



Department of Water and
Environmental Regulation



2022-23
ANNUAL REPORT

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

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Front cover: Department staff Elke Reichwaldt (middle) and Charlie Jones (far right) with Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee members Tim Gamblin, Alan Bewsher and Shaun Ossinger (left to right).

Inside cover: Students' excitement at the 'Fish Olympics' conducted by Alisia Lampropoulos at the annual Children's Gnamara Groundwater Festival.

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

Statement of compliance

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Hon Simone McGurk MLA

Minister for Water

Hon Reece Whitby MLA

Minister for Environment;
Climate Action

In accordance with section 63 of the *Financial Management Act 2006*, I hereby submit for your information and presentation to Parliament the annual report for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.

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



Alistair Jones
Director General
7 October 2024







Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we live and work throughout Western Australia, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise the practice of intergenerational care for Country and its relevance to our work as water and environmental managers.

We seek to listen, learn, genuinely engage and build strong partnerships. We aim to provide sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal people within our workforce and through our business.

Working with the community, we move forward with a shared commitment to protect and conserve Country for future generations, recognising Country is a term used by Aboriginal people to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are intrinsically linked, and to which their wellbeing, law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity belong.

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From the Director General

I am pleased to present the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's annual report for 2023–24, the first to be delivered since I joined the department as Director General.

The past financial year saw the greatest transformation of the department's operating structure since it was formed in 2017, with the introduction of a new portfolio operating model in August 2023. This has been created to enable us to focus our efforts in three key areas: Climate and Sustainability, Approvals, and Strategy and Performance.

The new operating model, developed in response to the Public Sector Commission's Agency Capability Review, recognised the need for a better way of organising ourselves, to enable us to maximise resources, deliver better outcomes, streamline existing processes and improve customer and stakeholder experiences.

Guided by a streamlined Corporate Executive, our new operating model will help ensure we are positioned to respond swiftly to government priorities and better support the vision of a prosperous, resilient and low-carbon state in which our environment and water resources are protected for future generations.

Since December 2023, there has been considerable focus on implementing changes to streamline our environmental approvals system, to make investment in Western Australia more attractive, while continuing to protect our environment. These efforts follow a review by former Environmental Protection Authority Chair Dr Paul Vogel and planning expert David McFerran.

As part of its reform agenda, the State Government will be investing \$36.4 million to expedite approvals.

Our strategic overhaul and repositioning are supported by our flagship digital project, Environment Online. A further \$10.6 million will be spent in 2024–25 to continue the build and expansion of Environment Online, providing a single system for approvals across government.

Key functions of importance to our users, such as Environmental Protection Authority services, are already operational and other business areas are progressively being added to our online systems, with native vegetation clearing permit application lodgement added in early 2024. The integration of our Water Online, Planning Advice, and Industry Regulation processes and systems is next in line for 2024–25.

The funding of our priority projects as part of the 2024–25 State Budget reflects the State Government's commitment to improving water and environmental regulation and furthering our work in climate action.

As part of this, the State Government has allocated \$21.2 million to the department to bolster our environmental monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities, including for high-priority projects such as Alcoa's mining operations in the Darling Ranges.

Other initiatives funded in the State Budget that reflect the department's focus to deliver on sustainability and biodiversity included:

- \$3.1 million to continue the implementation of the native vegetation policy
- \$3.1 million to support the protection of Cockburn Sound
- \$2.7 million to further understanding of the impact of climate change on the state's water resources
- \$1.2 million in boosted resourcing to support the Kimberley flood response and repairs to river monitoring stations caused by ex-tropical cyclone Ellie.

We have also been liaising with the Australian Government and Western Australian organisations to strengthen water security and develop water infrastructure projects for regional and remote communities, including safe and reliable water for Aboriginal communities. More than \$265 million in funding from the State Government and Australian Government will be available for these projects from 2024–25.

In keeping with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the state's *Closing the Gap*

Jurisdictional Implementation Plan 2023–2025 and *Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy*, a key focus of the department is ensuring that co-delivery involves economic benefits as well as social and cultural benefits. You will read in this report some great examples of our progress with Western Australia's Aboriginal corporations and communities in skills development, capacity building and enterprises in work such as waterways management, environmental monitoring, cultural mapping and climate adaptation.

I thank the department's talented staff for their work throughout the year. We look forward to progressing the important work expected in ensuring the state's water resources and environment are managed sustainably now and in the future.

I would also like to praise the efforts of my predecessor Michelle Andrews, who served as the Director General of the department for more than two-and-a-half years. Michelle led the organisation through the Agency Capability Review and the creation of the new portfolio operating model, and made significant strides in engagement and collaboration with Western Australia's First Nations people.



Alistair Jones
Director General

Our 2023–24 at a glance



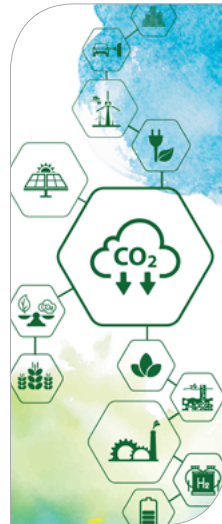
**154
million**

single-use coffee cups saved from landfill through the Plan for Plastics



**\$22.5
million**

allocated to drive delivery of green energy solutions for Western Australia



**\$16.24
million**

in grant funding for innovative industrial decarbonisation programs



**\$12.5
million**

donated to charities and community organisations through Containers for Change



**7
million+**

online impressions gained by our Be Groundwater Wise awareness campaigns



**668,000
kilograms**

of phosphorus could be saved from being applied across 257 farms in the Healthy Estuaries WA fertiliser management program



**2.3
million**

users reached by the Be a GREAT Sort social media campaign



**215,000
households**

receiving three-bin food organics and garden organics (FOGO) services



12,634
water licences

across
773 groundwater
and 427 surface
water resources



22,770
million

litres of water
saved by
business
and industry
under our two
Waterwise Perth
action plans



503
tonnes

of household
hazardous
waste materials
collected for
safe recovery or
disposal



93
infringements

issued in
relation to
illegal dumping
and littering



8,160
requests

for water
information
on our Water
Information
Reporting portal



9,736
reports

to our
Environment
Watch service



1.57
million

tonnes of
controlled
waste tracked



\$14
million

committed to
implementing
the e-waste to
landfill ban from
1 July 2024

Who we are

As Western Australia's primary water and environmental regulator, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) has a responsibility to be an influential and future-focused organisation.

Overview

Environmental Officers Adriana Monroy Olaya and Diane Austin-Blaine



Our vision

Our vision is for a low-carbon Western Australia with a healthy environment and secure water resources for future generations.

Our mission



Waste

We act to reduce the harmful impact of waste and create a low-waste circular economy.



Climate

We act to reduce emissions, mitigate climate change impacts and build greater environmental and community resilience.



Water

We act to ensure our water resources meet the needs of the community, ecosystems and economic development.



Environment

We act to make sure that environmental values are protected, and that development is sustainable.

