

Environmental Regulation Division Compliance Plan 2024-25

Department of
Lands, Planning and Environment

A strong environmental regulator deters crime, supports a stable economy and protects the Territory lifestyle.

Executive Director, Environmental Regulation



Onshore petroleum

- > Inspect drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities
- > Audit compliance with rehabilitation, chemical storage and waste management commitments in EMPs



Projects assessed by the NT EPA

- > Inspect projects with new environmental approvals within six months



Darwin Harbour

- > Audit and inspect all licensed discharges and dredging in Darwin Harbour



Hydrocarbon facilities

- > Audit and inspect all hydrocarbon facilities



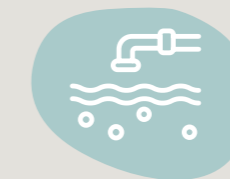
Licensed landfills

- > Inspect all licensed landfill sites and review tyre management



Treated wastewater (sewage)

- > Audit discharge and monitoring of sewage treatment facilities



Treated wastewater (mining)

- > Ensure lawful discharges from high-risk mining sites



Waste transporters and transfer stations

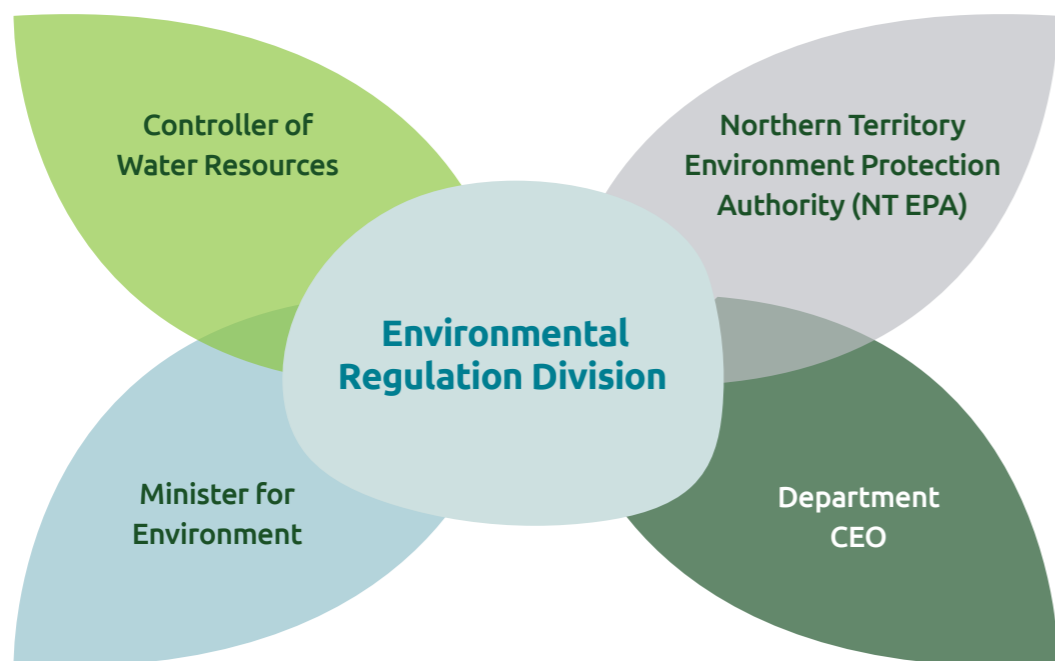
- > Inspect high-risk transport, storage and waste transfer stations

Environmental Regulation Division Compliance Plan 2024-25

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Who are we?

The Environmental Regulation Division within the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) supports four statutory decision-makers under a wide range of environmental laws to protect the Territory's environment.



We apply the proportionate, accountable, consistent, targeted and transparent (PACTT)¹ regulatory principles to everything that we do, including advice, licensing, monitoring compliance and enforcement.

The PACTT principles



Proportionate

Our actions consider the risk of harm and attitude to compliance.



