



# **Regulator Performance Framework Annual Report 2023–24**

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science  
and Innovation



**Queensland  
Government**

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*The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.*

*The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.*

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# Summary

In accordance with the *Queensland Government Regulator Performance Framework*, Queensland Government regulators whose regulatory activities impact business, particularly small business, are required to publicly report annually on their regulatory performance. As a result of Machinery of Government changes on 18 December 2023 and 1 November 2024, and the associated inclusion of Innovation and Tourism as divisions in the department, the former Department of Environment and Science has been renamed the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the department). This report relates to the activities of the department during the 2023-24 reporting period.

The department regulates activities in world heritage areas, marine parks, protected areas, State forests and timber reserves; and those relating to protected wildlife, environmentally relevant activities, coastal development, environmental offsets, waste management and resource recovery in Queensland as well as places on the Queensland Heritage Register (Heritage Register) and the standard to which they are maintained.

We deliver consistent and transparent regulations targeting industry-specific strategies and facilitate sustainable development in Queensland, whilst maintaining Queensland's high environmental standards by actively monitoring and managing environmental risks, through robust assessment, compliance, investigation, incident response and enforcement programs. We also ensure the rehabilitation of environmental impacts and provide timely and comprehensive environmental information to state and local stakeholders. During the reporting period the department managed a wide regulatory portfolio, administering and implementing statutory decisions under a range of legislation. A full list of this legislation can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

As a regulator, the department is responsible for:

- undertaking project assessments and approvals, including environmental approvals and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) processes
- delivering risk-based and intelligence-driven compliance activities and enforcement actions, and progressing prosecutions
- undertaking assessment and compliance on development proposals under the Planning Regulation 2017, which involve development in the coastal zone and Great Barrier Reef wetland protection areas against the relevant state planning codes and the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*
- undertaking assessment and compliance related to the taking of coastal quarry materials authorised under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*
- undertaking assessment and compliance on development proposals under the Planning Regulation 2017, which involve interfering with koala habitat against the relevant state planning code and Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017
- administering and enforcing the requirements of the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* to counterbalance the significant residual impacts of prescribed activities on prescribed environmental matters
- responding to environmental incidents and community reports
- administering licensing and permits, including charging of fees and debt recovery
- providing guidance to licence holders to support approval processes and voluntary compliance
- managing processes associated with the Heritage Register, regulating development at the nearly 1,800 places, and administering discoveries of important archaeological and underwater cultural heritage artefacts
- managing, co-stewarding, or jointly managing approximately 13 million hectares of protected areas and forests
- supporting the protection of over 4.99 million hectares of private protected areas, managing 12,000 square kilometres of declared fish habitat areas and over 400,000 square kilometres of marine parks
- upholding Australia's obligation to protect the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area as required under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (Wet Tropics Act)
- supporting over 50 million domestic and international visits to national parks and forests each year, including up to 1.5 million camper nights annually
- managing species listed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NC Act) and undertaking effective regulation within the bounds of the NC Act's subordinate legislation, helping to protect over 1,075 species of animals and plants listed as threatened (extinct, extinct in the wild, critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable) in Queensland
- undertaking proactive audits of native animal authorities to help disrupt animal trafficking activities
- regulating the collection of native biological material, use of traditional knowledge for biodiscovery, and the

sharing of benefits from biodiscovery under the *Biodiscovery Act 2004* (Biodiscovery Act)

- contributing to managing risks to the health and safety of people and to the environment by coordinating Queensland's contributions to the National Gene Technology Scheme, which regulates dealings with genetically modified organisms.

#### **Other performance reporting and monitoring**

In addition to evaluating the department's regulatory performance against the Queensland Government's regulator model practices, performance against these measures is captured in other published reporting materials including the department's *Regulatory Strategy 2022-2027 – Progress report 2024*, the department's Annual Report and in the Annual Reports on the administration of the NC Act, the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act), the *Marine Parks Act 2004* (MP Act) and the *Wet Tropics Management Authority Annual Report* (regarding the Wet Tropics Act).

