



Department of Water and
Environmental Regulation



2025-26 ANNUAL REPORT

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the Department) 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.

The Department recognises the practice of intergenerational care for Country and its relevance to our work and working with the community.

The Department continues to move forward with a shared commitment to protect and conserve Country for our future generations.



Caring for Country visual style

The First Nations artwork used throughout this report was created by Wongutha artist and designer Kevin Wilson.

The artwork explores the interconnectedness of water sources across Western Australia, above and below the ground. It depicts the rivers, creeks, waterways, and waterholes that sustain Country. The repeated waterhole motif emphasises that, despite geographical separation, water remains intrinsically connected beneath a shared sky. These connections are shaped by the Western Australian landscape — the land (Country) and its natural systems. The meeting place motif represents our communities, while the surrounding scattered dots symbolise the diversity of flora found throughout the state. Kangaroo and emu footprints are incorporated to acknowledge the presence and movement of animals through Country.

The vibrant colour palette reflects the breadth and richness of the state's environmental landscapes and natural wonders. Together, these elements show that people, animals, and plants can only continue to thrive within a healthy, well-stewarded environment, recognising the importance of caring for Country.





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Front cover: Rangers from Yued Aboriginal Corporation's Ranger Program conducting river health monitoring with members of the DWER River Science team at Regans Ford on Yued Boodja, January 2026.

Disclaimer

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

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Statement of compliance

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Hon Daniel Pastorelli MLA
Minister for Water

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Minister for the Environment;
Climate Resilience

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 2026.

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

Alistair Jones
Director General
22 October 2026





From the Director General



As our State continues to grow and develop, so too does our responsibility to protect our unique environment, water resources and the liveability of our communities.

Over the past year we have set ourselves up for the future with the development and release of our *Strategic Intent: Beyond 2050*, which outlines how our current work will deliver long term impact.

Our work is broad and deep – securing water for people, nature and the economy, while protecting our natural systems and environmental and human health, to build low waste, low carbon, circular economies and climate resilient and sustainable communities.

We engage, listen and act in partnership with the communities we serve. This includes exploring ways to foster partnerships with Aboriginal communities for mutual benefit and working with respect for Aboriginal traditional knowledge in our decision-making processes.

Population and economy are growing at the fastest rate in the country, and climate change is reshaping the way we live and work.

As industry and our economy grows, noise, dust, odours and other community concerns are also increasingly requiring our attention as regulators and in engaging with affected people.

In WA, water and climate remain priority issues. Government's key water direction statement, *Made Possible by Water*, directs our work with the State's water utilities and corporations to strengthen water security across Perth and regional communities while supporting housing, jobs and economic growth.

We are building drought resilience in dryland and regional agricultural areas through strategic water supply programs and partnerships with Commonwealth and local governments, industry and community, ensuring water security needs are being met wherever we are in the state.

Our circular economy work across food organics, e-waste, tyres, cardboard and other priority materials is supporting greater resource recovery and reducing the amount of valuable materials lost to landfill.

The year saw great global climate, geopolitical and economic change and therefore the need for agile and forward-looking responses that consider energy and decarbonisation, new industries and mining and processing of critical minerals.

We lead and support major projects in housing, energy and infrastructure through assessment and approvals. Our approvals system integrates the best science, environmental protections and outcomes. I am proud of our work in streamlining approvals processes and of our role in wider government initiatives such as the lead agency framework and Green Energy Approvals Initiative.

You will see some examples in this report of the science and environmental management work we do as a Department, and how that ensures evidence-based, practical decisions are made in our assessments, and to support informed regulatory decision-making.

We are working hard to inform, reform and improve environmental impact assessments to deliver sustainable outcomes that link today's actions to long term benefits for WA.

Our role is to strike the right balance for Western Australia – protecting nature and water while enabling communities and the economy to thrive.

This approach will guide our regulation, advice and programs to 2050 and beyond.

Alistair Jones
Director General





Our 2025-26 highlights

12,995



water licences managed covering 4,000+ GL of licensed water entitlements

Statewide climate projections



WA's first statewide projections support future planning

48

community water supply projects approved with 33 local governments



12

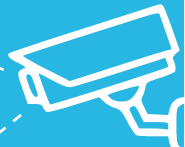
active freshwater investigations



conducted on water resources and ecosystems

400+

river and estuary sites monitored across the south-west



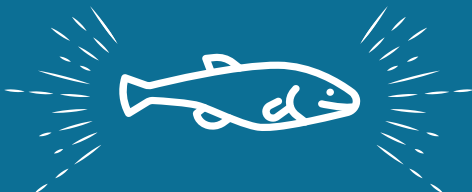
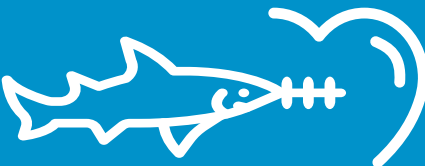
60

emissions profiles tracked across 140 government entities through new software



Threatened perch

presence confirmed in the Helena River



Threatened sawfish

supported through Kimberley conservation efforts

16%

seagrass increase reported in the Peel-Harvey



\$6.35 mil

in carbon innovation grants

approved for emissions reduction initiatives





200 mil
more
containers
captured
yearly

through the expanded
Containers for Change scheme

25



EPA
reports completed
with departmental
support for environmental
assessment



9,269

environment
reports received
from community, industry
and other sources



Water
measurement
drones

tested for water data
collection

591 tonnes

of hazardous household
materials collected



3,000+

land planning advice
requests provided
supporting planning decisions
across Western Australia

254



environmental
incidents
responded to on pollution and
environmental risk matters

Infra-red gas
detection
systems



trialled for
field use and
environmental
monitoring



Recycling

capacity funded for tyre and
cardboard recovery

175

Green Energy
assessments
completed
since 2023



387



environmental
investigations
completed
on environmental compliance
matters

44



environment
and water
workstreams
progressed for delivery in
the Cocos Keeling Islands



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Agency Performance



Agency Performance

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Outcome 1

Service 1: Water information and advice

Water measurement and monitoring

The Measurement Branch collects hydrological data used by departmental scientists and planners to support sustainable water management. The data is also used by the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, industry and the community.

The Measurement Branch is trialling and acquiring new technology throughout the regions, increasing our statewide capability to support departmental priorities. The branch recently acquired Surfbees (pictured left) for each of its teams across the state.

Our measurement network includes 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



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



Water information

The Water Information Reporting (WIR) portal provides access to data from more than 150,000 monitoring sites. Data requests declined during 2025–26 after a software rebuild temporarily took the portal offline and introduced improved self-service functionality, allowing users to access more information directly.

Analysis of data use shows most WIR requests relate to environmental assessment, research and investigation.

Water and land use planning

The Department provides water and environmental advice to the WA Planning Commission, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and local governments to support sustainable development. This includes early advice on regulatory requirements under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act), *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RiWI Act), *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* (Contaminated Sites Act), *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (CAWS Act), *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909* and related legislation. The Department also supported assessment of Part 11B Significant Development Applications through technical water and environmental advice.

Water Information Reporting data use

* All years refer to financial years.

Purpose	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
Environmental assessment	3,051	2,713	2,782	1,317 ↓
Research and investigation	2,622	2,880	3,330	1,412 ↓
Other	435	462	554	689 ↑
Mining and exploration	653	644	696	398 ↓
Agriculture	430	316	488	212 ↓
Domestic supply	153	134	153	68 ↓
Water source protection	551	493	410	167 ↓
Infrastructure	382	384	337	254 ↓
Property development/land use planning	249	163	266	131 ↓
Industry and commerce	99	91	141	28 ↓
Recreation	32	27	33	17 ↓
Total	8,657	8,307	9,192	4,693 ↓

We worked closely with DPLH to:

- improve the quality of referrals and scoping documentation submitted by developers
- ensure timely and transparent environmental assessments aligned with EPA expectations
- streamline advice into the statutory land planning process.

In 2025–26, we assessed and responded to 2,910 requests for water and environmental advice into planning processes. Of these:

- 1,683 requests were from DPLH
- 781 requests were from local government authorities

- 139 requests were from the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE)
- 291 requests were from other stakeholders, including state and federal government agencies, utilities and industry
- 16 requests related to the new Part 11B (*Planning and Development Act 2005*) Significant Development Application pathway.

This work also included advising on 108 water management reports associated with land planning.

The Department also improved efficiency through the integration of its Planning Advice workflows into the Department’s Environment Online system.



Drainage planning and floodplain modelling

Drainage planning in Perth is becoming more complex as urban development expands into areas with shallow groundwater and more variable flood behaviour.

We produce catchment-scale flood models for selected priority development areas and major State projects, and provide technical guidance on stormwater and shallow groundwater management. We also provide strategic flood risk management and land capability advice to inform planning decisions consistent with State Planning Policy 2.9 and the [Stormwater management manual for Western Australia](#) for development areas identified in WAPC's [Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million](#) frameworks.

A total of 78 enquiries were resolved, with advice provided 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.



Service 2: Water planning, allocation and optimisation

Water resources management plans

Water resources management plans, also known as water allocation plans, establish the Department's approach to water licensing, allocation and management under the RiWI Act within specific plan areas in Western Australia.

► Pilbara

During the year, the Department commenced the Accelerating Pilbara Planning Program to strengthen water planning in the Pilbara in response to climate change, increasing water demand and the region's future development.



The program will evaluate the [Pilbara Groundwater Allocation Plan](#), review a number of groundwater allocation limits across the plan area, strengthen climate guidance for water planning, and improve hydrogeological information to support water allocation decisions and public water supplies.

► Jandakot – Perth South

Work continued on the draft Jandakot–Perth South Groundwater Areas Water Resources Management Plan under [Kep Katitjin – Gabi](#)

[Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan 3](#). The draft plan includes a review of allocation limits for the Superficial, Leederville and Yarragadee aquifers, together with a review of existing water level criteria under [Ministerial Statement 688](#). Updated climate guidance and the latest Perth Regional Aquifer Modelling System are informing the development of the plan.

► Gnangara

The Department continued implementing the 2022 [Gnangara Groundwater Allocation Plan](#) and commenced preparation of a second biennial progress report. The report will outline progress towards implementing the plan's strategies to improve the long-term sustainability of Perth's largest groundwater resource.

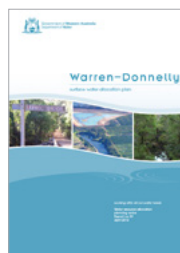


Learn more about the *Gnangara groundwater allocation plan* on [YouTube](#)



► Warren–Donnelly

Development of a new [Warren–Donnelly Surface Water Allocation Plan](#) continued. The plan is being informed by updated streamflow monitoring, the latest climate projections developed for Australia under the [CMIP6 modelling phase](#) and consultation with the Warren–Donnelly Water Advisory Committee.



Water investigations

Water investigations continued across the state to improve understanding of groundwater resources and support future planning.

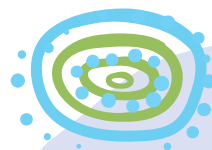
Under the [State Groundwater Investigation Program](#) we undertake targeted groundwater investigations to ensure government and industry have timely and accurate knowledge of water resources suitable for drinking, agriculture, horticulture, mining and industry.

This year \$4.2 million of capital funding supported 12 active groundwater investigation projects.

Modelling

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

In 2024–25 we delivered a catchment model for the Wilson Inlet, one of the South Coast's largest estuaries near Denmark. We are using the model to test the impacts of land use change in the catchment and nutrient management actions that might reduce nitrogen and phosphorus loads. We also completed the [Nullaki \(Wilson Inlet\) sandbar opening decision framework](#), which uses information from the Wilson Inlet estuary response model to support decisions about whether the sandbar should be opened in drier years.



Water investigations: highlights

► Collie groundwater investigation

The Collie groundwater investigation is a multifaceted project aimed at improving understanding of groundwater processes and surface water interactions within the Collie Basin. This information is essential for protecting local waterways, supporting the community, planning future land use, and assisting Collie's long-term transition as mining activities change.

Since April 2026, we have been installing groundwater and surface water monitoring sites near Collie, expanding the groundwater monitoring network, and collecting valuable geological and water level data. This information – combined with geophysical, hydraulic test and water quality data – will be used to develop localised hydrogeological conceptual models. The models will support future groundwater modelling, allocation planning and licensing decisions.

► West Canning Basin project

This year we updated the regional numerical groundwater model for the West Canning Basin, building on the recently revised hydrogeological conceptual model. The updated model provides a framework to assess groundwater level responses, system-wide impacts of abstraction, and the influence of climate variability across the basin.

The numerical model is being used to support an allocation limit review and to inform groundwater licensing decisions. It enables testing of different abstraction scenarios and climate conditions, providing evidence to guide allocation settings and assess potential impacts to groundwater-dependent values at a regional scale.





We continue to progress building new models to test the availability of surface water and groundwater under a range of potential future climates and where demand is high, and there are high-value environmental values – including in the important horticultural and agricultural areas in the South West, and to the north of Perth around Gingin.



Watch the Wilson Inlet Sandbar Opening 2025 on [YouTube](#)

Water source protection

We protect public drinking water source areas across WA to ensure safe, reliable and affordable drinking water for communities. These areas include surface water catchments (dams and reservoirs) and groundwater recharge areas (aquifers and wellfields), which are essential to longterm water security.

In 2025–26, we delivered a coordinated program of drinking water source protection planning, implementation and technical advice to address emerging risks, land use pressures and climate considerations. This included progressing drinking water source protection plans, supporting endorsement of priority

protection area boundaries, and undertaking [South West Native Title Settlement](#) (SWNTS) assessments and other land use planning activities within public drinking water source areas.

We provided around 1,270 hours of technical advice to support land use planning, development and regulatory decision-making, including recreation proposals, mining and resource developments, environmental impact assessments, works approvals, licences and native vegetation clearing applications. We also supported statutory referral processes by assessing land use compatibility, identifying water quality risks and recommending appropriate management measures.

Policy and guidance materials were updated to improve clarity and consistency in decision-making, including revisions to water quality protection notes and alignment with contemporary planning frameworks.