Our values



We serve to make a difference

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



We build trust

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



We care

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



Open minds

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

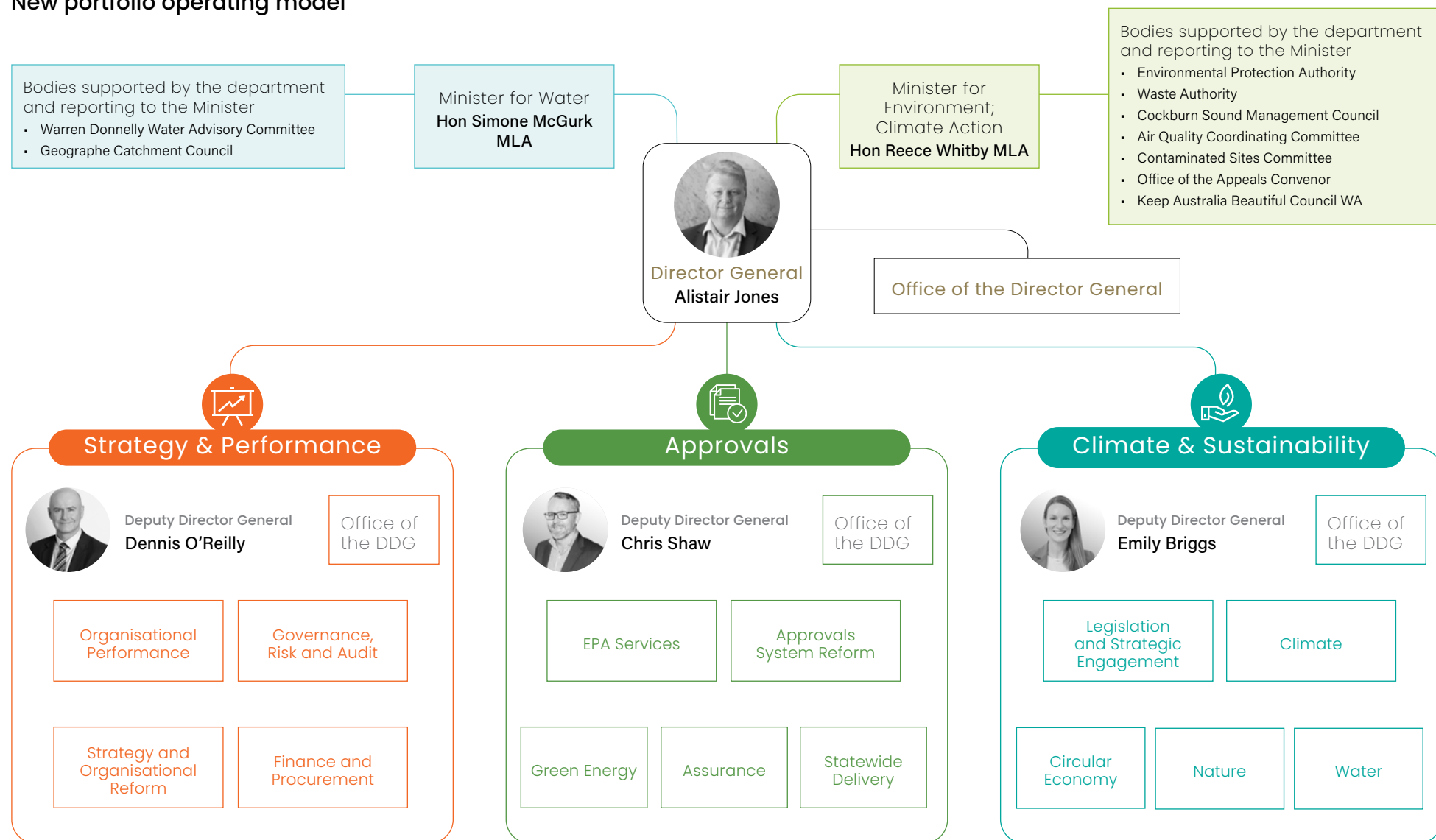


Better together

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

Our 2023–24 structure

New portfolio operating model





Alistair Jones

Director General

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

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



Dennis O'Reilly

Deputy Director General Strategy and Performance

With more than 20 years of public sector experience, Dennis joined the department in January 2023, leading corporate services, strategy and engagement. He has driven the department's response to the Public Sector Commission's Agency Capability Review, introducing initiatives to enhance integrity, program planning, and customer and stakeholder experiences.

Dennis is committed to the agency's regional work and partnerships with First Nations people. Previously, he served as Executive Director Regional Services at the Department of Transport, delivering services to regional and remote communities, and transforming Corporate Services into a high-performing, customer-focused team.



Chris Shaw

Deputy Director General Approvals

Chris joined the department in November 2023, bringing extensive experience in regulatory decision-making, strategic policy and major reforms. He previously served as Deputy Director General at Queensland's Department of Energy and Public Works where he led the formation of a division for future industries.

With a strong track record in cross-government reforms in environmental and natural resource management, Chris has overseen the establishment of the Approvals portfolio which integrates all regulatory functions. He is dedicated to advancing the State Government's environmental approvals reform agenda and supporting key areas such as housing, green energy and critical minerals.



Emily Briggs

Deputy Director General Climate and Sustainability

Emily became the inaugural Deputy Director General Climate and Sustainability in April 2023, bringing international experience in decarbonisation and economic development across government and the private sector. Emily began her career at BP Australia and has held senior roles in the UK Government, focusing on renewable energy, Brexit and the COVID Green Economic Recovery.

Passionate about climate action and ensuring the long-term prosperity of Western Australia, Emily has overseen the establishment of the Climate and Sustainability portfolio which is delivering key policies to support the state's transition to net zero emissions.











Our people

Our department grew to 1,173 employees in 2023–24. Our *Workforce and Diversity Plan* affirms that by bringing together people from different backgrounds and with different points of view, we create the most value and better reflect the community that we serve.

Inclusive employer 2023–24

As members of the Diversity Council of Australia, we participated for the second time in their Inclusion@Work Index. This is a workforce inclusion survey that captures broader diversity data and inclusion experiences of employees within the workplace, measured against national employment benchmarks. We were once again recognised as a ‘Top Inclusive Employer’, with the reported employee experience in working for our agency exceeding all five benchmarks.

Snapshot of our diversity

	 Women in Senior Executive Services	 Youth	 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	 Culturally and linguistically diverse people	 People with disability
Aspirational targets	50.0%	5.8%	3.7%	15.5%	5.0%
Number of staff	19	32	11	161	40
Change from last year	 up from 13	 up from 29	 up from 10	 down from 164	 down from 43
Representation	52.8%	2.7%	0.9%	13.7%	3.4%
Gap to meet target	Met target	36	32	20	18

Performance summary

Actual results versus budget targets

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














KPIs comprise both effectiveness and efficiency indicators.

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

You will find more detail in our Disclosures section, which starts on [page 105](#).

Financial targets	2022–23 Actual (\$'000)	2023–24 Budget (\$'000)	2023–24 Actual (\$'000)	2023–24 Variance (\$'000)
Total cost of services (i.e. endorsed expense limit)	211,497	269,619	240,581	29,038
Net cost services (details in the income statement)	52,256	112,327	72,784	39,543
Total equity (details in the statement of financial position)	655,670	631,388	735,261	-103,873
Agreed salary expense level	109,702	120,191	116,624	3,567
Working cash limit	9,656	12,335	11,196	1,139

Summary of key effectiveness indicators

Outcome	Key effectiveness indicator	2022-23	2023-24		
		Actual %	Target %	Actual %	Variance %
1. Western Australia's growth and development is supported by the sustainable management of water resources for the long-term benefit of the state	Proportion of stakeholders who perceive the department to be effectively managing the state's water as a resource for sustainable, productive use	58	55	63	8 
	Proportion of priority growth areas that have a water supply planning strategy	57	100	100	0 
2. Emissions, discharges and clearing of native vegetation are effectively regulated to avoid unacceptable risks to public health and the environment	Percentage of regulatory compliance activities completed as planned	100	100	81	-19 
	Percentage of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring program that are rectified within two months	22	40	19	-21 
3. Development and implementation of strategic policy and legislation that promoted sustainable environmental outcomes	Percentage of advice and recommendations that met Ministerial approval, without the need for significant modification	99	95	99	4 
4. Waste avoided and the recovery of materials from landfill maximised	Percentage of municipal solid waste (MSW) reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to waste strategy target in the Perth metropolitan region	36	65	36	-29 
	Percentage of commercial and industrial (C&I) waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target	45	70	46	-24 
	Percentage of construction and demolition (C&D) waste reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared to the statewide waste strategy target	85	75	85	10 
5. Quality advice to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Minister for Environment on significant proposals and environmental issues	The EPA's satisfaction with the department's environmental impact assessment (EIA) service during the year, in line with best practice principles of EIA	96	82	93	11 
	Percentage of project-specific conditions which did not require significant change following the appeal process	98	82	89	7 
	Percentage of assessments that met agreed timelines	80	75	88	13 
	The EPA's satisfaction with the department's provision of environmental management services during the year	97	82	73	-9 
6. Compliance with Ministerial Statement implementation conditions are monitored effectively	The number of Ministerial Statements audited compared to targets	42	90	23	-67 

Summary of key efficiency indicators

Service		Key efficiency indicators	2022-23 Actual	Target	2023-24 Actual	Variance	
Service 1	Water information and advice	Proportion of statutory referrals from decision-making authorities (DMAs) where advice is provided within target timeframes	89%	95%	92%	-3%	↓
		Average cost per referral assessment	\$4,332	\$7,371	\$4,259	-3,112	↑
		Average cost per water measurement site managed	\$7,414	\$7,414	\$8,285	871	↓
Service 2	Water planning, allocation and optimisation	Average cost per plan, report or guidance document to support water planning, allocation and optimisation	\$243,074	\$409,599	\$194,137	-215,462	↑
		Average cost per hour of scientific support for water planning, allocation and optimisation	\$197	\$198	\$199	1	↓
Service 3	Water regulation, licensing and industry governance	Average cost of assessing a water licence application by risk assessment category:					
		• Low risk	\$4,018	\$4,242	\$4,182	-60	↑
		• Medium risk	\$5,357	\$5,656	\$5,577	-79	↑
		• High risk	\$6,697	\$7,070	\$6,971	-99	↑
		Average time taken (days) to assess a licence application by risk assessment category:					
		• Low risk	43	65	58	-7	↑
		• Medium risk	57	75	84	9	↓
		• High risk	85	95	92	-3	↑
		Average cost of compliance monitoring and enforcement action	\$206	\$177	\$344	167	↓
Service 4	Environmental regulation	Average cost per works approval and licence application	\$73,244	\$56,014	\$77,628	21,614	↓
		Average cost per native vegetation clearing permit application	\$33,764	\$60,594	\$38,428	-22,166	↑
Service 5	Water and environment policy	Average cost per hour of policy advice and recommendations	\$328	\$489	\$325	-164	↑
Service 6	Waste strategies	Cost of landfill levy compliance as a percentage of landfill levy income collected	1.64%	1.50%	1.55%	0.05%	↓
Service 7	Environmental impact assessment services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of assessment output	\$79,177	\$69,506	\$102,998	33,492	↓
Service 8	Environmental management services to the EPA	Cost per standardised unit of environmental management services output	\$26,151	\$53,838	\$53,172	-666	↑
Service 9	Compliance monitoring services to the Minister	Average cost per environmental audit completed	\$148,276	\$37,574	\$336,373	298,799	↓



Our priorities

We are responsible for ensuring the state's water resources and environment are healthy and able to support a strong economy and thriving communities. This section reflects our work delivering on the strategic directions of the Government of Western Australia.

