



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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October 2026

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ISSN 22096329 (online)

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



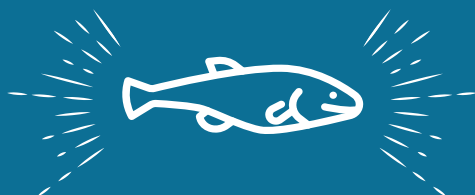
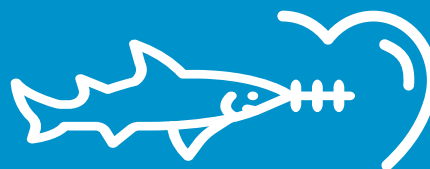
60

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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Our purpose

We protect what makes Western Australia unique, so every generation can enjoy a healthy environment, secure water and a prosperous future



Overview



Our values

WE SERVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



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

WE BUILD TRUST



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

WE CARE



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

OPEN MINDS



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

BETTER TOGETHER



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

Our strategic focus areas: 1–5 years



Intelligence

Robust data,
integrated
monitoring systems,
and predictive
analytics supporting
decisions.



Influencing for impact

Shaping sustainable
behaviours and
decisions across
government, industry
and the community.



Adaptive capability

A skilled, agile
workforce and
advanced systems to
respond effectively
to change.

Delivering for Western Australia



Protecting and restoring our environment

- Decarbonising the WA economy and supporting our trading partners to reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions.
- Protecting and restoring our land and oceans.
 - Increasing the urban tree canopy.
 - Reducing the impact of waste.



Jobs: Diversifying the WA economy to remain the strongest in the nation

- Continuing to deliver strong budget management.
- Becoming a renewable energy powerhouse.
- Securing our water future in a drying climate.



Housing: Ensuring every Western Australian has a home

- Increasing land supply for housing.
 - Cutting red tape for housing developments.



Our approach

We lead with integrity, accountability and courage. By working with community, industry and governments, we ensure WA is prosperous, protected, and thriving – for today and beyond 2050.



Responsive, credible regulation

- We make timely, transparent and evidence-based decisions.
- We ensure our guidance is clear, contemporary and accessible.
- We lead and support major projects in housing, energy and infrastructure through streamlined approvals.



Effective policy that drives real-world change

- We deliver the State's legislative and policy foundations for the climate, environment and water resources.
- We collaborate to develop policy for impact.
- We advance towards a circular economy and waste reduction through targeted programs and infrastructure grants.



Promoting, enforcing and monitoring compliance

- We uphold standards and take action when required.
- We educate those we regulate, as well as the broader community.
- We support emergency responses to environmental incidents including droughts, floods, bushfires, and pollution events.



Partnering with purpose

- We engage, listen and act in partnership with the community we serve.
- We raise awareness and promote behavioural change.
- We adapt our approach to meet regional needs.
- We support statutory bodies such as the Environmental Protection Authority, Waste Authority, and State Government advisory committees.



World-class science and research

- We deliver scientific advice and information to government, industry, and the public.
- We apply advanced modelling and monitoring to assess environmental impacts and guide decisions.
- We invest in independent, peer-reviewed science to support our work.



Embedding Aboriginal worldviews and knowledge systems

- We listen and embed Aboriginal worldviews and ways of knowing, being and doing.
- We respect traditional knowledge in our decision-making processes.
- We foster partnerships with Aboriginal communities for mutual benefit.

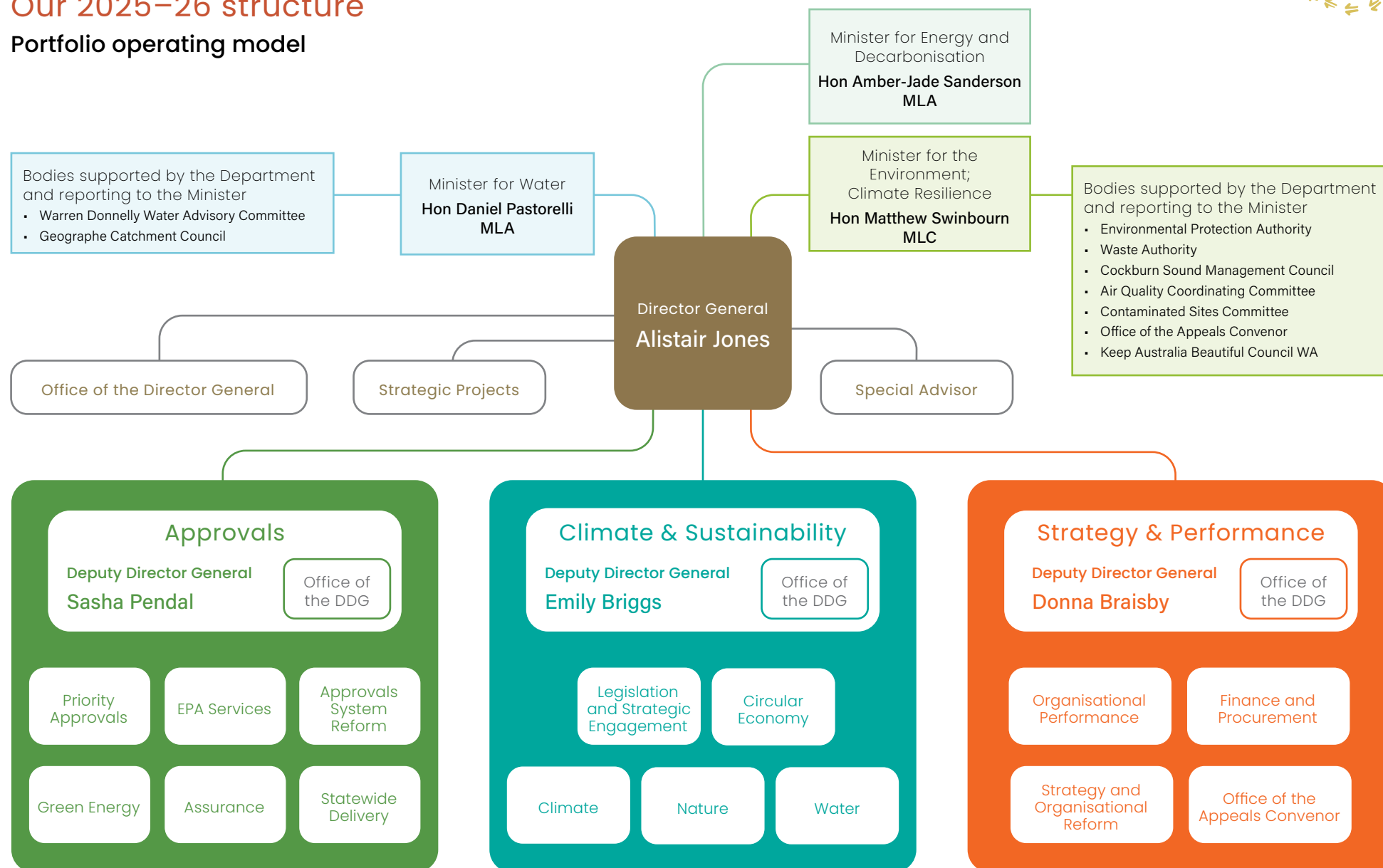


Customer-focused systems and services

- We design and deliver our services around customer needs.
- We seek feedback and work constructively with our customers to improve our services.

Our 2025–26 structure

Portfolio operating model





Alistair Jones

Director General

Alistair joined the Department as Director General in January 2024. He is dedicated to protecting Western Australia's environment and water resources and is excited to be leading the Department through the major reform of the State's environmental approvals system.

Alistair arrived from the Department of Treasury, where he was Assistant Under Treasurer of the Economic Business Unit and, before that, Assistant Under Treasurer of Strategic Policy and Evaluation. With more than 15 years in State Government, his leadership roles include Acting Director General of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation in 2023.



Sasha Pental

Deputy Director General
Approvals

Sasha joined the Department with more than 25 years' experience in commercial and corporate development, operations, strategy and stakeholder engagement. Previously, she has held senior executive roles in the private and not-for profit sectors, including with HBF, Synergy and Early Start Australia.

Sasha holds a Master of Business Administration from the Australian Graduate School of Management UNSW, and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree from the University of Western Australia. She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors with ten years' experience in non-executive roles, including as Fremantle Football Club Director and Lifeline WA Chair. She is Chair of the inaugural AFL Women's Committee at Fremantle Football Club.



Emily Briggs

Deputy Director General
Climate and Sustainability

Emily has served as Deputy Director General Climate and Sustainability since 2023, leading Western Australia's whole of government action on climate, biodiversity, circular economy and water, as well as the Department's engagement with the Commonwealth.

Emily brings experience across government and the private sector, with a focus on policy, commercial strategy and stakeholder engagement. She has previously held senior roles in both government and the private sector including the UN Environment Programme.

Emily enjoys building partnerships with stakeholders to deliver pragmatic solutions for a sustainable WA.



Donna Braisby

Deputy Director General
Strategy and Performance

Donna Braisby was appointed Deputy Director General Strategy and Performance at the Department in February 2026, bringing extensive public sector leadership experience across Western Australia and the United Kingdom.

She leads the Department's strategic planning, governance, organisational performance, reform, digital and information services, communications, stakeholder engagement and legal functions.