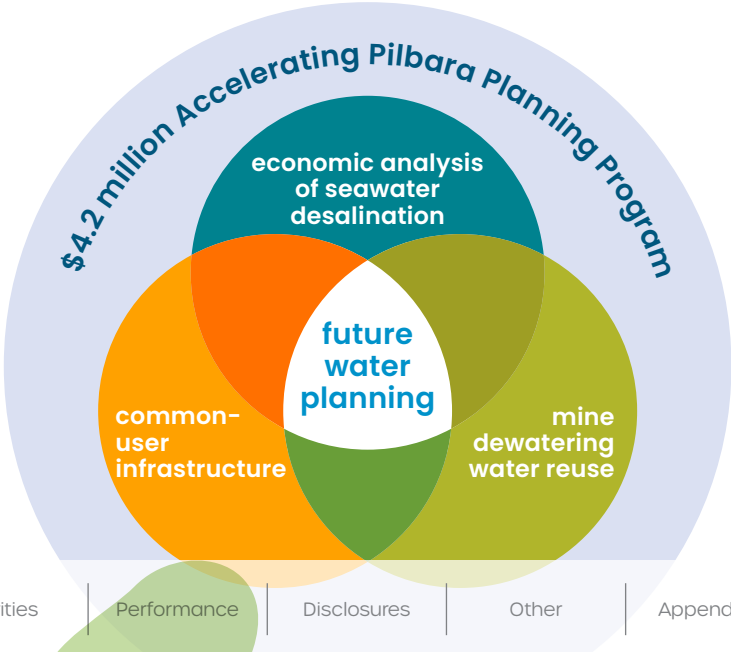
We also progressed priority planning and governance initiatives under the Indian Ocean Territories program, including preparation of the *Cocos (Keeling) Islands Drinking Water Source Protection Plan* for public consultation.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with State agencies, local government, water service providers, community stakeholders and First Nations groups to support implementation of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and a risk-based, catchment-to-tap approach to protecting drinking water quality across Western Australia.

Water supply planning

Pilbara water security remained a major focus during 2025–26. We completed the [Building Water Security for Pilbara Coastal Towns and Industry – Status Report](#) (March 2026), which identified increasing pressure on coastal water supplies from declining rainfall and growing demand, highlighting the need for climate-independent water sources such as seawater desalination to support future community and industrial growth.

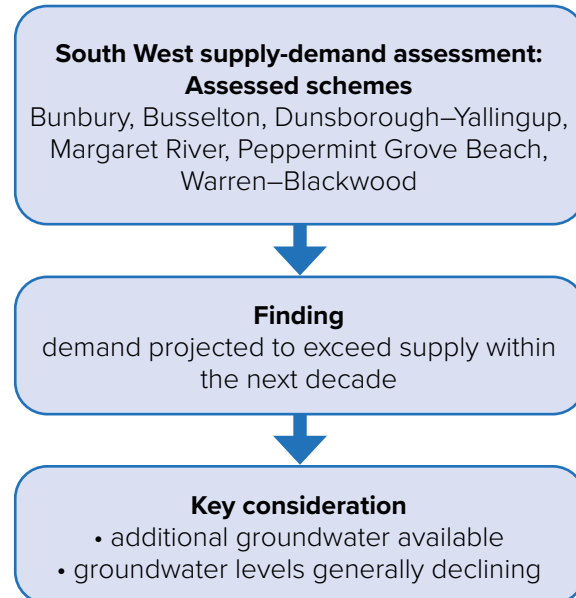
As part of the WA Government’s \$4.2 million Accelerating Pilbara Planning Program, we commissioned an economic analysis of seawater desalination and common-user infrastructure, together with a study into opportunities to reuse surplus mine dewatering water. The findings will inform future water resource and supply planning for Pilbara coastal towns and strategic industrial areas.





In the South West, we completed a supply and demand assessment for public water supply schemes in partnership with Aqwest – Bunbury Water, Busselton Water and Water Corporation. The assessment found demand is projected to exceed available supply within the next decade for the Bunbury, Busselton, Dunsborough–Yallingup, Margaret River, Peppermint Grove Beach and Warren–Blackwood schemes.

We also developed a statewide water resource risk assessment framework for public water supply schemes, providing a consistent approach to assessing risks and informing planning for future water sources and demand management.



Waterwise Councils

The [Waterwise Councils program](#) supports local governments to improve water efficiency and climate resilience. We partner with Water Corporation and 45 councils statewide to sustain this long-standing initiative and take action under [Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise action plan 3](#). Participation is free and optional, and councils are offered education, training, resources and funding to promote waterwise practices.

Organisational and individual achievers within the Waterwise Councils program are recognised each year at an event hosted by the Department and Water Corporation. Gosnells and Karratha were recognised as joint Platinum Waterwise Councils of the Year for outstanding waterwise initiatives. These achievements show how the Waterwise Councils program is translating investment into on-ground action, with councils embedding waterwise behaviours in planning, design and operations to deliver measurable water savings and stronger, more resilient communities.



Drainage for liveability

In partnership with Water Corporation, we continued to support the transformation of stormwater drains and basins into living streams, wetlands and community spaces. The [Drainage for Liveability](#) program, an action in [Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise action plan 3](#), is revitalising these assets to increase their social, amenity and environmental value, while strengthening how drainage infrastructure is integrated into urban design. Projects such as the [Nurdi Way Constructed Wetland and Living Stream](#) in Riverton have converted conventional drainage assets into multi-functional systems that improve water quality, reduce flood risk and create habitat, while providing an accessible and valued community space.

Rural water planning

The [Rural Water Planning](#) program is part funded through the Australian Government's [Water Infrastructure for Sustainable and Efficient Regions](#) (WISER) initiative under the [National Water Grid](#) (NWG) until 2027. The NWG contributes \$2.8 million to the [Community Water Supplies Partnership \(CWSP\) program](#), matched by \$2.2 million from the WA Government. A further \$4 million is provided for the Agricultural Area (AA) Dams and [Strategic Community Water Supply](#) (SCWS) programs, with matching funding from the WA Government.



Community water supplies partnerships

The Community Water Supplies Partnerships program supports local governments and community groups to improve non-potable water supplies for emergency stock watering, public open space irrigation, firefighting, and assisting regional communities to become more resilient to a drying climate.

Between July 2024 and June 2026, 48 projects across 33 local government areas were approved, with \$3.4 million in funding supported by \$1.6 million in co-contributions. Projects included rainwater tanks, firefighting water tankers, catchment and dam restoration, and stormwater harvesting and management.



48 projects

across 33 local government areas were approved

An additional eight projects across three local government areas received more than \$569,000 through a \$1.5 million expansion of the program into the South West and Great Southern. Projects include non-potable water pipelines, mobile water carts, standpipes and smart water access systems to reduce reliance on scheme water while improving regional water security and community infrastructure.



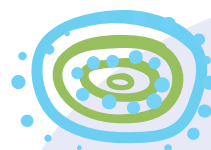
Emergency agricultural and community network

The Agricultural Area (AA) Dams and Strategic Community Water Supplies (SCWS) programs continued expanding Western Australia's network of non-potable water sources for use in firefighting and stock watering emergencies across dryland agricultural regions.

During the year, 54 projects across 22 local government areas, valued at \$1.7 million, were completed, with a further 22 projects across 17 local government areas, valued at more than \$1.4 million, commenced. Works included

restoring dams, upgrading roofs and guttering, installing rainwater tanks and stormwater harvesting infrastructure to improve emergency water supplies, strengthen drought resilience and reduce reliance on scheme water.

During the year, 54 projects across 22 local government areas, valued at \$1.7 million, were completed.



Pingaring tank in the Shire of Kulin

The restoration of the historic Pingaring tank included the following works and benefits:

- Nine-million-litre concrete tank constructed in 1932.
- Initial works focused on restoring the tank's roof after investigations identified the need for major structural upgrades.
- During restoration, inspections revealed that water from the Pingaring Rock catchment was not reaching the tank because the inlet infrastructure had deteriorated.
- Roof restoration works included:
 - » remediated inlet to tank
 - » replaced the existing roof structure
 - » installed new support columns and steelwork
 - » removed 15 tonnes of debris from inside the tank.
- Benefits included:
 - » improved drought preparedness
 - » increased emergency water storage capacity
 - » enhanced long-term water security for the region.





Water carting

A water deficiency declaration is a government response to safeguard the commercial interests of farmers during very dry periods.

Since water carting began in 2024, more than \$1.3 million has been spent on emergency stock watering.

Water deficiency declarations were in place during the year for the Salmon Gums, Grass Patch and Cascades areas in the Shire of Esperance.

Declarations:

Salmon Gums
deficiency declared
22 December 2023

Grass Patch
deficiency declared
16 February 2024

Cascades
deficiency declared
27 February 2025



Water deficiency declaration tanks, Cascades

Strategic community water supply plans

Twenty-seven [strategic community water supply plans](#) have been published. These plans provide information for the local government, farmers and the community on the location of strategic community water supplies and how to access non-potable water for emergency stock watering and firefighting purposes, including what infrastructure is available at each site and who to contact to access the water.

River science

The Department maintains long-term river monitoring programs and undertakes targeted research to improve river management.

► Healthy Rivers program

Our water planning, environmental planning and licensing decisions are underpinned by the [Healthy Rivers program](#), which monitors the biodiversity, water quality and habitat condition of rivers across south-west Western Australia.

The program routinely monitors around 200 sites, with additional investigations undertaken in response to emerging issues. During 2025–26, field assessments were completed at 90 sites between the Arrowsmith



Healthy Rivers team completed assessments at
90 sites

River and the Waychinicup River. Results are published through the [Healthy Rivers website](#) alongside environmental monitoring guidance, information on native species and current research.

Monitoring continued to improve our understanding of the impacts of a drying climate on river ecosystems. The program reinforced the critical importance of protecting permanent river pools as climate refuges, which enable native species to persist during drought and recolonise river systems when conditions improve.



The Healthy Rivers team partners with natural resource managers and community groups, landholders, academic institutions, industry, local governments, other State agencies, and Aboriginal organisations across all regions. A significant outcome from our partnership with the Bibbul Ngarma Aboriginal Association (BNAA) was the discovery of the threatened Balston's pygmy perch (*Nannoperca balstonii*) in the Helena River (Mandoon Bilya).



The species is endemic to south-west Western Australia but had not previously been recorded in rivers north of Margaret River. The discovery highlights the conservation significance of the Helena River and supports the BNAA's BoorYul-Bah-Bilya project to improve catchment health.

► **Climate resilient rivers**

2025–26 marked the third year of the Creating Climate Resilient Rivers (CCRR) project, funded through the State [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).

The project is mapping environmental values, condition, climate risks and potential resilience of rivers across south-west Western Australia to support water planning, environmental licensing, and future investment in river protection and restoration.

During the year, we continued restoration partnerships with local catchment councils, Aboriginal organisations, local communities, universities, schools, OzFish West, State agencies and local governments. Works included monitoring habitat enhancement projects in [Collie](#) and Harvey rivers and planning new projects for delivery during 2026–27.

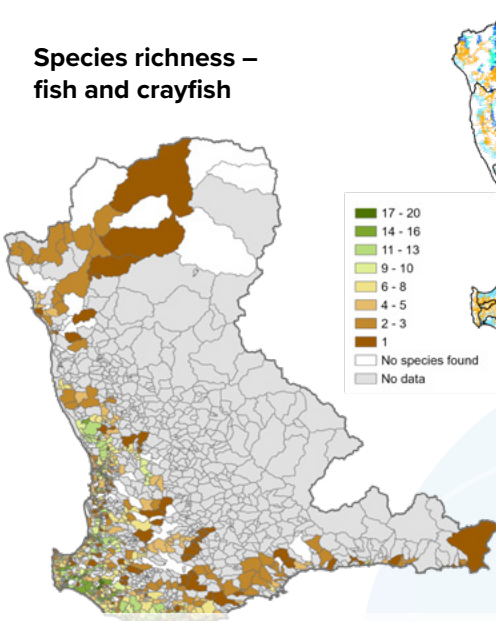
Future works include installing fish passage structures to improve connectivity between climate refuges, expanding habitat restoration in the Harvey and Serpentine rivers, and improving environmental water provision to create additional refuge habitat for threatened fish species on the South Coast.



Find out about Upper Collie Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project on [YouTube](#)



Species richness – fish and crayfish



River typing – habitat diversity

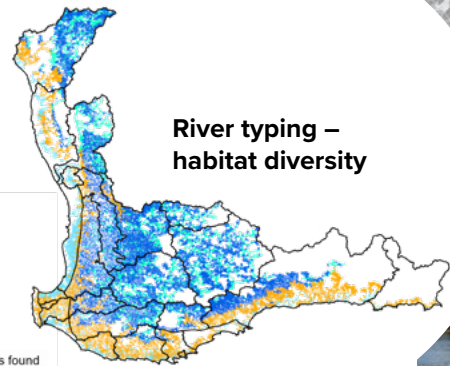


Photo: Leschenault Catchment Council: Upper Collie River Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project



Response to fish mortalities

We lead the response to fish kills in the inland waters of WA. Fish kills are defined as the sudden death of a relatively large number of animals.

We work cooperatively with DPIRD, DBCA, the Department of Health 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 17 fish kill reports across the state and supported DPIRD's response to events in marine



we responded to
17 fish kill reports
across the state

Reporting a fish kill

If you see a fish kill, please report it immediately to:

- the DPIRD Fisheries [FishWatch hotline](#) 1800 815 507 (24 hour service)
- your nearest [Department of Water and Environmental Regulation](#) or [DPIRD](#) office
- within the Swan Canning Riverpark, contact [DBCA](#) on 9278 0900 or after hours on 9278 0981

For your safety please do not touch dead or dying fish, and avoid contact with the water in the area until our officers can assess the risk. This includes not using fish in the area of a fish kill event as bait, in case there is risk of transferring disease or contaminants.



waters and DBCA's response to events in the Swan and Canning river systems and estuary.

