

Annual Report 2024-25







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Letter from the Chairperson NT EPA to the Minister

The Hon. Joshua Burgoyne MLA
Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment
Parliament House
State Square Darwin NT 0800

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present you with the annual report of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) for the year ended 30 June 2025, as required under section 33 of the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012*.

The report describes the performance of the NT EPA's functions during the 2024–2025 financial year including its activities outlined in the NT EPA's Statement of Intent 2023–2027.



Dr Paul Vogel AM
Chairperson
Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority

28 October 2025

Chairperson's message

I am pleased to present the NT EPA's Annual Report 2024–2025, which sets out the continued action of the NT EPA under the NT EPA Statement of Intent 2023–2027.

In 2024–2025, the scale and impacts of proposals in the NT highlighted the importance of the NT EPA's role to promote ecologically sustainable development, protect the environment and enhance community confidence.

The NT EPA's administration of the environmental impact assessment process under the *Environment Protection Act 2019* was efficient, with 91% of decisions made within the statutory timeframe.

The NT EPA provided its assessment report and draft environmental approval for the Phase 2 of the Arnhem Space Centre to the Minister, and public consultation was undertaken in relation to the assessment of 8 proposals, including:

- Phase 2 Arnhem Space Centre: proposal to expand the Arnhem Space Centre near Nhulunbuy
- Wurrumiyanga Residential Subdivision: proposal to construct and operate a new residential subdivision development within Wurrumiyanga township of Bathurst Island 80 km north of Darwin
- Little Paradise Development: proposal to construct and operate infrastructure and facilities in the north-east of the main township of Alyangula on Groote Eylandt
- RTA Gove Closure Works at Pond 2 West: proposal to expand the existing footprint of closure works at Rio Tinto Gove operations
- Lei Lithium Project: proposal to develop the Lei Lithium Project, located approximately 30 km south of Darwin
- Sturt Plateau Pipeline: to construct and operate Sturt Plateau Pipeline in the Roper Gulf Region, approximately 50 km south of Daly Waters, and approximately 80 km north of Elliott
- Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) project: proposal to construct and operate an off-stream water storage system adjacent to the Adelaide River in the Coomalie and Litchfield shires, expected to deliver 60 gigalitres annually to the Darwin regional water supply system
- Darwin Energy Hub: proposal to construct and operate solar generators and overhead transmission lines in the Weddell region.

A unique project for the NT is the Middle Arm Precinct because of its scale and use of strategic environmental assessment. The strategic environmental assessment approach enables the NT EPA to assess individual projects within the context of the iterative and cumulative impacts of the precinct. During this reporting period, the NT EPA received regular updates on the Middle Arm Precinct, as part of stakeholder engagement, on environmental studies, research, design work, and progress towards the draft environmental impact statement (EIS).

In 2024–2025, the NT EPA published the Guidance for Modelling Dispersion of Air Pollutants in the NT to provide technical instructions for conducting air quality impact assessments for proposed or existing facilities in the Territory.

Air quality in the NT remains an area of attention for the NT EPA. The technical instructions contained in the guidance document will assist in managing pollutants, especially in the Top End, which is impacted by smoke from distant and local vegetation burning during the dry season. The exceedances of the air quality standards that are reported in 2024–2025 relate to particulates (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) and occurred during the dry season, when bushfires typically contribute to poor air quality in Darwin and Katherine.

Other publications approved by the NT EPA included the Waste Tyre Guide for Private Landholders to assist landholders understand the risks and responsibilities for storing waste tyres and the Guideline: Biosolids Management in the Northern Territory aims to enable the beneficial reuse of biosolids in the NT.

I welcome the incoming NT EPA colleagues that joined during this reporting period,

Ms Tracey Wilson and Dr Gillian Sparkes AM, and acknowledge the outstanding contributions of all NT EPA members. I would also like to thank the staff of DLPE who support the NT EPA and acknowledge their professionalism and the quality of their work.



Looking ahead

In the coming year the NT EPA will continue to assess and advise on the impacts of a range of projects that are significant to the Northern Territory. The assessment of the Middle Arm Precinct will require considerable attention, and the NT EPA will need to be prepared for possible assessment and advice on petroleum activities in the Beetaloo Sub-basin. The NT EPA is expecting to receive referrals for petroleum development activities as proponents plan to move from exploration phase through to production phase.

The NT EPA will have increased capacity to deal with the management of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The NT Government's proposed changes to the *Waste Management and Pollution Control (Administration) Regulations 1998* will explicitly include PFAS as a listed waste. The NT EPA will provide greater certainty about the management of PFAS by releasing a position statement on the application of the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan in the NT.

The NT EPA plans to publish guidance material, policies and guidelines in the coming year to improve certainty and increase transparency in the environmental impact assessment process.

The publications will provide information to proponents, consultants and the public on various topics, for example biodiversity data and Terrestrial ecosystems. The NT EPA aims to build comprehensive and consistent understanding of:

- environmental and ecological factors and their significance to ecosystems
- technical guidelines for proponents on the assessment of potential impacts of proposals
- how the NT EPA exercises its powers and performs its functions
- best practice – demonstrating use of the latest and most appropriate technologies and techniques
- general environmental duties.

We look forward to expanding the resources available to support the ecologically sustainable development of the Northern Territory.

The NT EPA plans to continue regular engagement with stakeholders, including project proponents, Aboriginal traditional owners and their representative bodies, and other stakeholders from across the government, industry and environment sectors.



Purpose and function of the NT EPA

The NT EPA is established by the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012* (NT EPA Act). The NT EPA is an independent body providing expert advice on environmental matters in the NT. Its purpose is to ensure the environment is protected for the benefit of current and future generations, and its objectives are defined in the NT EPA Act, to:

- promote ecologically sustainable development (ESD)
- protect the environment, having regard to the need to enable ESD
- promote effective waste management and waste minimisation strategies, and
- enhance community and business confidence in the environmental protection regime of the Territory.

The objectives guide the NT EPA's decision making when fulfilling its functions under a range of legislation. The NT EPA's advisory powers are contained in the NT EPA Act; its powers and functions are enabled by the *NT Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act), the *NT Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act 2012* (EP (BC&PB) Act), the *NT Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998* (WMPC Act), and supporting regulations.



Independence, accountability and Statement of Intent

The NT EPA's independence is enshrined in the NT EPA Act, ensuring that neither the NT EPA (as a separate legal entity) nor any of its members are subject to direction by the Minister or government in the performance of the NT EPA's powers and functions.