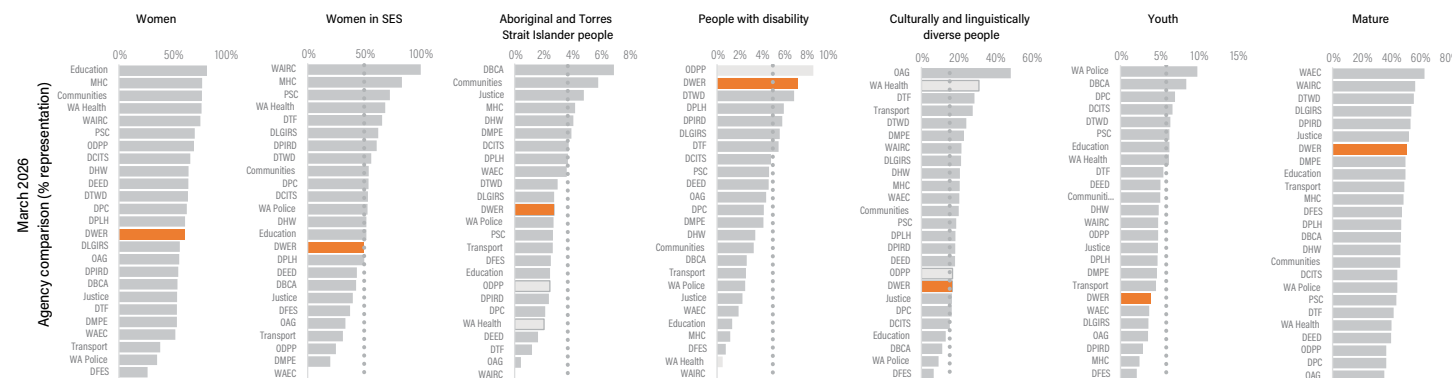
Before her current appointment, Donna led Green Energy and Approvals System Reform, supporting major improvements to Western Australia's environmental system. She has held senior roles in Health, Policing and Justice. She is passionate about practical reform and high-quality customer service that supports government priorities and community outcomes.



Inclusive Employer

2025 – 2026

(March 2026) Headcount: 1,260 Change in headcount over 3 months: +22 (+1.8%)		Based on diversity response rate							Based on total public sector headcount	
Diversity Group	Target %	Current % and change since last quarter		Previous quarter %	Same time last year %	Current employee headcount in diversity group	Equity Index	Response rate	Target employee headcount in diversity group	Employee headcount below target
Women		61.7%	▲	61.5%	60.8%	777	96			
Women in Senior Executive Service (SES)	50.0%	50.0%	▶	50.0%	45.0%	11			11	Target met
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	3.7%	2.7%	▲	2.5%	2.6%	22	88	63.8% 804 456	47	25
People with disability	5.0%	7.2%	▲	7.1%	6.9%	51	108	56.0% 705 555	63	12
Culturally and linguistically diverse people	15.5%	16.9%	▲	16.8%	16.5%	173	70	81.3% 1,024 236	196	23
Youth (age 24 and below)	5.8%	3.8%	▲	3.1%	3.3%	48			74	26
Mature (age 45 and above)		51.2%	▼	51.9%	51.7%	645				



Response rate

The representation rates of employees in each diversity group is based on the number of valid responses. Agencies with less than 70 per cent response rate is considered to be below the reliability threshold. This is also indicated in the agency comparison charts by the lighter grey bars.

If there are fewer than 10 employees in a diversity group, the equity index may not be a good indicator of the distribution of salary ranges of the diversity group.

Equity index

The equity index indicates the distribution of a diversity group across the salary ranges compared with the distribution of all employees across the same salary ranges across the public sector. An index of less than 100 indicates a concentration of employees at the lower salary range. An index greater than 100 indicates a concentration of employees at the higher salary range. An index of 100 indicates that the distribution of that diversity group is reflective of the general salary distribution of the agency.

Agency comparison legend

- Orange = Selected agency for this report
Dark Grey = greater or equal to 70% response rate (see response rate definition)
Light Grey = less than 70% response rate (see response rate definition)
..... Dotted line = Target





Performance summary

Actual results versus budget targets

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

KPIs comprise both effectiveness and efficiency indicators.

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

You will find more detail in our Disclosures section, which starts on [page 97](#).

Financial targets	2024–25 Actual (\$'000)	2025–26 Budget (\$'000) ^(a)	2025–26 Actual (\$'000)	2025–26 Variance (\$'000)
Total cost of services (i.e. endorsed expense limit)	267,562	317,869	293,804	24,065
Net cost services (details in the income statement)	106,518	129,426	112,249	17,177
Total equity (details in the statement of financial position)	817,979	830,807	913,324	-82,517
Agreed salary expense level	138,034	144,711	148,010	-3,299
Working cash limit	12,331	14,967	12,809	2,158

(a) 2025–26 Budget figures reflect the final approved budget / estimated actual position, as applicable, and may differ from the original 2025–26 Budget Statements figures used for explanatory statement purposes.





Summary of key effectiveness indicators

Outcome	Key effectiveness indicator	2024–25	2025–26		
		Actual %	Target %	Actual %	Variance %
1. Western Australia's growth and development is supported by the sustainable management of water resources for the long term benefit of the State	Proportion of stakeholders who perceive the department to be effectively managing the State's water as a resource for sustainable, productive use	38	65	51	-14 ↓
	Proportion of priority growth areas that have a water supply planning strategy	22	56	56	0
2. Emissions, discharges and clearing of native vegetation are effectively regulated to avoid unacceptable risks to public health and the environment	Percentage of regulatory compliance activities completed as planned	97	100	99	-1 ↓
	Percentage of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring program that are rectified within two months	16	40	11	-29 ↓
3. Development and implementation of strategic policy and legislation that promoted sustainable environmental outcomes	Percentage of advice and recommendations that met Ministerial approval, without the need for significant modification	98	95	99	4 ↑
4. Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised	Percentage of Municipal Solid Waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to waste strategy target in the Perth Metropolitan Region	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)
	Percentage of Commercial and Industrial Waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)
	Percentage of Construction and Demolition Waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)
5. Quality advice to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Minister for the Environment on significant proposals and environmental issues	The Environmental Protection Authority's satisfaction with the Department's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) service, during the year, in line with Best Practice Principles of EIA	87	90	89	-1 ↓
	Percentage of project-specific conditions which did not require significant change following the appeal process	67	90	88	-2 ↓
	Percentage of assessments that met agreed timelines	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)	N/A ^(a)
	The EPA's satisfaction with the Department's provision of environmental management services during the year	92	95	94	-1 ↓
6. Compliance with Ministerial statement implementation conditions are monitored effectively	The number of Ministerial statements audited compared to targets	68	100	88	-12 ↓

(a) The Treasurer has approved an exemption from reporting this indicator for 2024–25, 2025–26 and 2026–27



Summary of key efficiency indicators

Service		Key efficiency indicators	2025–26 Actual	Target	2025–26 Actual	Variance	
Service 1	Water information and advice	Proportion of statutory referrals from decision-making authorities (DMAs) where advice is provided within target timeframes	94%	95%	96%	1%	⬆️
		Average cost per referral assessment	\$5,182	\$4,967	\$4,686	-\$281	⬆️
		Average cost per water measurement site managed	\$8,107	\$9,526	\$8,864	-\$662	⬆️
Service 2	Water planning, allocation and optimisation	Average cost per plan, report or guidance document to support water planning, allocation and optimisation	\$259,057	\$248,550	\$288,409	\$39,859	⬆️
		Average cost per hour of scientific support for water planning, allocation and optimisation	\$218	\$204	\$229	\$25	⬆️
Service 3	Water regulation, licensing and industry governance	Average cost of assessing a water licence application by risk assessment category:					
		• Low risk	\$4,243	\$5,296	\$4,813	-\$483	⬆️
		• Medium risk	\$5,657	\$7,062	\$6,418	-\$644	⬆️
		• High risk	\$7,071	\$8,827	\$8,022	-\$805	⬆️
		Average time taken (days) to assess a licence application by risk assessment category:					
		• Low risk	59	65	57	-8	⬆️
		• Medium risk	63	75	68	-7	⬆️
		• High risk	76	95	78	-17	⬆️
		Average cost of compliance monitoring and enforcement action	\$475	\$421	\$306	-\$115	⬆️
Service 4	Environmental regulation	Average cost per works approval and licence application	\$69,499	\$97,398	\$78,164	-\$19,234	⬆️
		Average cost per native vegetation clearing permit application	\$38,442	\$66,524	\$44,779	-\$21,745	⬆️
Service 5	Water and environment policy	Average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations	\$334	\$525	\$338	-\$187	⬆️
Service 6	Waste strategies	Cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected	1.19%	1.70%	1.39%	-0.31%	⬆️
Service 7	Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of assessment output	\$79,259	\$119,060	\$69,481	-\$49,579	⬆️
Service 8	Environmental management services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of environmental management services output	\$47,570	\$61,879	\$62,148	\$269	⬆️
Service 9	Compliance monitoring services to the Minister	Average cost per environmental audit completed	\$112,958	\$127,469	\$163,319	\$35,850	⬆️



Photo: Surfbee coupled with Sontek M9 ADCP
ready for flow measurement on the Dunham River.