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Previous page: Tony Falkland, Aaron Gwynn-Thomas, Judith Le Gresley and Andrew Stevenson on Cocos (Keeling) Islands investigating and installing groundwater telemetry equipment

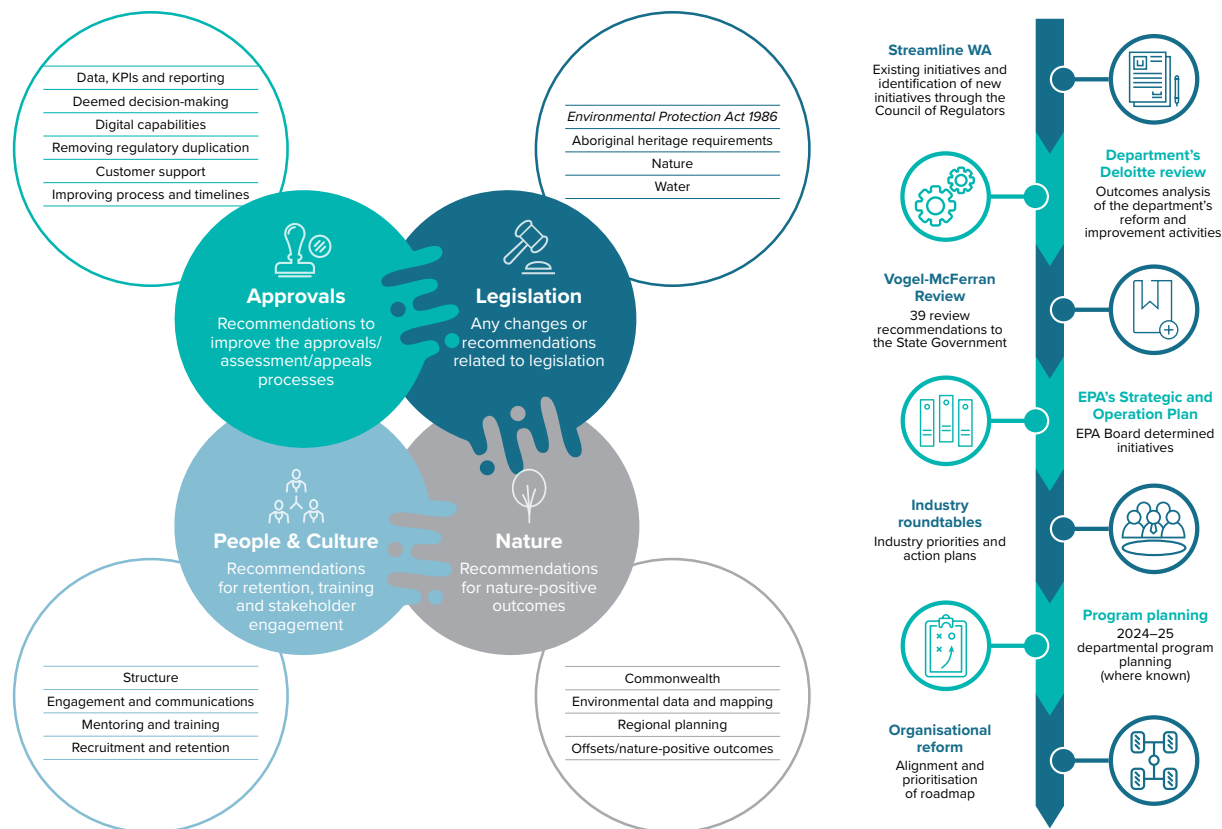
Approvals system reform

The 2023–24 year saw significant progress in the reform of our environmental approvals system, which was established to reduce timeframes and better address stakeholder priorities, while ensuring the state’s unique environment is protected.

This followed a review, commissioned by the State Government in October 2023, which found approvals processes had become overly complex and lengthy. The review, led by former EPA chair Dr Paul Vogel and planning expert David McFerran, delivered 39 recommendations to the State Government which were all accepted or noted.

As a result, the State Government announced a major overhaul of Western Australia’s environmental approvals system in December 2023 and committed to an additional 13 approval initiatives recommended by the Council of Regulators as part of Streamline WA – a whole-of-government initiative to improve regulation and regulatory practice.

Key elements of these reforms and how they fit together are represented below.



The department is focused on implementing these reforms with highlights of progress to date as follows.

Attraction and retention of staff

A significant focus of the recommendations related to people and culture, with the review identifying the need to improve staff attraction and retention.

We developed attraction and retention packages for key qualified staff in 2024. This includes the roles of Appeals Convenor and our new Director Major Projects Approval within the EPA Services team.

Another new arrangement will see graduates starting in July 2024 join a cross-government program offered by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI) and the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS), giving our young staff the opportunity to learn how approvals processes are managed in different agencies. This experience means they will be well placed to inform future approvals streamlining efforts.

We are also continuing the delivery of a mentoring program, launched in March 2024, pairing young approvals professionals with experienced staff to build confidence and skills.

Legislative changes

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has been working closely with us to develop the Environmental Protection Act Amendment Bill 2024, which proposes significant reforms to support the streamlining of the state’s environmental approvals system.

The most significant amendment will enable parallel decision-making for projects, allowing other government regulators to issue their own approvals ahead of the EPA issuing an environmental impact assessment. This change could see project timelines reduce significantly.

As part of the amendments, the Minister for Environment will be able to provide the EPA with a Statement of Expectation, helping it to better understand the State Government’s priorities including the green energy transition, housing delivery, job creation and protection of the state’s unique environment.

The membership of the EPA board will also be expanded to between five and nine members, who will be required to have skills or experience in specific disciplines important to the functions of the EPA.

In related reforms, regulation changes in March 2024 mean that minor planning scheme changes that have no impact to the environment or are of low risk to the environment no longer need to be referred to the EPA. These changes, introduced as part of the Environmental Protection Amendment Regulations 2024, reduce administrative burden and better focus assessment resources.

New EPA office

In April 2024, a new office was established for the EPA in the Perth CBD, enabling EPA Services staff and EPA members to hold in-person meetings with stakeholders, proponents and other government agencies in a convenient, central location.



Minister for Environment; Climate Action Reece Whitby opens the EPA office

Environment Online

[Environment Online](#) is a digital platform that will provide a single gateway for regulatory activities, automated case management, and an integrated data management system. It continues to develop as a key enabler of the State Government's overhaul of environmental approvals processes in Western Australia.

During the year, Environment Online completed a migration of data from all EPA systems, including all proposals under referral and assessment as well as more than 30 years of historical data. A major program of work also introduced a range of new functionality and enhancements.

One of the key changes included additional ways to log in to Environment Online for both employees within organisations and individuals.

The ability to apply for native vegetation clearing permit applications was also added, providing a streamlined process to apply to amend, transfer and surrender clearing permits as well as a dashboard to track and view associated records.

As part of the 2024–25 State Budget, the State Government committed \$10.6 million to expedite the delivery of Environment Online, aligned to the recommendations of the review into the state's environmental approvals process. The funding will allow the transition of Water Online, Planning Advice and Industry Regulation processes and systems into Environment Online.

Stakeholder roundtables

Between November 2023 and March 2024, the department held a series of roundtable meetings as part of a commitment to engage better with external stakeholders. These were attended by 46 local governments, five peak bodies, six State Government departments and representatives from more than 40 major companies and businesses.

These stakeholders collectively represented a range of sectors with primarily urban, mining and industrial development interests, which intersect with our water and environment approvals work.

Much of the feedback by stakeholders during these meetings related to the state's environmental approvals processes and will be addressed through the approvals system reform.

Environment Online completed a migration of data from all EPA systems, including more than 30 years of historical data.



New portfolio operating model

As part of the department's reform program, we began the implementation of a new portfolio operating model in August 2023, which saw us shift from nine directorates to three portfolios as displayed right.

Our focus for the final phase will be on establishing the Statewide Delivery directorate to ensure we leverage our significant regional presence to its fullest extent for regulatory decision-making and policy setting across the department.



Strategy & Performance

- Strategy
- Organisational and business systems
- Corporate services
- Human resources and workplace culture
- Corporate communications
- Stakeholder engagement
- Performance evaluation



Approvals

Integration of all the regulatory functions of the department, including:

- EPA Services
- Green Energy
- Assurance (formerly Compliance and Enforcement and including Environmental Sciences)
- Statewide Delivery (incorporating the former Regulatory Services and Regional Delivery directorates)
- Approvals System Reform



Climate & Sustainability

- Whole-of-government climate action agenda
- Statewide policy and programs across water, nature and circular economy
- Partnerships with key business, community and Aboriginal stakeholders
- Legislative agenda and working with the Australian Government on national reforms

Our changing climate

...the science is clear



Hottest

Western Australian summer recorded in 2023–24, with many areas recording their highest summer temperatures (BoM 2024a)



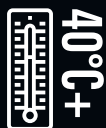
1.4°C

average increase in temperature in Australia since 1910, with most warming occurring since 1950 (CSIRO and BoM 2022)



Below

average annual rainfall in western and far-southern areas of the state in 2023 (BoM 2024b)



>40°C

days becoming more frequent across Australia (NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information 2024)



Rise

in dangerous fire weather days and a longer fire season for southern Australia (CSIRO and BoM 2022)



Increasing sea surface temperatures

on average, affecting our marine environment and fisheries and causing marine heatwaves (CSIRO and BoM 2022; Caputi et al. 2016; Le Nohaïc et al. 2017)



Driest

year on record in the Gascoyne and Central West regions in 2023 (BoM 2024b)



Accelerating

global mean sea level rise will amplify the risks of coastal inundation, storm surge and erosion (CSIRO and BoM 2022)



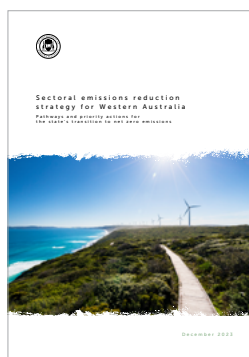
Increased and longer-lasting marine heatwaves

and increasing ocean acidification that will affect marine environments (CSIRO and BoM 2022)

Climate action

The department is leading the implementation of the [Western Australian Climate Policy](#). This year was a significant year for climate action in Western Australia with the:

- release of the [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) to ensure our communities, environment and economy are resilient to future climate change
- release of the [Sectoral emissions reduction strategy for Western Australia](#) (SERS), setting out pathways and priority actions for the state's transition to net zero emissions
- introduction of the state's first climate legislation into Parliament, which seeks to establish the framework for government action on climate, including commitments to set targets and report annually.