# Model practices

## 1. Ensure regulatory activity is proportionate to risk and minimises unnecessary burden

The *Regulatory Strategy 2022–2027: Queensland’s Environmental Regulator* (Regulatory Strategy) sets out the department’s environmental and heritage regulatory approach, which reflects modern regulator principles such as regulating proportionate to risk.

A strategic, consistent and risk-based approach is applied to compliance and enforcement, and the department makes decisions in accordance with the department’s *Enforcement Guidelines*. These Enforcement Guidelines set out principles to ensure, amongst other things, that enforcement actions are proportionate to the level of risk, or the harm caused, and that such actions consider the circumstances of the alleged offender where appropriate.

To support this approach, the department has a range of enforcement tools available, which include, but are not limited to, formal warnings, statutory notices, penalty infringement notices and prosecutions. This ensures an enforcement response is proportionate to the seriousness of the offence.

### Implementation of the Regulatory Strategy

The Regulatory Strategy has set targets that the department is aiming to achieve for six focus areas by 2027. Implementation of the Regulatory Strategy will deliver more streamlined, efficient and cost-effective regulation that is proportionate to the risk of supporting Queensland’s economy while ensuring the State’s unique environment, coastal and heritage places are well-managed and protected now and into the future. Annual reports are provided on the delivery of the Regulatory Strategy, with the *Regulatory Strategy 2022–2027 – Progress Report 2024* published in June 2024.

### Risk management approach

The department’s approach to compliance is multilayered and includes proactive compliance, responding to unplanned events and incidents, and discrete and targeted programs in response to emerging issues and strategic priorities.

Proactive compliance inspections of sites with environmental authorities under the EP Act are prioritised using a compliance prioritisation model (CPM). The CPM assists departmental officers in evaluating the risk profile of each licensed site, allowing them to make informed decisions regarding which sites to inspect. Relevant considerations include the compliance history of the site, and the site operator, and the intensity or complexity of the activity taking place at the site. This process ensures that in deciding which sites to inspect, officers focus their efforts on sites with a greater risk of serious consequences occurring. Lower risk sites are less frequently flagged by the CPM for inspection, ensuring the regulatory burden on operators of low-risk sites is reduced.

Capacity is retained for reactive or unplanned compliance events and incidents such as significant environmental harm events (including nuisance) and impacts from major weather events.

Discrete and/or targeted compliance programs are undertaken in response to emerging issues, and to address specific strategic priorities such as waste management, pre-wet season preparation and compliance with agricultural environmentally relevant activities (ERAs) carried out on land in the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

The department also undertakes compliance activities under other legislation that it administers, and in relation to unlicensed sites.

### Intelligence gathering

Strong processes and systems are in place for gathering information and intelligence on activities to inform compliance.

To gather information from the broader community and licensed operators, the 24/7 Pollution Hotline provides a means of reporting issues and suspected non-compliances. Almost 20,000 reports were received in 2023–24. New online pollution reporting forms have also been implemented throughout the 2023–24 reporting period, making it easier for community members to report issues such as odour nuisance. The department has actively promoted these reporting avenues in the community (for example, relating to odour nuisance in Ipswich). Monitoring of air, noise and water quality for higher risk sites assists with compliance activities and in some instances forms the basis of community engagement activities.

Data is collated on matters related to protected plants and animals in an Enquiries and Compliance Register, based on reports from both the Wildlife hotline and 1300 Animal hotline. This data supports compliance and enforcement action and enables spatial and temporal patterns in wildlife matters to be analysed. In 2023–24, the department received 3,778 enquiries and compliance matters through these hotlines.

## Places on the Heritage Register and important archaeological artefacts

The Pollution Hotline is also used by the community to report concerns regarding neglect of, or unapproved development occurring at, places listed on the Heritage Register.

Regular reports are received about discoveries of important archaeological and underwater cultural heritage artefacts. These discoveries are investigated, advice is given about management options, and details are recorded in the Living Heritage Information System or the Australian Government's Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database.

The department participates in the National Underwater Cultural Heritage Program (2023–26), and in doing so, conducts periodic inspections of the State's most important historic ship and aircraft wrecks, many of which are in the Great Barrier Reef.

