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As part of the changes to machinery of government the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) was separated on 1 July 2013 into two agencies: the Department of Environment Regulation and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. Any information in this report for the period up to 30 June 2013 relates to activities under the former DEC.

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Questions regarding this report should be directed to:

Department of Environment Regulation
Locked Bag 33 Cloisters Square
PERTH WA 6850
Phone: +61 8 6467 5000
Fax: +61 8 6467 5562
Email: info@der.wa.gov.au
Web: www.der.wa.gov.au

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Approvals summary

Works approvals and licences

Major resources projects

For major resources projects approvals, the Department of Environment Regulation (DER) has set a target to decide (grant or refuse) 100 per cent of works approval and licence applications within 60 working days.

Delivery status

Licence applications

- Five new licence applications were received in Q2 2015–16; a decrease from the preceding quarter, but more than in Q2 2014–15 (when three were received).
- Four licence applications were decided, fewer than in the previous quarter and the corresponding quarter in 2014–15 (when five were decided each quarter). The average processing time for a decision was 85 days, which was an increase on the previous quarter's average time of 44 days.
- The percentage of licence applications decided within the time frame of 60 working days decreased from 100 per cent to 50 per cent, with two of the four decisions being made within 60 working days.

Works approvals

- In Q2 2015–16, the Department received a total of four new works approval applications, a decrease from the totals in the previous four quarters (26, 20, 18 and 19).
- Twenty-one works approvals were decided, the same as the previous quarter.
- The average processing time increased from 50 days to 73 days, which is an increase from the corresponding quarter in 2014–15.
- DER decided 76 per cent of works approval applications within 60 working days, which is a five per cent improvement compared to the previous quarter.

Summary

Overall, Q2 2015–16 showed a decrease in the percentage of major resources projects licence applications decided within the time frame of 60 days, decreasing from 100 per cent to 50 per cent (two of the four decisions being made within 60 working days). The average time for a decision increased from 44 days in Q1 2015–16 to 85 days in Q2 2015–16.

DER's performance with respect to major resources projects works approval applications was similar to the previous quarter, with 76 per cent of applications decided within the 60-working day time frame (an improvement from 71 per cent in the previous quarter) and an increase of 23 days in the average time for a decision (50 working days to 73 working days).

DER refocused its industry regulation business improvement program in 2015 to deliver a range of significant reforms. The reform program aligns with DER's [Guidance Statement: Regulatory Principles](#) and the recently published [Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions](#).

DER is developing a comprehensive risk-based approach to its regulatory functions under Part V Division 3 of the EP Act. The [Guidance Statement: Regulatory Principles](#) are being supported by a risk based assessment framework and the development of a series of detailed documents and process improvements for more efficient, effective, transparent, consistent and accountable environmental regulation in WA.

Non-major resources projects (other projects)

For non-major resources projects (other projects) approvals, DER has a target to decide 80 per cent of works approval and licence applications within 60 working days.

Delivery status

Licence applications

- Fourteen new licence applications were received in Q2 2015–16, similar to the previous quarter (when 17 were received), and twice the number received in Q4 2014–15 (seven).
- Fourteen licences were decided by DER in Q2 2015–16, which is twice the number decided in the preceding quarter, and more than the corresponding quarter in 2014–15 (ten).

Works approvals

- DER decided 63 per cent of works approval applications within the 60-working day time frame, a significant improvement in percentage from the previous quarter (31 per cent) and short of the 80 per cent target.
- Sixteen works approval applications were decided by DER in Q2 2015–16, which is a decrease on the preceding quarter (when 19 were decided) and similar to the corresponding quarter in 2014–15 (when 17 were decided).

Summary

The average time to process an other projects licence application was 66 working days, which was higher than the previous quarter (41 working days). The percentage of other projects licence applications decided within the 60-working day time frame was 79 per cent, just below the 80 per cent target.

The average processing time for an other projects works approval application decreased during this quarter to 62 working days, an improvement on the preceding two quarters (97 and 71 days).