Our Priorities





Our Priorities

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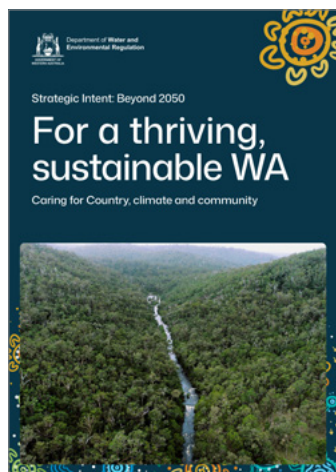
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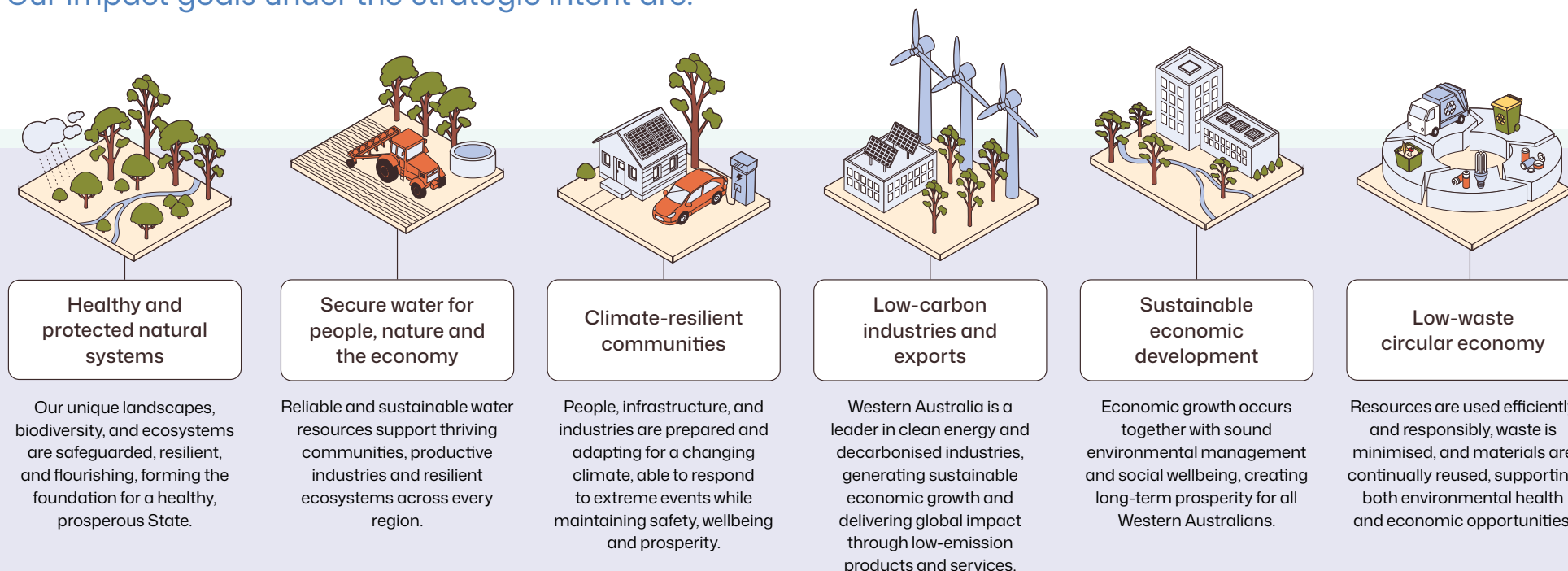


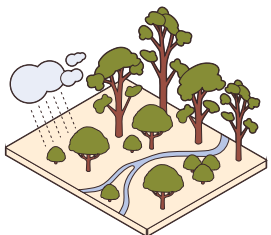
Strategic Intent: Beyond 2050

During the year we released [Strategic Intent: Beyond 2050](#) – capturing our long-term vision for a thriving, sustainable Western Australia (WA) by caring for Country, climate and the community.

The Strategic Intent is aligned with WA Government priorities – positioning the Department as a vital partner in delivering economic and environmental outcomes.

Our impact goals under the Strategic Intent are:





Impact goal 1: Healthy and protected natural systems

Our unique landscapes, biodiversity, and ecosystems are safeguarded, resilient, and flourishing, forming the foundation for a healthy, prosperous State.

High-risk estuaries

Dairy farm effluent can affect river and estuary health if not managed effectively, but it is also a valuable on-farm resource. During 2025–26 more than \$2 million was committed over four years to continue this work through [Healthy Estuaries WA](#).

The project is being delivered by Western Dairy in partnership with the Department, regional catchment groups and dairy farmers.

This next phase builds on more than eight years of improving effluent management. The funding is jointly provided by the WA Government, Western Dairy and Dairy Australia. The funding will support dairy farms located near the seven most at-risk estuaries in south-west WA – the Peel-Harvey Estuary, Vasse-Geographe waterways, Leschenault Estuary, Hardy Inlet, Wilson Inlet, Torbay Inlet and Oyster Harbour.



Peel-Harvey estuary protection

During 2025–26 a total of \$5 million was allocated for community-led initiatives that restore rivers and increase care of waterways in the Peel and the iconic Bindjareb-Djilba (Peel-Harvey estuary).

Bindjareb Traditional Owners will receive \$1.3 million to continue Aboriginal-led partnerships in waterways planning and management. The Peel Development Commission will receive \$3.7 million for river restoration and a local schools program.



Birds like the Great Egret rely on the Peel-Harvey estuary

Seagrass recovery in the Peel

New scientific data shows total seagrass in the Bindjareb-Djilba (Peel-Harvey estuary) increased by 16 per cent from 2021 to March 2025.

Seagrass meadows provide habitat for wildlife and indicate estuary health. The monitoring program supports the Bindjareb-Djilba (Peel-Harvey estuary) Protection Plan, delivered through Healthy estuaries WA. While the increase in seagrass is encouraging, ongoing nutrient reduction remains critical.



Showcasing water sensitive urban design in the Peel region on [Youtube](#)



Report cards track wetlands

New report cards are making Vasse-Wonnerup wetland science accessible.

The report cards summarise long-term ecological monitoring of Busselton’s Vasse-Wonnerup wetlands across key environmental indicators, enabling the community, scientists and decision-makers to track changes over time.

The Vasse-Wonnerup wetlands are listed as a [Wetland of International Importance](#) under the Ramsar Convention and are highly valued for their environmental, cultural and recreational importance. The program is delivered with Murdoch University, Edith Cowan University (ECU) and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), funded through Revitalising Geographie Waterways and Healthy Estuaries WA.

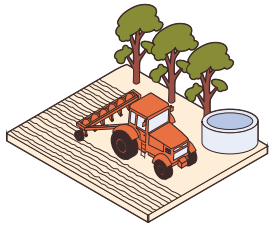
New science supporting native species

Western Australia has eight of Australia’s 15 [biodiversity hotspots](#), including the globally recognised south-west biodiversity hotspot which is one of only two global biodiversity hotspots in Australia. To address the increasing pressures on biodiversity, the Department continues to invest in science to better understand and manage local environments. In 2025–26, in partnership with various local research institutions, we have been investigating:

- **The value of farm dams as habitat for native species.** This work aims to find ways to best manage these environments to support biodiversity and ecosystem health. In some areas, farm dams are providing critical refuges for native species during the increasing hotter, dryer periods

Year	 Aquatic Plants	 Macroinvertebrates	 Black Bream	 Waterbirds	 Fish kills	 Water quality
2024	B	C	A	C	A	C
2023	B	C	D	D	A	C
2022	B	B	A	C	A	C
2021	B	B	D	C	E	D
2020	C	B	D	B	A	C
2019	B	C	Not Sampled	A	E	C
2018	B	B	D	A	A	C

- being seen in the south-west of the country.
- **The water quality preferences of native species, particularly in conditions directly affected by climate change (such as increasing temperature, salinity and declining oxygen levels).** This work aims to provide clear guidance on the management conditions required to support biodiversity and ecological function.
 - **The tolerance of burrowing freshwater crayfish species to groundwater decline.** This collaboration with ECU focuses on understanding the resilience of species to changes in groundwater levels so we can better manage water use into the future.
 - **The genetics of several of our river species.** This work aims to understand potential genetic differences across species that could affect how they respond to pressure, such as their potential resilience to climate change. Partners include DBCA, the University of Western Australia (UWA), ECU and Murdoch University.
 - **The swimming capabilities of freshwater fish.** Alongside Murdoch University, this work is supporting the design of new fish passage structures for improving weirs and road crossing structures, as well as understanding the potential risks drying climate may have on the ability of species to move through systems to complete life cycles.



Impact goal 2: Secure water for people, nature and the economy

Reliable and sustainable water resources support thriving communities, productive industries and resilient ecosystems across every region.



Stronger data, stronger water security in the Warren–Donnelly

We continued delivery of the \$2 million Warren–Donnelly Measurement and Monitoring Project, part of the WA Government's \$15.3 million investment in water security announced in August 2023.