Climate change legislation

The [Climate Change Bill 2023](#), introduced to Parliament in November, will provide the framework for State Government action on climate. Once enacted, the legislation will contribute to national and global goals for decarbonisation, provide certainty for businesses, and attract the investment required to transition to net zero emissions.

Climate Adaptation Strategy

The *Climate Adaptation Strategy*, released in July 2023, lays out the steps the State Government will take to ensure it is addressing climate change in its own operations and to support all Western Australians to adapt.

It was developed through targeted consultation with State Government agencies, local governments, Aboriginal and environmental groups, and peak industry bodies. It reflects the significant and unique perspectives of those stakeholders in relation to climate change.

The strategy acknowledges that effective climate response requires energised and empowered communities to contribute to tangible adaptation action. Businesses and industry need to manage their climate risks, and all levels of government will continue to play a role in delivering services and setting policy frameworks to advance climate action and support other stakeholders in their adaptation efforts.

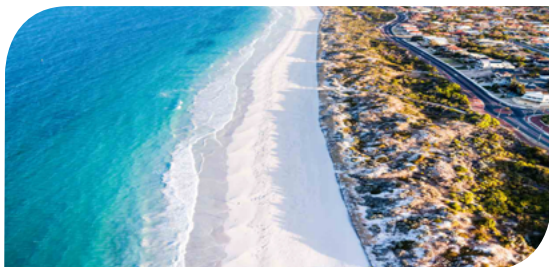
We have also been developing the *Guide to future climate projections for water management in Western Australia*, which will provide a modernised framework for using climate change projections to help scientists, planners and decision-makers assess impacts and risks to our water resources. The guide is due for release in September 2024.

► West Kimberley climate adaptation strategy

Empowering the climate resilience of Aboriginal people is a key direction of the state's *Climate Adaptation Strategy*.

In 2023–24 the department began developing a [co-designed climate adaptation strategy for the West Kimberley](#) in partnership with the Nulungu Research Institute at the University of Notre Dame Australia. As part of this, traditional knowledge and stories will be used to identify the impacts of climate change on the Fitzroy River and surrounds.

A new monitoring framework will be established through partnerships with local communities and the Martuwarra River Keepers, incorporating conventional and traditional knowledge. This framework will measure the effects and impacts of climate change on the people, biodiversity, rivers, floodplains and wetlands of the area.



► Creating Climate Resilient Rivers

We are leading a new \$1.5 million program to enhance the resilience of rivers across south-west Western Australia to address the impacts of climate change.

Funded under the *Climate Adaptation Strategy*, the Creating Climate Resilient Rivers program will identify priority locations for protection and enhancement and deliver on-ground initiatives to help improve river health and climate resilience.

The program will run for four years and deliver a range of projects, including the creation of climate refuges, enhancement of instream habitat and revegetation of banks, and restoration of fish passage through dams and weirs.

The program will also map biodiversity and habitat values across the state's south-west rivers and identify areas of permanent water with intact streamside vegetation that support aquatic and terrestrial species during the dry season.

► Harvey River fish hotels

An innovative habitat creation project was the first to be delivered as part of the new Creating Climate Resilient Rivers program.

This year, nine 'fish hotels' were established in a section of the Harvey River that was historically de-snagged (had woody debris removed) to increase drainage. The hotels, which look like small wooden pyramids, sit on the riverbed and serve as a perfect location to attract and retain aquatic wildlife.

Species that will benefit include freshwater catfish, nightfish, pygmy perch, western minnow and blue spot goby, as well as crustaceans such as marron, shrimp and gilgie. They will also boost habitat for turtles, rakali (water rats) and water birds.

The purpose-built 'hotels' were constructed by Waroona Men's Shed and students from the Western Australian College of Agriculture in Harvey using locally sourced timber.

The project design was a joint effort with the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce, Water Corporation, Murdoch University, OzFish, the Harvey Aboriginal Corporation, Shire of Harvey and Shire of Waroona.



Transition to net zero emissions

► Sectoral emissions reduction strategy

In December 2023, the State Government released the SERS, which sets out actions for reducing emissions to support the State Government’s target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The department developed the SERS in collaboration with key State Government agencies and with oversight by the Ministerial Taskforce on Climate Action. Its development followed an extensive engagement process, which included consultation with businesses and industry and with research, environment and community organisations.

The SERS addresses key sectors of the economy, covering all major sources of emissions including from electricity, industry transport, agriculture and land use, buildings and waste. It builds on action already underway in these sectors and supports the collective actions of households, business and industry.

SERS initiatives will drive innovation, provide incentives for clean energy investment, build social licence for key technologies and facilitate infrastructure critical for Western Australia’s transition to net zero emissions.



► Electric vehicles

The department is leading the stimulation of electric vehicle (EV) uptake in Western Australia as part of the [State Electric Vehicle Strategy for Western Australia](#). Battery EVs provide a transformational pathway to cut emissions from road transport, while improving air quality and reducing the state’s reliance on imported fuels.

Coordinated actions of our department and other State Government agencies – including the Department of Transport, DEMIRS, Synergy, and Horizon – are bringing to life the [WA EV Network](#), the longest such network in Australia.

During 2023–24 the WA EV network build reached more than 60 per cent of its planned locations throughout the state. The network, which is part of the *Western Australian Climate Policy*, is scheduled to be finished by late 2024. On completion it will span 7,000 km from Kununurra in the north, to Walpole in the south and Eucla to the east.

Local governments and other entities, including small and medium-sized enterprises and non-government organisations, are our partners in supporting the uptake of EVs and the increasing delivery of infrastructure required to support them.

► Green Energy Approvals Initiative

In July 2023 the department established a Green Energy directorate to support the cross-government [Green Energy Approvals Initiative](#), which is driving the delivery of green energy solutions for Western Australia.

As part of this, we are working with other State Government agencies to develop clear assessment pathways and provide high-quality, timely support for proponents and investors.

More than 30 green energy projects are currently being assessed or regulated by the department, with a further 50-plus proposals expected to be referred for assessment over the next 12 months.

During the year we also worked to build new processes, forms and templates for green energy-specific proposals within our 'one stop shop' for business, Environment Online.



First green energy project approved



In June 2024 a proposal by Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation – a partnership between Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation and international renewable energy company ACEN Corporation – was the [first to receive approval](#) through the Green Energy Approvals Initiative.

Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation received environmental approval for its first solar project of up to 150 megawatts, to be developed within a 13,000 km² area in the Pilbara covered by the Yindjibarndi Native Title Determination Area.

In total, Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation's projects will deliver up to 3 gigawatts of solar, wind and storage capacity and, if successful, could become one of Australia's largest renewable energy developments.

The projects could also play a significant role in decarbonising the state, creating sustainable training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, and supporting renewable energy uptake by industry in the Pilbara.

Biodiversity conservation

Australia’s Strategy for Nature

Western Australia signed on to *Australia’s Strategy for Nature 2019–2030* on 10 November 2023, on six priority areas for national targets:



protecting and conserving 30 per cent of Australia’s land and 30 per cent of Australia’s oceans by 2030

effective restoration of degraded terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems

tackling the impact of invasive feral species

working towards zero new extinctions

minimising the impact of climate change on nature

building a circular economy and reducing the impact of plastics on nature

Nature repair legislation

We are assisting the establishment of the Australian Government’s Nature Repair legislation in Western Australia by providing input into its measurement protocols and operational design.

The *Nature Repair Act 2023* (Cth) came into effect on 15 December 2023. The Act establishes the framework for a world-first national voluntary biodiversity market.

The Nature Repair Market scheme will make it easier for organisations and businesses to voluntarily invest in nature repair projects across Australia. Landholders, including First Nations people and organisations, conservation groups and farmers, will be eligible to participate in the scheme.



Regional planning

Regional planning for native vegetation is underway in the Perth, Peel and Wheatbelt regions. The State Government will produce maps and guidance to bring more certainty, clarity and consistency within the existing approvals framework, while balancing development and conservation. This includes information on cumulative impacts and guidance on where conservation and restoration investment should be made, such as offsets.

Urban Greening Grants Program

We are delivering the Urban Greening Grants Program in partnership with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) to increase canopy and vegetative cover across the state.

In March 2024, 12 local governments were awarded a share of more than \$591,000 through the first round of the program to

support the planting of more than 9,400 trees and 29,000 understorey species in winter 2024.

Applications for the program's second round opened in May 2024, through which local governments were able to apply for a share of \$2.8 million to provide more canopy cover for cooling, shade and habitat for wildlife.

The program requires the selection of waterwise and local species to maximise the benefits of urban greening.