## Actions

During the 2023–24 reporting period, the department:

- conducted specific and targeted compliance activities including in relation to waste management, asbestos in composting, odour issues in the Ipswich Local Government Area and assisting operators with their pre-wet season preparations
- continued to implement a specific compliance and enforcement strategy for the Reef protection regulations, with inspections undertaken by a specialist team, to ensure that the regulatory activity for the agriculture industry is proportionate to the risk and minimises unnecessary burden. This resulted in seven statutory enforcement notices and five penalty infringement notices being issued
- continued assessment of the new environmentally relevant activity standard (prescribed ERA 13A), which regulates commercial cropping and horticulture in the Great Barrier Reef catchment, with 11 new environmental authorities issued
- continued assessment and compliance in relation to development in koala habitat areas made assessable under the Planning Regulation 2017 to ensure compliance with all planning and environmental requirements of State Code 25: Development in South East Queensland koala habitat areas, and the Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017
- conducted proactive and reactive compliance investigations relating to activities involving the take, use and keeping of protected plants and animals under the NC Act and subordinate regulations
- conducted ongoing compliance operations, jointly with Queensland Police, ensuring safe driver conduct on Cooloola, Bribie Island and Fraser Island (K'gari) Recreation Areas
- continued the coordination of whole of government input to the national Gene Technology Regulator on applications under the National Gene Technology Scheme, to manage risks to human health and the environment while enabling world leading genetic research in Queensland
- completed a trial of improved pre-lodgement materials and processes developed as part of the Guidance for Resource Industry Project (GRIP) to help improve the quality of environmental applications for resource activities, and the timeliness of approvals
- continued enhancements to the EP Act Public Register Portal to provide increased public access to a wider range of data and documents related to environmental authorities and enforcement activities
- continued an environmental authority modernisation program targeting specific environmentally relevant activities to facilitate contemporary best practice standards
- issued 36 permits to enter the protected zones around four of Queensland's most important, yet fragile shipwrecks and several permits to conduct physical testing of protected shipwrecks
- completed a program of updating existing entries (23) and adding new Conservation Management Plans for two shipwrecks (Aarhus and Scottish Prince) in the publicly accessible Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database, with a focus on Queensland's historic aircraft wrecks, many of which were wrecked during World War II
- removed an exemption that formerly allowed mining under licence in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
- developed a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) *Compliance Strategy 2024–2028*.

## Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- consider the learnings and improvements for the resources industry from GRIP, including improving pre-lodgement and guidance materials, to continue to improve industry experiences with the environmental authority process
- continue implementation of the QPWS&P *Compliance Strategy 2024–2028*.



## 2. Consult and engage meaningfully with stakeholders

The department has published a Stakeholder Charter outlining what stakeholders can expect from the department and what the department asks of stakeholders.

Regular discussions are held with industry peak bodies such as the: Queensland Resources Council, Australian Energy Producers, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, Timber Queensland, Queensland Water Directorate, AgForce, Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia, macropod industry bodies, Australian Organics Recycling Association, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, Waste Recycling Industry Association Queensland and the Local Government Association of Queensland. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss operational matters and for two-way feedback between the department and its regulated community and stakeholders. Consultation is also undertaken with these and other industry peak bodies such as the Australian Banana Growers Council and Canegrowers in relation to specific activities the department is undertaking, such as regulatory reviews. In addition to addressing specific needs, the department meets regularly with a broad range of First Nations, community, wildlife and conservation groups.

The department facilitates public consultation on new significant regulatory documents (such as new statutory guidelines), which are made available for public comment through the department's website at the public notices and consultations page. Targeted consultation may also be undertaken with stakeholders where new or updated support materials only affect specific stakeholder groups. The department's website allows interested members of the public to be alerted when there is something available for public consultation.

The department participates as a member agency of The Australasian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators network (AELERT) - a well-respected and internationally recognised professional network for environmental regulators across Australia and New Zealand. Through AELERT membership, departmental officers participate in working groups and communities of practice, along with other local, state and federal government agencies responsible for the implementation and administration of environmental legislation. This provides access to a range of opportunities to learn from other regulators and gain exposure to best practice approaches to environmental regulation.

