

Regulator Performance Framework Annual Report 2024–25

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and
Innovation

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and Innovation.

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The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal 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.

December 2025

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared with all due diligence and care, based on the best available information at the time of publication. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document.

The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty in understanding or accessing this document, you can contact us for assistance and we will arrange for this publication to be made available in an alternative format.

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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. This report relates to the activities of the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the department) during the 2024–25 reporting period.

In Queensland, the department regulates activities in world heritage areas, marine parks, protected areas, State forests and timber reserves; activities relating to protected wildlife, environmentally relevant activities, coastal development, environmental offsets, waste reduction and recycling; and places on the Queensland Heritage Register (Heritage Register), including exemption certificates for minor impact works.

The department seeks to deliver consistent and transparent regulatory functions and facilitate sustainable development in Queensland whilst maintaining Queensland's high environmental standards. This is achieved by actively monitoring and managing environmental risks through robust assessment, compliance, investigation, incident response, education and enforcement programs. The department also ensures the rehabilitation of environmental impacts and provides 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 under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act)
- 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* (the Koala Conservation Plan)
- 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 nearly 1,800 places on the Heritage Register, and administering discoveries of important archaeological and underwater cultural heritage artefacts
- managing, co-stewarding, or jointly managing over 14.9 million hectares of protected areas, forests and recreation areas, and approximately 72,000 square kilometres of state marine parks
- supporting the protection of over 4.99 million hectares of private protected 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 1,060 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 Annual Report
- Annual Reports on the administration of the NC Act, EP Act, *Marine Parks Act 2004* (MP Act) and Wet Tropics Act.

Model practice 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 its Compliance and Enforcement Guidelines. These 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.

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. The department identifies the areas where potential non-compliance with legislation poses the greatest risk to the environment and takes targeted compliance action to reduce that risk.

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 and pre-wet season preparation.

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. In 2024–25, 519 reports were received. The department has actively promoted these reporting avenues in the community (for example, issues relating to odours from the Swanbank Industrial Area). 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 2024–25, the department received 3,894 enquiries and/or notifications of non-compliance 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 reviewed, with advice provided on 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 2024–25 reporting period, the department:

- conducted targeted compliance activities including in relation to odour issues in the Ipswich Local Government Area
- assisted environmental authority holders with their pre-wet season preparations
- established an industry liaison position to educate and support the waste industry to implement improved environmental practices and comply with legislative requirements
- worked with mining operators to streamline the process for transitional Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans (PRCPs) and ensure industry can enter the PRCP framework in a timely manner, to meet the three-year timeline
- 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 Koala Conservation Plan
- 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
- jointly with the Queensland Police Service, conducted an ongoing compliance operation ensuring safe driver conduct on Cooloola, Bribie Island and K'gari Recreation Areas
- conducted ongoing compliance using an Automatic Number Plate Recognition system to validate vehicle access permits for the Cooloola, Bribie Island and K'gari Recreation Areas

- conducted ongoing compliance on commercial permit authority holders and unauthorised events and commercial activities in national parks and recreation areas
- continued to deliver the recommendations from the Sustainable Visitor Capacity Management studies commissioned by the Queensland Government for the Cooloola, Bribie Island, and K'gari recreation areas
- funded a trial of 75 newer model AXON body-worn cameras to improve the collection of audio/visual evidence when conducting compliance and enforcement interactions in protected areas, and improve prosecution outcomes
- implemented new, statewide standardised compliance plans for all Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) regions
- 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
- processed 44 permits to enter the protected zones surrounding 10 of Queensland's most important, yet fragile shipwrecks
- in partnership with Wuthathi People and Meriam Nation (Ugar, Mer, Erub), co-designed and piloted access protocols for Raine Island to provide clarity for operators within the protected area and align compliance pathways with Traditional Owner cultural authority.

Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- continue supporting operators in meeting their environmental obligations through education and proactive engagement
- continue undertaking proactive compliance and responding to unplanned events and incidents
- continue undertaking discrete and targeted programs in response to emerging issues and strategic priorities
- review our regulatory and legislative frameworks to ensure they are fit for purpose and efficient
- enhance engagement with waste operators to implement improved environmental practices, supported by the newly established industry liaison officer for the waste sector
- continue working with mining operators to streamline the process for transitional PRCPs and ensure industry can enter the framework in a timely manner
- work to identify opportunities to reduce resourcing effort and average processing times for assessment and compliance actions
- work with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development (DNRMMRRD) to enhance efficiencies for the resource industry

- review compliance operations in Queensland's protected areas, including priorities, planning, training and performance
- integrate additional digital tools and streamline processes to reduce administrative burden
- progress legislative amendments and system changes to deliver a single integrated permission which can be granted to businesses conducting tourism activities on parks and forests to reduce red tape for tourism operators operating across protected areas, marine parks, State forests and recreation areas
- progress technological improvements to the Automatic Number Plate Recognition system, including direct integration with the QPWS&P camping booking system and a national vehicle registration database.

Model practice 2: Consult and engage meaningfully with stakeholders

The department has published a Stakeholder Charter outlining what stakeholders can expect from the department and what it asks of stakeholders. Regular discussions are held with industry peak bodies such as:

- 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
- the Local Government Association of Queensland
- Four Wheel Drive Queensland
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Beekeepers' Association
- National Parks 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 Australian 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
- 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 2024–25 reporting period, the department:

- established an industry liaison position to educate and support the waste industry to implement improved environmental practices and comply with legislative requirements
- continued action to bring relief to the Ipswich community from odours from the Swanbank Industrial Area and the launch of an enhanced Swanbank air quality monitoring platform to improve public access to real time and historic data
- undertook significant consultation on the draft new *Queensland Waste Strategy 2025–2030 – Less Landfill, More Recycling* to ensure it was co-designed in collaboration with the waste industry, local governments and other relevant stakeholders
- established the Queensland Wetlands Network by expanding the Great Barrier Reef Wetlands Network to include membership from all regions, enhancing collaboration in wetlands management
- implemented regulation amendments to increase the regulated waste threshold values for PFAS from zero, as a result of industry consultation
- engaged with First Nations Peoples on the statutory Planning Program, enabling joint preparation of planning instruments consistent with the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) or Indigenous management agreement
- 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, to raise community awareness about the protections in place for Queensland's cultural heritage

- continued to work with industry stakeholders on supporting progressive mine rehabilitation through the ongoing implementation of the Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plan reforms
- worked closely with DNRMMRRD, which has a co-regulatory role for the resources sector, by meeting regularly to discuss operational matters, exchange information as needed and as permitted by privacy and confidentiality considerations, to ensure each regulator can better inform its activities
- supported key operators, local governments and utility providers to strengthen resilience in preparation for cyclone and flooding events by participating in working groups, liaising with industry associations and providing timely information around the management of waste and other environmentally relevant activities
- jointly with Queensland Police Service, established a Strategic Governance Group and refreshed and expanded the existing joint Operational Group, with the objective of delivering enhanced compliance and enforcement activities (particularly in relation to driver conduct) in the Cooloola, Bribie Island and K'gari Recreation Areas
- provided an online Queensland Commercial Macropod Program stakeholder update to broaden awareness of harvest regulations, macropod population trends and program outlook
- led consultation with Australian Government regulators, Queensland agencies and the applicant regarding licence application DIR 207 from Oxitec Australia Pty Ltd to introduce a genetically modified mosquito in Queensland to reduce the population of mosquitoes linked to the spread of the dengue virus
- 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
- commenced consultation with agricultural producers, peak bodies and those with an interest in the agricultural environmentally relevant activities standards to form part of the statutory review into the standards, to determine whether they are easy to understand, clear to comply with and remain fit for purpose and evidence-based
- continued involvement in Local Marine Advisory Committees, providing a forum for stakeholders to discuss localised issues in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and provide specific input into Marine Park management
- consulted with stakeholders on QPWS&P Management Plans for protected areas, including park visitors, commercial operators, business and community organisations, through public consultation processes.

Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- continue to facilitate regular, industry-specific engagement meetings providing opportunities for discussion of operational matters and two-way feedback
- continue to work with operators to streamline the process for transitional progressive rehabilitation and closure plans and ensure industry can enter the framework in a timely manner

- identify additional opportunities to deliver meaningful engagement with stakeholders with the shared goal of facilitating sustainable development whilst maintaining high environmental standards, including the roll-out of regulator roadshows in different locations across Queensland, each with a different industry sector focus
- continue to engage with waste operators to implement improved environmental practices, supported by the newly established industry liaison officer for the waste sector
- continue to engage with operators and the community in relation to odour issues in the Ipswich Local Government Area
- engage with industry and community stakeholders in response to the Swanbank Health Inquiry and implementation of the Government's response
- continue to work with DNRMMRRD to enhance efficiencies for the resource industry
- continue to work in partnership with waste and recycling industry stakeholders to implement a new Queensland waste strategy
- undertake significant consultation on the draft *Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy* to ensure the strategy designed protects the Reef and its catchments, resonates with those who live and work in the catchments
- continue to work with the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator to manage risks to the health and safety of people and to the environment by coordinating Queensland's contributions to the National Gene Technology Scheme
- undertake more meaningful consultation with industry, community groups and Traditional Owners
- undertake significant consultation to inform the Statutory Review of the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan to ensure the long-term protection of the significant natural and cultural values of the Marine Park while balancing the range of social and economic uses of the Park
- continue to work jointly with Queensland Police Service in the delivery of Operation Sandstorm, targeting unlawful driver conduct in Cooloola Recreation Area, and work to expand this type of ongoing operation into other QPWS&P-managed Recreation Areas in South East Queensland
- expand engagement with Traditional Owner marine rangers through annual ILUA workshops
- deliver a targeted stakeholder communication strategy in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as part of the Reef Joint Field Management Program.

Model practice 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 may provide advice to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning on how local governments could achieve local heritage protection by applying the State Planning Policy to their local planning instruments.

When places are entered in the Heritage Register, the department often engages with relevant owners or managers regarding exemption certificates to inform new place owners and/or managers of their responsibilities, and to reduce the risk of potential future non-compliance. Applicants intending to lodge exemption certificate applications under the Heritage Act are encouraged to seek pre-lodgement advice on proposed development activities.

Heritage Agreements are another method for considering and approving more complex development matters that remain under the threshold of minimal detrimental impact under the Heritage Act. If applied, a Heritage Agreement is entered into by the department and the owners of a Queensland heritage place for a defined scope of development, with the advice of the Queensland Heritage Council.

Actions

During the 2024–25 reporting period, the department:

- administered commercial activity permits and commercial activity authorities for businesses operating commercially in a protected area, including provision of a pre-lodgement service for applicants, the issuing of permits and authorities, providing ongoing advice to permit and/or authority holders, and conducting monitoring activity to ensure compliance
- 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
- provided scientific advice and report (water quality and aquatic ecosystem health) in relation to licensing and compliance for environmentally relevant activities under the EP Act and other relevant legislation
- published the interim water quality guidelines and related biological health indicators for corals of Hervey Bay Great Sandy Strait and Burnett-Baffle coast report, to inform decisions in the Great Sandy Strait–Hervey Bay region
- progressed the development of aquatic ecosystem water quality guidelines for a range of toxicants to inform national and interstate policy settings and program delivery
- undertook consultation and implemented regulation amendments to increase the regulated waste threshold values for PFAS from zero, so materials with very low levels don't need special disposal
- 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
- identified and deterred illegal activity in the Great Barrier Reef through 1,109 dedicated compliance patrol days, comprising 970 vessel, 52 land-based and 87 aerial days
- supported the waste industry to implement best-practice environmental management through the establishment of an industry liaison position
- continued to 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
- continued action to bring relief to the Ipswich community from odours from the Swanbank Industrial Area and the launch of an enhanced Swanbank air quality monitoring platform to improve public access to real time and historic data
- continued to work with macropod industry stakeholders to build knowledge and understanding of the regulatory requirements for the commercial harvest of macropods through field-based engagement and harvest period updates

- 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 to 131 applicants intending to lodge an exemption certificate application under the Heritage Act regarding the development of Queensland heritage places
- assessed and issued approximately 632 exemption certificates enabling low impact development to be carried out on Queensland heritage places.

Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- launch the Tourism Support Hub, which will help Queensland tourism operators navigate government processes by providing personalised support, clear guidance and end-to-end oversight of enquiries until fully resolved
- launch a new guide for ecotourism facilities on protected areas, and enhance permitting process for other protected areas authorities
- regularly publish information to help inform and educate operators and the community about the department's compliance and enforcement activities
- continue to provide guidance materials and online resources to assist regulated entities to comply with their environmental obligations
- continue to require training for authorised officers, administrative decision-making and other targeted training to ensure departmental officers are safe, effective and efficient in their roles
- continue publishing Swanbank and New Chum odour updates to keep the community aware of departmental activities, in addition to hosting regular community reference group meetings and drop-in sessions
- strengthen compliance support across the Great Barrier Reef and marine parks by delivering targeted, accessible communication products that improve understanding of regulatory requirements
- support rangers, including Traditional Owner rangers, through regulatory capability-building modules, to enhance their ability to interpret and communicate compliance obligations during joint field operations
- continue to work with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning to support expedited development assessment and the provision of technical agency responses related to State Code 14 – Queensland heritage.

Model practice 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, the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 was introduced to strengthen and modernise the laws that govern how certain low-risk authorities are issued, ensuring they reflect contemporary processes and to ensure that an electronic system can continue to be used to automatically issue low-risk authorities and licences.

Actions

During the 2024–25 reporting period, the department:

- completed an independent technical review of the methodology for determining safe PFAS limits for composting operations and worked collaboratively with industry to develop guidance on managing PFAS in composting
- developed new regulations for the management of Queensland's protected areas, recreation areas and state forests following the statutory review of the Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017, the Recreation Areas Management Regulation 2017 and the Forestry Regulation 2015, with changes made to contemporise provisions relating to camping and campfires, vehicles and aircraft, enforcement and compliance, permissions management, estate management and other administrative matters
- approved and tabled Schedule 1 of the Commonwealth Gene Technology Amendment (Minor Measures) Regulations 2025, which amends the Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulations 2001, in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 22 May 2025 in accordance with section 21 of the *Gene Technology (Queensland) Act 2016*
- supported progression of legislative amendments to give effect to recommendations of The Third Review of the National Gene Technology Scheme and the Final Report
- commenced a review of the *South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020–2025*

- continued to provide training opportunities for nominated QPWS authorised officers on the *Positive Interactions and Self Preservation* training course delivered by Queensland Police Service at the Queensland Police Academy, to enhance their safety and compliance capabilities and competencies
- undertook a review of the *Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan* to discuss new opportunities for how Reef catchments will be managed in the future and better reflect the connection between the catchment, the Reef and the community
- commenced a statutory review of the agricultural environmentally relevant activity standards for commercial sugarcane and banana cultivation and beef cattle grazing in the Great Barrier Reef catchment
- commenced a statutory review of the water quality objectives for the Great Barrier Reef
- continued to assess operational linkages between the department and DNRMMRRD and review practices to ensure efficiencies when dealing with the resource industry.

Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- continue to deliver enhancements to the Public Register Portal allowing public access to a wider range of documents and data in support of providing open and transparent data
- identify opportunities to reduce resourcing effort and average processing times for application assessments and compliance actions by the environmental regulator
- continue to work with DNRMMRRD to enhance efficiencies for the resource industry
- continue to enhance and improve the environmental regulator's officer training and capability framework
- continue designing and developing an improved Waste Tracking system replacement
- enhance macropod management officer compliance capability and safety through the overt use of body worn cameras, enhanced in-field connectivity and more readily identifiable operational uniforms
- conduct a review of permit application processes (including systems) with businesses (commercial operators) which currently hold, or have obtained, a commercial activity authority or commercial activity permit to operate commercially in a protected area, with a view toward reducing barriers that impede, or delay, applications
- commit to regular reviews, digital upgrades and streamlined processes
- evaluate Raine Island compliance and monitoring protocols, integrating field learnings, cultural advice and incident reviews to refine future operations
- co-develop updated regulatory induction processes with Traditional Owner partners to embed cultural, environmental and safety requirements before field deployment
- use insights from the Raine Island ILUA Working Group to refine permit conditions, reporting requirements and field protocols to reflect evolving cultural and environmental risk

- progress legislative amendments and system changes to deliver a single integrated permission which can be granted to businesses conducting tourism activities on parks and forests to reduce red tape for tourism operators operating across protected areas, marine parks, State forests and recreation areas
- implement the outcomes and recommendations of the statutory reviews into agricultural environmentally relevant activity standards and water quality objectives for the Great Barrier Reef.