The project is modernising monitoring infrastructure across the Manjimup–Pemberton region, improving information on streamflow, groundwater and water use. Key initiatives include upgrading and installing gauging stations, expanding dam and groundwater monitoring, and reinstating critical long-term monitoring and research sites. These improvements strengthen water information for industry, regulators and the community. The project supports water allocation planning, licensing decisions and adaptive management in response to climate variability and land use change.



Managing water supply

Developed collaboratively by the Department, Water Corporation, Aqwest – Bunbury Water and Busselton Water, [Made possible by water](#) presents a coordinated, long-term approach to managing water sustainably across WA.

The document outlines how declining rainfall, reduced streamflows and increasing demand are placing pressure on traditional water sources and sets out priorities including climate-independent water supplies, water efficiency, recycling, climate-resilient infrastructure and partnerships with Aboriginal communities, industry, regional utilities and local government.





Fitzroy water planning

Our [Consultation draft – Fitzroy–Derby water resources management plan: policy and guidance](#) was released on 1 April 2026 for public consultation. The draft plan is supported by the [Consultation draft – Fitzroy–Derby water resources management plan: methods](#).

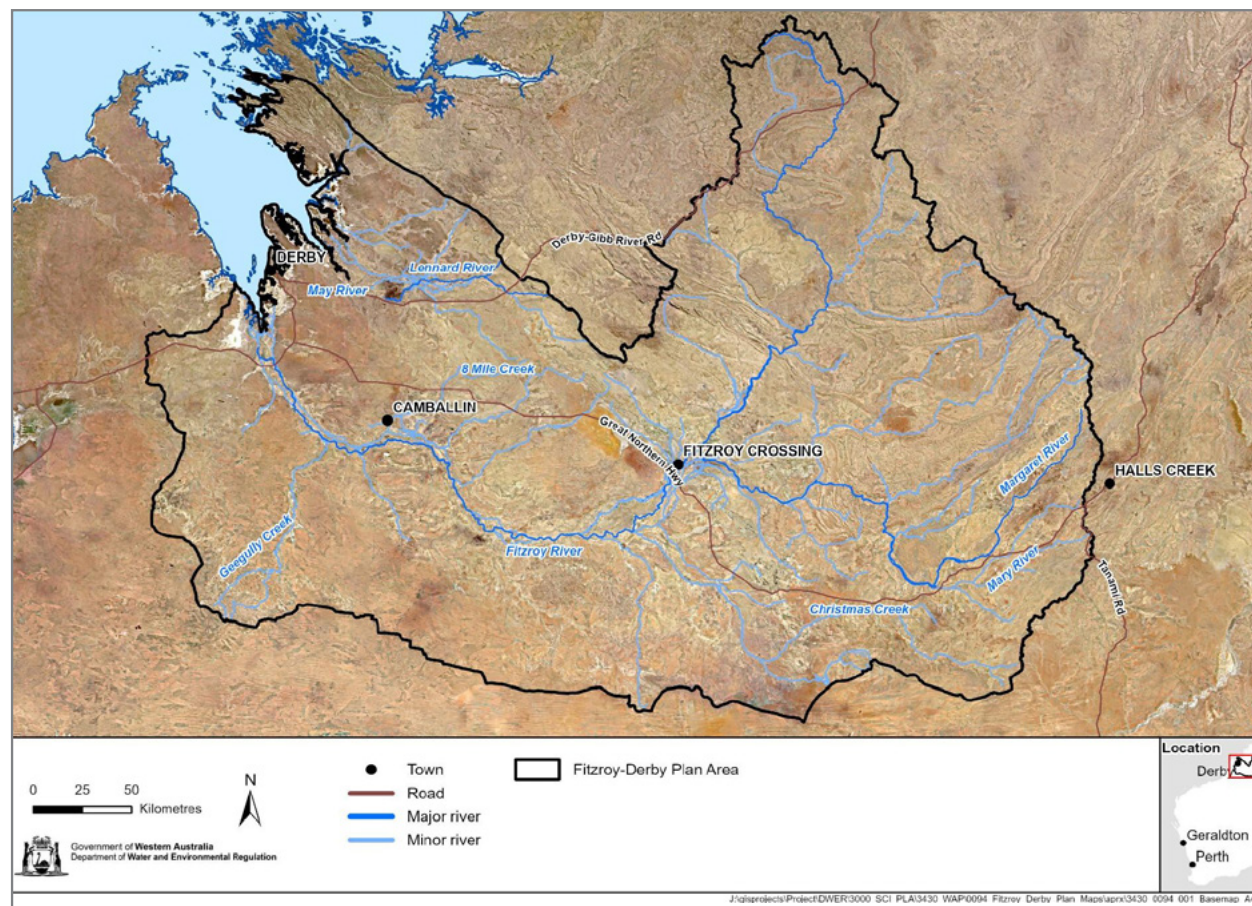
The draft Fitzroy–Derby plan combines water planning for the Fitzroy River catchment and the Derby Peninsula. It is the first water plan for the Fitzroy River catchment and related groundwater resources in the Canning–Kimberley groundwater area.

Wide consultation informed development of the draft plan, including engagement with Traditional Owners, industry, government and the community, attracting 142 individual submissions and more than 55,000 pro-forma submissions. See [Consultation summary – Fitzroy–Derby water planning](#).

A statement of response is being prepared.

Water security through innovation in drylands

During 2025–26 the Australian and WA governments jointly invested in two initiatives to improve water security and climate resilience in regional and remote WA. The first initiative, the \$2.7 million WaterSmart Wheatbelt project, explores the potential of using brackish groundwater as emergency and long-term water sources for drought-prone agricultural regions without access to public water supplies.



The project will develop aquifer exploration methods, guidance, training and mapping to support sustainable self-supply. Focus regions include the Central Wheatbelt and Great Southern, where the initiative will support broadacre agriculture, livestock processors and other intensive industries.

The project is led by the WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), in partnership with federal science agencies and universities, including the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), and involves local government and other WA Government agencies.



Remote trial for community water treatment

During the year an initiative delivered by Water Corporation, in collaboration with the Department and UWA, received \$486,000 to trial low-tech monitoring and treatment methods to improve drinking water quality in remote Aboriginal communities.

Technologies such as accessible water chemistry test kits and domestic-scale freeze desalination will be trialled in communities across the Pilbara, Gascoyne and Eastern Goldfields.

The project will improve community capability to monitor and treat drinking water while strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

Community water supplies

The Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation was among 10 recipients in 2025–26 to receive grants which support rural and remote communities to build climate resilience through improved water infrastructure projects across WA's Mid West, Wheatbelt and South West regions.

The Community Water Supplies Partnership (CWSP) program provides grants of up to \$100,000 per project to develop off-farm community water supplies.

The CWSP is jointly funded by the Australian and WA governments, with the federal funding provided through the National Water Grid Fund. Both governments have jointly committed \$5.6 million to the program from 2024–25 to 2026–27.

Projects will enhance critical water infrastructure in regional and remote communities – including bores, tanks and pumps to deliver water for firefighting and community use – and boost resilience in areas with no or low scheme water.

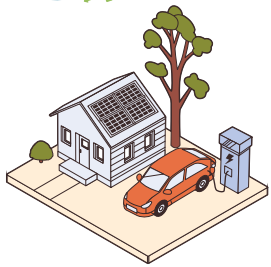


SUPPORTING BAIYUNGU WATER SECURITY



Funds are helping the Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation to establish a secure bore water supply for the Cardabia Homestead precinct near Coral Bay. This will enable access to an affordable non-potable water supply for essential use and livestock drinking water, while also improving the corporation's ability to hold events like the Jamba Nyinayi Festival. The property serves as a major cultural hub and gathering place for the Baiyungu people.





Impact goal 3: Climate resilient communities

People, infrastructure, and industries are prepared and adapting for a changing climate, able to respond to extreme events while maintaining safety, wellbeing and prosperity.

In 2025–26 we released our two-year progress report on actions to build climate resilience across WA's communities, economy and ecosystems.

Key highlights: Action Plan status



Over the past twelve months, a range of actions have been taken to build statewide climate resilience and help Western Australia adapt to climate change. These include actions to improve our understanding of climate risks, increase the climate resilience of infrastructure, support vulnerable communities, and enhance communication about climate science and adaptation responses.

Since the release of the Climate Adaptation Strategy, four actions are now complete, with 33 actions in progress and several key milestones achieved in the past 12 months.

Report tracks climate resilience work

The Climate Adaptation Strategy sets out 37 priority actions to help WA prepare for climate change. Since its release, four actions have been completed and 33 are underway, improving climate risk understanding, infrastructure resilience, support for vulnerable communities and climate communication. Progress highlights include:

- developed a new state planning policy and bushfire guidelines to improve risk mitigation
- instigated an Urban Greening Strategy for Perth and Peel
- established 12 WaterSmart dam demonstration sites to showcase leading on-farm drought resilience techniques, supported by a new app
- funded seven climate action projects through the \$16.5 million Aboriginal Ranger Program (ARP)
- supported three Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services through a Services Grant Agreement

- released a *Remote housing review and guide* recommending resilience strategies for housing, with refurbishment works underway in two remote communities
- developed an Aboriginal-led West Kimberley Climate Adaptation Strategy in partnership with the Nulungu Research Institute at the University of Notre Dame Australia (Broome) and the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council.