Our work to help address ongoing strandings of the threatened freshwater sawfish in the Fitzroy River also continued in 2025–26. We are working with experts and local stakeholders to find ways to improve protection of this important species into the future.



Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947

► Licensing

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

- issuing clearing licences and advising government and the 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 2025–26 we:

- issued 10 CAWS Act licences to clear
- assessed 17 *Environmental Protection Act 1986* referrals
- assessed 84 WAPC planning advice referrals.

► Bushfire management

Four bushfires occurred within the Department's estate during the 2025–26 bushfire season. We work collaboratively with bushfire response agencies (Volunteer Bushfire Brigades, DFES and DBCA) on fire control and provide resources and logistical support when bushfires occur within our estate.



Guided by our Bushfire Management Strategy, we conducted three bushfire mitigation (prescribed) burns, totalling 160 hectares, in Chowerup, in partnership with the Shire of Boyup Brook.

► Plantations

We continue to work with the Forest Products Commission (FPC) to establish pine in suitable areas for water resource management purposes. Plantation coverage

within CAWS Act catchment areas achieves the dual purpose of reducing saline water discharge to river systems and expanding the State's softwood supply capacity. More than 3,000 hectares of CAWS Act estate has been placed under leasehold with the FPC to date.





Service 3: Water regulation, licensing and industry governance

Water licensing

The Department licenses the taking and use of water under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RiWI Act) for a range of purposes including agriculture, industry, mining and 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.

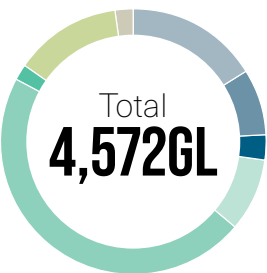
As of 30 June 2026, we managed 12,995 water licences across 774 groundwater and 427 surface water resources. These licences authorise the taking of 4,572 gigalitres (GLs) of water – 3,499 GL from groundwater resources and 1,073 GL from surface water resources.

In certain areas, the construction of water-use infrastructure including bores and dams, and the disturbance of the beds and banks of a watercourse, are also subject to authorisations. As of 30 June 2026, there were 1,001 licences to construct and alter groundwater wells and 487 permits to interfere with beds and banks granted across the state.

In 2025–26 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 all licence applications. The average assessment timeliness performances

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

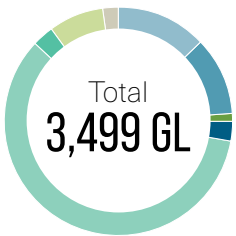
Agriculture: 747 GL (16%)	Commercial and institutional: 378 GL (8%)
Industry and power generation: 118 GL (3%)	Irrigation scheme supply: 434 GL (10%)
Mining: 2,087 GL (46%)	Parks, gardens and recreation: 110 GL (2%)
Public water scheme supply: 611 GL (13%)	Other*: 87 GL (2%)

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

Groundwater licensed volume by sector

Agriculture: 463 GL (13%)	Commercial and institutional: 376 GL (11%)
Environment and Conservation: 39 GL (1%)	Industry and power generation: 106 GL (3%)
Mining: 2,055 GL (59%)	Parks, gardens and recreation: 109 GL (3%)
Public water scheme supply: 290 GL (8%)	Other*: 61 GL (2%)

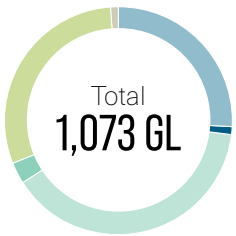
*Other contains irrigation scheme supply and stock and domestic.



Surface water licensed volume by sector

Agriculture: 284 GL (26%)	Industry and power generation: 12 GL (1%)
Irrigation scheme supply: 419 GL (39%)	Mining: 32 GL (3%)
Public water scheme supply: 320 GL (30%)	Other*: 6 GL (1%)

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



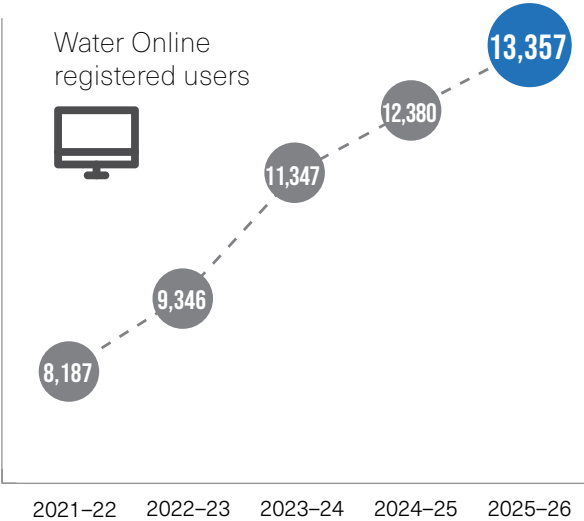


for low-, medium- and high risk water licence applications were 57 days, 68 days and 78 days respectively.

We have also continued implementing the statewide water licensing backlog program, reducing the water licence application backlog by 89 per cent from a peak of 608 applications in February 2024, despite continued growth in demand for water licences.

Water Online

Water Online continued to expand during the year, with active users increasing to 13,357. The platform enables customers to submit licence applications, meet reporting obligations and lodge meter readings online.



Water compliance and enforcement

At 30 June 2026, 6,055 water licences were subject to metering or alternative measurement requirements under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Regulations 2000, representing 97 per cent of the volume of water licensed across Western Australia.

During 2025–26, we completed 335 compliance inspections and water meter audits, 1,161 desktop water use surveys and audits, 374 reviews of compliance reports, and processed 2,674 abstraction volume and meter reading submissions.

These activities resulted in the assessment of 3,823 suspected incidents of non-compliance, with 798 confirmed incidents addressed through a range of regulatory responses. We issued 674 education letters, 74 warning notices, 17 infringement notices and 33 statutory directions.

 **6,055**
water licences

 **335**
inspections and audits

 **1,161**
desktop water use surveys and audits

 **374**
reviews of reports

 **3,823**
assessment of suspected incidents

 **674**
letters of education

 **74**
warning notices

 **17**
infringement notices

Our compliance program combines education, monitoring and enforcement to support licence holders in meeting their obligations while ensuring appropriate regulatory action is taken where breaches occur.

Our compliance program combines education, monitoring and enforcement to support licence holders in meeting their obligations while ensuring appropriate regulatory action is taken where breaches occur. Monitoring is undertaken through onsite inspections, desktop assessments and digital reporting services, including Water Online.

The Water Assurance Branch within the Assurance Directorate, in collaboration with Statewide Delivery, developed a cross-portfolio delivery model for water resource assurance (compliance and enforcement) to ensure consistency and transparency across the state. A breach management framework was also established. These documents support our response to the [Office of the Auditor General's Water Compliance Audit findings](#).



Water fees

We collect fees from water licence and permit applications from the mining and public water supply sectors. In 2025–26, we spent \$22,281,669 on the assessment of all water licence and permit applications and collected \$1,017,797 in fees from 198 licensees for 540 application assessments.

Water services

The Department administers the *Water Services Act 2012* (Water Services Act), supporting water service providers to deliver water supply, sewerage, irrigation and drainage services across Western Australia.

Western Australia has three government-owned water corporations – Water Corporation, Busselton Water and Aqwest – and 20 other licensed water service providers, including local governments, irrigation cooperatives, mining companies, developers and the Rottnest Island Authority.

During 2025–26, we amended the Water Services (Water Corporations Charges) Regulations 2014 and the Water Services Regulations 2013 in consultation with the government water corporations to publish customer fees and charges for the 2026–27 financial year.

We also continued working with Water Corporation to improve water services in regional Aboriginal communities, including support for licensing, permitting and public drinking water source protection.

Managing public water supply

The Department manages surface water and groundwater for public water supply through water licences issued under the RiWI Act. During 2025–26, we continued working with Water Corporation and other water service providers to ensure water abstraction remained sustainable and protected the health of key groundwater resources, including Gnangara, Albany, Esperance, West Pilbara and Exmouth.

We also progressed drinking water source protection through source protection planning, updated water quality guidance and technical advice for public drinking water source areas. Key achievements included completing the Country Heights Estate Drinking Water Source Protection Review and updating [Water Quality Protection Note 4 – Sensitive Water Resources](#) and [Water Quality Protection Note 36 – Protecting Public Drinking Water Source Areas](#).

We continued working with water service providers on source development planning for the Bunbury, Busselton, Esperance, Exmouth, Geraldton, Lower Great Southern, Port Hedland, West Pilbara and Warren–Blackwood public water supply schemes, while supporting long-term planning for Perth’s Integrated Water Supply Scheme.

Water services

Administering the framework

Water Services Act 2012

Supporting delivery across WA

water supply /
sewerage / irrigation /
drainage

Working with providers

3 government-owned
water corporations

20 other licensed
water service
providers

2025–26 focus:

- ✓ updated regulations for 2026–27 fees and charges
- ✓ support for regional Aboriginal community water services

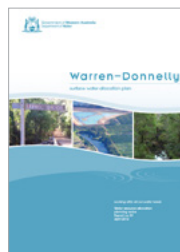




Water committees

► Warren–Donnelly

The Warren–Donnelly Water Advisory Committee provides community, Aboriginal and stakeholder advice on surface water management in the Warren and Donnelly catchments.



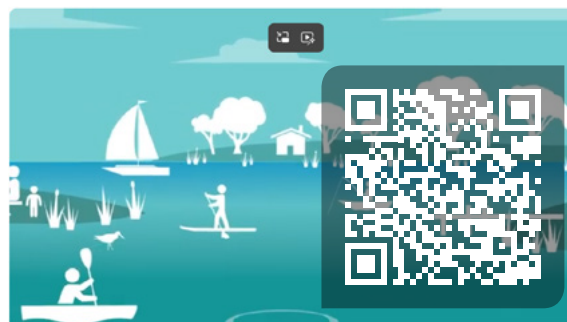
During 2025–26 the Committee continued supporting development of the new [Warren–Donnelly Surface Water Allocation Plan](#) through stakeholder engagement and advice.

► 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 on-ground works and communication. The Department supports GeoCatch through project funding and support services, co-locating with GeoCatch in the DWER Busselton Office.

Healthy Estuaries

Our work to improve the health of estuaries across south-west Western Australia continued during 2025–26 through [Healthy Estuaries WA](#), [Revitalising Geographe Waterways](#) and the [Bindjareb Djilba \(Peel Harvey estuary\) Protection Plan](#). These programs work in seven priority estuaries and their catchments: the Peel-Harvey Estuary, Leschenault Estuary, Vasse Geographe waterways, Hardy Inlet, Wilson Inlet, Torbay Inlet and Oyster Harbour. We monitor their water quality regularly at 175 locations.



Learn about Healthy Estuaries WA on [YouTube](#)

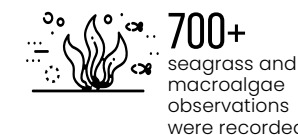
► Healthy Estuaries WA conference

The Healthy Estuaries WA Conference, held in Mandurah in September 2025, brought together more than 100 stakeholders to reflect on eight years of collaborative effort to protect and restore south-west estuaries. The event strengthened partnerships across government, regional organisations, Traditional Owners and industry, while showcasing on-ground

achievements in water quality, sustainable agriculture and ecosystem restoration. Holding the conference was an important opportunity to build shared knowledge, foster collaboration and align future priorities, ensuring continued progress towards healthier estuaries.

► Seagrass and macroalgae monitoring

During 2025–26, over 700 seagrass and macroalgae observations were recorded in the Hardy Inlet, Leschenault Estuary, and Wilson Inlet, providing insight into presence and absence of individual species. Detailed monitoring at 24 sites further enhanced our understanding of seagrass condition. 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.



► Phytoplankton monitoring

Healthy Estuaries WA is underpinned by the work of the Department's Aquatic Science branch, which oversees the statewide phytoplankton response, monitoring key waterways through Healthy Estuaries WA and the Bindjareb Djilba Protection Plan.

The Phytoplankton Ecology Unit (PEU) also identifies species that may be a concern to human health and waterway ecology in waterways across the state. They play a vital role in keeping people safe by alerting



the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) when potentially harmful phytoplankton species are present. In 2025–26 the PEU analysed more than 1,400 phytoplankton samples across the seven estuaries.

► Fencing and revegetating waterways

Farmers, volunteers and Aboriginal ranger groups have fenced 231 km of waterways and revegetated 133 hectares since 2022

– planting just under 300,000 native seedlings and 20 kg of seed. Fencing and revegetation helps reduce the nutrient load from stock and improves natural filtration and ecosystem benefits in local waterways.



Just under
300,000
native
seedlings
+ **20 kg**
of seed

During 2025–26, partners engaged with local Aboriginal ranger groups or work crews to collaboratively deliver on-ground works, with fencing, native seed collection and winter planting achieved across four catchments.

► Sustainable agriculture

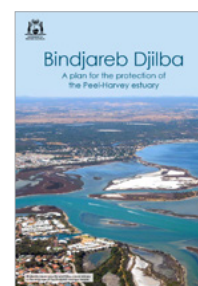
Our [Dairy for Healthy Estuaries](#) project, part of the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, worked in partnership with Western Dairy to reduce dairy effluent entering waterways.

Through Healthy Estuaries WA, 171 farmers tested their soils during the 2025–26 Fertiliser Management program, to determine the right

rate and right nutrients that needed to be applied to their paddocks. 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 2020 [Bindjareb Djilba \(Peel–Harvey estuary\) Protection Plan](#) has reached its fifth year of implementation, demonstrating sustained momentum and strong, ongoing support from Bindjareb Traditional Owners, partner agencies and the broader community.



In 2025, the Bindjareb-Djilba Policy and Planning Committee, co-chaired by State Members for Mandurah and Dawesville, reaffirmed its leadership by committing to a second four-year term. The Committee provides strategic oversight of the Plan and a \$5 million grants program.

