Department of
LANDS, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

COMPLIANCE PLAN 2026-27

Environmental Regulation Division



ntepa Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority

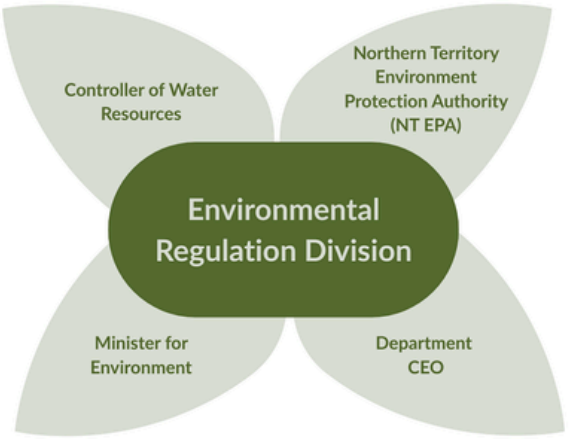
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Environmental Regulation Division

2026-2027 COMPLIANCE PLAN AND ONGOING REGULATORY PROJECTS

Who are we?

The Environmental Regulation Division within the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) supports four statutory decision-makers in administering a range of environmental legislation and regulatory frameworks across the Northern Territory.



Our purpose

Environmental regulators play a crucial role in ensuring the Territory's environment is healthy, resilient and productive, both now and for future generations.

Our purpose is to support ecologically sustainable development by protecting the environment while enabling the Territory's social and economic development. Promoting and enforcing compliance with environmental laws is an important part of achieving this purpose.

We undertake our regulatory functions in accordance with our best practice regulatory principles of being proportionate, accountable, consistent, targeted and transparent (PACTT). These principles guide how we make decisions and exercise our regulatory powers.

Our regulatory functions

The Division administers a range of environmental legislation on behalf of four statutory decision-makers. In doing so, we undertake a broad suite of regulatory functions. The table below provides an overview of the Division's key environmental regulatory legislation and functions.

Legislative regime	Advice & guidance	Licences / approvals / plans	Compliance monitoring	Enforcement
Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environment Protection Act 2019	✓	Environmental approval administration*	✓	✓
Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act 2011	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water Act 1992 (Waste Discharge Licences only)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marine Pollution Act 1999	✓	-	✓	✓
National Environment Protection (National Pollutant Inventory) Objective 2004	✓	-	✓	✓
Environmental Offences and Penalties Act 1996	-	-	-	✓

The table demonstrates the breadth of the Division's responsibilities across multiple legislative frameworks and regulatory functions. This Compliance Plan focuses on the Division's compliance priorities while also outlining key regulatory initiatives that support the effective administration of environmental legislation and the achievement of positive environmental outcomes.

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

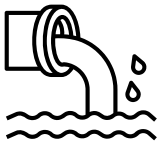
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*The Division does not undertake environmental impact assessment nor regulation of environmental (mining) licences under the *Environment Protection Act 2019*. Significant variations to environmental approvals may require environmental impact assessment and are not determined through the Division's post-approval functions.

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2026-2027 COMPLIANCE PLAN AND ONGOING REGULATORY PROJECTS

Compliance Priorities



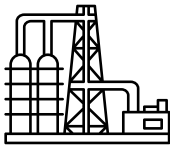
Treated Wastewater (Sewage)

- Inspections of priority sites with a focus on urban and regional facilities
- Wet season preparedness and freeboard management



Hydrocarbon Facilities

- Annual compliance assessment of hydrocarbon facilities focusing on air emissions
- Inspections of licensed hydrocarbon facilities
- Audits of emissions calculation methods



Onshore Petroleum

- Education and engagement on reform changes, including development of Groundwater Monitoring and Management Guidelines
- Ongoing inspections of priority sites to monitor the storage and transfer of wastewater



Landfills

- Continued focus on facilities that have reached licensing thresholds
- Inspections of sites to assess waste segregation, appropriate site planning, and closure documentation

Ongoing Regulatory Projects

Licence Review Implementation

Implementing recommendations from the licence reviews conducted in 2025-26 for the aquaculture industry and Darwin airshed LNG facilities.

Air Quality Monitoring Scheme

Expanding air quality monitoring and reporting to improve transparency, support industry planning and strengthen regulatory oversight in the Darwin airshed.

Illegal Dumping

Strengthening collaboration with local stakeholders to prevent, detect and respond to illegal dumping in Alice Springs through Operation Don't Be a Dumper (DBAD).

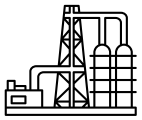
Environmental Data

Enhancing a centralised environmental data repository to improve accessibility, regional risk insight and regulatory decision-making.