Updates on WA climate projections

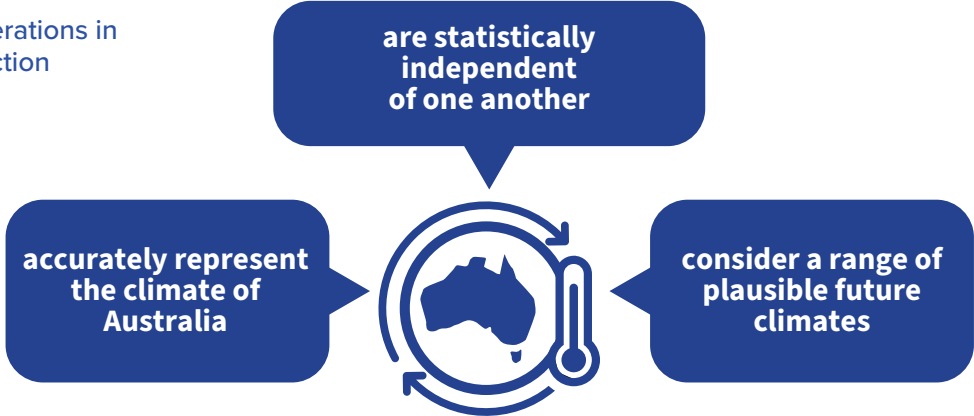
Through the Climate Science Initiative (CSI), the WA Government is producing high-resolution climate projections for WA to support climate risk assessment and long-term adaptation planning. In partnership with the NSW Government, Murdoch University and the Pawsey Supercomputing Research Centre (Pawsey), the program is producing WA's most detailed climate projections to date, extending to 2100.



In November 2025, WA's first statewide future climate projections at 20 km resolution were released through the WA Government's Shared Location Information Platform. The CSI hosted a public event at Murdoch University's Boola Katijin with Murdoch University and Pawsey, bringing together researchers, policymakers, planners and community stakeholders to share the latest climate science. In March 2026, the first four km simulation data became available through the National Computational Infrastructure. The projections are supporting planning across water, infrastructure, agriculture and emergency management.



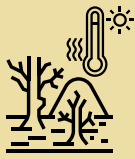
Key considerations in model selection



The five Global Climate Models used in the Climate Science Initiative

*ACCESS is an Australian-made climate model developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM). [Technical factsheet for 20km temperature and rainfall climate projections](#)

- 1



ACCESS*-ESM 1.5
A hotter and much drier future
- 2



EC-Earth3-Veg
A hotter and much wetter future for much of Australia except the south-west of WA
- 3



NorESM2-MM
Lower warming, mid-range changes in rainfall
- 4



UKESM1-0-LL
Low probability, high impact case (high climate sensitivity, high Australian warming)
- 5



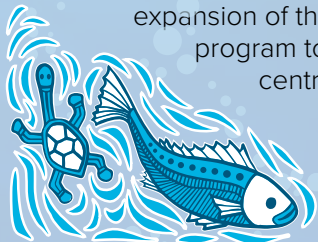
MPI-ESM1-2
Considered a relatively balanced model among the others

Third Waterwise plan in action

Kep Katitjin – Gabi Kaadadjan *Waterwise action plan 3*

(2024–27) is the third plan in the multi-award-winning Waterwise program. The program supports the WA Government's response to climate change in Boorloo (Perth) and Bindjareb (Peel), where declining rainfall, rising temperatures, population growth and urbanisation are placing pressure on water resources. Established in 2019, the program is delivered by 10 WA Government agencies in collaboration with Aboriginal people, industry, research, community and local government.

Collaboration and Walking Together underpin the program, supporting innovation and waterwise behaviour across government, industry and the community. The program has received the [Australian Water Association's Organisational Excellence Award](#) at both state and national level twice. The plan's 43 actions strengthen collaboration to conserve water resources, support urban greening, enhance biodiversity, and increase tree canopy and urban cooling. The plan includes research and stakeholder engagement to support expansion of the Waterwise program to regional urban centres from 2027–30.



ACHIEVEMENTS 2019–26



Water saved

601 million litres

saved by retrofitting social housing with water-efficient fixtures

1,336 million litres

saved through programs to help households adapt to climate change

41,550 million litres

saved by business and industry by improving their water use practices



22,817 trees planted

reducing urban heat in our suburbs



1,096,332 waterwise plantings

creating biodiversity and cooling our suburbs



10 strategic documents influenced to include Aboriginal environmental, social and economic outcomes



100% Boorloo and Bindjareb councils endorsed as Waterwise and 94% recognised as Gold Waterwise Councils



357 Waterwise awareness and education events, 39,929 people attended these events since October 2024



9 New innovations developed/completed since October 2024



103 New collaborative initiatives since October 2024



20 Publications/information/education materials produced that incorporate waterwise topics since October 2024



217,742 students participated in the Waterwise Schools program

14 Waterwise projects influenced to include Aboriginal environmental, social and economic outcomes since October 2024

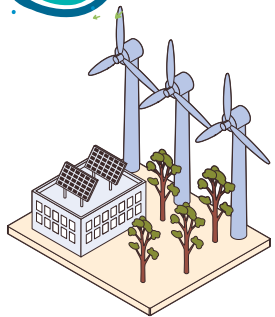


This plan includes **43 actions being delivered** through the collaborative efforts of 10 agencies, that are actively addressing the impacts of climate change through their actions



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





Impact goal 4: Low carbon industries and exports

Western Australia is a leader in clean energy and decarbonised industries, generating sustainable economic growth and delivering global impact through low-emission products and services.

We support the Energy and Decarbonisation ministerial portfolio in delivering whole-of-government emissions reduction and supporting Western Australia's transition to net zero emissions.



Green energy initiatives

The [Green Energy Approvals Initiative](#) supports the delivery of green energy projects and the State Government's commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. The initiative streamlines approvals in support of the Made in WA agenda, working with the Department of Energy and Economic Diversification (DEED) and other agencies to reduce approval timeframes. Since we established our dedicated Green Energy Assessment team in 2023, more than 175 assessments have been completed. There are more than 33 active proposals, with a further 25 expected by the end of 2026.

Development Act

The [State Development Act 2025](#) supports economic diversification, job creation and renewable energy development.

Through the Lead Agency Framework, we support the Made in WA agenda by helping drive the transition from coal-fired generation and supporting major trading partners to decarbonise through critical minerals and green products such as green iron.

Industry innovation grants

During the year, the \$15 million [Carbon Innovation Grants Program](#) funded \$6.35 million to nine projects to advance technologies that will help Western Australia's heavy industry transition to net zero emissions by 2050. Projects included a seaweed biorefinery to produce plastic alternatives, a trial to capture CO₂ from ammonia production and create useful by products, and a feasibility study into hybrid electrification of quad trailers for regional transport.

Round 4 of the [Clean Energy Future Fund](#) (CEFF) opened in January 2026, offering grants of between \$100,000 and \$4 million for projects that benefit First Nations people, support green exports and local manufacturing, increase renewable energy and network resilience, and improve productivity through electrification.



CATALYST REDUCES GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS



Wesfarmers Chemicals, Energy and Fertilisers (WesCEF) has installed advanced abatement catalyst technology at its Nitric Acid Ammonium Nitrate Plant 3 in Kwinana as part of its journey towards net zero. Supported by a \$500,000 grant through the [Carbon Innovation Grants Program](#), the project converts greenhouse gases into less harmful substances before releasing them into the atmosphere. Combined with existing systems installed in 2012, the catalysts have reduced the plant's nitrous oxide emissions by more than 98 per cent.



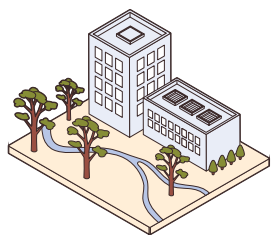
Government emissions tracking and reporting

Greenhouse gas emissions reporting supports the WA Government's target to reduce operational emissions to 80 per cent below 2020 levels by 2030. In accordance with the Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy, we are leading the implementation of an emissions tracking and reporting software system across government to measure progress against whole of government targets.

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

The emission reporting and tracking system manages more than 60 emissions profiles encompassing around 140 government entities. The system will support reporting on emissions and energy use, helping identify high-emitting facilities and informing emissions reduction decarbonisation planning for government.





Impact goal 5: Sustainable economic development

Economic growth occurs together with sound environmental management and social wellbeing, creating long-term prosperity for all Western Australians.