The [Bindjareb Djilba Kaadadjan Bidi Yarning Circle](#) plays a central role in the plan's success, providing a culturally grounded governance framework. The positive impact of the Yarning Circle was recognised nationally, winning the [2026 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\) Summit Award for Excellence in Sustainability and Sustainable Futures](#).

Through this model, Bindjareb people are driving decision-making, strengthening cultural governance, and leading a collaborative delivery approach supported by Department-enabled partnerships with Winjan, Harvey and Waroona Aboriginal Corporations.

Together, these partners have delivered a suite of strategic initiatives across Bindjareb Country, including improving access to land, expanding Aboriginal ranger programs, and progressing both on-Country and digital cultural mapping.

► Vasse Taskforce and Revitalising Geographe Waterways

The Department continues to support the [Vasse Taskforce](#) in overseeing water quality improvement and waterway health across the Geographe catchment. In 2025, the Taskforce welcomed independent Chair Neema Premji.

Supported by the Vasse Taskforce, the [Revitalising Geographe Waterways](#) program has continued to deliver coordinated on-ground works, science and monitoring to reduce nutrient inputs into priority waterways.

During 2025–26, our partner, GeoCatch, engaged with 489 gardeners and community members across 13 workshops and verge inspections to educate people about low-nutrient urban gardening practices, to minimise nutrient run-off to priority waterways including the Vasse-Wonnerup estuaries.

Outcome 2

Service 4: Environmental regulation

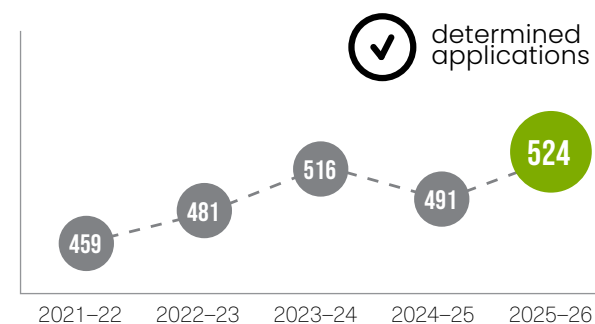
Industry regulation

Demand for environmental licences, works approvals and amendments remained strong during 2025–26, with 610 applications received across the resources, industrial, waste, energy, agribusiness and manufacturing sectors.

During the year, 524 applications were determined through grant or refusal decisions, an increase from 491 in 2024–25. A further 112 applications were finalised through other outcomes. At 30 June 2026, 273 applications remained under assessment, a 13 per cent reduction from the previous year.

 112 applications finalised

Assessment timeframes continued to reflect application complexity, information quality, technical assessment requirements and competing operational priorities. Of the applications determined during the year, 228 (44 per cent) were decided within the target timeframe, with a further 148 finalised within 30 days of the target.



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

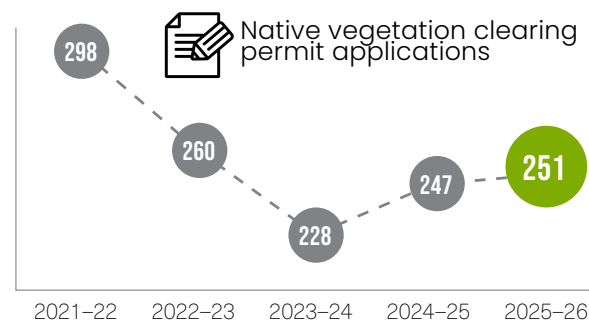




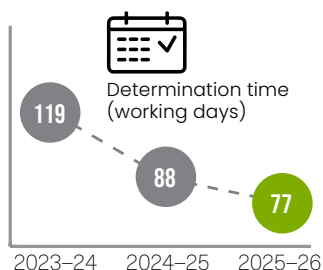
Native vegetation regulation

► Clearing permits

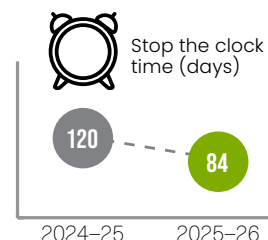
Demand for clearing permit assessments continued to increase, with application numbers rising from 228 in 2023–24 to 247 in 2024–25 and further increasing to 251 in 2025–26. Despite the continued growth in application volumes, the number of open applications in 2025–26 decreased slightly to 145, compared with 151 in 2024–25.



The average time taken to determine applications continued to improve in 2025–26, decreasing to 77 working days. This represents a significant reduction from 119 working days in 2023–24 and 88 working days in 2024–25.



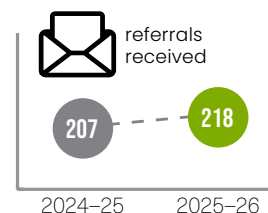
The average time applications remained in 'stop the clock' status decreased from 120 business days in 2024–25 to 84 days in 2025–26. 'Stop the clock' reflects the additional time applicants require to address information gaps, including details on avoidance, minimisation and mitigation measures, conducting biological surveys, and identifying suitable environmental offsets.



Improved assessment performance was supported by pre-lodgement engagement with proponents, updated guidance and stakeholder education, resulting in higher quality applications and more efficient assessments.

► Clearing referrals

Use of the clearing referral pathway continued to grow during 2025–26, with 218 referrals received, representing 46 per cent of all requests for clearing approvals lodged under Part V of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act).



Assessment efficiency continued to improve, with the average time to finalise a referral decreasing from 24 working days in 2024–25 to 17 working days.

Of the referrals assessed during the year, 109 were determined not to require a clearing permit, representing a cumulative proposed clearing area of 29.76 hectares. The referral process continues to support timely decision-making for proposals with minimal environmental impact while maintaining appropriate environmental safeguards.

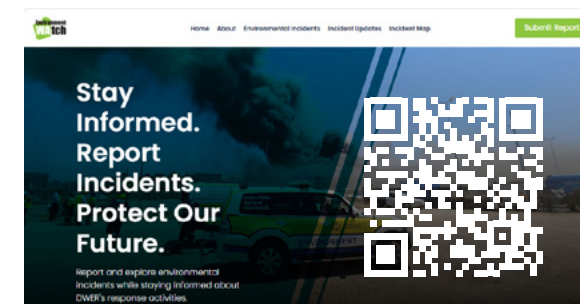
Environmental compliance and enforcement

► Environment WAtch

[Environment WAtch](#) continued to provide a 24-hour service for the community and industry to report pollution, illegal dumping and other environmental incidents through an online reporting platform and dedicated hotline.

During 2025–26, the service received 9,269 reports, providing critical intelligence to support compliance, enforcement and regulatory responses across Western Australia.

9,269 reports





► Environmental Response Team

The Environmental Response Team responded to environmental hazards, pollution events and emergencies across Western Australia, providing technical advice and coordinating regulatory responses with partner agencies.

During 2025–26 the team responded to 254 environmental incidents.

 **254**
incidents responded



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 Crime Team

The Environmental Crime Team investigates serious breaches of environmental legislation, including unlawful clearing of native vegetation, illegal waste activities and offences causing significant environmental harm.

During 2025–26 the team completed 387 investigations, issued 20 Vegetation Conservation Notices, one Environmental Protection Notice, one Prevention Notice, 67 education letters, 49 warning letters, and prepared five prosecution briefs.

 **387**
investigations

 **67**
letters of education

 **49**
letters of warning

Targeted operations in Ellenbrook and Hazelmere removed 298 cubic metres of waste, 199 tyres and four abandoned vehicles.

Waste Assurance

During 2025–26, Waste Assurance completed seven Ministerial Statement audits, 100 Waste Levy inspections and 74 Part V inspections, identifying 277 instances of non-compliance.

 **26**
prosecutions

 **112**
inspections

 **59**
infringement notices

 **85**
letters of warning

These inspections, together with community reports, resulted in 112 investigations, leading to 26 prosecutions, 59 infringement notices and 85 warning letters.

The Department also partnered with local governments and State agencies to deliver illegal dumping campaigns in Dawesville, Nowergup, Ellenbrook and Hazelmere. Targeted operations in Ellenbrook and Hazelmere removed 298 cubic metres of waste, 199 tyres and four abandoned vehicles, alongside measures to deter future illegal dumping, including surveillance, signage and restricted vehicle access.





Environmental noise

During 2025–26, the Department responded to 176 requests for environmental noise advice and technical support. This included 69 requests from local governments relating to the administration of the [Environmental Protection \(Noise\) Regulations 1997](#), seven matters under Environmental Protection Authority consideration and 19 requests from other Australian and State Government agencies. We also delivered three noise regulation training sessions to support local government officers.

Work also continued on reforms to the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997. This includes amendments to introduce Special Entertainment Precinct provisions to manage music noise, with the State's first entertainment precinct to be established in [Northbridge](#). The Department is also progressing reforms for the management of wind farm noise to provide greater certainty and clarity for industry and the community.



Odour emissions and management

[Odour emissions](#) and associated impacts from licensed facilities are regulated under the EP Act.

The Department continued to investigate odour emissions in several areas across the state where community concern remains significant, including:

- suburbs surrounding 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 of Kwinana and Rockingham affected by emissions from the Kwinana Industrial Area
- suburbs surrounding the Tamala Park Waste Management Facility in the City of Wanneroo.

During the reporting period, odour-related matters accounted for approximately 70 per cent of all complaints received by the Department.

The Department continued to prioritise responses to odour impacts and community complaints through inspections of potential source sites, community odour assessments and specialist technical investigations to identify odour sources, assess mitigation measures and inform appropriate regulatory responses.

► Mandurah odour investigation program

The Department has continued to receive odour complaints from residents in Secret Harbour, Mandurah, Singleton and Lakelands. Following extensive field odour surveys in early 2024, the Department identified two companies in the [Nambeelup precinct](#) (C-WISE and CM Farms), as the source of the odours experienced by the community.

To improve understanding of odour sources and odour-generating activities within the precinct, the Department conducted an odour investigation program from January to March 2026 comprising three components:

- **Odour diaries:** Community volunteers recorded odour observations and related information between mid-November 2025 and mid-February 2026. The diary program was established following consultation with community representatives.
- **Onsite operational diary:** A consultant maintained a continuous onsite record of site activities and operating conditions during precinct operating hours.
- **Odour fieldwork assessments:** Field measurements of odour character and intensity were undertaken across Nambeelup sites to improve understanding of odour sources and identify activities contributing to off-site impacts experienced by the surrounding community.

The Department is reviewing the investigation data, with findings to be published on the Department's community update webpage.



Air quality

The Department operates and maintains 15 permanent air quality monitoring stations across Western Australia, including nine in the Greater Perth region and six regional stations. During 2025–26, the Department procured and trialed a Scanning Infrared Gas Imaging System (SIGIS 2) in the Kwinana region to strengthen its capability to remotely detect, identify and monitor industrial gas emissions.

Since 2022, the Department has also operated an air quality monitoring network in Port Hedland, where dust levels can be higher than elsewhere in the state. [Reporting on the first three years of monitoring](#) is available on the Department's website.

Air quality technical advice

The Department continued to provide strategic, technical and policy advice on air quality matters, including ambient air quality, industrial emissions, odour assessments, meteorology, health standards and air toxics.

During 2025–26, the Department completed more than 225 technical reviews and provided scientific advice on several high-profile projects. This included reviewing scientific reports for the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program and supporting licence compliance inspections and odour assessments through field visits to sites including the Tamala Park Waste Management Facility and the Nambeelup precinct.

► Murujuga rock art monitoring

The [Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Strategy](#) continued to support the protection and long-term management of one of the world's most important cultural landscapes. A key milestone was achieved on 11 July 2025 with the successful inscription of the [Murujuga Cultural Landscape](#) on the UNESCO World Heritage List, as the world's first successful Indigenous-led nomination.

A delegation with representatives from the [Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation](#) (MAC), Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program (MRAMP) and Australian and WA governments travelled to Paris to provide cultural and technical expertise and brief UNESCO representatives on the program's scientific activities.

The MRAMP research found:

- no measurable impact from current industrial emissions on rock art
- no current evidence of acid rain in the area
- reinforced the previous conclusion that higher porosity found in some rocks is most likely related to historical emissions, rather than current industry activity.

The MRAMP has completed its third year of scientific research. Further studies and investigations will be undertaken to refine the environmental criteria that will ensure ongoing protection of the rock art. This will provide a scientific basis for long-term monitoring and management in future decades.





Together, these outcomes position the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Strategy as a leading example of collaborative, culturally informed and science-based environmental stewardship.

A key milestone was achieved with the successful inscription of the Murujuga Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List, as the world's first successful Indigenous-led nomination.

Contaminated sites

Contaminated land and water resulting from historical contaminating activities are managed under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* (Contaminated Sites Act) and Contaminated Sites Regulations 2006.

During 2025–26, the Department classified reported sites within the 45-day statutory timeframe required under section 14 of the Contaminated Sites Act. Ninety-one per cent of

mandatory auditor reports (MARs) not requiring referral to other agencies were processed within the 21-day target, and 300 sites were classified during the year.

The Department also implemented a backlog project to classify outstanding low-risk reported sites and introduced a formal follow-up process for sites classified as 'possibly contaminated – investigation required' and 'contaminated – remediation required'.

As of 30 June 2026, there were 248 sites classified as 'contaminated – remediation required' and 296 sites classified as 'possibly contaminated – investigation required'.



248
contaminated
– remediation
required sites



296
possibly
contaminated
– investigation
required sites

Continued demand for residential development has increased pressure to provide statutory planning advice and assess mandatory auditor reports, often for sites with complex contamination issues and shorter assessment timeframes.



16,847
decontaminated
or unrestricted
use land parcels

As of 30 June 2026, 16,847 land parcels had been classified as 'decontaminated' or 'not contaminated – unrestricted use', reflecting land made suitable for its intended use through remediation, independent auditing and the planning process.

Cross Sector Triage Team

The Cross-Sector Triage Team (CSTT) provides dedicated case management for State-significant and priority projects, coordinating complex approvals pathways, managing interdependencies and supporting timely decision-making across regulatory areas. During the reporting period, CSTT worked closely with the Department of Energy and Economic Diversification (DEED) to progress Lead Agency Framework projects and with the Office of the Coordinator General (OCG) to support implementation of the *State Development Act 2025*.