Model practice 5: Be transparent and accountable in actions

To promote transparency and demonstrate open accountability, the following are publicly available via the department's website:

- compliance and enforcement guidelines
- the EP Act Public Register Portal
- Annual Reports.

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 and increasing access and searchability for records and documents, with over 52,000 records and 17,000 documents available online
- 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 2024–25 reporting period, the department:

- responded to public enquiries opposing the commercial license application by Oxitec Australia to the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator to introduce a genetically modified mosquito in Queensland to reduce the population of mosquitoes linked to the spread of the dengue virus
- launched the new *Queensland Regulation Insider* webpage, providing greater public insight and visibility into the work being undertaken to protect communities and the environment from pollution
- delivered enhancements to the EP Act Public Register Portal allowing public access to a wider range of data and documents, including modules released for Environmental Impact Statements, Financial Assurance, Post Surrender Management Reports and improvements to progressive rehabilitation information
- continued publishing 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
- commissioned and published a new report on long-term water quality trends in the Great Sandy Strait on the department's website.

Plans for future improvements

The department plans to:

- continue enhancements to the EP Act Public Register Portal to provide public access to a wider range of data and documents related to environmental authorities and enforcement activities
- continue publishing Swanbank and New Chum odour updates to keep the community aware of departmental activities, in addition to hosting regular community reference group meetings and drop-in sessions
- continue to provide public visibility into the work being undertaken to protect communities and the environment from pollution via the Queensland Regulation Insider webpage
- release the redeveloped Queensland Environmental Offsets public register to improve transparency and establish quarterly updates
- release joint communication updates with Traditional Owners highlighting monitoring results, co-management outcomes and regulatory improvements for Raine Island and surrounding reef systems.

Appendix 1: 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 2023
- *Water Act 2000* (Chapter 3)
- *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*

Appendix 2: Referenced websites and publications

Title of Document or Webpage	Page(s) referenced	URL
Queensland Heritage Register (detsi.qld.gov.au)	1, 2, 4, 11	https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/
Corporate documents – Annual Reports (detsi.qld.gov.au)	2, 14, 17	https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/our-department/corporate-docs#section-annual-reports
Compliance and Enforcement Guidelines (detsi.qld.gov.au)	3, 17	https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/policies?a=272936:policy_registry/cm-gl-compliance-enforcement.pdf
Odour updates (detsi.qld.gov.au)	3, 8, 12, 13, 18	https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/monitoring/air/air-programs/odour/swanbank-new-chum/updates
Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database (www.dcceew.gov.au)	4	https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/underwater-heritage/auchd
Corporate documents – Stakeholder Charter (detsi.qld.gov.au)	7	https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/259139/stakeholder-charter.pdf
Public notices and consultations (detsi.qld.gov.au)	7	https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/our-department/public-notice
Feedback form—Complaint (detsi.qld.gov.au)	8	https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/contactus/feedback-forms/feedback-form-complaint
Customer Complaints Management Policy and Procedure (detsi.qld.gov.au)	8	https://www.detsi.qld.gov.au/policies?a=272936:policy_registry/customer-complaints-management-policy-procedure.pdf
Completed EIS statistics (www.qld.gov.au)	11, 17	https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/environmental/eis-process/projects/eis-statistics

Public register—<i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> (www.qld.gov.au)	12, 15, 17, 18	https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/licences-permits/public-register
Interim water quality and related biological health indicators for corals of Hervey Bay, Great Sandy Strait, and Burnett-Baffle Coast—Stage 3: Final Report (detsi.qld.gov.au)	12, 18	https://environment.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/390743/hervey-bay-corals-wq-guidelines.pdf.pdf
Community Response Team Customer Service Charter—Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (detsi.qld.gov.au)	17	https://www.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/166753/community-response-customer-service-charter.pdf
Offsets Register (<i>Environmental Offsets Act 2014</i>) (detsi.qld.gov.au)	17	https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/offsets-register/
Queensland Regulation Insider (detsi.qld.gov.au)	18	https://environment.qld.gov.au/community/environmental-regulation-news/all-posts

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