A complaints mechanism is in place providing customers with the ability to lodge a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service delivery, services, decisions or actions of the department. In the first instance, customers are encouraged to contact relevant officers to resolve the matter. If a matter is unable to be resolved in this way, the customer may lodge a complaint. Complaints can be lodged:

- online
- in a printed format (either posted or emailed)
- in person, or
- anonymously.

Information regarding the management of complaints, and the *Customer Complaints Management Policy and Procedure* is available on the department's website.

### Actions

During the 2023–24 reporting period, the department:

- undertook public consultation on future mapping and protections for rivers, floodplains and water courses of greatest ecological importance within the Queensland section of the Lake Eyre Basin, including the delivery of regional face-to-face information sessions, and reviewing some 17,500 written submissions from the community
- finalised consultation on a post-implementation review of South East Queensland's koala habitat regulations and commenced work to implement recommendations through improved koala regulations
- completed consultation as part of the statutory review of the Reef protection regulations
- undertook consultation on proposed legislative changes that could reduce the impact of odour from composting facilities on nearby communities
- undertook targeted consultation on proposed changes to offences and penalties for managing human actions in relation to dangerous native animals (crocodiles and dingoes)
- undertook consultation on proposed changes to the Queensland Crocodile Management Plan
- released and implemented the outcomes of the Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan Review

- employed a co-designed service delivery model to continue the delivery of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Local Government Environmental Services Support Program that supports Councils achieve positive environmental outcomes relating to the management of their environmentally relevant activities
- published the *Environmental Services and Regulation Annual Strategic Compliance Priorities 2023–24* (compliance priorities) and the *Annual Strategic Compliance Priorities 2022–2023 final report* (compliance priorities final report) to increase stakeholder and community awareness about compliance priorities and highlight the department's targeted approach to compliance activities
- proactively engaged with a broad range of communities regarding the assessment of cultural heritage significance, designing for adaptive reuse of heritage places, and terrestrial and maritime archaeology. This will raise community awareness about the protections in place for Queensland's cultural heritage and how this varied resource is managed. Lectures, talks and short courses are provided to tertiary students as well as local community groups
- worked closely with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development, which has a co-regulatory role for the resources sector. The two departments meet regularly to discuss operational matters, exchange information as needed and, as permitted by privacy and confidentiality considerations, ensure each regulator can better inform its activities. The department continues to assess operational linkages between the two departments and review practices to ensure efficiencies when dealing with the resource industry
- proactively engaged with the aquaculture sector through the establishment of the Aquaculture Working Group and provided input into the development of the *Queensland Aquaculture Strategy 2024–2034*
- collaborated with the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator to provide feedback on measures taken to manage the risk to human and environmental health from applications to utilise gene technologies and dealings with genetically modified organisms
- continued to participate in the review and reform process for gene technology-related laws to ensure they remain risk based and up to date in this rapidly evolving field of science
- delivered actions under the *Queensland Heritage Implementation Strategy* to deliver an improved heritage protection system, including proactive engagement with the community about nominations to the Heritage Register
- worked in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland to finalise arrangements for a local government heritage conference planned for delivery in 2024.

## Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- continue to facilitate regular, industry-specific engagement meetings providing opportunities to discuss operational matters and for two-way feedback
- re-survey targeted stakeholders about the department's engagement as Queensland's environmental regulator in relation to the department's Stakeholder Charter, to identify opportunities for improved stakeholder engagement.

### 3. Provide appropriate information and support to assist compliance

Information to assist environmental authority holders in understanding their obligations and support compliance is published in the following documents:

- technical guidelines to assist applicants in applying for an environmental authority and providing all the necessary information
- information to assist operators in managing their environmental risks and to comply with their obligations
- guidelines about the statutory enforcement tools, which may be issued in the event of non-compliance, so operators are made aware of the potential consequences of non-compliance
- information about the roles, powers and activities of the authorised officers under the EP Act
- information concerning how to lodge an application for a permit or authority.