Accountable

We explain, justify, and document our regulatory actions and decisions.



Consistent

Our processes are consistent and lead us to the right outcomes.



Transparent

We share information about our actions and decisions.



Targeted

We allocate effort and resources to the areas with the potential for most harm.

Our purpose

Why we do it

To strike the right balance between protecting the environment and enabling development.

What we do

We apply, monitor and ensure compliance with the law.

How we do it

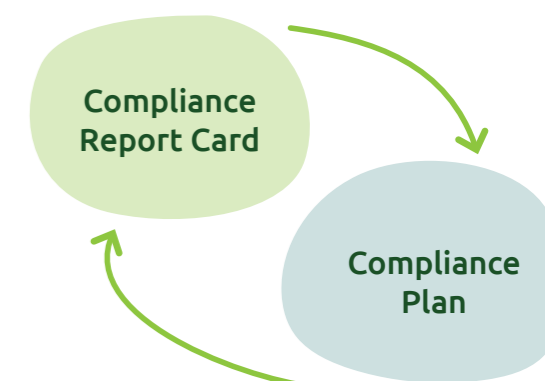
We apply the PACTT principles to our regulatory functions.

Our compliance planning and reporting




Our commitment to applying our PACTT principles includes publishing our compliance priorities in annual compliance plans and comparing our performance against them in compliance report cards.






In 2023, the division published its first [Compliance Plan](#). It targeted our effort and resources to areas with the potential for most harm and transparently communicated our compliance priorities.

We kept ourselves accountable to that plan and reported back on how we delivered it in our Compliance Report Card. This in turn informed our focus in this 2024-25 Compliance Plan.



¹ Pink, G., Navigating Regulatory Language: An A to Z Guide, (2021)

Description	What is the issue and why is it important?	Where will the regulator target its effort?
<p>Onshore petroleum</p> 	<p>Our role is to ensure that onshore petroleum activities in the Territory are undertaken in line with approved EMPs. EMPs are drafted by industry and submitted to the regulator for assessment. They are only approved if industry has demonstrated the risks have all been reduced to acceptable levels and in line with the Code of Practice. All EMPs are published.</p> <p>We undertook a number of audits in 2023–24. Our report card provides details of these audits and our findings. We have identified areas for continued focus as well as new focus areas.</p> <p>Key areas for continued focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> groundwater monitoring and sampling practices progressive rehabilitation. 	<p>Monitor compliance with groundwater monitoring requirements in approved EMPs, which is a mitigative control to ensure early detection of any aquifer contamination.</p> <p>Conduct at least one inspection of each petroleum company that is authorised to undertake drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities.</p> <p>Undertake an inspection of all facilities licensed to store waste from drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities.</p> <p>Undertake an audit of industry compliance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring activities take place in approved areas ensuring activities are rehabilitated in line with commitments in EMPs implementing controls to ensure approved drilling and hydraulic fracturing chemicals are stored appropriately with appropriate secondary containment to prevent loss of containment where required implementing controls to ensure drilling wastes and wastewater have appropriate liners and freeboard to prevent loss of containment.
<p>Significant projects assessed by the NT EPA</p> 	<p>Under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2019</i>, the independent NT EPA assesses projects with the potential for significant impact and makes recommendations to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment (the Minister) about how to manage those impacts. The Minister may agree to those recommendations and can include them as conditions in an ‘environmental approval’.</p> <p>In 2023–24 we undertook compliance audits and inspections of all premises with an environmental approval. These inspections were instrumental in setting up regulatory expectations for the project and site familiarisation.</p>	<p>Conduct compliance audits and inspections of projects with an environmental approval within six months of works commencing.</p>
<p>Discharges into Darwin Harbour</p> 	<p>Darwin Harbour is a focal point for cultural, residential, commercial and industrial activity. Maintaining the health of the harbour is critical for all users of the harbour. A range of facilities are currently licensed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discharge wastewater directly into Darwin Harbour dredge spoil directly into Darwin Harbour discharge to the Darwin Harbour catchment. <p>The sensitive nature of the harbour environment makes compliance under these licences an important focus for us.</p> <p>Commencing in 2024–25, we will publish a statement of reasons for WDL decisions on our website.</p>	<p>Conduct compliance audits and inspections of all licenced sites directly discharging into or dredging in Darwin Harbour. These are as follows:</p> <p>Sewage treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leanyer-Sanderson Ludmilla Berrimah Palmerston <p>LNG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ichthys LNG Santos LNG <p>Dredging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandorah marine facilities Coonawarra Darwin ship lift INPEX dredging Santos Darwin pipeline duplication <p>Power Generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Territory Generation (Channel Island) <p>Conduct desktop audits of compliance with discharge and monitoring conditions for lower risk or indirect catchment discharges. These include:</p> <p>Aquaculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crocodile farms Small aquaculture facilities <p>Mining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lithium Developments (Grants) NT (Grants and BP33 projects).