Protecting our water

South West dry season response 2023–24

The [Community Water Supplies Partnership \(CWSP\) program](#) was extended to the South West and Great Southern to help more regional communities manage the impacts of the dry conditions in 2023 and the summer of 2024.

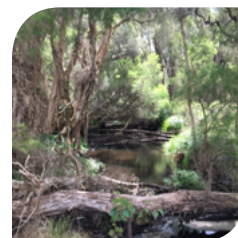
The \$1.5 million expansion is part of the State Government's \$8.6 million support package for agricultural industries impacted by drought conditions, which includes a raft of measures such as hardship grants and interest-free loans.

Local government authorities (LGAs) and community groups can apply for grants of up to \$100,000 to contribute to new water security projects, which help fortify regional towns and communities suffering low rainfall.

Since 2021, 59 projects have been funded under the program. Regional communities use the funds to develop supplies that optimise and upgrade existing assets to improve water capture, storage and distribution for purposes such as urban greening, watering sports and recreation turf, and providing emergency stock and firefighting supplies.



Minister for Water Simone McGurk with Shire of Brookton community members. With the help of State Government CWSP funding in 2023 the Shire of Brookton devised the community water supply at Happy Valley to reduce reliance on valuable drinking water, using a licensed non-potable bore



Water allocation planning

Water allocation plans outline how much water can be taken from groundwater and surface water resources, while safeguarding the sustainability of the resource and protecting the water-dependent environment in the face of climate change. We set water allocation limits for most of the water resources in Western Australia.

Further details about water allocation plans can be found under [Service 2](#).

► Ngarangara

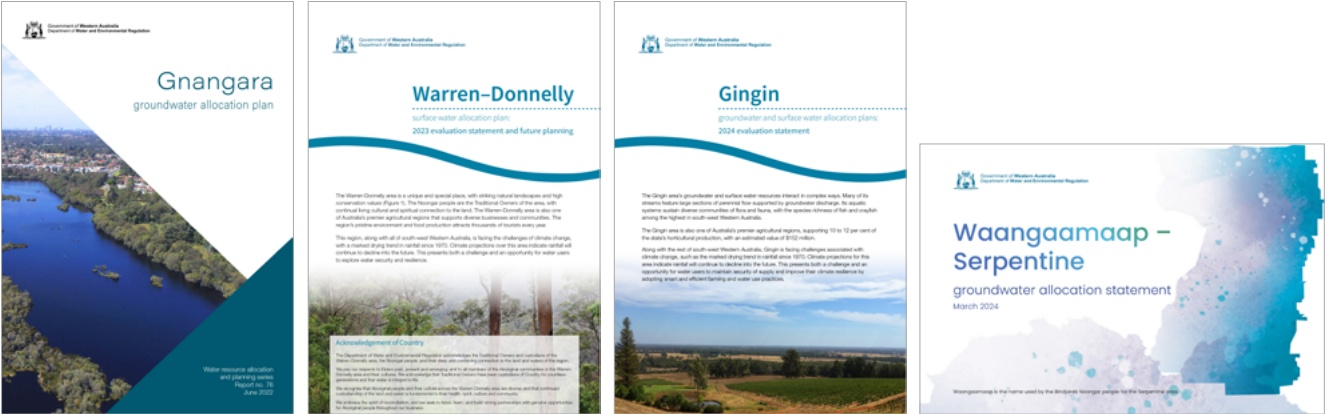
In July 2023, \$4 million in funding was made available to local governments through the Ngarangara Waterwise Councils Grants Program – a joint initiative of the department and Water Corporation. The program, which supports the [Ngarangara groundwater allocation plan](#), aims to reduce groundwater use in local government areas most affected by the urban heat island effect. The funding will be provided over four years.

► Serpentine (Waangaamaap)

We released the [Waangaamaap – Serpentine groundwater allocation statement](#) in March 2024. This set new allocation limits to improve the security of the groundwater supply for existing users over the next decade and to reduce the risks of impacts to groundwater-dependent ecosystems and cultural values from over-abstraction.

► Gingin

In June 2024, we released the [Gingin groundwater and surface water allocation plans: 2024 evaluation statement](#), which evaluated the performance of the 2015 *Gingin groundwater allocation plan* and 2011 *Gingin surface water allocation plan*. It found several ongoing risks to groundwater and surface water resources in the southern part of the region where climate change and abstraction has led to long-term declines in groundwater levels and streamflow.



► Warren-Donnelly

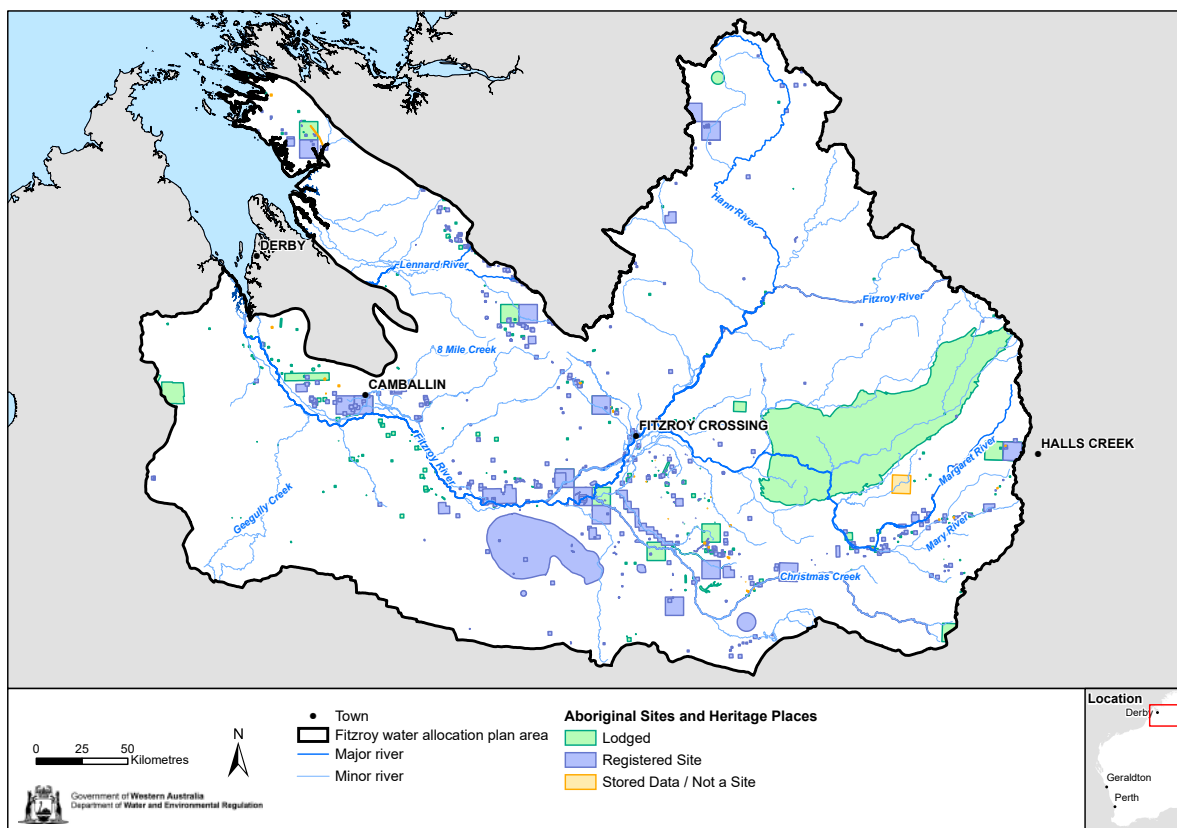
In October 2023, we released the [Warren-Donnelly surface water allocation plan: 2023 evaluation statement and future planning](#), which found the current allocation plan was still appropriate to support the region's horticultural industry and natural environments. The department is now developing the next water allocation plan for the Warren-Donnelly area, to guide future water management in this region and address climate change impacts.

► Fitzroy and Derby

We published [five technical reports](#) relating to the Fitzroy water planning area in October 2023. These reports will inform future water allocation planning and support the State Government's [Water allocation planning in the Fitzroy – Policy position paper](#), also released in October.

Water allocation planning work for the Fitzroy River catchment and Derby peninsula will continue through 2024–25. Following thorough feedback on [Derby water allocation planning](#) and ongoing conversations with Traditional

Owners, a revised draft Derby plan will be released together with a future draft Fitzroy water allocation plan for further public comment.



Listed Aboriginal sites and heritage places in the Fitzroy planning area

Circular economy

Western Australia is transitioning to a circular economy – where products and materials are kept in circulation through repair, reuse, recycling, recovery and redesign rather than disposal. Materials are used again and again, minimising waste and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.

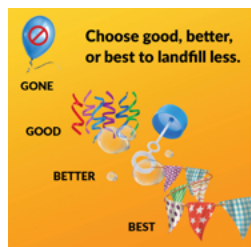
The department's work is guided by the state's [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030](#) (waste strategy), which sets targets relating to waste avoidance, resource recovery and protection of health and the environment. Now in its fifth year, a review of the strategy is underway to evaluate its performance and determine improvements that could be made to ensure it stays current and relevant.



WA Plan for Plastics single-use plastic bans 2022–25

In WWF-Australia's *The State of Plastics in Australia* scorecard for 2023, Western Australia was shown to be leading the way nationally on phasing out single-use plastics. This is a result of the ban on single-use plastic bowls, plates, cutlery, coffee cups and lids, straws, and takeaway food containers.