Environmental authority applicants are encouraged to undertake a pre-lodgement meeting to discuss proposed activities. Pre-lodgement meetings give the applicant an opportunity to discuss the nature of the activity, where and when the activity is to be conducted, the risk of the proposed activities and seek information to understand if their proposed application will meet the legislative requirements. Pre-lodgement meetings can also initiate discussions around expected timeframes and the quality of information necessary for the application process.

Performance statistics for the department's EIS process, including timeframes for assessments, are available on the Queensland Government website.

#### Places on the Heritage Register

As the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* (Heritage Act) includes provisions regarding the protection of local heritage places, the department provides advice to the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers on how local governments might achieve this through application of the State Planning Policy to their local planning instruments.

When places are entered in the Heritage Register, the department engages with the relevant owners or managers regarding the establishment of exemption certificates that activate on entry and approve the scope of routine work that will occur at the place over an extended period. This process informs new place owners and managers of their responsibilities, while also reducing the risk of future non-compliance.

Applicants intending to lodge an exemption certificate application under the Heritage Act are encouraged to seek pre-lodgement advice on the proposed development through an exchange of information or meeting.

A Heritage Agreement is another method for considering and approving development provided for by the Heritage Act. A Heritage Agreement is entered into by the department and the owners of a Queensland heritage place for a defined scope of development and with the advice of the Queensland Heritage Council.

#### Actions

During the 2023–24 reporting period, the department:

- supported environmental authority holders to prepare for extreme weather events in advance of the wet season, through the provision of information and delivery of webinars for specific industries
- undertook proactive and reactive compliance activities in relation to the regulated take, use and keep of protected plants and animals under the NC Act in accordance with the Annual Compliance Plan
- undertook overt and covert compliance audits of commercial whale watching operations to ensure all operators were conducting activities in accordance with the regulated marine animal separation distances and consistent with the conditions of their relevant authorities
- published a new *Guideline—Greenhouse gas emissions—Environmental Protection Act 1994* to outline the requirements for applicants in relation to greenhouse gas emissions, including requiring medium and heavy emitters to provide a greenhouse gas abatement plan with their application
- published a range of new guidance materials to support the implementation of the EP Act amendments giving effect to the Government's response to the independent review of Powers and Penalties. This included updated and new guidance around General Environmental Duty, the new Duty to Restore, Duty to Notify and others
- published guidance materials, including updating the *Code of practice – ecologically sustainable lethal take of flying-foxes for crop protection*, detailing new requirements and planned phase-out for applicants in relation to damage mitigation permits (lethal take of flying-foxes) for crop protection

- continued to maintain and manage the internal online Ranger base – Compliance and Enforcement page, which provides updated compliance policies, tools and practices under the NC Act, *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*, MP Act, *Forestry Act 1959*, and the Wet Tropics Act
- provided pre-lodgement advice for applicants intending to lodge an exemption certificate application under the Heritage Act. There were 103 engagements, as well as responses being provided to approximately 550 enquiries regarding the development of Queensland heritage places
- assessed and issued approximately 630 exemption certificates, enabling low impact development to be carried out on Queensland heritage places
- continued to administer Heritage Agreements respectively established in 2017 for the Ravenswood Mining Landscape and Chinese Settlement Area in North Queensland, and in 2022 for the restoration of the Home (sometimes referred to as Lamb House) at Kangaroo Point
- released the *Traditional Knowledge Guidelines – Using publicly accessible traditional knowledge*, supporting implementation of the traditional knowledge obligation under the *Biodiscovery Act 2004*. This will support the growth of the biodiscovery industry in a culturally appropriate way where the traditional knowledge of First Nations peoples about native biological material is used in biodiscovery
- negotiated the addition of section 50(1)(l) to the *Land Title Act 1994*, which requires written consent by the Executive Director of the Wet Tropics Management Authority for registration of a 'plan of subdivision' if it affects land within the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. This is communicated to landowners through an administrative advice attached to land titles for land within the World Heritage Area.

## Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- regularly publish information to help inform and educate operators and the community about the department's compliance and enforcement activities
- provide details of statutory enforcement tools issued on the Public Register Portal, where an individual or company has committed a breach of the EP Act, except for penalty infringement notices and prosecutions
- review the department's non-statutory guidelines for Landfill Siting, Design and Operation, and the Prevention of Fires in Waste Stockpiles to provide further clarity around the department's expectations for waste operations in Queensland.

## 4. Commit to continuous improvement

The department is committed to continuous improvement through a range of initiatives and processes, such as its membership of AELERT which provides ongoing opportunities to learn from other regulators and to gain exposure to best practice approaches to environmental regulation.

Departmental officers also participate in functions hosted by the ANZSOG National Regulators Community of Practice, an active network of public sector regulators from all three levels of government and every regulatory sector, professional background, role and level of seniority.

A range of resources are available to support officers, including procedural guides, guidelines, forms and templates. Central teams are available to provide advice to frontline officers regarding the execution of powers and delegations under the department's administered legislation, and the Litigation Unit provides legal advice for complex compliance matters.

The department actively monitors its regulatory performance and has a range of measures reported through its Service Delivery Statements (e.g. percentage of operators compliant with the environmental obligations specified in an enforcement notice). Performance results are published in the department's annual report under the 'Our Performance' section which can be found on the department's website.

Regulating legislation is reviewed periodically to ensure it is meeting its intended purposes. For example, following an independent review into the adequacy of powers and penalties available under the EP Act a number of amendments were made through the *Environmental Protection (Powers and Penalties) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024*. Commencing in June 2024, the amendments aim to allow more efficient and effective action to be taken to protect community health and wellbeing. This includes improving powers to support proactive responses, such as making it an offence not to comply with the general environmental duty, and increased visibility of the importance of human health in the legislation.

### Actions

During the 2023–24 reporting period, the department:

- completed eight amendment regulations resulting in a net growth of the protected area estate of over 300,000 hectares
- undertook a statutory review of the Reef protection regulations to assess the extent to which they have been effective in reducing land-use sources of water pollutant loads
- supported implementation of the recommendations of the Future Fisheries Taskforce, including the establishment of new gillnet-free zones in the northern third of the Great Barrier Reef, and parts of the Gulf of Carpentaria, from the end of March 2024
- delivered the *Environmental Protection (Powers and Penalties) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* to provide stronger protections for communities impacted by environmental issues caused by operators. The amendment also gave the environmental regulator additional tools to prevent environmental harm before it occurs
- trained over 130 rangers and wildlife officers and approximately 60 Queensland Police officers to enhance their skills and capabilities in compliance and enforcement activities, as well as 12 non-government Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers as authorised officers
- finalised significant updates to the non-statutory guideline *Major and minor amendments*, to better clarify the requirements for environmental authority and progressive rehabilitation and closure plan amendment applications. The updates include the addition of several new flowcharts and a new appendix detailing application requirements
- continued to make enhancements to the useability of the EP Act Public Register Portal, including improved searching capability which allows users to add multiple criteria to their searches
- increased the number of forms available for customers to complete online, including the application for pre-lodgement services and the application for a temporary emissions licence
- created a dedicated community issues webpage that can be directly accessed from the department's homepage. The webpage includes details and links to further information and data related to current and historic community issues
- developed and deployed modernised replacement systems, PIN Hub for the Penalty Infringement Notices (PINs) Database and the Littering and Illegal Dumping Online Reporting System (LIDORS), increasing functionality and improving the user experience for members of the public submitting littering and illegal dumping reports

- partnered with the University of Adelaide and other state and Australian Government agencies in the Australian Research Council funded project Combatting Wildlife and Environmental Crime, which is seeking to develop new digital and wildlife forensic tools to improve the surveillance and detection of the illegal killing and trade of wild animals and plants, to safeguard Australia's biodiversity and natural environment.

