Environment

Part IV EP Act Ministerial statements (and conditions)

Ministerial Statements are issued under Part IV of the EP Act and outline how a proposal is to be implemented and, if applicable, what conditions and procedures that implementation will be subject to. If a proponent does not ensure implementation of a proposal 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', the Minister for the Environment is informed and the Department may take further compliance or enforcement action in accordance with its Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

Compliance and audit activity

We monitor compliance with Ministerial Statements through a proactive program that audits a selection of statements each year. The statements are identified for audit based on a combination of environmental risk and information held by the Department, such as complaints, compliance history, incidents and date of last audit.

In accordance with our compliance priorities this year, we completed 40 audits of Ministerial Statements for significant proposals including iron ore mining, mineral sands, gas production and water management.

In addition, we reviewed 94 compliance assessment reports and 27 notices of non-compliance were issued. The purpose of these notices is to resolve non-compliances and identified environmental impacts and determine what steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence. Compliance activities identify areas for improving proponents' compliance and inform future annual compliance programs and the environmental impact assessment process.

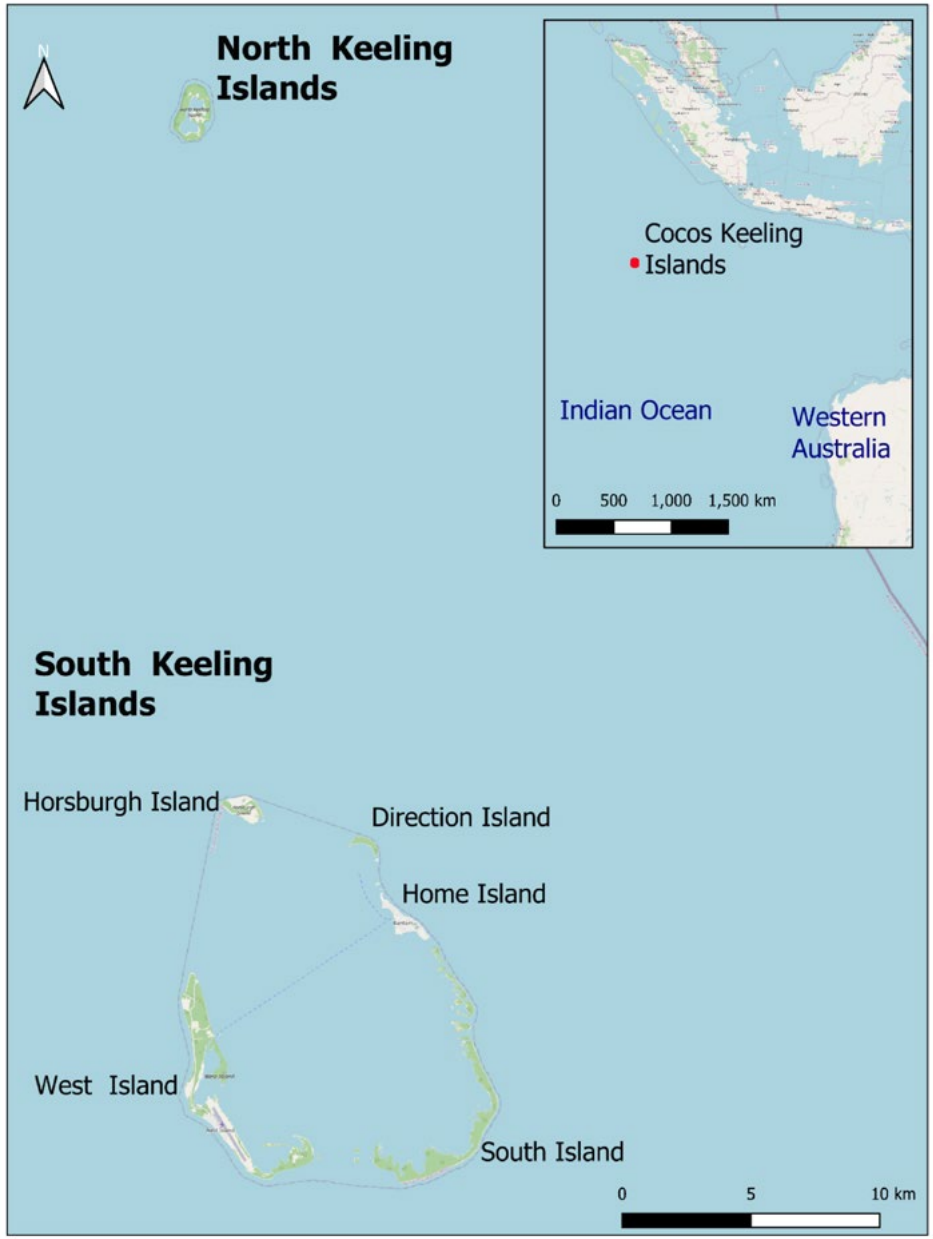
Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) services

We manage environmental and water resources in the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) on behalf of the Commonwealth, which has a service delivery agreement with the Department.

Established under key legislation – including the *Christmas Island Act 1958 (Cth), Cocos (Keeling) Islands Act 1955* (Cth), and the Indian Ocean Territories *(Administration of Laws) Act 1992* (WA) – this arrangement enables the delivery of services equivalent to those on the mainland. Our responsibilities include environmental regulation, pollution response, waste management, and sustainable water resource management. These functions are delivered in accordance with relevant legislation, with full cost recovery funding and infrastructure support provided by the Commonwealth. The arrangement reflects the State's commitment to meeting its statutory obligations while supporting the environmental health and water security of the IOT.