Western Australia's [Plan for Plastics](#) is being implemented in a staged approach.



Stage 2 began in February 2023, with items to be phased out between September 2023 and July 2025.

From 1 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded plastic packaging (loose fill) Expanded polystyrene cups and trays for meat and seafood Degradable plastics Disposable cotton buds with plastic stems Microbeads in rinse-off personal care, cosmetic and cleaning products
From 1 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposable plastic cups for hot drinks Disposable plastic cup lids (for hot and cold drinks) Disposable plastic trays for takeaway or eat-in food
From 1 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use plastic promotional film for outdoor applications
From 1 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic produce bags for fruit and vegetables Plastic takeaway containers for fresh food

Transition periods will allow businesses to run down their supplies and make plans for alternative processes and packaging. The rollout of the Plan for Plastics has been supported with targeted community education, and retail and supplier engagement.

The Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018 will be amended to ensure produce bags supplied after the enforcement date of 1 September 2024 are certified as compostable in line with Australian composting standards (AS4736:2006 or AS5810:2010). Plastic takeaway containers for fresh food will also be banned.



Watch our Plan for Plastics Stage 2 campaign on [YouTube](#)



E-waste to landfill ban

On 1 July 2024, the department implemented the ban on e-waste to landfill, fulfilling the State Government’s election commitment and helping Western Australia move towards its goal of becoming a low-waste, circular economy.

The ban includes e-waste items such as batteries, mobile phones, televisions, computers, light globes and fluorescent tubes, large white goods and professional medical devices.

Funding of \$14 million has been committed to implementation, which includes support for policy and regulatory changes, infrastructure grants for new e-waste collection and recycling infrastructure, and community education.

The ban is aimed at industry rather than households, with banned items having recovery pathways in place to ensure a smooth transition, aligning with national product stewardship arrangements, and supporting local industry capacity.

End-of-life tyres

In 2023–24 Western Australia led collaborative work on the development of national principles to inform future action on end-of-life tyres. This included investigation of key issues relating to end-of-life tyres and a high-level assessment of reuse options, such as for ‘off-the-road’ tyres used in mining and agriculture.

This project was part of an agreement with federal, state and territorial governments following the inclusion of waste tyres in the federal Minister’s Product Stewardship Priority List. The findings are expected to be delivered to Environment Ministers in late 2024.

► New tyre recycling infrastructure

In May 2024, Western Australia’s most advanced tyre recycling infrastructure opened, supported by an Australian Government and State Government co-investment of \$5.2 million, with Tyrecycle contributing \$9.6 million. Tyrecycle’s new recycling plant in East Rockingham will have the capacity to process 42,000 tonnes of tyres every year and support 10 new jobs.

Funded through the Recycling Modernisation Fund, this project and others are expected to add 1.3 million tonnes of processing capacity every year across all national jurisdictions, diverting valuable materials from landfill for reuse and supporting new jobs in the circular economy.

We are administering the [Recycling Modernisation Fund](#) for Western Australian projects.

Visit site!



A woman with short dark hair, wearing glasses and a red ruffled top, is seated at a desk in an office. She is smiling and looking towards the right. Her hands are on a keyboard and mouse. The background shows an open-plan office with other people working at desks and a wooden slatted partition.

Aboriginal Engagement and Partnerships

Deanne Fitzgerald, Senior Manager
Strategy and Planning

Aboriginal engagement and advancement

Closing the Gap

The department is committed to delivering its projects and services in alignment with the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) and the state's [Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan 2023–2025](#) and [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy](#).

We maintain a commitment to increase engagement and participation of Aboriginal people in the stewardship of Western Australia's land and water. This is reflected in our [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) and programs of work including:

Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group (AWEAG)

Engagement of the Yamatji Water Company to provide water monitoring services

Formal collaboration agreement with Nyamba Buru Yawuru and Karajarri Traditional Lands Association

Delivery on the water components of Indigenous Land Use Agreements

Green Jobs Plan

Delivery of the Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund



Aboriginal Empowerment Board

Murujuga Rock Art Strategy implementation and partnership with the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation

Water is critical to improving economic and social outcomes for First Nations peoples. Closing the Gap aims to redress this through the development of a new inland waters target.

We have also been working with the State Government to increase Aboriginal inclusion in the water industry, through water allocation planning and licensing processes.



Then AWEAG co-Chair Jason Barrow (right) conducts a smoking ceremony to farewell outgoing Director General Michelle Andrews and welcome Alistair Jones into the role

► Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group

Recognising the profound cultural knowledge and connection to Country and living waters of First Nations people, the AWEAG provides strategic counsel to the department. The AWEAG meets quarterly to ensure that Aboriginal knowledge, values and needs are considered and appropriately addressed in the way the department manages and regulates Western Australia's environment and water resources.



Our staff meet with our AWEAG and the Committee of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Water Interests

► Aboriginal Empowerment Board

Established in 2022, the Aboriginal Empowerment Board leads and guides the department's commitment and vision for ongoing reconciliation and the engagement and empowerment of Aboriginal peoples and communities through our business activities.

The Board meets quarterly and is made up of our Corporate Executive and Aboriginal staff.

► Yamatji Water Company

The department has engaged the newly established Yamatji Water Company to provide [water monitoring services](#) as part of the state's Yamatji Nation Southern Regional Agreement native title extinguishment settlement package.

The services will be provided by Yamatji people who have been trained in an arrangement between Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation, ATC Work Smart and Central Regional TAFE, with support from the department. This comprehensive training included a work placement at our Geraldton office and rotations with ILLUKA Resources, 29 Metals, Water Corporation and Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation.



Yamatji Water Company and department staff presented to Yamatji Cultural Groups




Beachpit sampling

This collaboration aims to enhance the economic independence and self-determination of the Yamatji people through the sustainable development and management of water resources within the region.

► La Grange collaboration agreements

As part of the [La Grange Groundwater-Dependent Ecosystems Investigation](#) project, the department has signed collaboration agreements with Nyamba Buru Yawuru and Karajarri Traditional Lands Association. These agreements detail how we work together and how we can use the knowledge that is shared.



Through this project, Yawuru Country Managers and Karajarri Rangers worked with our scientists on eight field trips on Country in 2023–24. This involved:

- ecohydrological, vegetation and water monitoring
- bilby surveys
- cultural mapping
- heritage surveys.

A unique aspect of this project is the investigation into the role that groundwater may play in the health of the nearshore marine environment.

We also worked with North Regional TAFE to develop a Certificate II course in Sampling and Measurement, which had its first intake in May 2024. This offers Country Managers and Rangers from Traditional Owner groups a formal qualification in environmental monitoring relevant to their region.

The ability of Aboriginal Ranger groups to gain formal qualifications in groundwater sampling, measurement techniques and equipment operation means they are better able to undertake fee-for-service work for other organisations.

► Indigenous Land Use Agreements

The State Government has committed to resolving native title compensation matters through agreement with native title parties. The department plays a pivotal role in progressing commitments under three native title settlements and is represented on the steering and implementation committees overseeing delivery of Indigenous Land Use Agreements.

South West Native Title Settlement

The department is working in partnership with South West Regional Corporations to facilitate access to public drinking water source areas for some customary activities. Work is progressing through the South West Public Drinking Water Source Working Group, co-chaired by the department and Water Corporation.

Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement

We support the Yamatji Nation with key components of the Indigenous land use agreement. This includes the use or trade of a 25-gigalitre-per-year groundwater reserve, funding for groundwater investigations to

explore viable water resources within the reserve and accredited water monitoring training and employment. Support for managing these commitments is also provided by an Aboriginal Liaison Officer funded through the settlement.

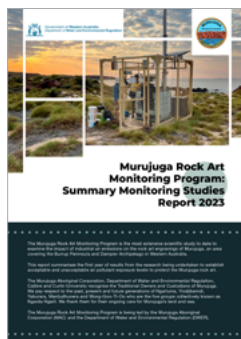
Tjiwarl Palyakuwa Indigenous Land Use Agreement

The Tjiwarl Agreement recognises the spiritual relationship of Tjiwarl people to water, the importance of access to water resources and the need for input into the management of water on Tjiwarl Country.

Through the Tjiwarl Water Working Group, we are supporting Tjiwarl people to undertake a study of water resources on Country and to identify and protect their cultural, economic and environmental values. We also support them to access information related to water licensing and permitting as well as early engagement with water licence and permit applicants.

► Murujuga Rock Art Strategy implementation and partnership with the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation

The department is committed to the ongoing protection of Murujuga's rock art by working in partnership with the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC). MAC represents five language groups who come together to care for Murujuga land and sea Country, known collectively as Ngarda Ngarli.



In recognition of MAC's ongoing leadership, we renewed our longstanding partnership with MAC in October 2023. As part of this, funding was extended to support MAC's involvement in and oversight of the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program.

In December 2023, the department and MAC jointly released the [first-year results](#) from the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program, the most extensive scientific study to date to examine the impact of industrial air emissions on the rock art engravings of Murujuga.

This year, MAC Rangers Glen Aubry and Kasziem Bin Sali and our Aboriginal Project Officer Matt Palfrey completed the first of five university-level micro-credentials on air quality monitoring, which are essential to support ongoing implementation of the monitoring program.

► Jillian Collard: Executive leadership experience

Our Director Aboriginal Engagement and Partnerships, Jillian Collard, is a Noongar leader with connections to the Whadjuk, Ballardong and Wilman groups.