## **Plans for future improvements**

The department plans to:

- improve internal practices relating to information and decision sharing, including shared business hubs for information and an internal assessment advice register for greater visibility
- implement improved conflict of interest practices and visibility across assessment processes
- continue to modernise environmental authorities for composting activities. This may include applying conditions requiring enclosed composting facilities when receiving highly odorous feedstocks nearby to residential areas, and setting standards for finished compost products, including PFAS levels to ensure safe products for the community
- support implementation of the *Queensland Aquaculture Strategy 2024–2034*.

## 5. Be transparent and accountable in actions

To promote transparency and demonstrate open accountability, the Enforcement Guidelines, compliance priorities, compliance priorities final report, Regulatory Strategy, Regulatory Strategy annual progress reports and EP Act Public Register Portal are publicly available on the department's website. Access to this information provides the regulated community and stakeholders with an understanding of how decisions related to enforcement and regulation are made.

Most of the enforcement decisions made under the EP Act require reasons for the decision to be provided to the person affected by the decision. The EP Act provides a statutory right to have most enforcement actions internally reviewed and a right to appeal those decisions to either the Planning and Environment Court or the Land Court.

*The Environmental Regulatory Update* is a regular e-bulletin sent to subscribers providing the latest important regulatory information.

The department regularly publishes information to help inform and educate operators and the community about its regulatory activities, including:

- performance statistics relating to the EIS process, including timeframes for assessments
- a Public Register Portal providing information and documentation relating to administration and enforcement activities undertaken in line with the EP Act. The portal provides increased access and searchability for records and documents, with over 47,000 records and 14,000 documents available online. Information requests can be made for records that cannot be found when searching the Public Register Portal
- a customer service charter for management of the Pollution Hotline, which is a Queensland Government service for the reporting of pollution and environmental incidents and environmental non-compliance issues
- maintaining a public register for the Queensland Environmental Offsets Framework, which is contributed to by Queensland agencies responsible for the administration of offsets under the framework. The Offsets Register details the location of impacted areas requiring an offset, impacted environmental values, payments made to the Queensland Government for offsetting impacted areas, offsets that are being delivered, areas suitable for delivering future offsets (advanced offsets) and approved activities for delivering offset projects (Direct Benefit Management Plans).

### Actions

During the 2023–24 reporting period, the department:

- published the compliance priorities including the key strategic and operational priorities on the department's website. The department's ongoing compliance work continues to be informed by community, industry and scientific intelligence
- published the *Regulatory Strategy 2022–2027 – Progress Report 2024* to provide an update on the delivery of the action items and targets across the six focus areas during the second year of the Regulatory Strategy
- published Swanbank and New Chum odour updates to keep the community aware of departmental activities and other information the department wished to communicate, in addition to hosting regular community reference group meetings and drop-in sessions.

### Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- redevelop the Queensland Environmental Offsets public register to improve transparency and establish regular reporting periods. The register is anticipated to be released by late 2024 to early 2025.
- publish the 2025 Regulatory Strategy Progress Report, continuing the department's accountability for the implementation of the Regulatory Strategy.

# Appendix 1 – Legislation

Legislation managed and administered by the department in a regulatory capacity:

- *Biodiscovery Act 2004*
- *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*
- Coastal Protection and Management Regulation 2017
- *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*
- Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- Environmental Protection Regulation 2019
- Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2019
- Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2019
- Environmental Protection (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) Policy 2019
- *Forestry Act 1959* (jointly administered with the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities)
- *Gene Technology (Queensland) Act 2016*
- *Marine Parks Act 2004*
- Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004
- Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2024
- Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2019
- Marine Parks Regulation 2017
- *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- Nature Conservation (Animals) Regulation 2020
- Nature Conservation (Estuarine Crocodile) Conservation Plan 2018
- Nature Conservation (Forest Reserves) Regulation 2000
- Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017
- Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest Period 2021) Notice 2020
- Nature Conservation (Macropod) Conservation Plan 2017
- Nature Conservation (Plants) Regulation 2020
- Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017
- Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Regulation 1994
- *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*
- Queensland Heritage Regulation 2015
- *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*
- *Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project Agreement Act 1998*
- *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*
- Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011
- *Water Act 2000 (Chapter 3)*
- *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993.*