During the year we delivered 58 environmental and water-related workstreams. Our service reflects more than a decade of service delivery oversight and continuous improvement to ensure the needs of IOT communities and other state agencies operating under similar arrangements are met with professionalism, scientific rigour, and operational excellence. This year more than 35 specialist Department staff contributed to delivering core services in environmental licensing, water resource management, regulatory compliance, technical advisory, and community education. The IOT service delivery contributes to our key efficiency indicators and demonstrates effective intergovernmental collaboration in delivering high-quality environmental regulation and water governance in two of Australia's most remote regions. Key achievements over the year included:

- progressing the proclamation of drinking water reserves and groundwater areas of water resources to underpin long-term water security
- installing real-time (telemetered) water monitoring infrastructure to support sustainable water use and flood resilience
- providing regulatory oversight for critical components of the Commonwealth Defence runway upgrade
- advancing climate adaptation planning through the integration of coastal hazard risk management (CHRMAP) frameworks.

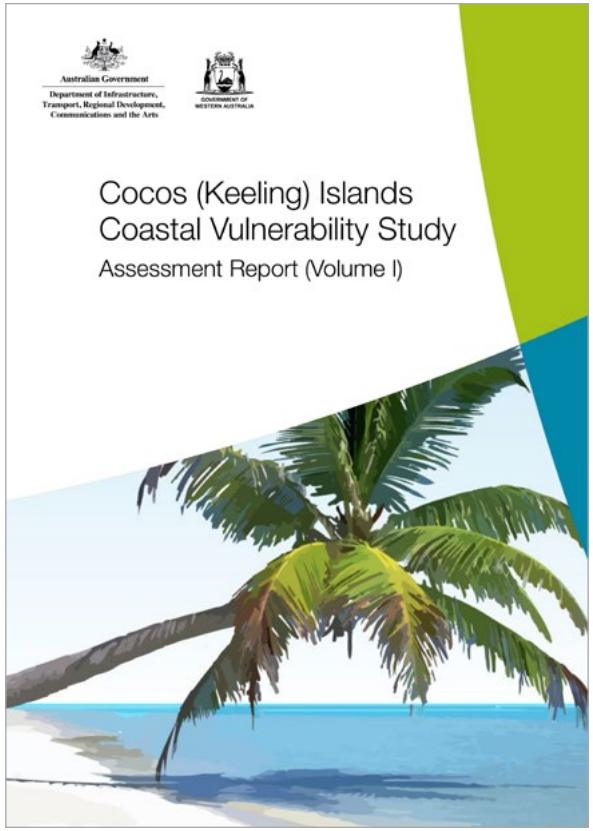


▶ Service 1

We integrated climate adaptation planning within coastal hazard management (CHRMAP), supporting DPLH to evaluate vulnerability to coastal hazards including erosion, inundation, and wave-driven water levels across multiple planning horizons.

▶ Service 2

We significantly expanded our service delivery to support water resource management and long-term water security. Key activities included the ongoing measurement and assessment of groundwater to inform sustainable water use, while protecting environmental and social values. Consultation was undertaken to enable a Commonwealth-approved legislative framework for water protection and licensing. Various scientific reports on hydrogeology and ecological water requirements were prepared to support future water planning and allocation. Drinking water source protection planning continued across the year, including inspections and familiarisation visits on both islands. We also provided advice to the Commonwealth on the Christmas Island strategic assessment concerning waste and liaised on matters relating to the proposed West Island runway upgrade, ensuring water sources were protected during project planning and delivery.



▶ Service 3

We conducted 'Water Our Precious Resource' educational visits to student year groups three to 10 on Christmas Island, supported by Water Corporation, building on the water and waste education programs delivered for eight years.

▶ Service 4

We continued to deliver regulatory oversight and environmental compliance functions across the IOT. This included supporting implementation of Western Australia's Plan for Plastics with the shires, conducting prescribed premises inspections and assessments of light industrial areas for compliance with discharge and licensing requirements, and undertaking ad hoc inspections and investigations as needed. Regulatory activities also involved the assessment of native vegetation clearing applications, environmental licences, works approvals, and contaminated sites. Engagement with stakeholders such as industry, Parks Australia, and the shires supported permit familiarisation and consultation processes. Preparatory work was also undertaken for the potential implementation of Controlled Waste Tracking services on both islands, aligned with future projects and national park policy requirements.

▶ Service 5

Our IOT program and service delivery is expected to expand to meet water and environmental governance expectations applied under Western Australian and IOT legislative responsibilities.

We supported the expansion of waste management initiatives through strategic partnerships and community engagement. This included collaboration with the Commonwealth on the development of an IOT Strategic Waste Policy and support for licensing the reprocessing of waste oils for reuse. We also helped the shires to progress local laws to prohibit single-use water bottles and improve regulatory waste control. Waste education and awareness activities were delivered in schools and the broader community through programs such as the Marine Debris Project, 'Sea Week' events, and regular communications via local media. These efforts are aimed at reducing waste generation, promoting reuse, and supporting long-term environmental sustainability in the IOT.

▶ Service 6

We supported the expansion of waste management initiatives across the IOT through strategic partnerships and community engagement. This included collaboration with the Commonwealth on the development of an IOT Strategic Waste Policy and support for licensing the reprocessing of waste oils for reuse. DWER also assisted the Shires in progressing local laws to prohibit single-use water bottles and improve regulatory waste control. Waste education and awareness activities were delivered in schools and the broader community through programs such as the Marine Debris Project, 'Sea Week' events, and regular communications via local media. These efforts are aimed at reducing waste generation, promoting reuse, and supporting long-term environmental sustainability in the Territories.

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