The NT EPA is accountable to the NT community and government. This expectation and obligation is reflected in various provisions in the NT EPA Act. The NT EPA Act requires the NT EPA to provide the Minister with a Statement of Intent specifying the NT EPA's priorities and activities to meet those priorities for the period of the statement. The NT EPA reports on the fulfilment of its activities under the NT EPA Statement of Intent 2023-2027 in this annual report.

The NT EPA comprises 7 members appointed by the NT Administrator, and the chair of the Northern Territory Planning Commission who is appointed by the NT Minister Lands, Planning and Environment in accordance with the *NT Planning Act 1999*. The NT EPA member details are at Appendix 1.

Relationships

The NT EPA relies on its relationship with the community, stakeholders, industry and government to help it achieve the important objectives and functions it is responsible for, including ensuring good environmental management outcomes are achieved and facilitating ESD in the NT while recognising the important role of Aboriginal people, who are stewards of their country, and the importance of participation by Aboriginal people and communities in the environmental decision making process.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) provides the NT EPA with access to staff (employees from the Department's Environment Division) and facilities to enable it to properly exercise its powers and perform its functions. These employees support the NT EPA by conducting the environmental impact assessment process, administering licences and approvals to protect the environment from the impacts of waste and pollution, investigating pollution complaints and potential breaches of environmental legislation, and preparing draft reports and other advisory material to enable the NT EPA to provide the Minister with strategic advice. This approach enables the NT EPA to focus on significant and strategic matters, while DLPE staff of the Environment Division provide administrative and operational support to the NT EPA, including acting under delegation from the NT EPA.

Priorities and activities of the NT EPA

This annual report outlines the NT EPA's achievements and future priorities against the NT EPA's Statement of Intent 2023–2027.

The NT EPA's core responsibilities are environmental impact assessment, waste and pollution management and provision of strategic advice and assurance in line with the NT EPA's objectives.

In delivering on these responsibilities, the NT EPA's Statement of Intent 2023–2027 identifies the following strategic priorities:



**STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT**



**AN EFFECTIVE AND
EFFICIENT REGULATOR**



**STRATEGIC ADVICE
AND ASSURANCE**



**GREENHOUSE GASES
AND CLIMATE CHANGE**



**GUIDANCE AND
INFORMATION**



Core responsibilities of the NT EPA

Environmental impact assessment

The NT EPA is responsible for implementing the environmental impact assessment process in the NT under the EP Act and the Environment Protection Regulations 2020, undertaking assessments of development proposals that have the potential to have a significant impact on the environment, and providing advice to inform the Minister about whether to grant an environmental approval and if so, on what conditions. The EP Act has been in operation for 5 years as of 27 June 2025.

In 2024–2025, the NT EPA made 22 environmental impact assessment decisions under the EP Act that have statutory timeframes. Of these, 20 decisions (91%) were made within the prescribed statutory timeframe. The number of completed assessment reports and key assessment decisions of the NT EPA in 2024–2025 are listed in Appendix 2, Tables 1, 2 and 3.

The NT EPA completed its assessment of one proposal (Phase 2 expansion of the Arnhem Space Centre) in 2024–2025 and provided its advice to the Minister on 24 November 2024 recommending the proposal be approved with conditions. The Minister's approval was granted on 1 December 2024.

The NT EPA made an assessment decision (whether to assess a referred proposal) on 6 proposals.

The NT EPA determined that 3 proposals would require environmental impact assessment. The Lei Lithium Project is undergoing assessment by the supplementary environmental report (SER) method, and the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) proposal is being assessed by the environmental impact statement (EIS) method. The Little Paradise Development was determined in October 2024 to require assessment by the SER method. However, the proposal was subsequently withdrawn from the assessment process by the proponent in March 2025.

The NT EPA decided that assessment was not required for 3 referred proposals: Sturt Plateau Pipeline; RTA Gove Closure Works at Pond 2 West; and Wurrumiyanga Residential Subdivision.

Throughout the financial year, there were 18 active proposals under an environmental impact assessment process. The NT EPA received 8 new referrals under the EP Act during the financial year, one more than the previous year.



Waste and pollution management

The WMPC Act establishes an environmental approval and licensing regime for certain activities. The licensing regime allows the NT economy to grow without compromising environmental values. Compliance with approvals and licences under the WMPC Act also gives industry and the regulated community a roadmap for earning a social licence in the NT.

Environment protection approvals (EPA) and environment protection licences (EPL) are in place for a range of activities across the economy, including in relation to waste management (e.g. waste transporters, waste transfer facilities and landfills), aquaculture and hydrocarbon processing (including liquefied natural gas) in the NT.

Licences are generally issued for 10 years. This provides industry certainty by reducing administration associated with frequent renewals and enables the NT EPA to focus on strategic compliance activities as outlined in the annual compliance plan.

In 2024–2025, the NT EPA administered*:

- 5 EPAs and processed 3 EPA applications for new licences and amendments
- 169 EPLs and processed 50 EPL applications for new licences, renewals, amendments or transfers

There were 2 EPA applications and 10 EPL applications under assessment on 30 June 2025.

The NT EPA regularly reviews licences to ensure conditions are contemporary and in line with regulatory principles. In 2024–2025, a review of all landfill licence conditions relating to waste battery and tyre storage conditions was conducted and resulted in improved standardisation of licences across the industry.



5
EPAs
administered



169
EPLs
administered

* Totals include licences and approvals that were current during the year as well as those that expired, were surrendered, or suspended.

Air quality

Ambient air quality monitoring is the primary tool to assess and report air quality levels in the Darwin airshed. Monitoring informs our understanding of air quality and guides regulation to prevent or mitigate impacts from pollutants emitted into the airshed. The National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure (AAQ NEPM) sets goals and standards for the major air pollutants and is the primary measure against which ambient air quality and the effect of air pollution from projects (individually and cumulatively) is assessed.

NT EPA is responsible for implementing the AAQ NEPM in the NT through provisions of the WMPC Act and the *National Environment Protection Council (Northern Territory) Act 1994*.

Ambient air quality monitoring is conducted at 3 locations in Darwin (Palmerston, Winnellie, and Stokes Hill), and one location in Katherine, and informs compliance reporting under the AAQ NEPM. Concentrations of air pollutants including carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and particulates (PM₁₀ is particulate matter 10 micrometers or less in diameter, PM_{2.5} is particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter) are measured in Darwin, and only PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are measured in Katherine. Particulates PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in the Darwin airshed are largely associated with smoke from bushfires. Real-time and historical air quality data measured at the 4 ambient air quality monitoring stations are available to the public on the NT EPA website.