CSTT also managed complex or sensitive matters requiring additional departmental coordination. This included the development of the Port Hedland dust management regulatory framework and associated guideline to improve environmental and community outcomes.

Through its centralised triage function, CSTT supported the early identification and resolution of cross-agency issues, helping streamline assessment pathways, reduce duplication and improve coordination across regulatory processes.



Housing Approvals Unit

The Housing Approvals Unit plays a key role in delivering the WA Government's housing agenda by helping unlock land for development through coordinated, efficient and environmentally responsible advice and approvals. The Unit works collaboratively with government agencies and the housing industry to progress priority developments, reduce unnecessary regulatory delays and support positive environmental outcomes.

During 2025–26, the Unit continued to case manage the priority growth areas of North East Baldivis and East Wanneroo, and expanded its role to include the Ellenbrook, Jandakot–Treeby and East Kwinana growth fronts.

As urban development increasingly occurs in more complex environments, including areas with high groundwater, elevated flood risk, reduced water availability and in public drinking water source areas, the Unit worked closely with DPLH to provide practical guidance to industry proponents. This included supporting hydrological modelling, assessing flood and inundation risks, and identifying mitigation measures to enable resilient and sustainable development.

Green energy

The Green Energy Approvals Initiative supports projects across renewable energy generation and manufacturing, including wind, solar and hydrogen; critical mineral mining and processing; energy storage; and renewable electricity transmission infrastructure.

It is a cross-government collaboration with DEED, DBCA, DPLH and DMPE to streamline assessment pathways, provide coordinated advice and case management, and support proponents through complex approvals processes.

During 2025–26, the Initiative supported streamlined approvals for projects including the [Narrogin Wind Farm](#) and Turner River Solar Farm.

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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

Climate resilience

Established in 2025, the Climate Resilience Ministerial Portfolio continued to deliver key initiatives during 2025–26. These included publication of Western Australia's first detailed climate projections under the Climate Science Initiative, ongoing implementation of the Climate Risk Capability Initiative, and development of Sectoral Adaptation Plans. Together, these initiatives support the climate-resilience of communities, natural ecosystems and infrastructure across the state.

Climate adaptation

The [Understanding how climate change impacts water in WA](#) communication and research initiative continued to improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on the state's water resources.

Funded with more than \$4 million to 2028, the initiative provides reliable, evidence-based hydroclimate science to support informed decisions about managing and protecting Western Australia's water resources.

During 2025–26, the team continued to assist with implementation of the [Guide to Future Climate Projections for Water Management across WA](#) (April 2024), analyse climate

data, and improve understanding of climate processes and changing water resources across the state. The latest climate data is being used to assess potential climate change impacts and inform departmental resource assessments and water allocation planning in the Pilbara, Fitzroy–Derby, Warren–Donnelly and Gingin regions.

Climate Risk Capability Initiative

The Climate Risk Capability Initiative continued to strengthen climate risk capability across WA's public sector to identify and manage climate risk during 2025–26. A dedicated knowledge portal provides WA public sector employees with access to guidance materials, tools, resources and recorded training sessions.

Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy

The Department is responsible for delivering five of the 40 actions under Western Australia's 2023 Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy, which are being implemented across 14 State Government agencies.



During 2025–26, the Department established dedicated resources within the Green Energy Approvals team to support the timely and efficient assessment of priority electricity transmission infrastructure.

Work also continued on the remaining actions, including expansion of the Clean Energy Future Fund to support trials and demonstrations of new technologies that will contribute to Western Australia's transition to net zero emissions.

Electric vehicles

The Department continued implementation of WA's Electric Vehicle Strategy. In October 2025, we published a [progress report](#) outlining progress since the Strategy was released in November 2020.



Planning an EV trip? Check RAC's [EV charging station map](#)

As of June 2026, the State Government has:

- fully or partially funded the delivery of more than 1,100 EV charging points at 560 sites through various programs
- replaced 155 diesel buses with electric buses as part of the Transperth fleet transition
- supported the uptake of 374 battery or plug-in hybrid EVs across the government fleet.

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- replaced 155 diesel buses with electric buses as part of the Transperth fleet transition

- supported the uptake of 374 battery or plug-in hybrid EVs across the government fleet.



Clean Energy Future Fund

The Clean Energy Future Fund supports innovative clean energy projects in Western Australia that deliver cost-effective emissions reductions while providing community benefits and supporting broader adoption of new technologies.

Round 4 closed to new applications on 20 April 2026, with grant recipients expected to be announced later in the year. The Department administers the Fund with support from DEED.



Carbon Innovation Grants Program

Grant recipients for Round 2 of the Carbon Innovation Grants Program (CIGP) were announced on 17 December 2025.

Nine projects were awarded grants totalling \$6.35 million to advance technologies and test solutions to help remove, reduce or



offset industrial emissions. These comprised five pilot projects, ranging from seaweed bioplastics manufacturing to carbon capture and reuse at an ammonia manufacturing plant, and four feasibility studies including a study into hybrid electrification of quad trailers for long-distance regional transport.

The funded projects are expected to leverage around \$41 million in total project value while helping reduce lifetime emissions from Western Australia's heavy industries.



Photo: ©Uluu

Native Vegetation Policy

During 2025–26, the Department continued leading implementation of the [Native Vegetation Policy for Western Australia](#) and its Implementation Roadmap. In 2025–26 we focused on strengthening the foundations for effective decision-making and improving the quality and accessibility of environmental information. We also published our [second-year detailed progress report](#).

Key achievements include:

- **Filling key assessment data gaps:** We developed and published high resolution native vegetation mapping for the Swan coastal plain and Perth–Peel regions (October 2025) and Wheatbelt (June 2026). These datasets provide consistent, up-to-date vegetation information across key regions. The Wheatbelt mapping project covers an area twice the size of Tasmania, replacing data that was up to 20 years old.
- **Improving native vegetation mapping with modern technology:** The four year \$3.8 million WA Vegetation Extent (WAVE) pilot is progressing an AI-powered proof of concept. The project has been recognised as a case study in AI governance, winning a program delivery award and being shortlisted for best practice in social value.
- **Reforming our offset tools:** Transparency in environmental approvals was improved through enhancements to the Environmental Offsets Register and development of environmental monitoring, evaluation and financial reporting tools for the Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund.



Urban greening

We continued to support the WA Government's commitment to increase Perth's tree canopy to 30 per cent by 2040 for urban greening, cooling and long-term climate resilience.

Together the Treebate and WA Tree Recovery programs have supported the planting of more than 14,000 trees across the state, creating communities that are greener, healthier and more liveable.

The \$6.9 million [Treebate](#) program was officially launched in July 2025, providing a practical incentive for residents to plant and care for trees on private property. To support the establishment of 40,000 trees over four years, rebates of up to \$150 are available for Western Australians aged 18 and over if they plant native trees on their private property. Treebate encourages uptake from the community with the simple catchphrase: 'It's as easy as One, Two, Tree. One: Buy a tree, Two: Plant the tree, Three: Make a claim'.



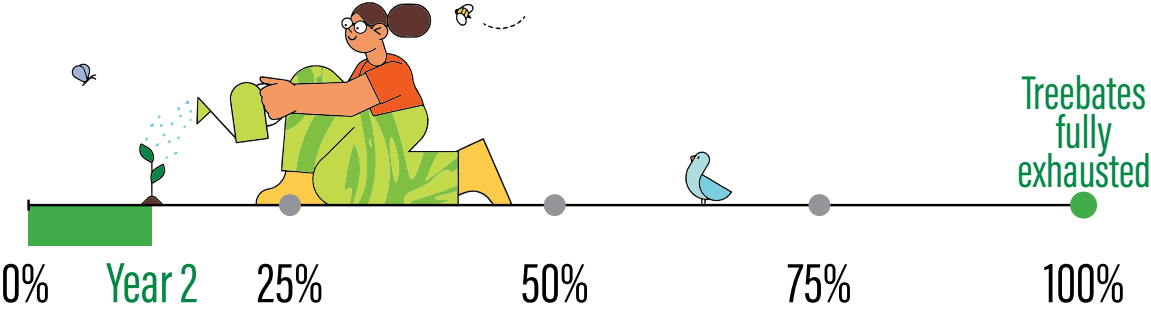


The \$7.2 million [WA Tree Recovery](#) program continued to provide support to land managers to replace trees lost to polyphagous shot-hole borer infestation. Grant funding of almost \$1 million was awarded to local governments to plant more than 2,700 trees, increasing the urban tree canopy and native biodiversity in our communities. The second round of local government grant funding opened in May 2026.

Together the Treebate and WA Tree Recovery programs have supported the planting of thousands of trees across the state, creating communities that are greener, healthier and more liveable.



How many trees can your household claim? Treebate explained by Minister Swinbourn on [YouTube](#)



Environmental offsets

We are committed to ensuring offsets deliver their intended environmental outcomes.

The Environmental Offsets Branch was established within the Nature Directorate in December 2025 to support the timely delivery of environmental approvals.

The branch brings together key functions, including delivery of the [Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund](#) (PEOF) and Part V fund, while leading comprehensive reform of WA's environmental offsets system.

Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund

The [PEOF](#) was launched in 2019 to invest funds received from conditions in WA and Australian government environmental approvals, in strategic conservation projects focused on improving vegetation and species habitat in the Pilbara.

With more than \$16 million invested across nine active projects, the PEOF program is partnering with Traditional Owners, conservation agencies and regional land managers to deliver enduring outcomes for the Pilbara.

In 2025–26, three new projects were approved working alongside Wintawari Guruma Aboriginal Corporation, Wirrawandi Aboriginal Corporation and Yarrie Pastoral Station.



Controlling *C. procera* in areas of high ecological value

The Pilbara Environmental Offset Fund (PEOF) has partnered with Budadee Aboriginal Corporation within the Woodstock Abydos Protected Reserve to deliver offsets through targeted weed management of *Calotropis procera*.

Key outcomes to date include:

- consistent management of *C. procera* since 2021 across the project area
- treatment of more than 5,200 occurrences of *C. procera* across 450 kilometres of riparian systems.

These activities support the PEOF's aim of improving vegetation condition in areas with high ecological value.



Bilateral agreement for environmental assessments

In November 2025, the Australian Government amended the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to deliver stronger environmental protection and restoration, more efficient and robust project assessments, and greater accountability and transparency in decision making.

We led WA's response to the reforms, with a standalone team established in 2026 to support this. On 21 April 2026, the Premier and Australian Minister for the Environment and Water entered into a memorandum of understanding to streamline environmental approvals including:

- develop and finalise a bilateral agreement for environmental assessments by December 2026
- prioritise the use of strategic approaches to environmental protection such as bioregional planning and strategic assessments to support better and faster decision-making, and help restore, protect and manage the environment
- collaborate on offset reform including through alignment with existing State schemes including the PEOF.

Negotiations with the Australian Government are ongoing.

Air Quality Coordinating Committee

WA's [Air Quality Coordinating Committee](#) comprises representatives from 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 once in 2025–26.

Exmouth Gulf Taskforce

On 5 September 2025, the WA Government released the [Exmouth Gulf Taskforce's final report](#).

The Department provided secretariat support and was a member of the Taskforce, working alongside Traditional Owners represented by the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC). In response, the WA Government committed to establishing a whole-of-gulf marine park, with sanctuary zones proposed to protect 30 per cent of the area.



Cockburn Sound Management Council

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

In 2025–26, the Minister appointed new council members including independent Chair Associate Professor Judith Fisher and community representatives Nicole Said and Dr Linda Davies. The incoming council also included, for the first time, representatives of Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation and Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporation. The council also includes representatives from environmental and recreational groups, as well as industry and federal, state and local governments.

The council did not make any recommendations to the Minister regarding changes to monitoring, reporting or management of Cockburn Sound's environment.



Outcome 4

Service 6: Waste strategies

Waste avoidance and resource recovery

► Waste Strategy review

Western Australia's [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030](#) (waste strategy), released in 2019, set out a statewide vision and goals for recycling and waste.

The Waste Authority is leading a review of the waste strategy reflecting on how we are performing, what is working and what we could do differently. As part of its review, the Waste Authority consulted extensively with a range of stakeholders including the waste and recycling industry, local and State Government, representative bodies, educational institutions and the community.

In December 2025, a consultation round gathered feedback on the proposed vision, goals, targets and priorities for waste and recycling in WA as well as the proposed five-year action plan to underpin these. This will inform the finalisation of the Beyond Waste 2030 Strategy and Roadmap.

► 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. A portion of the revenue generated by the levy funds programs relating to the reduction, reuse, recycling and measurement of waste. The waste levy was increased in 2025–26 to \$90 per tonne for putrescible landfills and \$136 per cubic metre for inert landfills (from \$88 and \$133 respectively). This became effective from 1 July 2026 to maintain the levy's value against inflation.

► Data collection, audits and reporting

Under regulation 18C of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008, waste and recycling data must be reported to the Department each year. In 2025, 254 annual returns were lodged. Data collected through the annual returns are published on the Waste Authority [website](#) annually. Data products published include a report, data downloads and interactive dashboards. Data is also published in the [Annual waste and recycling data reports](#).



Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised



Waste projects

Community engagement remained central to the Waste Authority's work in 2025–26, supporting Western Australians to avoid waste, recover more resources and dispose of waste correctly. Through statewide campaigns, grant programs, education partnerships and support for local governments, we helped communities take practical steps towards a low-waste, circular economy.

► Community engagement

The [WasteSorted Toolkit](#) and [GREAT Sorts](#) campaign continued to provide consistent waste education across WA. In 2025–26, 55 local governments and regional councils used the materials, with 32 using the toolkit and campaign resources in their entirety. The toolkit provides free, ready-to-use content including social media posts, posters, videos, truck decals and multilingual materials to support clear advice on waste sorting and contamination reduction.