## Appendix 2 – Referenced websites and publications

| Page or document name   | Page number in report | Full URL  |
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| Regulatory Strategy 2022–2027 - Progress report 2024 (desi.qld.gov.au)  | 2                     | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/policy-regulation/regulatory-strategy/progress-report-2024">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/policy-regulation/regulatory-strategy/progress-report-2024</a> |
| Corporate documents – Annual Reports (desi.qld.gov.au)  | 2                     | <a href="https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/our-department/corporate-docs#section-annual-reports">https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/our-department/corporate-docs#section-annual-reports</a>   |
| Regulatory Strategy (desi.qld.gov.au)   | 3                     | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/policy-regulation/regulatory-strategy">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/policy-regulation/regulatory-strategy</a>   |
| Compliance and enforcement – Enforcement Guidelines (desi.qld.gov.au)   | 3                     | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/compliance-enforcement">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/compliance-enforcement</a>   |
| Public register— <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> (www.qld.gov.au)  | 4                     | <a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/licences-permits/public-register">https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/licences-permits/public-register</a>   |
| Corporate documents – Stakeholder Charter (desi.qld.gov.au)   | 6                     | <a href="https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/our-department/corporate-docs">https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/our-department/corporate-docs</a>   |
| Public notices and consultations (desi.qld.gov.au)  | 6                     | <a href="https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/our-department/public-notice">https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/our-department/public-notice</a>   |
| Feedback form—Complaint (desi.qld.gov.au)   | 6                     | <a href="https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/contactus/feedback-forms/feedback-form-complaint">https://www.desi.qld.gov.au/contactus/feedback-forms/feedback-form-complaint</a>   |
| Compliance and enforcement – Environmental Services and Regulation Annual Strategic Compliance Priorities 2023–2024 (desi.qld.gov.au) | 7                     | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/compliance-enforcement">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/compliance-enforcement</a>   |
| Compliance and enforcement – Annual strategic compliance priorities 2022–2023 final report (desi.qld.gov.au)                          | 7                     | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/compliance-enforcement">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/compliance-enforcement</a>   |
| Queensland Aquaculture Strategy 2024–2034 (daf.qld.gov.au)  | 7                     | <a href="https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/industry/aquaculture/strategy">https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/industry/aquaculture/strategy</a>                                       |
| Queensland Heritage Implementation Strategy, October 2022   | 7                     | <a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/330764/qld-heritage-implementation-strategy.pdf">https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/330764/qld-heritage-implementation-strategy.pdf</a>               |
| Independent review of powers and penalties under the EP Act – Report and government response (desi.qld.gov.au)                        | 8                     | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/policy-regulation/independent-review">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/management/policy-regulation/independent-review</a>   |
| Completed EIS statistics (www.qld.gov.au)   | 8                     | <a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/environmental/eis-process/projects/eis-statistics">https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/environmental/eis-process/projects/eis-statistics</a>                     |
| State Planning Policy (planning.qld.gov.au)   | 8                     | <a href="https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/plan-making/state-planning/state-planning-policy">https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/plan-making/state-planning/state-planning-policy</a>             |
| Traditional knowledge and biodiscovery (desi.qld.gov.au)  | 9                     | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/biodiscovery/traditional-knowledge">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/biodiscovery/traditional-knowledge</a>       |
| Community issues (desi.qld.gov.au)  | 10                    | <a href="https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/community/issues">https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/community/issues</a>   |

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| Community Response Team<br>Customer Service Charter                        | 12 | <a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/166753/community-response-customer-service-charter.pdf">https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/166753/community-response-customer-service-charter.pdf</a> |
| Offsets register (www.qld.gov.au)  | 12 | <a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/environmental/offsets/registers">https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/environmental/offsets/registers</a>   |
| Odour updates – Swanbank and<br>New Chum odour<br>updates (www.qld.gov.au) | 12 | <a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/monitoring/air/air-programs/odour/swanbank-new-chum/updates">https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/monitoring/air/air-programs/odour/swanbank-new-chum/updates</a> |