The AAQ NEPM specifies a number of standards for different time periods, based on the premise that slightly higher levels of pollutants are less harmful if they only occur for a short period.

During 2024–2025, there were no exceedances of the AAQ NEPM standards for SO₂, NO₂, CO and O₃ recorded in the Darwin region. There were, however, several exceedances of the AAQ NEPM standards for particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}):

- PM_{2.5}: the one-day average PM_{2.5} standard was exceeded on 12 days at Winnellie, 10 days at Palmerston, 15 days at Katherine and 18 days at Stokes Hill (Figure 1). The one-year average PM_{2.5} standard of 8 mg/m³ was exceeded at all the stations; and
- PM₁₀: there were several exceedances of the one-day average PM₁₀ standard. The standard was exceeded on 4 days at Palmerston, 2 days at Katherine and 10 days at Stokes Hill, but no exceedances were recorded at Winnellie (Figure 2). None of the stations exceeded the one-year average PM₁₀ standard of 25 mg/m³.

Exceedances occurred primarily during the dry season months (May to September), when smoke from planned and unplanned bushfires contributes to poor air quality.

AAQ NEPM reporting to the National Environment Protection Council (NEPC) is required on a calendar year basis.



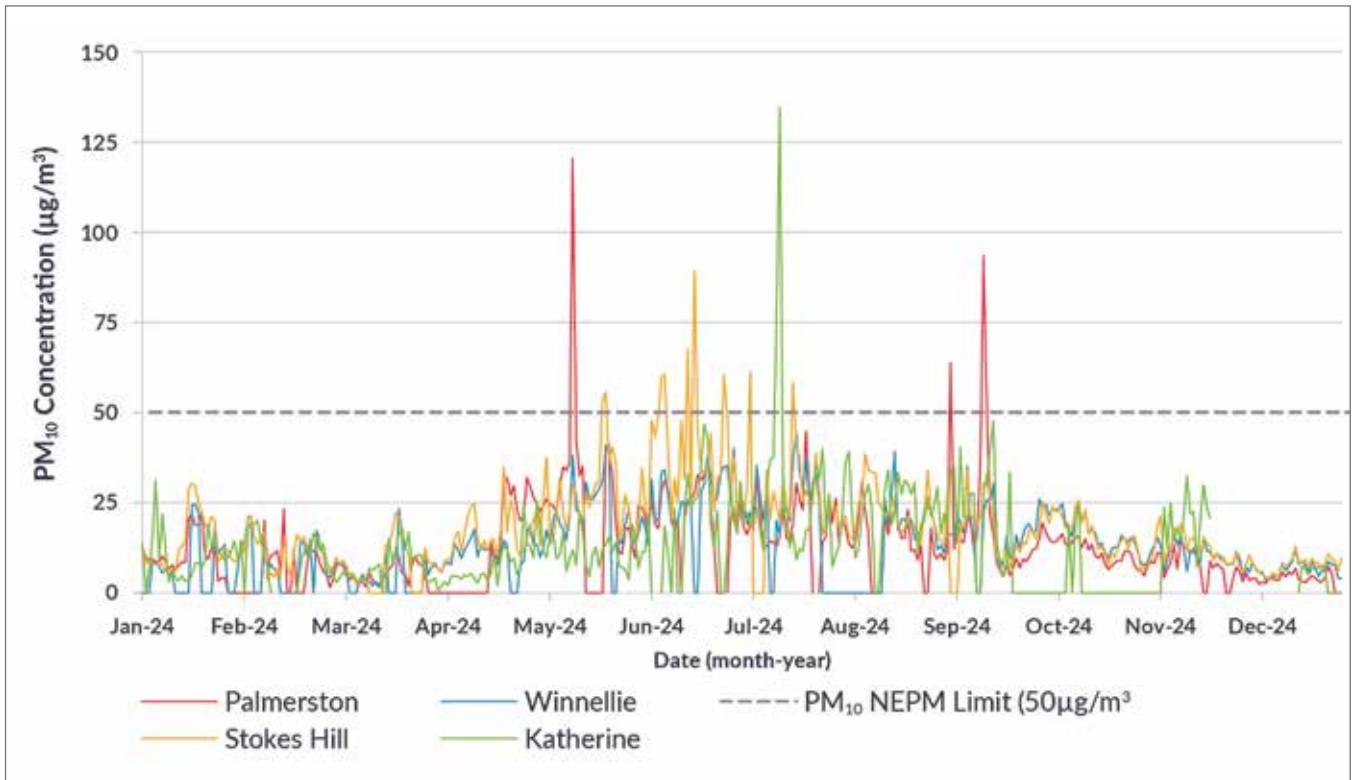


Figure 1: One-day average particulates (PM₁₀) concentrations at the air quality monitoring stations (2024) as reported to NEPC in 2024–25.