In 2023–24 Jillian joined our Corporate Executive for 12 months as part of the Public Sector Commission's Women in Executive Leadership



"Continuing to build on my leadership journey gave me the courage to take that next step and take part in this initiative to expand my skills at the executive level.

It's been an exciting opportunity that gave me the confidence to elevate, and contribute to the executive, the department and the sector. I've enjoyed my experience on the initiative and look forward to the future and continuing my leadership opportunities."

– Jillian

Development Experience Initiative. This enabled her to gain executive leadership experience and expand her impact across the agency.

► Danjoo Koorliny

Danjoo Koorliny is a large-scale, long-term, systems-change movement designed and led by Aboriginal people to help us all walk together towards 2029 (200 years of colonisation in Perth/Boorloo) and beyond. We continue to strengthen our connection with Danjoo Koorliny, an initiative that focuses on improving the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

\\ A place of opportunity! /\



Our capabilities

Graduate program

Our recruitment drive for our 2025 Graduate Program and Aboriginal Graduate Program was again supported by the Public Sector Commission’s ‘A place of opportunity’ initiative.

We built on the success of earlier recruitment campaigns to attract university graduates committed to positive environmental change by offering well-rounded professional, personal and peer-led development.

Incorporating a specialised Aboriginal graduate program highlights our commitment to valuing Aboriginal knowledge and cultural advice as set out in our [Strategic plan 2022–26](#).

Our Aboriginal graduates bring valuable cultural perspectives to decision-making processes, which will lead to more enriched, informed and diverse outcomes.

All graduates are supported through further education, mentoring, networking and the chance to rotate placements across our portfolios. Our Youth Outreach Understanding and Networking Group (YOUNG) is a platform for staff aged 30 and under to voice their opinions and concerns. The group’s objective is to link members with intergenerational connections, knowledge-sharing, upskilling and volunteering.

Graduates also learn new skills to combat climate change at an individual and professional level through carbon literacy training run in collaboration with Edith Cowan University’s School of Business and Law.

We were delighted to be included as a Top Graduate Employer in 2023 by the Australian Association of Graduate Employers.



Watch program testimonial by Sharlene Baloch on [YouTube](#)



2024 Graduate Officers Rebecca Wei, Brianne Robinson-Ellis, Rachel Padden, Lucinta Holmes and Sharlene Baloch

Previous page: Minister for Environment; Climate Action Reece Whitby and Minister for Water Simone McGurk with previous graduate program participants

Building leadership capabilities

A key component of our portfolio operating model is the Building Leadership Impact initiative.

This was formally released across the Western Australia public sector in February 2023 and offers a new and comprehensive approach to strengthening the leadership behaviours of all public sector employees.

We are investing in our staff, no matter their level, qualification, age, role, or experience, to build capability and develop strong leadership. This will enable the department to meet challenging and complex business needs and to create high-performing teams.

Our new, best-practice MyLearning online training portal supports this initiative. Staff can build their leadership capability through the wide range of training topics such as career development, change management, critical thinking, goal setting, project management, emotional intelligence and building resilience.

Staff reunion

On 5 June 2024, World Environment Day, we held our inaugural staff reunion at Perth City Farm.

Fifty-four former staff members attended, reconnecting and sharing memories. The positive feedback sparked a conversation about establishing an alumni group.

A department alumni group would offer an enduring sense of community and provide collaborative networking opportunities. It would also create a platform for mentoring and professional development, ensuring that the department's evolving environmental priorities continue to support a strong economy and thriving communities.

Post-event survey data highlighted the enduring bonds and shared commitment to the environment among past and present staff. The establishment of an alumni group will be explored in the coming year.



W.S. Lonnie Awards

The Institute of Public Administration Australia WA's W.S. Lonnie Awards are held each year for excellence and accountability in annual reporting.

Our [2022–23 annual report](#) claimed the Silver Award in the General Government Sector – Agencies with 101–1,000 full-time equivalent staff. In the Major Awards section, it won the Margaret McAleer Special Commendation, shared with Western Australia Police Force.

The recognition follows a Bronze Award for our [2021–22 report](#) and a Gold Award for our [2020–21 report](#).



Governance

Agency Capability Review outcomes reporting

A review of the department was carried out between November 2021 and June 2022 as part of the Public Sector Commission's sector-wide Agency Capability Review Program.

The [review](#), published in September 2022, acknowledged our committed and values-based workforce with strong science knowledge and policy skills, and our effective relationships across government and with our statutory boards and committees.

► Our response

The department began the implementation of a new portfolio operating model in August 2023, which saw us shift from nine directorates to three portfolios: Climate and Sustainability, Approvals, and Strategy and Performance.

In November 2023, Chris Shaw was appointed Deputy Director General Approvals following the appointments of Dennis O'Reilly as Deputy Director General Strategy and Performance in January 2023, and Emily Briggs as Deputy Director General Climate and Sustainability in April 2023.

Implementation of the new structure is nearly complete. Our focus for the final phase will be on establishing the Statewide Delivery directorate to ensure we leverage our significant regional presence to its fullest extent for regulatory decision-making and policy setting across the department.

Work to reform our approvals system has also begun and we have accelerated the delivery of Environment Online.

Another new arrangement will see graduates starting in July 2024 join a cross-government graduate program offered by JTSI and DEMIRS.

The review findings

Improvements were suggested for us to:



Stakeholder, customer and community insights

Key findings from this year’s stakeholder research:

- The proportion of key stakeholders who feel positive towards the department strengthened to 84 per cent.
- The majority (87%) of stakeholders believe their interactions with the department are the same as, or better than, their dealings with other government organisations.

Perceptions of the department’s leadership, ability to address queries and provision of services needed to manage water and environmental resources have improved. Similarly, perceptions of the department considering the needs of stakeholders and the community, and considering current and emerging issues, have improved.



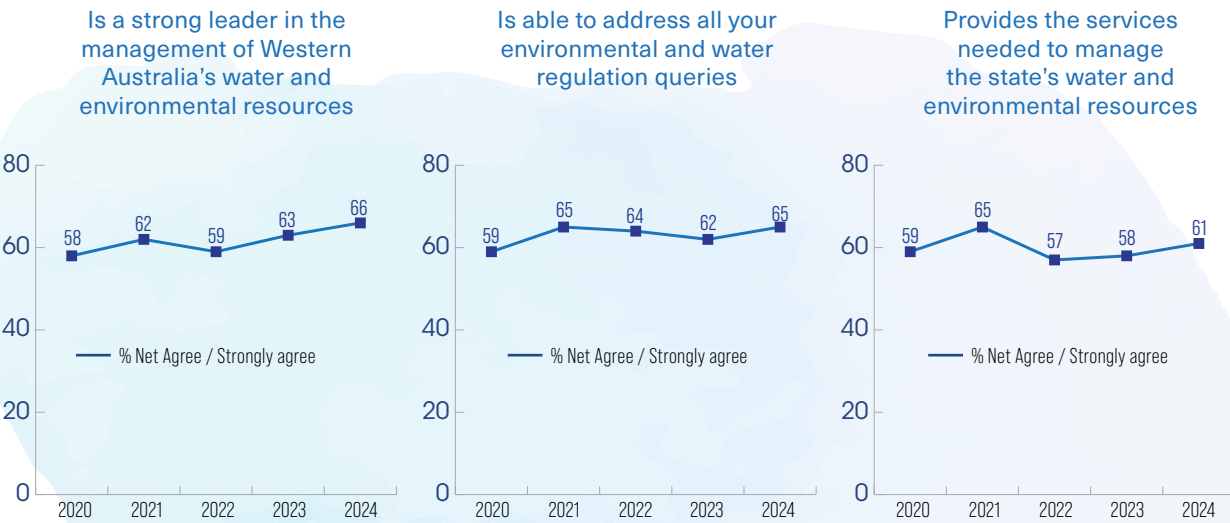
Slow response and approval times continue to be the key reasons for negative sentiment. Other weaker aspects of the customer service experience are the ease of accessing department services, ease of knowing who to contact, accessibility of appropriate people, and timeliness of communications.

Customer ratings continue to vary according to the reason for the customer interaction.

Half of the stakeholders and customers who have used Environment Online feel it has improved their interactions.

In response to this feedback, we are exploring customer service options across all work areas to deliver a better, and more consistent, customer experience.