Environmental Regulation Division

2026-2027 COMPLIANCE PLAN AND ONGOING REGULATORY PROJECTS

Compliance Priorities

Description	What is the issue and why is it important?	Where will the regulator target its effort?
 Treated Wastewater (Sewage)	In 2025-26, the regulator identified opportunities for improved environmental performance at licensed wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs). These included improving wet season preparedness, preventing unauthorised overflows, and strengthening monitoring and reporting, particularly during the wet season, when system capacity may be exceeded. Urban and regional facilities are a compliance priority due to increasing population demand and pressure on the receiving environment.	For all priority WWTPs, the regulator will: • conduct site inspections late in the Dry Seasons to assess freeboard levels and Wet Season preparedness • audit compliance against required monitoring regimes.
 Hydrocarbon Facilities	In 2025, a case of significant under-reporting of air emissions came to light, leading to a multi-faceted response from the NT EPA and Government. The regulator's priority is to continue to ensure licensed facilities comply with licence requirements and that risks to human health from industrial development remain low.	The regulator will: • conduct inspections of all licensed hydrocarbon facilities • audit compliance with air emissions conditions • audit how national pollutant inventory (NPI) emissions data is calculated for priority facilities, excluding those that have already been audited.
 Onshore Petroleum	In 2026, the regulator introduced targeted reforms through a new *Code of Practice: Environment* and amendments to the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016*. Supporting guidance, education and approved forms are required to facilitate implementation and ensure ongoing compliance. The storage and transfer of wastewater remain key environmental risks to land and water resources requiring ongoing management and regulatory oversight.	The regulator will prioritise: • education and engagement on reform changes • inspections of drilling and/or hydraulic fracturing sites to monitor the storage and transfer of wastewater.
 Landfills	In 2025-26, the regulator identified more than 15 landfills that: • have reached licensing thresholds under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998* (WMPC Act), and • need to improve waste segregation practices, site and closure planning documentation. These will be the priority landfills for 2026-27.	For all priority landfills, the regulator will: • monitor operator progress towards obtaining required licences and approvals under the WMPC Act, • conduct inspections to support compliance, and • review waste segregation, appropriate site planning, and closure documentation while reinforcing continuous improvement.

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Ongoing Regulatory Projects

Description	What is the issue and why is it important?	Where will the regulator target its effort?
Licence Review and Implementation	In 2025-26, two licence reviews were conducted by the regulator: • licences for aquaculture facilities were reviewed as a commitment in NT Government's Saying 'Yes' to Business report, and • licences for LNG facilities in the Darwin airshed were reviewed following significant under-reporting of emissions from the Ichthys LNG facility. Recommendations will be implemented in 2026-27.	The regulator will work with licensees to amend existing licences in accordance with the recommendations of the respective reviews.
Air Quality Monitoring Scheme	The Darwin airshed is experiencing increasing industrial development, while community expectations for transparency and assurance about air quality continue to grow. The current monitoring network has limited capability to monitor some industrial air pollutants, including benzene, toluene, xylene, ethylbenzene (BTEX). Expanding and modernising monitoring will provide independent, reliable data to support public confidence, protect human health and inform future development decisions.	The regulator will enhance the existing air quality monitoring network by expanding monitoring capability for industrial pollutants, improving transparency of air quality data and establishing a sustainable funding model to support long-term operation of the network.
Illegal Dumping	Illegal dumping remains a significant issue in the Alice Springs region. Operation: Don't Be a Dumper (DBAD) in Alice Springs identified multiple illegal dumping offences in 2025-26 through public awareness and camera surveillance campaign, resulting in the issuing of infringement notices, warnings and a prosecution.	The regulator will continue to work with the coordination group to raise awareness and keep up the pressure to reduce illegal dumping in the Alice Springs region. Camera surveillance and public awareness campaigns will continue.
Environmental Data	Effective environmental regulation is strengthened by accurate, consistent and accessible environmental data. In 2025-26, the regulator established a centralised environmental data repository (ESdat), bringing together groundwater level and quality data submitted by interest holders with regional datasets from CSIRO's GBA[1] and GISERA Programs[2] and the Government's SREBA Project.[3] This builds on existing environmental data holdings by providing a single, structured source for regional trend analysis and supporting strategic regulation of onshore petroleum activities.	The regulator will continue to build on the environmental data repository by expanding the range of consolidated environmental monitoring data available for analysis.

[1] Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's Geological and Bioregional Assessment (CSIRO GBA) Program
[2] Gas Industry Social and Environment Research Alliance (GISERA) Programs
[3] Northern Territory Government Strategic Regional Environmental and Baseline Assessment (NTG SREBA) Project

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