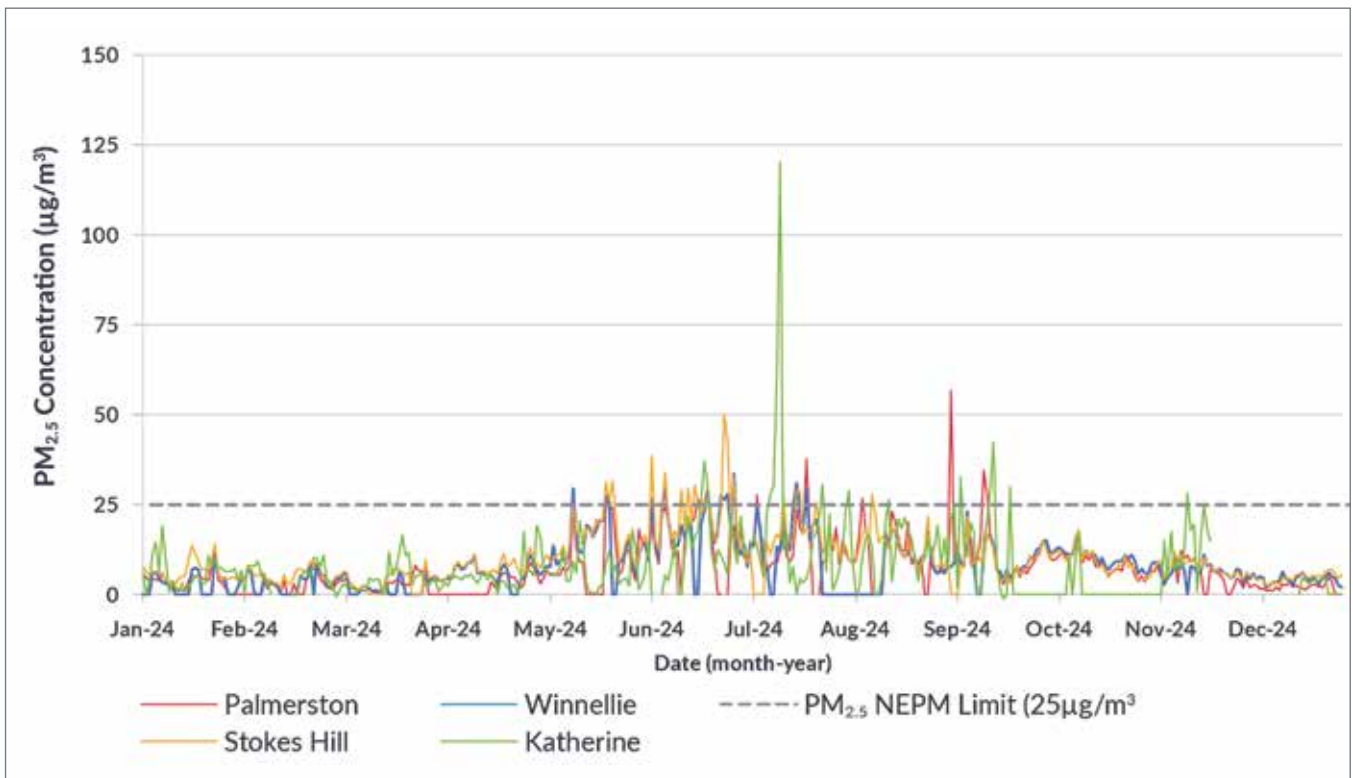


Figure 2: One-day average particulates (PM_{2.5}) concentrations at the air quality monitoring stations (2024) as reported to NEPC in 2024–25.

Licences issued by the NT EPA for LNG processing premises regulate air emissions at the point of release (stacks). Licences include requirements for monitoring of emissions at licensed discharge points to ensure compliance with emission limits.

In 2025, the NT EPA published the Guidance for Modelling Dispersion of Air Pollutants in the NT to provide technical instructions for proponents conducting air quality impact assessments of proposed or existing facilities in the Territory.

Air quality modelling is used to predict the concentration in air of pollutants that are released from various sources such as industrial facilities. Modelled concentrations are used to assess air quality impacts to ensure regulatory compliance and inform environmental management decisions. Monitoring of air quality is then used to validate model predictions and importantly provides the community with confidence their health is protected from air pollution.

Strategic advice and assurance

Since February 2019, the NT EPA has provided advice to the Minister in relation to all Environment Management Plans (EMPs) submitted under the NT Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016. During this time, the NT EPA has assessed and provided advice on 43 EMPs from 13 Interest Holders.

In 2025, the Minister removed the requirement for the NT EPA to provide advice on all onshore gas EMPs. This decision was informed by advice from the NT EPA that it has confidence in the experience and maturity of the regulator and robustness of the regulatory framework in the NT.

The NT EPA's purpose and function will be better met through providing independent expert advice to the Minister on strategic environmental matters relating to onshore petroleum developments and administering the EIA process for projects with a potentially significant environmental impact under the EP Act. Under the EP Act, the NT EPA also has discretionary powers to call in a proposal should the significance threshold be met.

Container deposit scheme

The EP (BC&PB) Act establishes the NT container deposit scheme (CDS), a key initiative that reduces beverage container waste and increases resource recovery and recycling across the NT.

During 2024–2025, the NT EPA administered:

- 4 CDS coordinator approvals facilitating return of CDS containers back to the beverage container suppliers
- 20 CDS depot approvals which cover 33 locations in the NT, including renewal of 7 depot approvals and 2 new depot approvals
- 323 CDS supplier registrations authorising the sale of CDS regulated containers in the NT, including 34 new registrations.

For more information on CDS activity, please see the separate CDS Annual Report.



43
EMPs
assessed



4
CDS
coordinator
approvals



20
CDS depot
approvals



323
CDS supplier
registrations

Strategic priorities and activities of the NT EPA

Stakeholder engagement

Priority 1.1 – Enhance community involvement and engagement in environmental decision-making processes

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of the EIA process and best practice environmental regulation. The NT EPA's stakeholders include:

- government, including the Minister, other agencies and the CEO of DLPE
- proponents and the regulated community
- the NT community Aboriginal people, including Land Councils and representative bodies of Traditional Owners
- representative bodies including environmental groups, industry and business peak bodies
- cross-jurisdiction EPA's to inform best practice approaches in the NT.

In December 2024, the NT EPA approved its Stakeholder Engagement Plan (the plan). The plan identifies stakeholders that are important to the NT EPA in exercising its functions and powers; and provides guidance on the NT EPA's approach to engagement with stakeholders in decision-making and the formulation of advice.

The NT EPA has 2 priority focus areas for stakeholder engagement in relation to the EIA process: enhancing community involvement and engagement in environmental decision-making processes; and encouraging proponents to engage early with the NT EPA.

During the environmental impact assessment process, the NT EPA engages with the community at various stages, including consultation on:

- a referral for a proposal
- a supplementary environmental report
- draft terms of reference for an assessment by EIS
- a draft EIS and supplement to the draft EIS
- additional information where relevant.

Submissions from the community made during public consultation periods assist the NT EPA to determine and assess the potentially significant impacts of a proposal on the environment and assists in understanding matters that are of concern to the community.

In 2024–2025, the NT EPA conducted 15 public consultation processes in relation to environmental impact assessment. This included 8 consultation processes related to proposals and 7 related to the development of guidance material.

The NT EPA's online consultation hub is the primary point of engagement with the community for EIA and the development of guidance material. The number of subscribers to the online consultation hub increased by 25% in 2024–2025, expanding the reach of EIA consultation and general news email campaigns to a wider audience.

The DLPE Environment Division hosts the Environmental Assessment Forum (EAF) to bring together representatives from across government to discuss proposals under impact assessment and allow proponents to present information about proposals to inform their submissions to the NT EPA. Three EAF meetings were held in Darwin in 2024–2025 that involved presentations on the Phase 2 Expansion of the Arnhem Space Centre (EAF meeting held 7 August 2024), AROWS proposal (EAF meeting held 4 February 2025) and NT EPA draft biodiversity guidance (EAF meeting held 4 April 2025).