Our department:





Environmental Officers
Kelli O'Neill and
Gina Marino

Appendices

Appendix A: Legislation

Legislation administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation as at 30 June 2024

Carbon Rights Act 2003

Contaminated Sites Act 2003

Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947

Environmental Protection Act 1986

Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2020

Environmental Protection (Landfill) Levy Act 1998

Litter Act 1979 (the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is the agency principally assisting the Minister for Environment in the administration of this Act assisted by the Keep Australia Beautiful Council [Western Australia])

Metropolitan Arterial Drainage Act 1982

Metropolitan Water Authority Act 1982

Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909

National Environmental Protection Council (Western Australia) Act 1996

Plumbers Licensing Act 1995 (except Part 5A which is administered by the Minister for Commerce principally assisted by the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) – alternative citations are *Water Services Coordination Act 1995* and *Water Licensing Act 1995*

Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 (the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is the agency principally assisting the Minister for Environment in the administration of this Act assisted by the Waste Authority)

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Act 2007 (the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is the agency principally assisting the Minister for Environment in the administration of this Act assisted by the Waste Authority)

Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984

Water Agencies Restructure (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 1995

Water Corporations Act 1995

Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2006

Water Resources Legislation Amendment Act 2007

Water Services Act 2012

Water Services Coordination Act 1995

Water Services Licensing Act 1995 (also called *Plumbers Licensing Act 1995*) (except Part 5A, which the Department of Commerce administers)

Waterways Conservation Act 1976

Regulations administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation as at 30 June 2024

Clean Air (Determination of Air Impurities in Gases Discharged to the Atmosphere) Regulations 1983	Environmental Protection (Kwinana) (Atmospheric Wastes) Regulations 1992	Environmental Protection Regulations 1987
Contaminated Sites Regulations 2006	Environmental Protection (Metal Coating) Regulations 2001	Litter Regulations 1981
Country Areas Water Supply (Clearing Licence) Regulations 1981	Environmental Protection (NEPM-NPI) Regulations 1998	Noise Abatement (Noise Labelling of Equipment) Regulations (No. 2) 1985
Environmental Protection (Abattoirs) Regulations 2001	Environmental Protection (NEPM-UPM) Regulations 2013	Plumbers Licensing and Plumbing Standards Regulations 2000
Environmental Protection (Abrasive Blasting) Regulations 1998	Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997	Rights in Water and Irrigation Regulations 2000
Environmental Protection (Bilateral Agreements) Regulations 2021	Environmental Protection (Packaged Fertiliser) Regulations 2010	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (Container Deposit Scheme) Regulations 2019
Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004	Environmental Protection (Petrol) Regulations 1999	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Regulations 2008
Environmental Protection (Concrete Batching and Cement Product Manufacturing) Regulations 1998	Environmental Protection (Plastic Bags) Regulations 2018	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (e-waste) Regulations 2024
Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004	Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008
Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021	Environmental Protection (Recovery of Vapours from the Transfer of Organic Liquids) Regulations 1995	Water Agencies (Entry Warrant) Regulations 1985
Environmental Protection (Fibre Reinforced Plastics) Regulations 1998	Environmental Protection (Rural Landfill) Regulations 2002	Water Agencies (Infringements) Regulations 1994
Environmental Protection (Goldfields Residential Areas) (Sulfur Dioxide) Regulations 2003	Environmental Protection (Solid Fuel Heater and Firewood) Regulations 2018	Water Corporations (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2013
	Environmental Protection (Unauthorised Discharges) Regulations 2004	Water Services Regulations 2013
		Water Services (Water Corporations Charges) Regulations 2014
		Waterways Conservation Regulations 1981

Other subsidiary legislation affecting our activities

For all other subsidiary legislation including bylaws, notices, declarations, proclamations, approvals, exemptions, orders, policy, pollution control areas, vesting orders, irrigation districts, standards and guidelines, please visit www.legislation.wa.gov.au.

Other key legislation affecting our activities

In the performance of our functions, the department complied with the following laws:

<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972</i>	<i>State Records Act 2000</i>
<i>Auditor General Act 2006</i>	<i>Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981</i>
<i>Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003</i>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i>
<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i>	
<i>Disability Services Act 1993</i>	
<i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i>	
<i>Financial Management Act 2006</i>	
<i>Freedom of Information Act 1992</i>	
<i>Government Employees Housing Act 1964</i>	
<i>Industrial Relations Act 1979</i>	
<i>National Environmental Protection Council Act 1997 (Cth)</i>	
<i>Long Service Leave Act 1958</i>	
<i>Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993</i>	
<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)</i>	
<i>Procurement Act 2020</i>	
<i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003</i>	
<i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>	
<i>Salaries and Allowances Act 1975</i>	

Appendix B: Shortened forms

Term	Definition
AWEAG	Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group
C&D	construction and demolition
C&I	commercial and industrial
Contaminated Sites Act	<i>Contaminated Sites Act 2003</i>
CWSP	Community Water Supplies Partnership
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
DEMIRS	Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
department	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
DMA	decision-making authority
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i>
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
ERRF	Environmental Revegetation and Rehabilitation Fund
EV	electric vehicle
FOGO	food organics and garden organics

Term	Definition
FOI	freedom of information
FOI Act	<i>Freedom of Information Act 1992</i>
GL	gigalitres
ha	hectares
JTSI	Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation
KABC	Keep Australia Beautiful Council
KPI	key performance indicator
LGA	local government authority
MAC	Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation
MAR	Mandatory Auditor's Report
MSW	municipal solid waste
RtR	Roads to Reuse
SCWS	Strategic Community Water Supply
SERS	<i>Sectoral emissions reduction strategy for Western Australia</i>
WA	Western Australia
WALGA	Western Australia Local Government Association
waste strategy	<i>Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030</i>
WIR	Water Information Reporting

Appendix C: References

BoM (Bureau of Meteorology) (2024a) [Western Australia in summer 2023-24](#), BoM website, accessed 6 September 2024.

BoM (2024b) [Western Australia in 2023](#), BoM website, Australian Government, accessed 4 September 2024.

CSIRO and BoM (2022) [State of the Climate 2022](#), CSIRO and BoM, Australian Government, accessed 4 September 2024.

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NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) National Centers for Environmental Information (2024) [January 2024 Global Climate Report](#), NOAA NCEI website, accessed 4 September 2024.

Teasdale N and Panegyres PK (2023) 'Climate change in Western Australia and its impact on human health', *Journal of Climate Change and Health*, 12(1) Article 100243. doi: [10.1016/j.joclim.2023.100243](#).

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Your feedback on our 2023–24 annual report would be greatly appreciated. We will use your comments to help improve the clarity and presentation of our publications. Thank you for your input.

- Did the report help you understand the department, its purpose, services and performance?

not at all	not really	somewhat	yes	absolutely
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- Did you find the design and presentation functional and effective?

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- Was the report clear, concise and easy to read?

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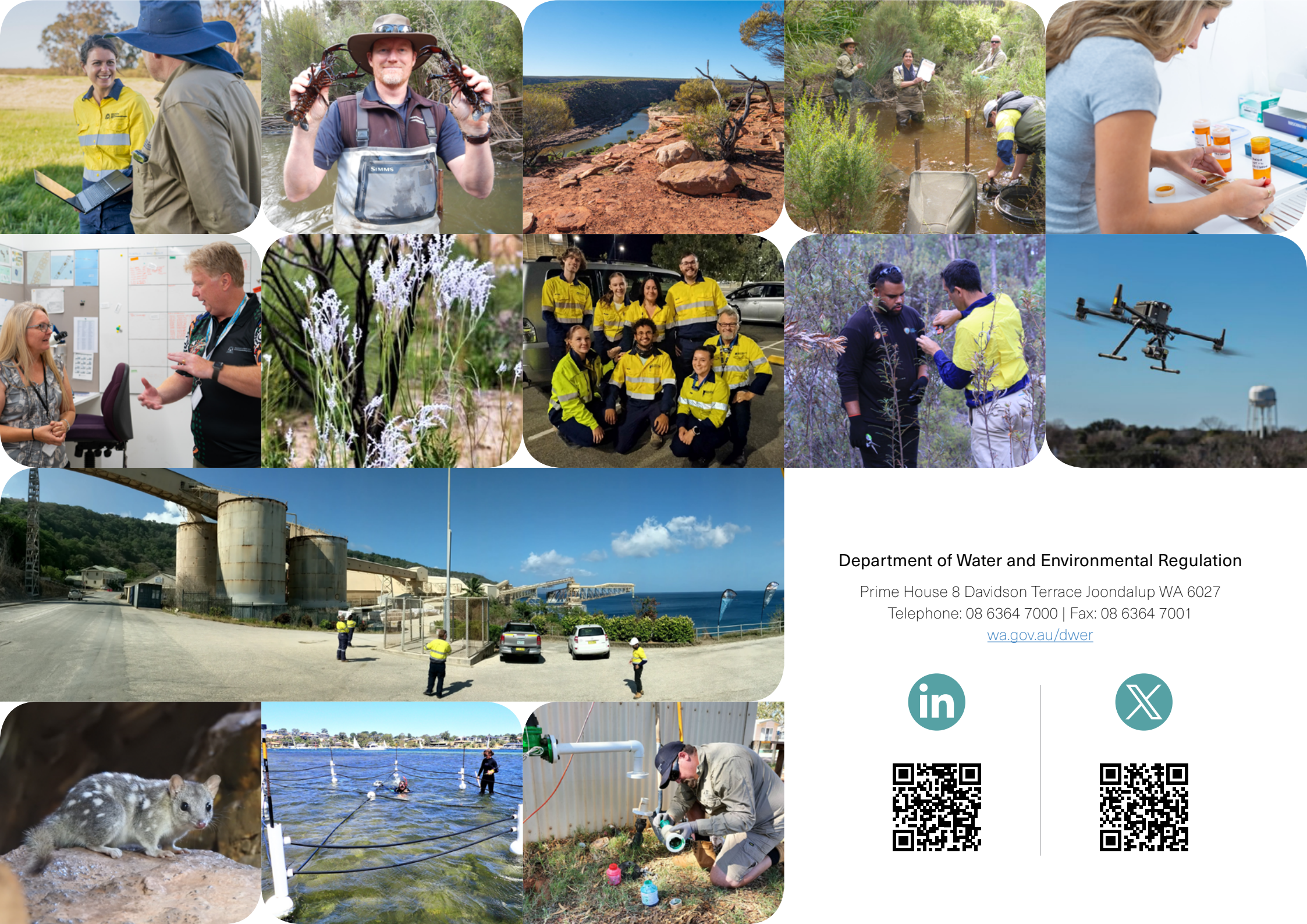
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