Approvals summary data applications—Works approvals and licences

Department of Environment Regulation	Q2 2014–15	Q3 2014–15	Q4 2014–15	Q1 2015–16	Q2 2015–16
Works approvals (major resources projects only)					
No. of applications carried over from previous quarter	27	36	24	42*	37
No. of new applications received	26	20	18	19	4
No. of applications granted/refused	17	30	10	21	21
No. of applications withdrawn	0	2	2	0	1
No. of applications declined	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	0
Average time for decision (working days)	57	49	53	50	73
Percentage of applications decided within target time frame of 60 working days (target is 100%)	59	80	80	71	76
No. of applications open as of end of quarter	36	24	30	37	19
Licences (major resources projects only)					
No. of applications carried over from previous quarter	14	10	11	14*	15
No. of new applications received	3	4	4	7	5
No. of applications granted/refused	5	2	5	5	4
No. of applications withdrawn	2	1	0	2	0
Average time for decision (working days)	43	43	58	44	85
Percentage of applications decided within target time frame of 60 working days (target is 100%)	100	100	40	100	50
No. of applications open as of end of quarter	10	11	10	14	16
Works approvals (other projects)					
No. of applications carried over from previous quarter	43	36	34	53*	54
No. of new applications received	14	18	16	35	30
No. of applications granted/refused	17	18	13	19	16
No. of applications withdrawn	4	2	2	7	5
Average time for decision (working days)	64	48	71	97	62
Percentage of applications decided within time frame of 60 working days (target is 80%)	59	72	69	31	63
No. of applications open as of end of quarter	36	34	35	54	56
Licences (other projects)					
No. of applications carried over from previous quarter	20	32	20	28*	33
No. of new applications received	22	9	7	17	14
No. of applications granted/refused	10	19	7	7	14
No. of applications withdrawn	0	2	1	3	5
Average time for decision (working days)	38	49	37	41	66
Percentage of applications decided within time frame of 60 working days (target is 80%)	90	84	71	71	79
No. of applications open as of end of quarter	32	20	19	34	28

* These figures have been updated to include all received applications that have been carried over from the previous quarter. Previously this figure only included those applications accepted for assessment.

Native vegetation clearing permits

For native vegetation clearing permits, targets are 80 per cent of applications to be decided¹ within 60 calendar days of receipt, and 100 per cent of applications to be decided within 90 calendar days.

DER's clearing permit system database records details of clearing permit applications and decisions made for both DER and the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP)², and forms the basis of the published records available on DER's website.

The quantitative information presented in the tables in this report is provided for both DER and DMP. The qualitative information in the text relates to DER only.

Delivery status

- DER received 95 native vegetation clearing permit applications in Q2 2015–16, which is the lowest of the previous four quarters (130, 98, 101 and 129).
- DER made 102 decisions on applications, which is more than the 97 decisions made in the previous quarter but fewer than the 126 decisions made in the corresponding quarter in 2014–15. The average time to make a decision was 74 days, which is longer than the lengths of time in the previous four quarters (58, 57, 54 and 52 days).
- DER decided 29 per cent of applications within the 60-day time frame (target = 80 per cent). Seventy-six per cent of applications were decided within 90 days (target = 100 per cent) and 24 per cent of decisions took longer than 90 days.
- The number of outstanding clearing permit applications decreased from 201 in the preceding quarter to 173 at the end of this quarter, and higher than the preceding three quarters (148, 153 and 169).

Summary

While there has been a decrease in outstanding applications, the Department has not met target time frames. It is acknowledged that significant improvement to performance is required to address this trend. DER's program to address the backlog of applications has been refocused to ensure the backlog of protracted applications are resolved by Q4 2015–16 and time frames are continually monitored to ensure improvement. Additional resources have been reallocated within the Department to address clearing timeframes.

¹ A 'clearing permit decision made' means an application to clear has been granted, given an undertaking to grant, refused, declined, withdrawn, amended, revoked or suspended.

² Under s 20 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of DER has delegated decision-making on clearing applications to DMP for the following activities:

- An activity under an authority granted, or a requirement imposed, under the *Mining Act 1978*, the *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967*, the *Petroleum Pipelines Act 1969* or the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982*.
- An activity under a government agreement administered by the Department of State Development.

Clearing permits—time frame data for DER applications/decisions

Department of Environment Regulation	Q2 2014–15	Q3 2014–15	Q4 2014–15	Q1 2015–16	Q2 2015–16
No. of applications carried over from previous periods	144	148	153	169	180
No. of applications received	130	98	101	129	95
No. of decisions that were subject to 'stop the clock'	62	38	32	60	64
Average time in 'stop the clock' for decisions in days	70	107	59	67	67
Average time for decisions in days (excluding time in 'stop the clock')	52	54	57	58	74
No. of decisions on applications	126	93	85	97	102
No. of outstanding applications at end of quarter	148	153	169	201	173
Percentage of applications that were finalised within time frames					
60 days (target = 80% of applications finalised)	62	59	53	57	29
90 days (target = 100% of all applications finalised)	96	86	85	86	76
More than 90 days	4	14	15	14	24

Clearing permits—time frame data for DMP applications/decisions

Department of Mines and Petroleum	Q2 2014–15	Q3 2014–15	Q4 2014–15	Q1 2015–16	Q2 2015–16
No. of applications carried over from previous periods	50	42	51	41	49
No. of applications received	39	57	47	59	46
No. of decisions that were subject to 'stop the clock'	30	21	30	22	15
Average time in 'stop the clock' for decisions in days	44	67	14	8	19
Average time for decisions in days (excluding time in 'stop the clock')	69	22	50	48	43
No. of decisions on applications	47	48	57	53	49
No. of outstanding applications at end of quarter	42	51	41	47	46
Percentage of applications that were finalised within time frames					
60 days (target = 80% of applications finalised)	75	96	91	94	98
90 days (target = 100% of all applications finalised)	96	100	96	98	100
More than 90 days	4	0	4	2	0