The NT EPA communicates with the regulated community which includes licence and approval holders, and industries which may cause environmental harm but are not required to have a licence or approval. DLPE staff engage with licence and approval holders on behalf of the NT EPA on applications and associated information requirements and on compliance matters.

The NT EPA also consults with stakeholders in developing regulatory guidance and strategic advice to the Minister.

An important focus of stakeholder engagement is to ensure that Aboriginal stakeholders have input to the NT EPA's activities. The NT EPA's engagement is primarily with the relevant Aboriginal land council(s) in the area that would be potentially affected by a proposal and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. In 2024–2025, the NT EPA met with the Central Land Council (CLC) during its April 2025 meeting to discuss the consideration of cultural values in the EIA process, proposals undergoing assessment and effective engagement with Aboriginal people. Advice from land councils will inform the NT EPA's development of guidance for the Culture and Heritage Environmental Factor.

The NT EPA met 10 times in 2024–2025, both by video conference and face-to-face. The NT EPA frequently uses its face-to-face meetings to engage with stakeholders on strategic matters and to inform its environmental impact assessment and licensing responsibilities.

The NT EPA met with 17 stakeholders:

- Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
- Alice Springs Town Council
- Australian Pipeline Association
- Central Land Council
- Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) – Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct
- DLI – Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage project (AROWS)
- DLPE Flora and Fauna Division
- Fortune Agribusiness
- GHD Pty LTD
- Inpex
- JBS&G
- Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment
- Santos
- SunCable
- Tamboran
- Territory Coordinator
- Western Australia Marine Science Institute.

The NT EPA also attended a site visit to the proposed site of the AROWS project.

Outside of the NT EPA meetings, the NT EPA Chairperson meets with the Minister, the CEO of DLPE, and other stakeholders on a regular basis. The NT EPA Chairperson is an ex-officio member of the NT Planning Commission and participated in 8 meetings of the Commission in 2024–2025.

The NT EPA Chairperson is the NT's representative on the Heads of Environment Protection Authorities (HEPA) and attended 2 meetings during the year. HEPA is an informal self-authorising alliance comprising the chairpersons, and the CEO or equivalent representatives from all Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand that provides collective leadership across jurisdictions to protect the environment and communities. The alliance also provides an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences, identify improvements in nationally consistent regulation and promote greater coherence in regulatory practice and policy across jurisdictions.

Priority 1.2 – Encourage proponents to engage early with the NT EPA

The NT EPA encourages early engagement during the pre-referral stage of the environmental impact assessment process when a proponent is considering whether a referral is required to be made. The NT EPA aims to offer proponents of proposals undergoing assessment an opportunity to meet with the NT EPA (or delegate) at least once during the assessment process and potentially more frequently for large-scale or complex proposals. Engagement can help to build relationships and improve visibility through early and ongoing communication for the duration of a proposal.

The DLPE Environmental Assessments team that supports the NT EPA in environmental impact assessment held 70 stakeholder meetings in 2024–2025. This included meetings with proponents and prospective proponents, other environmental regulators, government agencies, environmental consultants, approval holders and Aboriginal land councils.





90%
EPAs/EPLs assessed
within 60 days



An effective and efficient regulator

Priority 2.1 – Build an effective and efficient licensing function

In 2024–2025, the NT EPA administered more than 170 environmental licences and approvals.

The NT EPA and DLPE have adopted a target timeframe of 60 days for processing applications for EPAs and EPLs, with a key performance indicator of 90% of applications assessed within 60 days. In 2024–2025, more than 90% of licence applications were processed within the target timeframes. This provides industry confidence in the regulator and reduces delays through efficient and reliable processing of applications.

Priority 2.2 – Implement a strategic approach to compliance and enforcement

The NT EPA's compliance and enforcement action in 2024–2025 was undertaken in line with the Compliance and Enforcement Policy, Enforcement Guideline and the 2024–25 Compliance Plan. The policy and guideline adopt a risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement, and commit to applying proportionate, accountable, consistent, targeted and transparent (PACTT) principles to the delivery of all regulatory functions.

The 2024–25 Compliance Plan targeted regulatory efforts on activities with the potential to have the most impact on the environment and of concern to the community. Key focus areas this year were licensed landfills, waste transporters and transfer stations, hydrocarbon facilities and major projects assessed by the NT EPA.

All sites identified in the 2024–25 Compliance Plan were inspected on at least one occasion throughout the year and were audited for compliance with licence requirements. Outcomes of regulation activities will be detailed in the 2024–25 Compliance Report Card.

The regulatory response to non-compliances will always depend on the circumstances, considering the level of environmental harm and the person's attitude to compliance (culpability). Responses included a range of the following:

- supporting compliance through the provision of advice and guidance
- formal cautions and warning letters
- remedial action, such as issuing notices requiring environmental audits (section 48 WMPC Act)
- infringement notices.

Priority 2.3 – Enhance delivery of the NT EPA’s regulatory functions, including through improved systems and technology

In 2024–2025 the NT EPA received 540 reports of pollution through its pollution response line (Figure 4).