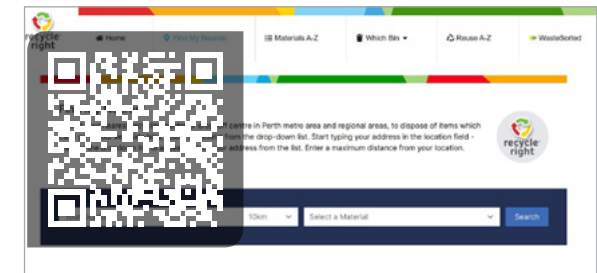
We also continued transitioning [Recycle Right](#) into the WasteSorted family. The Recycle Right app was retired on 1 March 2026, with services moving to a supported website model using embeddable [Find My Nearest](#) and [Materials A–Z](#) tools.

The 'Be A GREAT Sort' campaign promoted simple behaviours across its five focus areas: gifting, recycling, earth-cycling, avoiding and taking. Advertising ran across television,

radio, outdoor, YouTube and social media, with \$799,999 spent between November 2025 and June 2026 and social media reaching 1,147,000 Western Australians. The '[Recycling Loose](#)' sub-campaign reinforced the 'lids off, rinsed and loose' message to reduce bagged recycling contamination. Evaluation showed continued support for waste reduction and correct sorting, with stronger results in priority behaviours such as e-waste drop-off, battery recycling and use of food organics and garden organics (FOGO).

Community engagement was strengthened through practical activities and partnerships, including the Waste Truck exhibit at Scitech,

The Mix Markets at Perth City Farm and National Recycling Week promotions. These activities helped residents, families and children learn about waste sorting, reuse, repair and recycling in accessible ways.



Find your nearest recycling centre on the [Recycle Right website](#)





► WasteSorted Schools

Education in schools remained a major focus during the year. [WasteSorted Schools](#) is a free program that supports WA schools through curriculum-aligned resources, education strategies and practical action on waste avoidance, recycling, composting, worm farming, waste-free lunches and school gardens. In 2025–26, the program supported 371 accredited schools, including 26 schools that reached 10 years of accreditation and 12 schools that achieved 15 years of accreditation. Through professional learning, school visits, waste audits, incursions and regional support, the program reached thousands of students and school representatives. Work in regional and Aboriginal communities continued to grow, including Caring for Country resources and partnerships that connect waste education with local knowledge, environmental stewardship and community wellbeing.

WasteSorted Schools grants totalling \$252,770, were awarded to 95 schools for projects that avoid and recover school waste, including paper and cardboard, food waste, single-use containers and general recycling.



Watch how a WasteSorted Awards-winning school is inspiring its school community on [YouTube](#)



371
schools
achieved
accreditation
this year

2025–26 at a glance



Regional support

Support was provided through workshops, school visits and networking in Bunbury, Bidiyadanga and the Kimberley, Albany, the South West and the Wheatbelt.



Practical education resources

New and updated resources included factsheets, posters, a van wrap, superhero stickers, school stories, recycling activities, worm farming resources and food waste curriculum materials.



Teacher professional learning

13 workshops and webinars delivered to 319 teachers from 232 schools.
153 teachers and students from 99 schools completed the online professional learning module.



New regional resource kits

Two regional syndicate kits were provided to support local schools: one for Busselton and the other for Collie.



Program reporting

The *WasteSorted Schools key achievements 2020–2024* summary report was produced to capture the program's progress and impact.



Student and school reach

6,736 students and 508 school representatives reached.
62 schools visited for waste audits, 22 schools for incursions, 11 for project support and five for staff support.



Local government collaboration

21 attendees from 20 metropolitan and regional local governments joined the annual webinar. Waste educators were connected with schools through workshops and waste audit opportunities.



High school focus

High schools were supported through a dedicated teacher workshop, new high school resources and a student event attended by 222 students from 21 schools.





► Food awareness campaign

In 2025–26, we partnered with [End Food Waste Australia](#) to localise The [Great Unwaste campaign](#) in WA, supporting households to reduce avoidable food waste through simple actions such as planning meals, using leftovers, storing food correctly and buying only what is needed. We contributed \$50,000 and in-kind support to align the campaign with the WasteSorted Toolkit and GREAT Sorts program, as well as to make resources available to local governments and support WA's waste avoidance objectives and the national goal of halving food waste by 2030. The WA launch was held at the [Waste and Resource Recovery Conference](#) in Perth on 10 September 2025, with follow-up activities including local government and community partnerships, influencer content, digital resources, Royal Show activations, co-branded WasteSorted materials and 'Unwasting Workshops' with [The Great Unwaste](#) and [Foodbank WA](#).

► Plastic Free July

In 2025–26, the State Government allocated funding of \$750,000 over three years to the [Plastic Free Foundation](#) (which runs Plastic Free July). The funding supports the foundation's core operations and enables the campaign to continue to grow and reach new audiences both in Western Australia and around the world.

Grant programs

Grant programs continued to support action to avoid waste, recover resources and strengthen circular economy outcomes across WA.

In 2025–26 the [WasteSorted Community Education Grants](#) program [funded 17 projects](#) totalling \$252,205, supporting initiatives in reuse, repair, textiles, food waste, waste sorting and circular economy education. Funded projects included mobile clothes swap and repair activities, repair cafés and local waste education programs that helped communities build practical skills, reduce waste and strengthen local connections.

To support WA's e-waste landfill ban, which began on 1 July 2024, the government has awarded almost \$10 million in funding through the [E-waste Infrastructure Grants Program](#). The program funds two streams: e-waste

collection, storage and/or reuse facilities; and up to \$2 million for reprocessing infrastructure such as equipment and recycling upgrades. Funded projects include battery sorting and processing, solar panel recycling, regional collection systems, and repair and reuse equipment. More than half of the 35 funded projects are now complete, helping to divert thousands of tonnes of electronics from landfill and to create jobs and support WA's circular economy.

The [WasteSorted Donation Improvement Program grants](#) provided up to \$25,000 per project to help WA charitable recyclers improve donation practices, reduce illegal dumping and keep donated goods in use. Eligible projects include surveillance, signage, bins, lighting, fencing, gates and education activities that encourage responsible donations. The May–June 2026 round received seven applications, which were under assessment at the time of writing.



Watch the award-winning project Re(love) Your Stuff, funded through a WasteSorted Community Education grant, on [YouTube](#)



Watch the award-winning Shire of Broome project, funded through a WasteSorted Infrastructure Grant, on [YouTube](#)



Waste priorities

► Container Deposit Scheme

WA's container deposit scheme, [Containers for Change](#), has been operating since 1 October 2020 and continues to deliver environmental, economic and community benefits for WA. By the end of June 2026, more than 5.4 billion containers had been recovered for recycling and more than \$21 million had been donated to charities, schools and community groups. The beverage container recycling rate has increased from 34 per cent before the scheme began to more than 65 per cent in 2024–25.

On 1 July 2026, the scheme expanded to include wine and spirit bottles, which is expected to unlock an additional 200 million containers each year for recycling. The Department supported delivery of the expansion through policy development, new regulations, stakeholder consultation and communications. We also worked with the scheme coordinator, WA Return Recycle Renew Ltd (WARRRL), to support the readiness of refund points, logistics networks and processors for the additional container volumes.



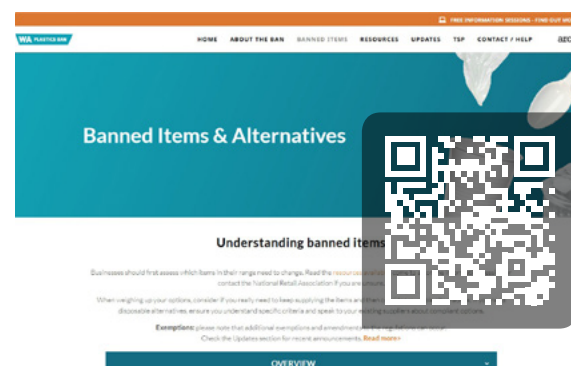
Find out more at [Containers for Change](#)

► Plan for Plastics

WA continued to lead nationally on plastic waste through its [Plan for Plastics](#), with 22 single-use and problematic plastic items having been banned since 2021, removing hundreds of millions of items from circulation each year.

In 2025–26, key reforms included the [ban on expanded plastic packaging](#) from 1 July 2025. The ban applies to moulded or cut-to-shape expanded plastic packaging, such as expanded polystyrene, for products weighing up to 45 kilograms.

During the second half of 2025, an influx of 'plastic cans' with aluminium-sealed lids was identified for made-to-order or packed-on-demand dine-in and takeaway drinks. These items are considered lidded plastic cups and are banned under the Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018.



Not sure if it is banned? Check banned items on the [WA Plastics Ban website](#)

► Household Hazardous Waste program

The [Household Hazardous Waste program](#) funds local governments and regional councils to collect, store, recover and safely dispose of flammable, toxic, explosive or corrosive hazardous waste generated by households. If not managed correctly, these materials can pose risks to public health and the environment. Since 2011, 8,132 tonnes of household hazardous waste has been collected from 15 permanent facilities, comprising nine metropolitan and six regional facilities, and on temporary collection days. In 2025–26, 591 tonnes of materials were collected for safe recovery or disposal, including gas bottles, batteries, flammable liquids, aerosols and cleaning products.



591 tonnes
recovered or
disposed

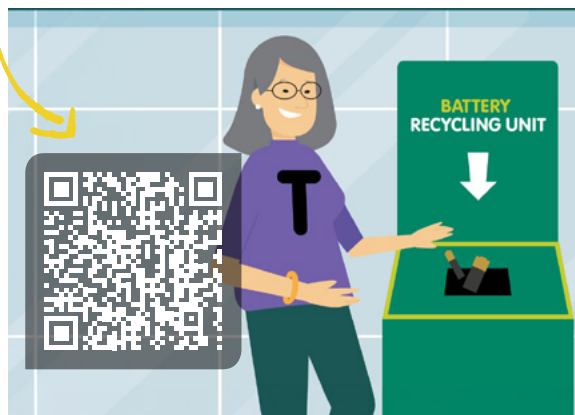




► Electronic waste

We continued to advance WA's approach to electronic waste management in 2025–26, supporting the state's transition to a more circular economy while addressing emerging environmental and safety risks. Key areas of focus included implementing the e-waste to landfill ban, investing in recycling infrastructure, and considering new collection pathways for products with embedded batteries.

In addition, the WasteSorted Never Bin a Battery campaign continued to encourage Western Australians to keep batteries out of bins and use dedicated drop-off points. A three-month Meta campaign funded through the Household Hazardous Waste program reached almost 600,000 unique accounts and drove more than 14,000 visits to the WasteSorted page, with over half using the [Find My Nearest](#) tool.



Find your nearest recycling centre on the [Never bin a battery! website](#)

► Reuse sector

In partnership with Charitable Reuse Australia and Rawtec, we delivered the [WA Reuse Impact Study 2025](#), the first comprehensive assessment of reuse activities in WA. The study quantified the environmental, social and economic value of the reuse sector. The findings provide an important evidence base for future circular economy policy, waste avoidance initiatives and reuse and repair programs across WA.

The [Charitable Recyclers Rebate](#) reimburses charitable recyclers for the waste levy paid on unusable or illegally dumped material that cannot be reused or recycled. Since 2016, the program has reimbursed \$3.06 million for 43,665 tonnes of levy-liable material. In 2025–26, claims totalled \$554,051 for 6,232 tonnes sent to landfill. We will continue to work with the sector to reduce waste, increase reuse and support its social benefits.



► Organic recycling

Organic waste remains a priority because it can be diverted from landfill and recycled into compost and mulch, reducing methane emissions and supporting a circular economy.

Since 2020, the State Government has provided \$6.25 million for collection infrastructure, kitchen caddies and education. By 30 June 2026, 27 local governments had rolled out FOGO to almost 366,000 households. In 2025–26, services began in Rockingham, Victoria Park and Perth. Three-bin FOGO systems achieved a 55 per cent average recycling rate in 2024–25, compared with 21 per cent for two-bin systems without organics composting.



Waste infrastructure

► Recycling Modernisation Fund

During 2025–26, the [Recycling Modernisation Fund](#) (RMF) continued to drive significant investment in WA's recycling infrastructure for whole used tyres and plastics, as well as mixed and unsorted paper and cardboard. Six projects are now operational and processing. Key milestones in 2025–26 included the opening of two major tyre

recycling facilities and the launch and delivery of a dedicated regional and remote local government funding round. Support continued for projects that increase local processing capacity for materials affected by national waste export bans. The program strengthened regional recycling capability, supported job creation and advanced the transition to a more circular economy, while also highlighting the importance of robust project governance and risk management in delivering large-scale recycling infrastructure.

► Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund

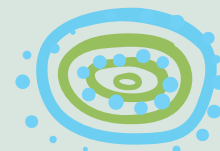
The State Government and Australian Government through the [Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund](#) are supporting upgrades to organics recycling infrastructure to increase the volume and quality of recycled organic products, particularly compost for agricultural soils. A total of \$11.25 million has been invested in three FOGO infrastructure projects north, east and south of Perth, with a total value of \$27 million. Together, the projects will divert up to 254,000 tonnes of FOGO waste from landfill each year, support 24 construction jobs and 51 ongoing jobs. Once complete, the projects will support the State's waste strategy targets, respond to industry demand for more organics processing capacity, and support the rollout of three-bin services across Perth and Peel local governments.

► Dedicated regional and remote funding

A dedicated [RMF regional and remote local government](#) funding round opened in February 2026 to boost recycling in regional WA. In June 2026, the Minister for the Environment approved 16 regional and remote local government waste and recycling projects valued at \$3.7 million under the round. The funding will support projects that improve the collection, sorting, storage and recycling of materials impacted by Australia's waste export bans across regional WA. Investments in baling equipment, transfer stations, recycling collection points and waste facility upgrades will help regional communities recover more resources locally, reduce transport costs and support WA's transition to a circular economy.



Complete Tyre Solutions – Neerabup tyre recycling facility



Complete Tyre Solutions' new tyre recycling facility in Neerabup was officially opened by the Minister for the Environment on 3 June 2026, expanding WA's capacity to process end-of-life tyres locally.