Regulatory reform and coordination

We progressed initiatives to improve the efficiency, consistency and coordination of environmental regulation across government. Key work included efforts to:

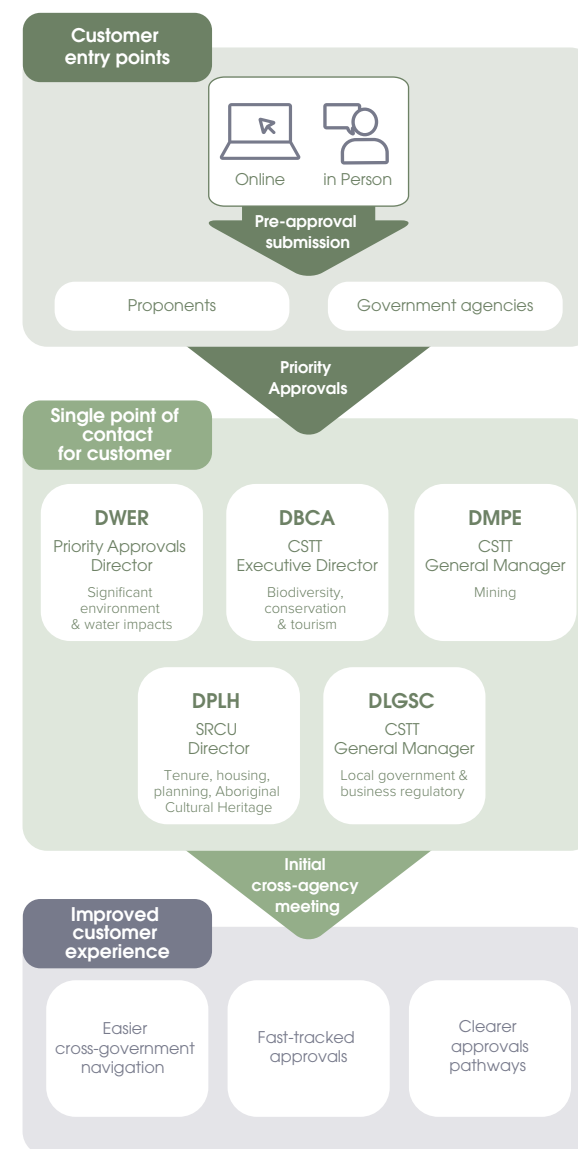
- develop Streamline WA assessment tools with other agencies to better clarify regulatory roles, increase transparency of approvals pathways, and support coordinated cross-agency decision-making
- progress a suite of initiatives to issue low-risk approvals more efficiently, creating faster timeframes and greater certainty for proponents when they avoid key environmental risks
- update inter-agency memoranda of understanding to strengthen collaboration and coordination of approvals processes across government
- contribute to whole-of-government reform through leadership and active participation in key committees.

Speeding up approvals for priority projects

The [Priority Approvals team](#) provides a single interface for proponents, coordinating cross-agency engagement and parallel secondary approvals during EPA assessment. The service provides a single point of contact, coordinated advice, early scoping and clearer agency roles.

Eligible projects include government priority, significant and strategic projects under the Lead Agency Framework; projects considered by the Tourism Investment Coordinating Council; Treasury Housing Supply Unit priority growth front projects, and high-profile developments. Read more about how we are [Speeding up approvals for priority projects](#).

Customer experience protocols





Assessment surveys go online

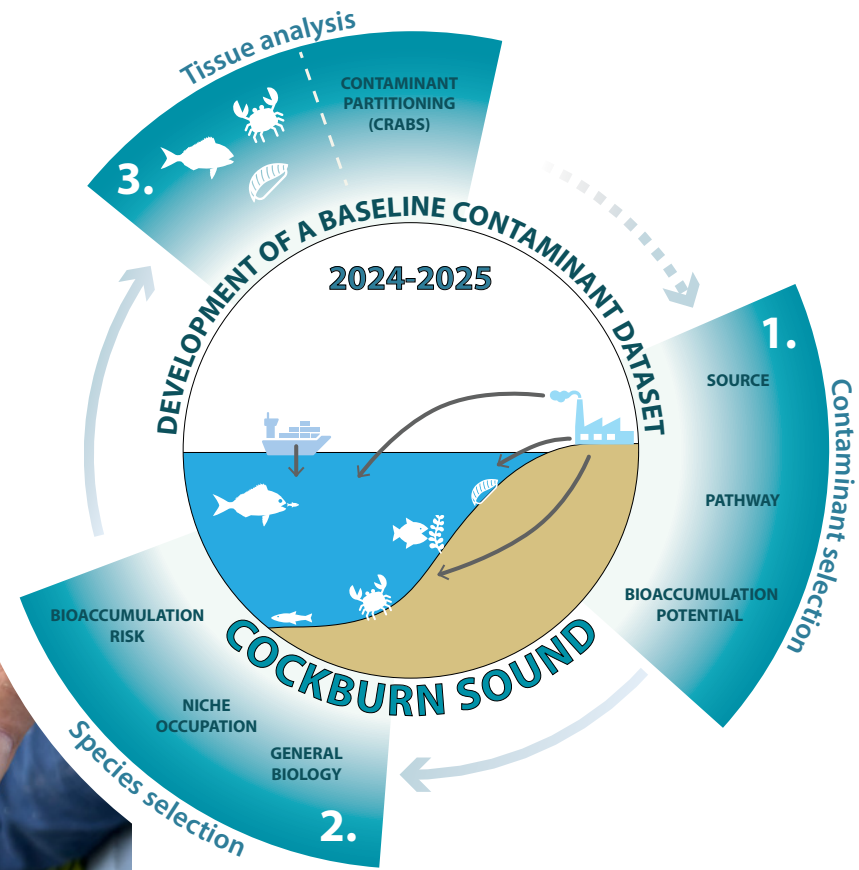
The new [Index of Surveys for Assessments \(ISA\)](#) provides industry, regulators and the community with an index of land-based biodiversity and sea-based marine surveys conducted in WA for environmental impact assessments.

Integration of the surveys into [Environment Online](#) this year has streamlined manual processes and made it possible to directly attribute data to an environmental assessment, application or compliance process. The updated process has significantly increased data sharing with 96 per cent of submissions opting-in for publication of their survey data since the October 2025 launch.



Marine research leadership

Through partnerships with the science community, government and industry, our Marine Ecosystems Branch supports the Department's and EPA's regulatory and strategic objectives. During 2025–26, collaborative research addressed knowledge gaps relating to salt farms, desalination brine and environmental management of Cockburn Sound.



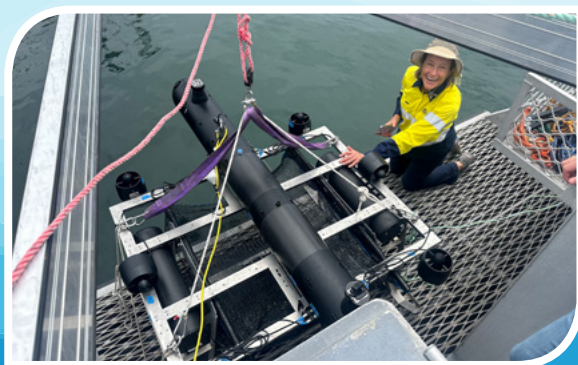
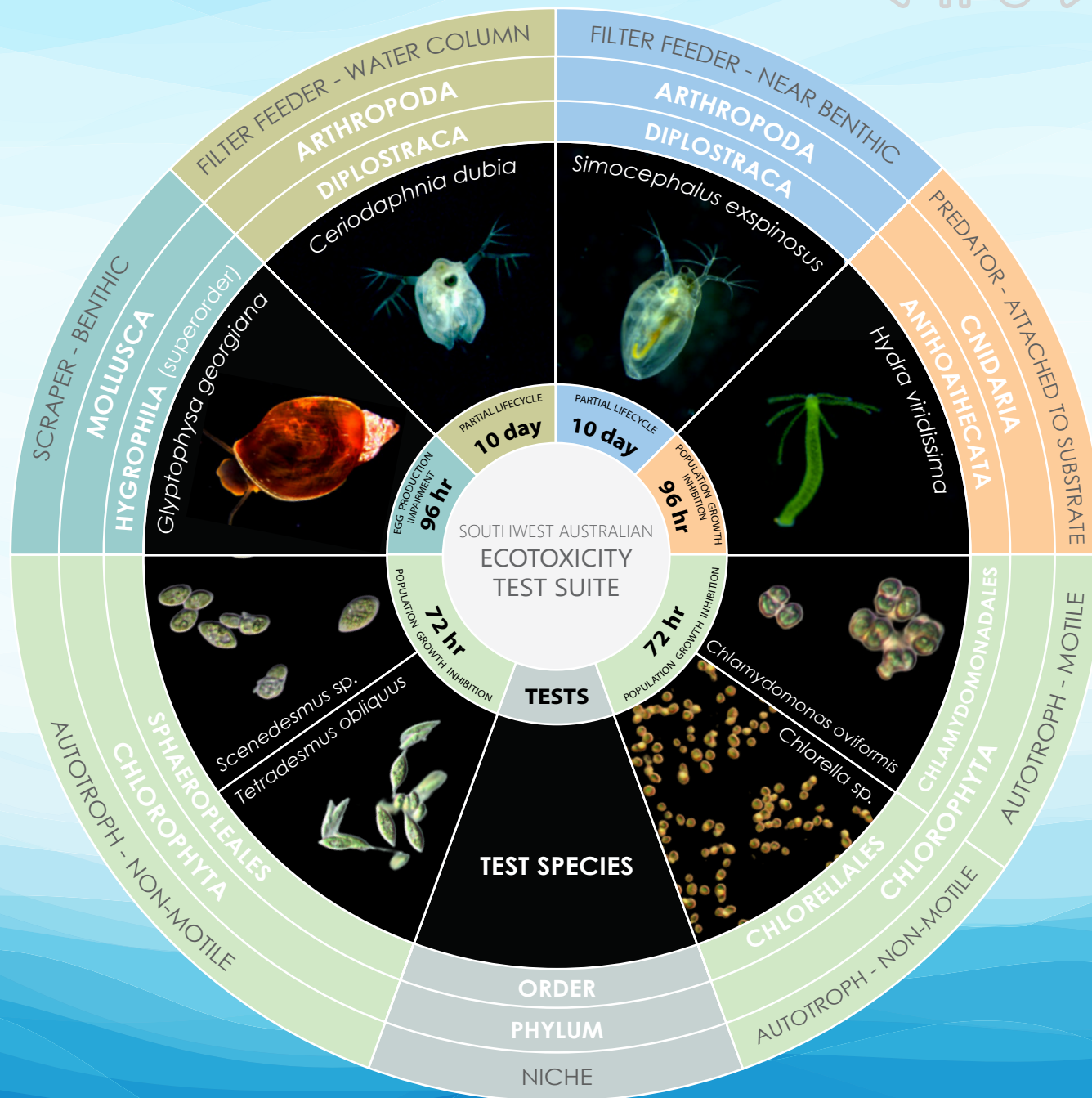


Test suite finished and available for use

The Southwest Australian Ecotoxicity Test Suite was completed and published in November 2025, providing a standard method to assess pollution risks to local aquatic ecosystems. Several mining and processing companies are already using the test suite to understand and manage potential risks from their operations.