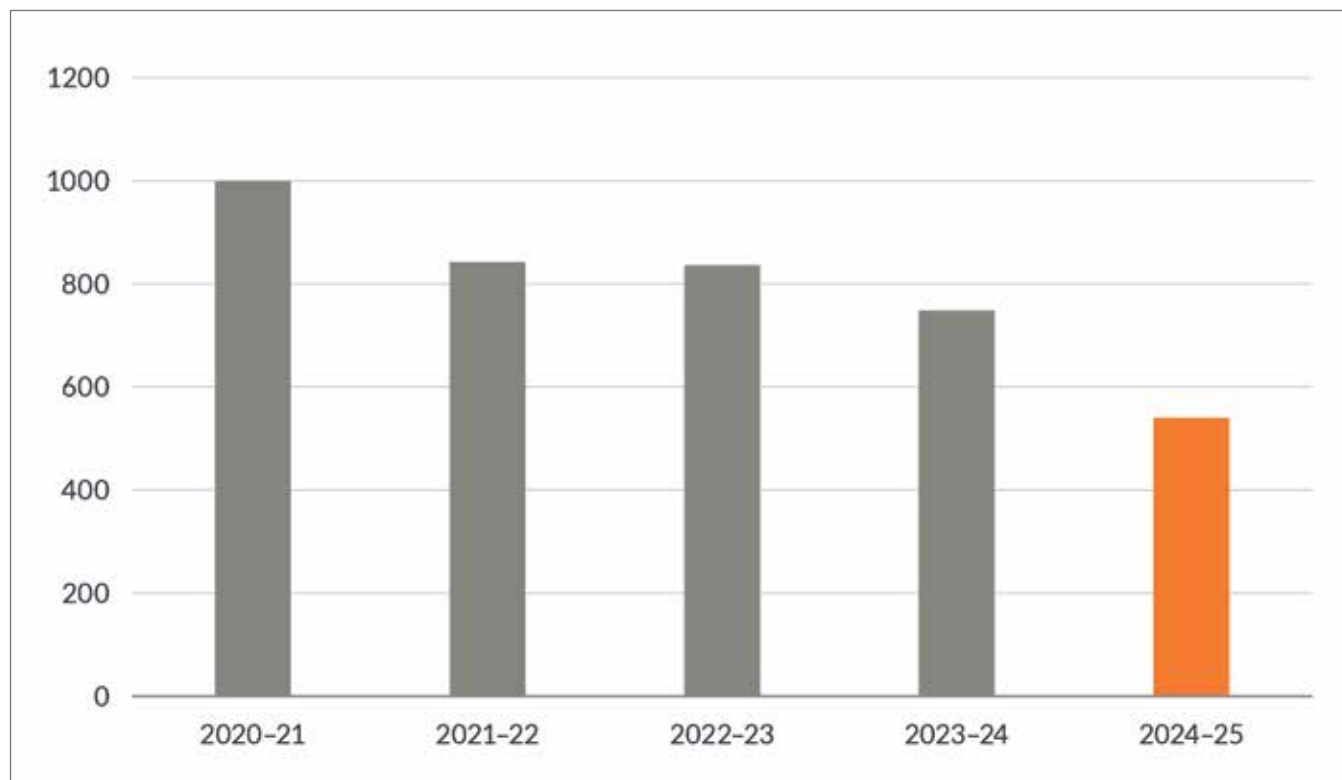


Figure 4: Yearly comparison of pollution response reports from 2020–21 to 2024–25.

The administration of pollution reports is being improved with the development of a new Pollution Case Management (PCM) system.

In 2024–2025 a prototype of the new system was developed and is undergoing testing. It is anticipated that the new system will be fully implemented in early 2026.

The PCM system will streamline current processes by:

- automating the triage process, helping officers to target resources to incidents with the most risk of environmental harm
- removing manual data collection for pollution reports
- providing an intuitive interface and dashboards for managing compliance and enforcement workflows
- providing reporting and business intelligence features.

Detailed investigation and analysis of options is underway in relation to the development of a single, national portal for approvals across all Australian container deposit schemes. There is strong stakeholder support to reduce the administrative burden, and a single portal would assist in promoting harmonisation as part of expanding the scope of the core range of containers within container deposit schemes.

Support for a national portal has moved beyond container approvals to include other supplier transactions such as reporting and invoicing. Work in 2025 has highlighted the complexity of integrating separate systems and the potential need for legislative and/or contractual changes.

The NT EPA has strengthened its regulatory capabilities through the strategic use of drone technology. As part of 'Operation: Don't be a Dumper' (DBAD) - a targeted initiative to address illegal dumping in Alice Springs, drone technology and aerial imagery are assisting the NT EPA to deliver its regulatory functions. By capturing high resolution aerial imagery, drones allow the NT EPA to monitor remote and often inaccessible areas, significantly improving the detection and investigation of illegal dumping activities. This enhanced capability has supported the identification of hot spot areas and is being used to review waste trends and refine proactive enforcement efforts.



Strategic advice and assurance

Priority 3.1 – Support the ecologically sustainable development of the Territory through the provision of strategic advice

The NT EPA Act requires the NT EPA to provide strategic advice at the request of the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment or to provide advice to the Minister on its own initiative. This may include reports on the system of environmental management in the Northern Territory.

The NT EPA has not received any requests for strategic advice from the Minister during the 2024–2025 financial year or provided advice on its own initiative.

Priority 3.2 – Promote effective waste management of emerging and high-risk problematic waste streams

In 2024–2025 the NT EPA targeted its efforts on 2 high-risk waste streams at landfill sites: tyres and used lead-acid batteries. Intelligence from licensed landfills during site inspections highlighted the poor storage of these listed wastes as a key risk of harm to the environment.

To abate the risk of environmental harm, an audit of standard licence conditions has remedied the inconsistent application of storage limits, segregation, and the provision of bunding, and emergency response preparedness. Revised storage conditions drew on advice from the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service and an assessment of guidance from other jurisdictions.

The NT EPA invited feedback from landfill operators on its findings and signalled its intent to implement the new standard storage conditions. No objections were received, and several operators proactively adopted the new conditions ahead of formal licence amendments. All licensed landfills will be subjected to the revised storage conditions in 2025–2026.

In February 2025 the NT EPA published the Waste Tyre Guidance: A guide for private landholders to help landholders understand the risks and responsibilities for storing waste tyres. The guide is relevant to all landholders and informs on the significant environmental, health, and economic risks waste tyres cause when managed incorrectly on their property.

The management of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contaminated waste remains an issue for environmental regulators. In 2024–2025 the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan was updated, resulting in new national guideline limits for PFAS. The NT EPA has been considering transitional arrangements to ensure there is minimal disruption to existing projects in the NT that may be affected by this change.



Priority 3.3 – Improve confidence in the environmental regulatory framework

The NT EPA continued to strengthen its regulatory frameworks in 2024–2025 and aims to provide confidence to industry and the public through effective communication, transparency and stakeholder engagement.

The publication of the annual Compliance Plan and Compliance Report Card, endorsed by the NT EPA, provides industry and the public with a clear view of the regulator’s priorities and achievements. The Compliance Plan specifies the high-risk activities the regulator will target for compliance activities each year, along with ongoing regulatory priorities, while the Compliance Report Card gives an overview of the findings and outcomes of compliance activities and how compliance and enforcement actions have affected behaviour change.

The Authorised Officer Policy and guidance was reviewed and re-published online to provide clarity to Territorians and the regulated community on what they can expect from environmental officers when undertaking monitoring compliance activities and exercising statutory powers.





Greenhouse gases and climate change

Priority 4.1– Support achievement of the NT Government’s net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 target

The NT EPA’s Atmospheric Processes environmental objective is to minimise greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions so as to contribute to the Northern Territory Government’s target of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It recognises the fundamental link between the release of GHG emissions from a proposal, the impact on atmospheric processes and the subsequent changes to climate and incorporates the target of net zero GHG emissions by 2050.

The objective reflects the NT EPA’s expected outcomes for this factor and aims to ensure that the Territory’s environment is clean, healthy and protected for current and future generations.

