



ENVIRONMENT REGULATION DIVISION COMPLIANCE PLAN 2023–2024

Department of
ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND WATER SECURITY

OUR ROLE

The Environment Regulation team in DEPWS administers a wide range of environmental laws to protect the Territory's environment. We support the NT EPA, Minister for Environment, Water Controller and Chief Executive of DEPWS to encourage good behaviours and change poor behaviours through licensing, monitoring, and enforcement.

This plan sets out the short term compliance priorities for the Environmental Regulation team. The plan complements our [Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#) and [Enforcement Guideline](#) and provides transparency on where we will focus our efforts to protect the community and the environment. The priorities have been determined using a range of data and information, including community complaints made through the Pollution Hotline, detected non-compliances and monitoring information. The plan provides assurance that the regulator is focussing on the environmental risks that can cause the greatest harm.

While we are prioritising the matters outlined below, we retain capacity and have discretion to pursue other matter in line with our Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

OUR WORK

We oversee the sustainable development of the waste industry, onshore gas industry, mining industry (in relation to offsite discharges), and all projects that may have a significant environmental impact.* In February 2023 the Environmental Regulation team administered:

- 145 environmental protection licences
- 7 environmental protection approvals
- 38 waste discharge licences
- 39 onshore petroleum environmental management plans
- 28 pollution abatement notices
- 16 environmental audit notices
- 5 environmental approvals for high-impact projects
- the Pollution Hotline, which received 809 reports in 2022
- 4 coordinators, 19 depots and 247 beverage suppliers as part of the Container Deposit Scheme

HIGH-IMPACT PROJECTS**

Under the Territory's new *Environmental Protection Act 2019*, projects that have a significant environmental impact are assessed by the NT EPA and approved by the Minister for Environment.

The regulator will:

- ensure compliance with those approvals by undertaking compliance audits and carrying out at least one inspection of the premises.

ONSHORE PETROLEUM**

The environmental impact of the onshore petroleum industry must be minimised in line with the mandatory Code of Practice.

The regulator will:

- conduct a strategic review of industry's compliance with obligations relating to groundwater, greenhouse gas emissions, and recordable incidents
- conduct at least one inspection of each interest holder that is authorised to undertake production, drilling or hydraulic fracturing activities
- conduct audits of prescribed records relating to inspection and monitoring programs, spill registers, and land clearing and rehabilitation.

HYDROCARBON PROCESSING FACILITIES (LNG)**

These are high-risk facilities because they release contaminants into water and air, including Darwin harbour and airshed. There are three licensed facilities in the NT.

The regulator will:

- ensure compliance with environmental protection licences by undertaking compliance audits and carrying out at least one inspection of each facility.

WASTE TYRES

The illegal stockpiling and unlawful disposal of waste tyres is a growing issue across Australia and the NT.

The regulator will:

- improve the community's understanding of how to manage, reuse and dispose of waste tyres
- deter non-compliance with strategic investigations and prosecutions.

WASTE CRIME

Waste crime, including illegal dumping is a complex and increasing problem across the Territory.

The regulator will:

- partner with other regulators, local Government, industry and the community to combat waste crime and illegal dumping in the Alice Springs region. This pilot program will inform further efforts to address illegal dumping across the Territory.

OFFSITE DISCHARGE FROM MINE SITES**

Some mines in the Territory are licensed to discharge waste water into the environment. These discharges must be carefully controlled.

The regulator will:

- ensure compliance with those licences by undertaking compliance audits and carrying out at least one inspection of each licenced site.

LICENCED LANDFILLS**

There is room for improvement in the performance of the Territory's landfills.

This year the regulator will be focusing on the Territory's licenced landfills and will:

- ensure compliance with the licences by undertaking compliance audits and carrying out at least one inspection of each facility.

* The Environmental Regulation team does not regulate water extraction, land clearing or activities inside a mining lease unless those matters are also regulated under an environmental approval under the *Environmental Protection Act 2019*.

** Sites or activities that have been authorised on 1 July 2023 and where activities are proposed to occur during 2023-24 are 'authorised high risk sites or activities' for the purposes of reporting against the key performance indicators published in Budget Paper No. 3.