Robot trial in Cockburn Sound

An underwater robot fitted with special combs to collect seagrass fruit was recently trialled in Cockburn Sound in a bid to accelerate seagrass recovery. The project is a collaboration between UWA researchers and international company Ulysses Ecosystem Engineering and supports the review of the State Environmental (Cockburn Sound) Policy 2015. Our Marine Ecosystems staff joined the research team to test the innovation.





Vegetation mapping: legacy meets future

During 2025–26, updated native vegetation mapping was completed and contemporary datasets published for the Swan coastal plain and Perth–Peel, alongside new releases for parts of the Wheatbelt, covering the Katanning, Merredin and Western Mallee Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) subregions. The Wheatbelt project covered an area twice the size of Tasmania and used high-resolution satellite imagery to replace datasets up to 20 years old.

The datasets, a deliverable under the State’s Native Vegetation Policy, improve planning, regulation and land management by providing consistent information on vegetation extent.

Complementing this work, we are advancing the [WA Vegetation Extent \(WAVE\) pilot](#) as flagship Artificial Intelligence (AI) project for the Department, testing whether machine learning and AI can provide a more efficient, consistent and repeatable approach to improving statewide vegetation mapping and monitoring in the future.



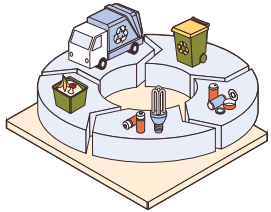
Maarli Ranger Group capturing drone imagery of landscapes in the town of Merredin in the central Wheatbelt region. Pictured (left to right): Chris Hayden Snr., Mick Hayden Snr., Chris Hayden Jnr., Joel D’Antoine (Winyama) and Angus McGrath.



Real-Time Kinematic base station for advanced satellite positioning.



Pincushions (Borya spp.) near Merredin.



Impact goal 6: Low-waste circular economy

Resources are used efficiently and responsibly, waste is minimised, and materials are continually reused, supporting both environmental health and economic opportunities.

Containers expansion

[Containers for Change](#) reduces litter and landfill and supports the circular economy. It has created 846 jobs and generated more than \$20 million for charities, schools and community groups to date.

 **846**
jobs created

 **\$20 mil+**
for charities, schools and community groups

In 2025, the WA Government announced that the [container deposit scheme](#) (CDS) would be expanded from 1 July 2026 to include more eligible containers.

Draft regulations were prepared to support the expansion and improve administration.



We consulted a stakeholder advisory group representing the beverage, wine, spirits, retail, resource recovery and local government sectors, alongside the scheme coordinator, before releasing draft regulations for eight weeks of public consultation. The regulations were published on 15 April 2026. From 1 July 2026, almost all beverage containers between 150 millilitres and 3 litres became eligible for the 10-cent refund, adding around 200 million containers to annual collections.

Rubber recycling hits the road

The [Recycling Modernisation Fund](#) is a partnership between the Australian and WA governments and industry to expand domestic recycling infrastructure in response to the waste export bans.

More than \$110 million has been invested to date in building tyre recycling infrastructure to increase WA's capacity to recycle end-of-life tyres. Of this, industry has invested more than \$89 million, and the federal and state governments have contributed more than \$21 million through the RMF.

 **\$110 mil+**
invested to date in building tyre recycling infrastructure

Australia generates about 130,000 tonnes of off-the-road mining tyres (OTR) each year, including 50,000 tonnes in WA. More than 90 per cent of larger OTR tyres in WA are currently disposed of in landfill, mainly in the Pilbara.

Capacity for paper and cardboard

We progressed WA's paper and cardboard recycling capacity with funding of \$7.92 million through the RMF for a project to upgrade existing processing infrastructure at the Canning Vale materials recovery facility.

The upgrades support compliance with national waste export requirements, including the five per cent contamination limit introduced on 1 July 2026.





WA Reuse Impact Study

The [WA Reuse Impact Study](#) found the reuse sector delivers significant environmental, social and economic benefits. In 2024–25, charities and reuse organisations collected more than 36 million items (14,000 tonnes), saving households about \$245 million and supporting more than 1,300 jobs.

Environmental benefits highlighted by the study included:

- avoiding consumption of 6,100 tonnes of virgin materials
- preventing an estimated 110,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions
- saving about 5,000 megalitres of water, equal to 2,000 Olympic swimming pools
- preserving about 52,000 hectares of land.

The study was an initiative of Charitable Reuse Australia, the Waste Authority and the Department, and was conducted by Rawtec.

Communities benefit from e-waste grants

More than half of the 35 ventures funded by our [infrastructure grants program](#) are now complete and helping to divert thousands of tonnes of electronics from landfill.

Total Green Recycling has completed three projects that have collectively diverted more than 1,752 tonnes of e-waste from landfill.

Western Australian Reuse Impact Study: Environmental Impact



Waste Diversion

Diverted an estimated
14,000 tonnes
of products from landfill to reuse.



Water Savings

Saved approximateley
5,000 megalitres of water
equivalent to the volume of
2,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.



CO₂-e Emissions

Saved an estimated
110,000 tonnes of CO₂-e
equivalent to removing
46,000 passenger vehicles from the road.



Land Use

Saved about
52,000 hectares of land
equivalent to the size of
73,000 soccer pitches.

Western Australian Reuse Impact Study: Employment Impact

Paid Employment

Employed

**1,301 full-time
equivalents (FTEs)**

including 351 FTEs for individuals facing
barriers to employment. This means around
one in four paid jobs are held by people
facing barriers to employment

Volunteers

Employed

1,172 FTEs

volunteers across
Western Australia.

Paid Employment Compared To Recycling and Landfill

Generated

62 times

more jobs than recycling and
204 times more than landfill
(on a per tonne basis)

[Western Australian Reuse Impact Study Executive Report – April 2026](#)



Embedding Aboriginal worldviews and knowledge systems

Caring for Country: Aboriginal empowerment transformation journey

During 2025–26, the Department continued its Aboriginal empowerment transformation journey through development of the *Caring for Country: 10 Year Transformation Strategy*. The Strategy provides the framework for long-term organisational change by strengthening cultural capability, enabling shared decision-making, and embedding Aboriginal worldviews and knowledge systems into departmental policy, systems and practice.

The Strategy aligns with the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#), the WA Government's [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy](#) and the Department's [Strategic Intent](#). The Department's approach is also informing the next [WA Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#).

In late 2025, the Department completed a current state assessment to identify organisational strengths, opportunities and barriers to implementing the National Agreement and [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy](#). The findings will inform implementation of the Transformation Strategy and confirmed a strong commitment across the Department to improving outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities. An independent Aboriginal-led review is also underway to strengthen the evidence base and ensure the Strategy is informed by Aboriginal perspectives, lived experience and community-led priorities.

In early 2026, the Department introduced an enhanced cultural capability learning suite aligned with whole-of-government standards to support culturally responsive engagement across the organisation.





SALT leads Aboriginal empowerment

The Senior Aboriginal Leadership Team (SALT) continued to provide strategic leadership for Aboriginal empowerment across the Department. During the year, SALT developed the Department's Aboriginal Empowerment governance model, aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the WA Government's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy. The model strengthens collaboration, shared decision-making and accountability across the Department through the Aboriginal Empowerment Board (AEB), the [Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group](#) (AWEAG) and other governance forums.

SALT also provided strategic oversight of key whole-of-agency initiatives, including the Transformation Strategy and development of the inland waters target under the National Agreement. It established a cross-jurisdictional relationship forum with the First Nations Water Branch at the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), creating opportunities for Aboriginal-led policy discussions on water, environment and engagement priorities. SALT also ensured Aboriginal water priorities were reflected in [Made possible by water](#).

Aboriginal engagement and partnerships

During 2025–26, the Aboriginal Engagement and Partnerships Branch strengthened Aboriginal participation in departmental policy, governance and decision-making. The Branch continued to support the Aboriginal Empowerment Board and AWEAG, and progressed co-development of the DWER–AWEAG Partnership Framework (2026–29) to strengthen collaboration and Aboriginal participation in water and environmental governance.