The NT EPA first published its Environmental factor guidance: Atmospheric processes in August 2023 to guide the environmental impact assessment of proposals with potentially significant greenhouse gas emissions. Submissions received during an 8 week public consultation period in 2022, were considered in development of the guidance.

In 2025 the NT EPA reviewed the Atmospheric processes guidance in response to Commonwealth and NT government policy changes. The NT EPA’s revised guidance will be published in 2025–2026.

Priority 4.2 – Promote consideration of climate change impacts in decision making

The environmental impact assessment process under the EP Act applies to all proposals that may have a potentially significant impact on the environment. It places obligations on both the NT EPA and proponents of a proposal to ensure that climate change impacts are addressed through the planning and assessment of a proposal and in the carrying out of the proposal. When addressing climate change impacts in project planning and implementation a proponent has obligations under section 43 of the EP Act to consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development the environmental decision-making hierarchy and the waste management hierarchy.

The NT EPA’s Atmospheric processes guidance advises proponents on the information requirements to ensure these obligations can be met.

Guidance and information

Priority 5.1 – Develop and review guidance material to support improved environmental management in the NT

In 2024–2025 the NT EPA published new guidance material on air quality modelling, biosolids, waste tyres and the assessment of impacts on biodiversity.

The Guidance for Modelling Dispersion of Air Pollutants in the NT provides advice for proponents on best practice air quality modelling to support EIA of developments that have the potential to significantly impact air quality.

The Guideline: Biosolids Management in the Northern Territory aims to enable the beneficial reuse of biosolids in the Northern Territory. Biosolids have beneficial properties, however, if not carefully managed, may pose risks to human health and the environment. The guideline provides a method for biosolids reuse which incorporates a classification system based on contaminant and pathogen concentrations that restricts the use of biosolids according to the level of risk while meeting the requirements of the WMPC Act.

The Waste Tyre Guidance: A guide for private landholders was published to help landholders understand the risks and responsibilities for storing waste tyres. The guide is relevant to all landholders and informs on the significant environmental, health and economic impacts waste tyres cause when managed incorrectly on their property.

Draft biodiversity guidance was prepared and released for public consultation in 2024–2025, including a Draft Environmental factor guidance: Terrestrial ecosystems, Draft Guidelines for assessment of impacts on terrestrial biodiversity, Draft Environmental factor guidance: Marine ecosystems, Draft Guidelines for assessment of impacts on marine biodiversity, and Draft NT EPA biodiversity data policy and guidance. These documents will be finalised for publication in 2025–2026. They introduce a change in requirements for proposals that generate biodiversity data to support environmental impact assessment, with the objective of maximising the availability of biodiversity data for the benefit of government, industry and the community.

The NT EPA published revisions of the following environmental impact assessment guidelines:

- Environmental factors and objectives
- Making a public submission
- Referring a proposal
- Preparing a supplementary environmental report
- Preparing an environmental impact statement.





Appendix 1: NT EPA membership



Dr Paul Vogel AM NT EPA Chairperson

Dr Paul Vogel was appointed as the Chairperson of the NT EPA on 14 November 2016.

Now a non-executive board chair and director and strategic consultant, Dr Vogel was Chairman of Western Australia's Environmental Protection Authority from 2007 to 2015.

Dr Vogel was also the inaugural Chief Executive and Chair of the South Australian EPA from 2002 to 2007 and prior to that held senior executive positions in the WA Departments of the Premier and Cabinet and Environmental Protection.

Dr Vogel has a PhD in chemistry from the University of WA and has extensive knowledge and experience across a broad range of environmental issues and sustainability, in organisational and regulatory reform and in the delivery of strategic environmental and business outcomes.

Dr Vogel is also Chair of the WA Marine Science Institution, Deputy Chair of CRC TiME – CRC on Transformations in Mining Economies and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He was appointed to the NT EPA on 1 January 2016.



Mr Colin Joseph (Joe) Woodward Member

Mr Joe Woodward brings more than 35 years' experience managing and advising on environmental regulation and approvals having worked in a variety of roles in the New South Wales Environment Protection Authority and its predecessor, the State Pollution Control Commission.

Mr Woodward has extensive experience in environmental management and regulation. As Deputy Director General of the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation he oversaw assessment and regulation of:

- air
- water
- noise
- waste
- chemicals
- radiation
- biodiversity
- threatened species and
- Aboriginal cultural heritage protection.

He has served as a Commissioner for the NSW Independent Planning Commission responsible for statutory assessments and determinations of state significant development proposals including mining, major industrial and urban developments.

Mr Woodward holds a Master of Engineering and Bachelor of Science. In 2009 he was awarded the Public Service Medal for Outstanding Contribution to the Environment in New South Wales.



Ms Samantha Nunan Member

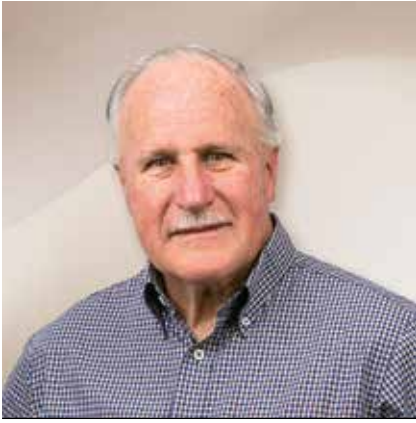
Ms Nunan is experienced in providing environmental regulatory and policy advice to industry and governments across multiple jurisdictions, including the Northern Territory.

Working in industry for many years, Ms Nunan has significant experience in participating in regulatory reviews and reform processes, predominantly as an industry participant, but also during her time in government.

During her time as a practising lawyer, Ms Nunan provided advice to businesses and statutory bodies relating to compliance frameworks and responses to environmental regulatory investigations.

Ms Nunan has had extensive exposure to environmental assessment processes, securing project approvals and the application of regulatory policies and legislation across a range of different industries, including resources, renewables, waste, agriculture and planning.

With this experience, Ms Nunan brings a good understanding of the existence of and the importance of overlapping interests in land and resources by various stakeholders including Traditional Owners, Government, Industry and broader communities.



Dr Rod Lukatelich Member

Dr Rod Lukatelich has a Bachelor of Science (Hons) and a PhD from the University of Western Australia.

Dr Lukatelich has 28 years oil and gas industry experience and is now semi-retired, working as an environmental consultant. He has extensive experience in:

- environmental approvals and impact assessment
- wastewater treatment
- atmospheric emissions management and
- assessment and remediation of contaminated sites.