Investment

The facility received \$8 million in Recycling Modernisation Fund support and represents a total investment of about \$50 million.



Activity

The project established a new tyre recycling facility to process end-of-life tyres and support increased recovery of a priority waste stream.



Outcome

The facility created 35 construction jobs and 20 ongoing operational jobs. It has an initial processing capacity of more than 30,000 tonnes of tyres per year.



Impact

With ultimate capacity expected to exceed 45,000 tonnes per year, the facility will strengthen WA's tyre recycling infrastructure, reduce reliance on disposal or export pathways, and support the transition to a more circular economy.



► Roads to Reuse

The [Roads to Reuse](#) (RtR) program supports the use of recycled construction and demolition materials in civil works, including road construction, by ensuring products meet specifications that protect human health and the environment. In 2025–26, three accredited recyclers operated across four sites in the Perth and Peel regions. We worked with the Transport portfolio to increase uptake; notably Main Roads WA has used more than 340,000 tonnes of RtR products since 2019. Six independent audits were conducted during the year to confirm recyclers' processes and products met RtR requirements.



Waste policy

► Resource Recovery Framework

A Resource Recovery Framework is being developed to give industry a clear, risk-based pathway for recovered resources to re-enter the economy, while protecting human health and the environment.

In 2025–26, we progressed legislative, policy and implementation work for the framework, formerly known as the Recovered Materials Framework.

This complex reform is supported by technical working groups with government, industry and technical representatives. This collaborative process helps test the framework's design, address information gaps and ensure declarations are practical, evidence-based and suited to WA's conditions. Work also progressed on stakeholder engagement, communications, process mapping and implementation planning. Development will continue in 2026–27.



► Remade in WA

In June 2026 the Minister for the Environment announced [\\$17.8 million in the 2026–27 State Budget](#) under the [Remade in WA](#) program to build the state's capacity to recycle solar panels and embedded batteries. Of the total funding, \$13 million will establish new collection, transport and processing pathways for end of life solar panels from both households and solar farms. An additional \$3 million will support local governments to collect embedded batteries.

► Policy reform

To strengthen WA's e-waste regulatory framework, the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (e-waste) Regulations 2026 commenced on 1 July 2026. The amendments clarify exemption criteria and reporting requirements for key entities, service providers and landfill operators, and make exemptions more flexible.

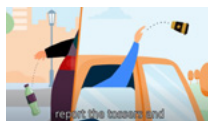


► Managing litter in WA

The [Keep Australia Beautiful Council WA](#) (KABC) continued to work towards a litter-free WA in 2025–26, receiving \$1,024,253 from the WARR Account to deliver litter prevention programs.



Key litter strategy achievements in 2025–26

	Litter surveys	conducted two full litter surveys using the Australian Litter Measure at 57 sites in 10 local government areas
	Litter count	counted an average of 110.92 items of litter per 1000 m ² , a reduction of 7 per cent from the previous year – cigarette butts were the most common item found, and plastic the most common material
	Adopt-a-Spot	expanded the Adopt-a-Spot program by 187 to 2,527 registered groups , bringing the total number of registered program volunteers to more than 52,000
	Litter Grants	provided a total of \$58,116 of funding to 10 recipients , through Community Litter Grants , for action and education on litter prevention projects
	Clean Schools	registered 38 new schools for the Clean Schools program, bringing the total number of schools, daycare centres and other educational organisations in the program to 812
	Unseen Heroes	continued to promote the Unseen Heroes campaign to increase community involvement in the Litter Report Scheme
	29 events attended	attended 29 community events in both metropolitan and regional areas of WA
	Litter infringements	issued 1,089 litter infringements, a 23 per cent increase from 2024–25



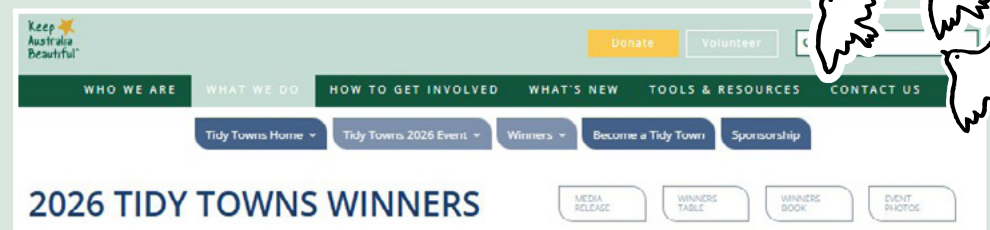
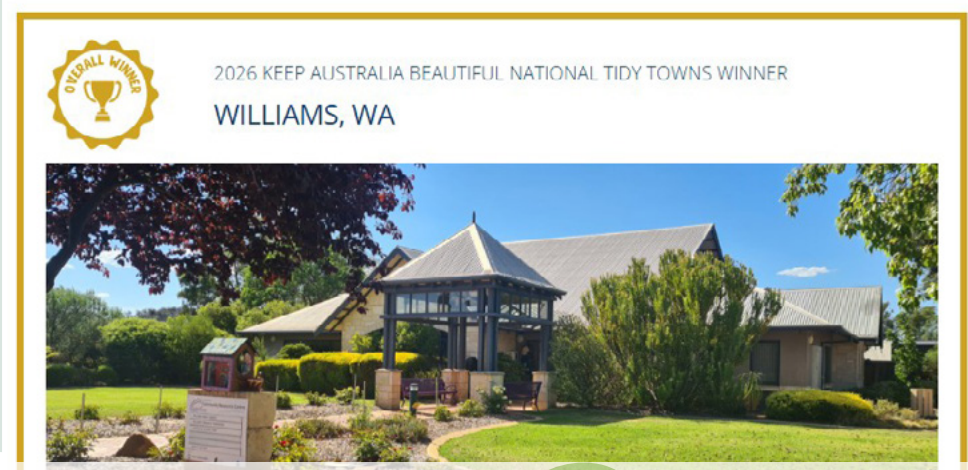
Tidy Towns Awards

In 2025, 38 communities entered 117 projects in the [Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities Awards](#).

These awards began as a WA tourism initiative in the 1960s and have grown into one of Australia's longest-running community programs, with more than 3,500 volunteers contributing to projects entered for this year's awards.

Williams was named the [2025 state winner](#) and went on to represent WA nationally, taking out the [overall national title](#) at the National Tidy Towns Sustainability Awards.

The Great Southern town, with a population just over 1,000, impressed judges by achieving an extraordinary level of local engagement in a range of social and sustainability initiatives. Williams scored the major prize along with awards in three other categories at a ceremony in Launceston, Tasmania, on 16 May.





Outcome 5



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

Service 7: Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA

The EPA is an independent authority of up to nine members which advises the Minister for the Environment on environmental matters. The Department has continued to provide services to the EPA to conduct environmental impact assessments of significant development proposals and planning schemes. Services for EPA assessments are provided by the EPA Services and Green Energy directorates.

Referral of development proposals, planning schemes and scheme amendments

In the 2025–26 financial year, the EPA received:

- 37 valid referrals of significant proposals or significant amendments, including one strategic proposal and two derived proposals
 - 109 referrals of schemes or scheme amendments under s.48 of the EP Act.
- 



Unless a referral is withdrawn or determined to not be valid, the EPA determines whether or not to assess each referral. If the determination is to assess, the EPA also determines the level of assessment required. In 2025–26, the EPA determined that:

- 14 proposals referred did not require further assessment
- 11 proposals referred required formal assessment
- one proposal was a derived proposal
- 83 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 on the environmental issues raised by 19 of the referred schemes that did not require further assessment.

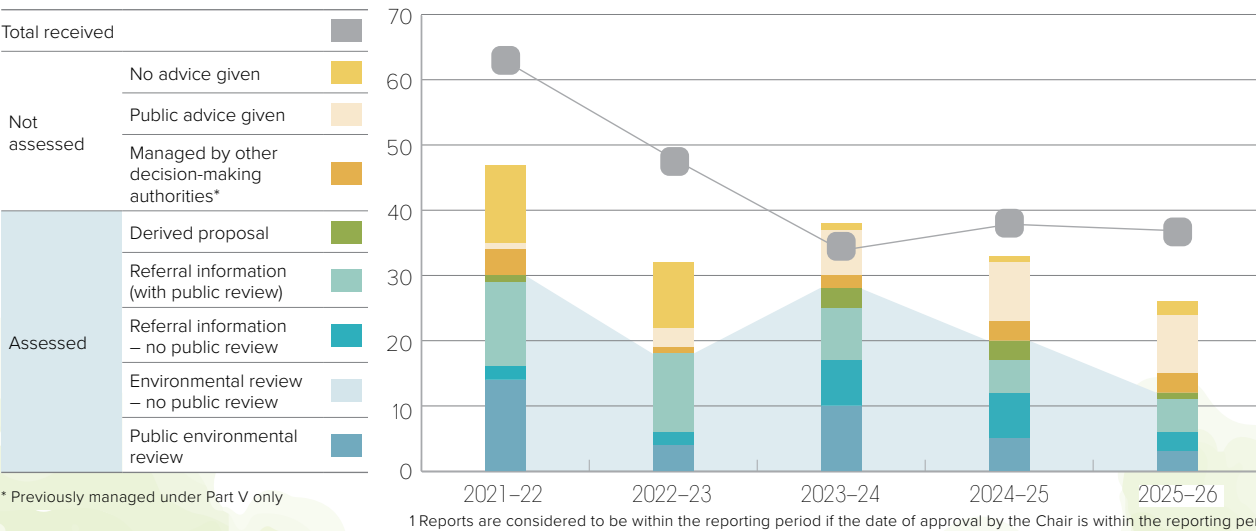
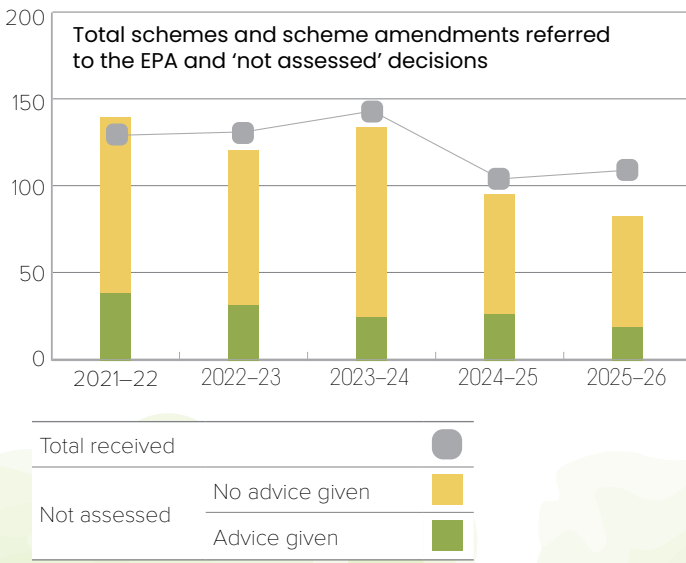
Completed assessments

In 2025–26 the Department supported the EPA to complete 25 reports to the Minister for the Environment (see next page). Of these, 20 were for the assessment of new proposals or significant amendments to existing proposals, one was a report on a scheme and four were inquiries into changing the conditions of Ministerial Statements for existing proposals.¹

In 2025, the EPA released the *Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Guide Assessment of Proposals in Western Australia under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986* (the EIA Practice Guide), which replaced the administrative procedures and procedures manual.

The EIA Practice Guide removed the prescribed levels of assessment for formally assessed proposals in favour of a flexible framework based on three key questions to enable more efficient and targeted assessments.

Total development proposals referred to the EPA and decisions





The table below reflects the new framework for s.38 determinations with assessments grouped to provide consistency with previous annual reports.

Completed EPA reports and recommendations to the Minister

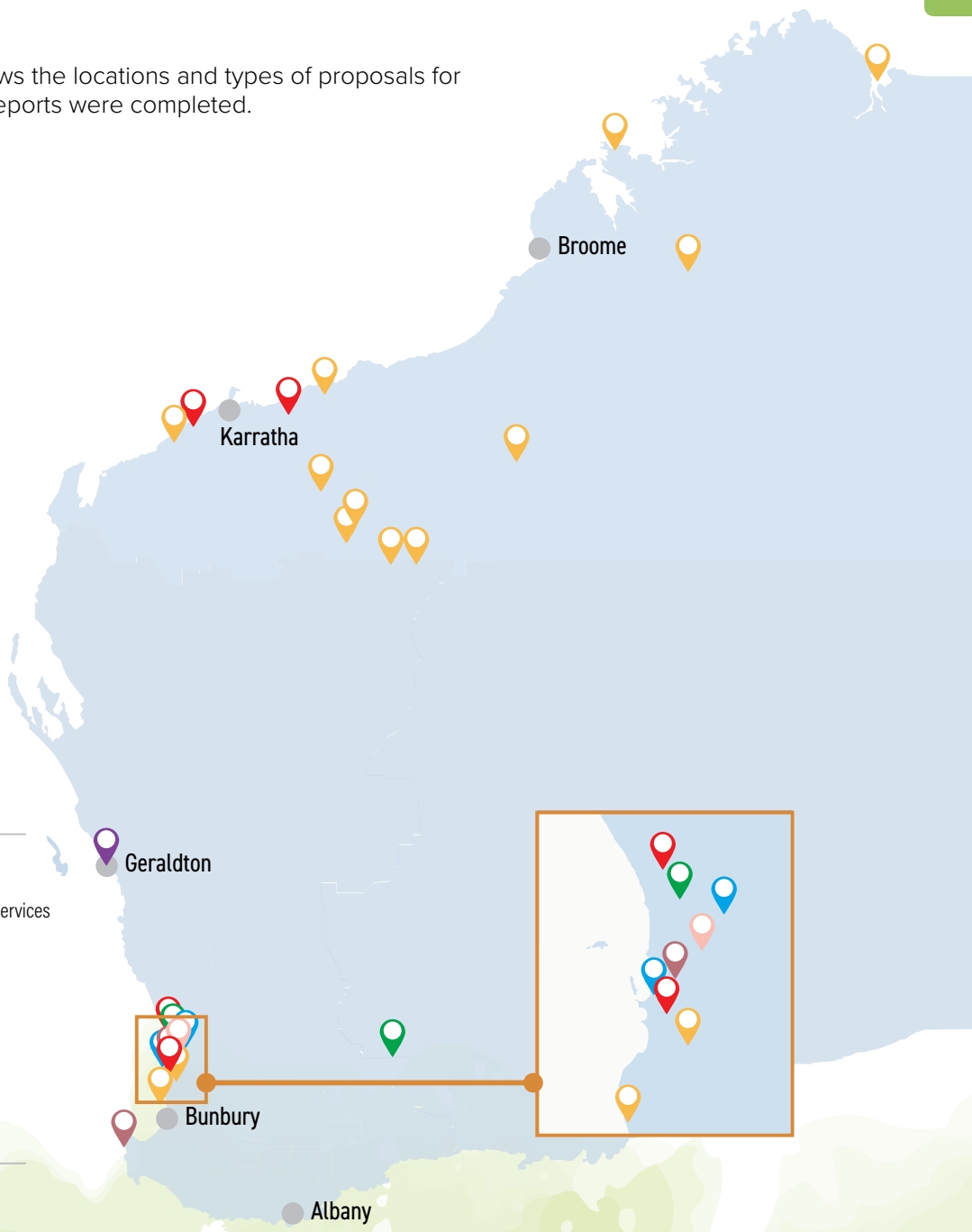
Type of assessment ²	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
s.38 formal assessments				
Assessment with public review and formal scoping of environmental review (previously PER)	4	9	7	4
Assessment with no public review – additional information (if required) under s.40(2)a	1	2	4	8
Assessment with public review - additional information (if required) under s.40(2)a	5	5	7	8
Strategic proposal	0	0	0	0
s.38 subtotal	10	16	18	20
Schemes and scheme amendments ³				
Scheme and scheme amendment	0	3	0	1
Changes to conditions				
s.46 inquiry	7	4	2	4
Total³	17	23	20	25

2 This data does not include completed derived proposal assessments, as this is adequately indicated by the number of determinations to declare a derived proposal, which is reported on above.