A key initiative during the year was the introduction of the Department's Caring for Country visual style, complementing the corporate identity through original artwork created by Wongutha artist Kevin Wilson in collaboration with Department staff. The visual identity reflects the interconnectedness of Western Australia's waterways and the shared responsibility of Caring for Country, symbolising the Department's commitment to embedding Aboriginal worldviews and knowledge systems across its work.

The Department also strengthened its Yarning Circle as a culturally safe forum to support Aboriginal staff participation in organisational decision-making and the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in policy and program development.





Customer-focused systems and services

Stakeholder insights, corporate perceptions and effectiveness

Annual stakeholder perception and effectiveness research showed an increase in positive stakeholder perceptions of the Department.

Research conducted between August and November 2025 achieved a 95 per cent confidence level with a 3.38 per cent margin of error.



Positive feedback

Almost 90 per cent of stakeholders rated their interactions with the Department as equal to or better than other State Government agencies (87 per cent of stakeholders and 91 per cent of customers). Staff interactions remained a strength, with 83 per cent of stakeholders and 79 per cent of customers satisfied with staff interactions, and 79 per cent and 74 per cent, respectively satisfied with staff knowledge. The Water Key Performance Indicator (KPI) has recovered strongly from a low last year, with improvements driven by stronger perceptions of leadership, long-term planning and approvals efficiency.



Areas for improvement

Priorities for improvement remain access to the right staff, understanding customer needs and response times.

Stakeholder HQ Portal

A Stakeholder HQ Portal was launched in 2025–26 as a central resource for stakeholder engagement information and support materials for all staff.

The portal includes consultation tools, templates, stakeholder research, network information and sponsorship guidance. It complements the Customers First portal introduced in 2024.





Digital transformation

AI driving award-winning vegetation project

The WA Vegetation Extent ([WAVE](#)) Pilot was shortlisted for the [2025 Institute of Public Administration Australia WA Achievement Award](#) for Best Practice in Social Values – a rare honour for an IT initiative.

This was in recognition of the WAVE Pilot's vegetation survey project in the Pilbara, designed to provide high-quality ground-truthed data for AI and machine learning in WA's sparse grassland ecosystems. These ecosystems are tricky to detect from satellite images and are under-represented in public data.

The pilot is a key deliverable of the State's Native Vegetation Policy, and a collaborative effort with [TERN](#) and [DBCA](#) and brought together government, scientists, Traditional Owners and pastoralists to ensure cultural knowledge and scientific rigour shaped the outcomes.

Innovator Carolyn Martin wins technology award for WAVE Pilot

Carolyn Martin, WAVE program manager, recently won a Women in Technology WA (WiTWA) Tech [+] Award for Delivery, Project Management and IT Support.



Her work was showcased by the Office of Digital Government as a model for ICT pilot project investment and has helped shape the State's AI assurance framework.

The WiTWA Tech [+] Awards celebrate remarkable women driving innovation and change across the tech industry. The ceremony was held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on 7 November 2025.

Environment Online

Environment Online continued to expand as the State's primary platform for environmental regulation. During the year, Environment Online expanded its industry regulation capability, enabling customers to manage applications, payments and compliance obligations through a single digital channel. This replaced manual and legacy processes, improving transparency and streamlining interactions for both customers and the Department.

An end-to-end digital payment solution improved financial management while reducing manual processing. Planning advice referrals and biodiversity and marine survey submissions were also integrated into Environment Online, replacing manual referral and email-based processes.





Workforce capability and development

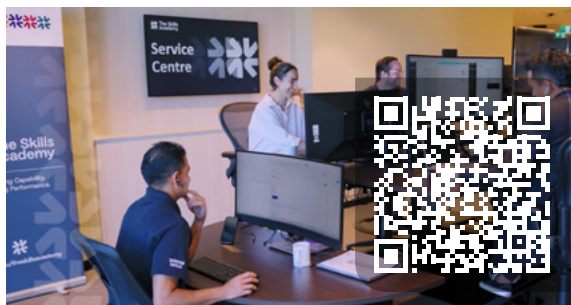
The Skills Academy

The WA Government's [Skills Academy](#) was launched in October 2025 as a \$20 million investment to uplift public sector capability.

The Department worked with the Public Sector Commission (PSC) to begin delivering training through The Skills Academy in March 2026.

Our learning and development team completed a large body of work to:

- integrate Skills Academy planning into our workforce and HR strategies
- identify capability gaps aligned to government priorities and integrate the academy with existing learning and development programs.



The Skills Academy is here!

Graduate program

In September, the 2025 graduate cohort participated in a regional familiarisation tour with DEED and Treasury. Travelling through the South West, the employees visited sites including the [Vasse-Wonnerup Estuary](#), [Wellington Dam](#) and [Collie Battery Energy Storage System](#), where they engaged with regional teams and explored the real-world impact of government work in local communities.

The tour strengthened leadership capability, cross-agency collaboration, regional understanding and appreciation of the role of the public sector.



2025 Graduate Program Regional Familiarisation Tour

Carer friendly workplace

During 2025–26, the Department introduced its Carer Friendly Workplace Policy to strengthen support for employees with caring responsibilities. The policy promotes a flexible and inclusive workplace by providing practical guidance, resources and support for carers and their managers.

The policy formed part of a broader commitment to creating a carer-friendly workplace and supporting employee wellbeing, helping the Department achieve Level 1 (Activate) accreditation under the national Carers + Employers Accreditation Program.





Significant issues impacting the agency

Current and emerging issues and trends

Water resources

The south-west is the area most affected by climate change in WA. Increasing demand for water because of industry and population growth is exacerbating water pressures associated with long-standing drying induced by climate change. Government responses include allocation planning, promotion of water-use efficiency, regulation of water resources and supporting investment in climate-resilient water sources. In the South West we have been working with Water Corporation, Busselton Water and Aqwest – Bunbury Water on the sustainability and management of public water supplies. This includes work to develop new water allocation plans for priority areas, including Myalup-Kemerton and Warren-Donnelly, informed by updated monitoring and advances in climate projections.

We have continued to manage water deficiency declarations in the Shire of Esperance to help farming communities in Cascades, Grass Patch and Salmon Gums with emergency stock watering. We are working closely with local governments and community groups to support grant projects to build climate resilience in regional WA, including those focused on industrial and community water supplies in the Pilbara.

Economic and social trends

Fuel security

The fuel disruption in 2026 created by conflict in the Middle East, and its impact on global supply chains of oil and other commodities, highlighted the risks of fuel security to our operations.

An Incident Management Team was established under the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to prepare for fuel supply disruptions. The disruption tested business continuity arrangements, procurement processes and fleet transition planning.

Mine closure

A [Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute](#) (WABSI) study found around 85 per cent of mining proposals assessed by the EPA include rehabilitation or closure conditions in Ministerial Statements. During the year, the Department established a Mining and Decommissioning Project Board to strengthen oversight of mine closure and rehabilitation.





Changes in written law

Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 (PRIS Act)

Ahead of commencement on 1 July 2026, a dedicated implementation team reviewed privacy practices and information collection notices.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

On 21 April 2026 the Premier and federal Minister for the Environment and Water signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to progress a bilateral agreement to streamline environmental approvals and reduce duplication between state and federal processes. In the MOU both governments agreed to:

- jointly develop and finalise a bilateral agreement that accredits WA's environmental assessment approach
- prioritise strategic solutions to environmental matters, such as bioregional planning and strategic assessments
- collaborate on offset systems including WA's Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund.



Emissions targets and climate change

The Australian Government published its Net Zero Plan in September 2025, including a 2035 emissions reduction target of 62–70 per cent below 2005 levels.

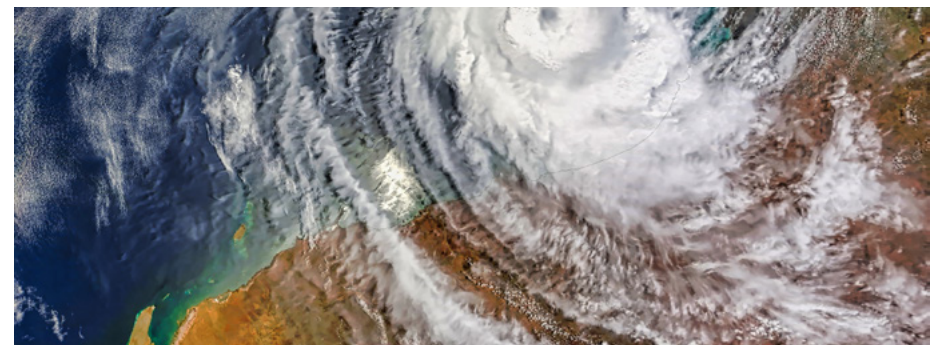
Climate and program risks

National climate assessments released during the year highlighted increasing climate risks for communities, ecosystems, infrastructure and economic productivity.

Cyclones and natural disasters

The frequency in 2025–26 of destructive cyclones impacting on WA has heightened the focus on roles in response to these events, as well as risks to programs, infrastructure and the workforce.

Our ability to fulfil our expected role during these events – such as gathering and supplying data from our network, and participating in wider government responses during and post event – requires better work health and safety (WHS) systems, increased regional coordination and improved communication.





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