Previously, Dr Lukatelich held an academic position at the University of WA where his research included:

- studies on the impacts of eutrophication on algae and seagrasses in lakes and estuaries
- development of ecological models and
- the relationships between hydrodynamics and water quality in reservoirs, rivers and estuaries.

Dr Lukatelich has been:

- a Board Director of the Cooperative Research Centre on Contamination and Remediation of the Environment since its inception in 2005
- a member of CSIRO Oceans and Atmosphere Strategic Advisory Committee
- was Chairperson of the Great Australian Bight Research Program Management Committee and
- was a member of the Environmental Protection Authority of Western Australia between 2009 and 2014.



Ms Jordy Bowman Member

Ms Jordy Bowman is a local Territorian, with extensive experience in Aboriginal land use and planning, and community and economic development in remote Australia and transitioning economies. Ms Bowman has worked across federal and Territory governments and held executive positions in Aboriginal corporations and not-for-profit organisations. She now runs a consultancy working with communities and organisations across the Northern Territory.

During her career, Ms Bowman has worked in partnership with Traditional Owners, Land Councils, regional and remote communities to support land use, industry and business development that aligns with economic, social and cultural aspirations. Ms Bowman is also the Chair of Jabiru Property Services Ltd and holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts.

Ms Bowman brings a wealth of local knowledge, deep connections with Northern Territory communities, and experience in regional development, stakeholder engagement and cross-cultural collaboration to the NT EPA.



Dr David Ritchie

NT Planning Commission

Chairperson (ex-officio member)

Dr David Ritchie has over 35 years' experience working for organisations responsible for heritage protection and land management, in a combination of professional, expert and also senior management and executive roles. This work includes extensive experience with statutory boards with roles under land rights, native title, and environment and heritage legislation.

For more than twenty years he has held Chief Executive roles, leading organisations responsible for:

- land resource planning
- remote service delivery
- parks and wildlife
- natural resource management
- environment protection
- Aboriginal policy
- Aboriginal cultural heritage and museums
- art galleries and
- archives.

Dr Ritchie's work has involved extensive field work in remote regions of the NT working closely with Aboriginal communities and developers on cultural heritage surveys for major infrastructure developments – ranging from gas pipelines and the North Australian Railway to mines, aquaculture and the newly created National Parks.

Dr Ritchie is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Australian Anthropological Society. He is also a Director of Ninti One Limited, on the board of the Northern Territory Land Corporation and Chairperson of the NT Grants Commission.



Dr Gillian Sparkes AM Member

Dr Sparkes has had a distinguished career working with industry, community and government to care for and protect our environment. Commencing her career as an industrial chemist, Dr Sparkes worked two decades in technical and operational roles in industry, including leadership roles with BHP Steel and Cleanaway, before senior public service. She has had senior roles with the Victorian and Commonwealth public service, including Deputy Secretary of the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, Chair of Sustainability Victoria and was Victoria's independent Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability for a decade, before joining NT EPA in July 2024. As Commissioner, Dr Sparkes led Victoria's state of the environment and broader environmental reporting program and was a key advisor to the Departmental Secretary and Minister for Environment.

A non-executive director with over 20 years' experience, Dr Sparkes is also the Board Chair of FrontierSI (Spatial Information); Deputy Chair of the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation and a board member of the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, Parks Victoria and the Industry Capability Network, Victoria.

Dr Sparkes holds a PhD in Applied Science (Chemistry) and a Master of Business Administration. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Victorian and National Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia.



Ms Tracey Wilson Member

Ms Wilson is an experienced board member and advisor to government, business, and non-government organisations, providing research and project management services across Australia and the Asia Pacific focussing on sustainable communities, stakeholder engagement, collective impact and strategic planning. Ms Wilson previously resided in Nhulunbuy and has extensive experience working with Indigenous communities in the NT and North Queensland.

Ms Wilson is a Fellow of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and a member of:

- Qld Electrical Safety Board
- Qld Electrical Safety Board Education Committee
- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- International Association for Impact Assessment
- Australian Evaluation Society.

Ms Wilson holds a Master of Sustainable Development and through her consultancy has won several awards, including the Inaugural IAP2 UNESCO International Sustainable Development in Community Engagement Award and the IAP2 Core Values Awards Indigenous Project of the Year.



Appendix 2:

Decisions made under the *Environment Protection Act (NT)* in 2024–25

Table 1 – Decisions that assessment is required under regulations 57 and 58

Proponent	Proposal	Date of decision
Department of Logistics and Infrastructure	Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS)	15 April 2025 (Assess by EIS)
Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation	Little Paradise Development	22 October 2024 (Assess by SER)
Lithium Plus Minerals Ltd	Lei Lithium Project	5 February 2025 (Assess by SER)

Table 2 – Decisions that assessment is not required under regulations 57 and 58

Proponent	Proposal	Date of decision
APA SPP Pty Ltd	Sturt Plateau Pipeline	11 March 2025
Department of Logistics and Infrastructure	Wurrumiyanga Residential Subdivision	22 October 2024
RTA Gove Pty Ltd	RTA Gove Closure Works at Pond 2 West	11 December 2024

Table 3 – Completed assessment processes

Proponent	Proposal	Date of decision
Equatorial Launch Australia Pty Ltd	Phase 2 Expansion of the Arnhem Space Centre	20 November 2024

Appendix 3:

Compliance and enforcement actions in 2024-25

Table 1 - Summary of compliance and enforcement action 2024-2025

Compliance and enforcement action	Number
Pollution reports	540
Monitoring compliance	177 licences, approvals and notices under the WMPC Act & EP Act.
Administrative compliance	347 container deposit scheme approvals issued under the EP (BC&PB) Act.
Inspections	59 site inspections. 100% of premises that had an environmental approval issued under EP Act in place on 1 July 2025. 100% of hydrocarbon processing facilities and landfills licensed under WMPC Act. 100% of high-risk transporters and waste management facilities licensed under WMPC Act.
Warnings	Issued 15 warning letters for non-compliance with EP Licence conditions.
Penalty Infringement Notices	4
Environment Audit Notices (s48 WMPC Act) issued	13 ongoing
Pollution Abatement Notices (s77 WMPC Act) issued	18
Prosecutions	0 new, 1 ongoing
Directions	5
Suspension of Licences	1

Table 2 - Entities issued with penalty infringement notices

Entity	Number of PINs issued
Eni Australia	2
SEM.NT Pty Ltd	1
McMahon Services	1