3 Previous years totals did not include reports on schemes and scheme amendments. Total numbers for 2023–24 in previous reports may therefore vary.

The map below shows the locations and types of proposals for which assessment reports were completed.

- Change to conditions
- Electricity, water and waste services
- Green Energy
- Infrastructure
- Mining and Resources
- Regional Scheme
- Residential and Tourism





Consultations

Providing opportunities for genuine public consultation is an important part of the EPA's environmental impact assessments. Members of the public and stakeholders are invited to offer advice, identify omitted relevant information, provide local knowledge and propose alternatives during several stages of the assessments.

In 2025–26, the EPA published 31 referrals for an initial seven-day public comment period and nine proposals were published for public consultation periods on proponent environmental review information.



31
referrals
for public
comment



9
of 31 published
referrals received
100+ comments

The number of responses received via the consultation hub for seven-day public comment periods ranged from none to 1,241. Nine of the 31 published

referrals received more than 100 public comments, with the remaining 22 referrals receiving between zero and 25 comments.

Of the eight assessments for which public review of proponent information was completed in 2025–26, six received between one and 30 comments, and one received 1,237 comments. The remaining consultation was for the combined Pinjarra Alumina Refinery revised proposal and bauxite mining on the Darling Range in the South West for the years 2023 to 2027 proposals. This consultation received about 59,000 public submissions.



about
59,000
public submissions
were received for
this consultation

Service 8: Environmental management services to the EPA

Modernising Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidance

During 2025–26, the EPA progressed a significant program of work to modernise EIA guidance, improving the accessibility, consistency and efficiency of the assessment process.

A key achievement was development of the [EIA Practice Guide](#), which came into effect on 1 January 2026. The new EIA Practice Guide provides clearer and simplified information on the EPA's assessment framework and expectations, helping proponents, consultants, decision-makers and the community to better understand and navigate the EIA process. It also reduced duplication by consolidating information previously provided in the administrative procedures and procedures manual. Both these documents have been revoked.





The EPA continued its collaboration with the Environmental Consultants Association to support capability-building across the sector, including delivery of EIA training aligned with current guidance and regulatory expectations.

New guidance set to elevate planning outcomes

The EPA and WAPC have strengthened the integration of environmental considerations into land-use planning through the joint release of the [Guidance for environmental advice on District Structure Plans](#).

Developed under section 16(k) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, the guidance provides a clearer pathway for the EPA to deliver targeted environmental advice on district structure plans (DSPs), helping

environmental factors be considered earlier in planning decisions. It is to be read alongside the EPA’s [Statement of environmental principles, factors, objectives and aims of EIA](#) (2023) and the WAPC’s [WA Planning Manual – District Structure Plans](#) (2025).

DSPs are important planning instruments that refine strategic land-use proposals, coordinate land and infrastructure planning, and guide future development. While DSPs are generally not assessed under Part IV of the EP Act, the new guidance clarifies how the EPA can provide meaningful input through s.16 advice, ensuring environmental factors are considered without delaying planning processes.

This initiative reflects the shared commitment of the EPA and WAPC to improving environmental planning outcomes across WA by embedding environmental considerations early and supporting more sustainable development.



Review of Environmental Protection Planning Regulations

Part 9A of the Environmental Protection Regulations 1987 sets out the classes of planning schemes and scheme amendments that are exempt from referral to the EPA for assessment. Amendments to Part 9A introduced in January and December 2024 were designed to streamline assessment pathways.

To evaluate the effectiveness of these changes, the EPA worked collaboratively with the Department and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). The review examined referral trends and the practical impact of the regulatory amendments on environmental assessment processes.

The review found that the 2024 amendments had achieved their intended objectives, resulting in a substantial reduction in the number of planning scheme referrals requiring EPA consideration.





Statement of Expectation reporting

Expectation	Actions	Progress 2025–26
Alignment with policies and priorities	When determining assessment priorities and escalation, consider key government priorities and policies.	<p>The EPA has considered the government's assessment priorities by completing and publishing our reports for the assessments below. The EPA released 20 s.38 assessment reports in the reporting period – the highest since 2013–14. This includes in the key priority areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• new transmission infrastructure (Northern Terminal to Neerabup Terminal 330kV transmission line)• new tourism initiatives (Smiths Beach Project, Yallingup – Coastal Tourism Village)• economic diversification and critical mineral projects (Port Hedland Iron Project – Stage 1 and Earl Grey Lithium Project, Life of Mine Proposal)• boosting housing supply (urban development of lots 11 and 74 Beenyup Road, Banjup).
	Where consistent with the Act adopt processes and initiatives to ensure a streamlined approach to regulatory assessment that reduces unnecessary duplication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EPA is continuing to consider whether another decision-making process could effectively mitigate the potential impact on the environment when determining whether or not to assess a proposal, avoiding regulatory duplication. For the 14 'not assess' decisions made during 2025–26, the ability of other processes to mitigate impacts was considered for every proposal. During 2025–26 the EPA amended its 'not assess' determinations published on the EPA website to include an explanation for the decision, which includes advice on these other decision-making processes.• The EPA's new EIA Practice Guide came into effect on 1 January 2026. Key supporting instructions regarding referral, scoping and environmental review documents were published on 24 December 2025.• The EPA began review of the Taking decision-making processes into account in EIA interim guideline and expects to publish updated guidance by the end of 2026.
Efficiency and timeliness of environmental assessments	Ensure environmental assessments are completed in a timely and efficient manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Department continues to refine internal reporting tools to support the EPA with greater visibility and better tracking of proposals and schemes that are under assessment, including progress against anticipated timeframes. This includes the development of dedicated reporting tools to provide the EPA Chair with clear Part IV assessment and amendment timeframes.• The EPA published 20 s.38 reports this financial year, which is the highest number since 2013–14.
	Develop and report on performance metrics for environmental impact assessment processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A new quarterly report on assessment timelines has been prepared for the EPA for all assessments.• Further development and standardisation of reporting and assessment timeframe tracking in Environment Online is being undertaken to detect long-term trends and identify risks to the timely delivery of assessments.



Expectation	Actions	Progress 2025–26
Efficiency and timeliness of environmental assessments (continued)	Ensure risk-based assessment principles and streamlined processes are ingrained into the operation of the EPA where the Act permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new EIA Practice Guide came into effect on 1 January 2026, which includes information on how to ensure a timely and efficient assessment.• Revision of key instructions related to referral, scoping and environmental review documents have been published to support streamlined assessment processes.• The EPA supported implementation of the EIA Practice Guide through dedicated training run by the Environmental Consultants Association in early 2026.
	Review EPA's technical guidance suite to ensure it reflects contemporary scientific understanding and consideration of risk-based approaches to biodiversity protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cumulative impact assessment guidelines.• District structure planning guidelines.• Environmental outcomes and Outcomes-based Conditions and Programs for continued contemporising.
	Support the establishment of subject matter expert advisory committees to provide advice on draft guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EPA is continuing to utilise the expertise of the Scientific Advisory Council, with workshops held on the Northern Jarrah Forest and the Pilbara. A further workshop is planned for the Swan coastal plain later in 2026.• The EPA is continuing to use the EIA panel (established by the Department) to support policy development and assessments, reduce EIA timeframes and manage workloads.
Reducing duplication	Reduce duplication of environmental assessments of projects and proposals where the Act permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As per initiatives for the expectation 'Alignment with policies and priorities'.• The EPA began review of <i>Taking decision-making processes into account in EIA interim guideline</i> to clarify and identify how other decision-making processes might be considered in EIA.• The EPA is continuing to consider whether another agency can mitigate potential environmental impacts during the assessment process. All 'not assess' decisions identify whether or not the ability of other decision-making authorities can effectively mitigate the potential impacts of the proposal.• The Department has established a team to support negotiations on a bilateral agreement with the Australian Government to reduce duplication with the EPBC Act.



Expectation	Actions	Progress 2025–26
Reducing duplication (continued)	Support reporting to Council of Regulators on the extent to which EPA is using relevant sections in the Act to enable other regulators/ decision making authorities to regulate cultural aspects of social surroundings and greenhouse gas emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EPA Chair has established quarterly meetings with the Coordinator General to support coordination of approvals.
	Review EPA policies in response to the State Government's revised Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy for Major Projects 2024 (October 2024).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EPA is continuing to implement the revised policy by considering whether a proposal's emissions are likely to be covered by the Commonwealth Safeguard Mechanism when they recommend conditions in EPA assessment reports. This is consistent with the update to the <i>Greenhouse gas environmental factor guideline</i> in November 2024.• The s.46 inquiry into the 20 proposals with step-down greenhouse gas conditions is underway. This will be used to inform EPA assessment and conditions for proposals currently mid-assessment.
Engagement with proponents	Establish a stakeholder engagement plan that outlines proponent roles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed.• Published December 2024.
	Adopt procedures and processes which provide a framework for collaborative and transparent communication with proponents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Escalation protocol for EIA published.• Quarterly EPA Stakeholder Reference Group meetings and regular meetings between the EPA Chair and proponents continue to occur.
	Support implementation of an escalation protocol which proponents can access when delays or requests for information in relation to the EPAs functions are considered unreasonable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete.• Escalation Protocol for EIA published. https://www.wa.gov.au/service/environment/environment-information-services/escalation-protocol-environmental-impact-assessments



Outcome 6

Compliance with Ministerial Statement implementation conditions are monitored effectively

Service 9: Compliance monitoring services to the Minister for Environment

Ministerial statements and conditions

Ministerial Statements are issued under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (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 'letter 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 36 audits of Ministerial Statements for significant proposals including mining of iron ore, gold, mineral sands and critical minerals and sulphate of potash, gas production, aquaculture, process facilities, water and waste management. In addition, we reviewed 49 compliance assessment reports and 40 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

The Department continues to manage the environmental and water resources in the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) under a service agreement on behalf of the Australian Government.

This arrangement enables the delivery of services equivalent to those on the mainland, and is 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).

Our responsibilities include environmental regulation, pollution response, waste management, and sustainable water resource management, with full cost recovery funding and infrastructure support provided by the Australian Government.

We delivered 44 environmental and water-related work-streams in 2025–26 through 35 specialist Department staff contributing to 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.

► Service 1 (Water information and advice)

We continued to integrate 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 (Water planning, allocation and optimisation)

We continued to support water resource management and long term water security. Key activities included measuring and assessing groundwater to inform sustainable water use, while protecting environmental and social values. Various scientific reports on hydrogeology and ecological water requirements have been 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.

► Service 3 (Water regulation, licensing and industry governance)

We advised the Australian Government on matters relating to the proposed West Island runway upgrade, ensuring water sources were protected during project planning and delivery. 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 (Environmental regulation)

We continued to deliver regulatory oversight and environmental compliance functions across the IOT. This included supporting implementation of WA's Plan for Plastics, with the shires, conducting prescribed premises inspections and assessments of light industrial

areas for compliance with discharge and licensing requirements.

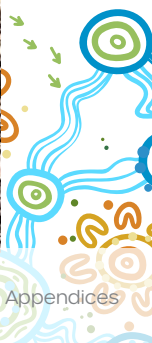
Regulatory activities also involved the assessment of native vegetation clearing applications, environmental licences, works approvals, and contaminated sites. Preparatory work was also undertaken for the potential implementation of controlled waste tracking services on both islands, aligned with future projects.

► Service 5 (Environmental and water policy)

We ensured our IOT program and service delivery meets water and environmental governance expectations applied under WA and IOT legislative responsibilities.

► Service 6 (Waste strategies)

We continue to support and apply the IOT Waste Strategy and waste management initiatives across the IOT through strategic partnerships and community engagement. This included collaboration with the Australian Government on the licensing initiatives for authorising reprocessing of waste oils for reuse. We also assisted the shires to reduce single use water bottles and improve regulatory waste controls. Waste education and awareness activities through programs such as 'Sea Week' are aimed at reducing waste generation, promoting reuse, and supporting long term environmental sustainability in the IOT.





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