Description	What is the issue and why is it important?	Where will the regulator target its effort?
<p>Hydrocarbon facilities</p> 	<p>The Territory has 4 hydrocarbon facilities regulated through EPLs or EAs. They are held by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENI Australia B.V. (Blacktip) • Ichthys LNG Pty Ltd (INPEX) • Santos NA Darwin Pipeline Pty Ltd (DLNG) • Crowley Australia Pty Ltd (Project Caymus). <p>We understand the need to provide the Darwin and Palmerston community confidence around air quality related to hydrocarbon facilities, particularly considering proposed development at the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct.</p>	<p>Conduct a compliance audit and inspection of all hydrocarbon facilities. Conduct an audit of emissions reported by licensees to the National Pollutant Inventory. Continue ambient air quality monitoring at 3 stations in the Darwin area. Explore what changes can be made to provide the community with additional confidence in the regulation of air emissions and the health of the Darwin airshed.</p>
<p>Licensed landfills</p> 	<p>The Territory has unique waste management challenges. A widely dispersed population with large distances and small economies of scale creates challenges for sustainable waste management. Waste tyres, in particular, are a problem across the Territory, including at licenced landfills.</p>	<p>Conduct at least one inspection of each licensed landfill site. Review tyre management practices at licenced landfills and provide guidance to landfill operators to ensure better management of tyres at their facilities.</p>
<p>Treated wastewater discharge (sewage)</p> 	<p>There are 27 sewage treatment facilities in the Territory that are licensed to discharge treated wastewater. Facilities are in urban, regional and remote locations servicing Northern Territory communities. While remote and regional facilities face unique challenges in achieving compliance, it is important that all members of the community can be confident their local environment is protected.</p>	<p>Audit discharge and monitoring conditions for licensed sewage treatment facilities.</p>
<p>Treated wastewater discharges (mining)</p> 	<p>There are currently 10 Waste Discharge Licences (WDLs) related to mine sites (including sites in care and maintenance, legacy and remediation). Treated wastewater from mining activities is considered a high potential risk to the environment and will remain a focus of ours.</p>	<p>Conduct compliance audits and inspections of licensed mine sites that are actively discharging, with a focus on water quality and reporting of monitoring results.</p>
<p>Waste transporters and waste transfer stations</p> 	<p>There are approximately 120 licence holders permitted to transport and/or store listed waste (excluding aquaculture, abattoirs, landfills, and transfer stations) within the Northern Territory. In the 2023–24 financial year targeted inspections were undertaken at 15 licensed facilities. The inspections identified areas for improvement including listed waste storage and spill response preparedness. These areas will be a focus for us in the 2024-25 financial year.</p>	<p>Conduct inspections at high-risk transport and storage facilities and waste transfer stations. Review waste storage measures and emergency response preparedness at high-risk waste facilities.</p>