

Annual strategic compliance priorities 2021–2022

Vision:

Our compliance effort protects the health of Queensland’s environment and communities.

As Queensland’s environmental regulator, we proactively manage and monitor environmental risks through a range of assessment, compliance, investigation and enforcement programs. Our compliance work is critical to enforcing the standards set by law that allows for sustainable development and safeguards Queensland’s environmental values by minimising or preventing environmental harm.

This plan outlines our key strategic priorities for the next 12 months and demonstrates our transparency by clearly articulating our focus areas to both regulated industries and the community. In addition to these priorities, our core compliance work will continue to be informed by community, industry and scientific intelligence. Through regular compliance planning, we target our effort at those activities that present the greatest risk and our statewide team of compliance officers can be deployed anywhere, anytime.

Our compliance planning is based on:

- Strategic and operational priority focus areas.
- Prioritised targeted compliance programs—we identify and manage issues that pose significant environmental risk.
- Prioritised unplanned compliance events—we react quickly to community reports, emerging intelligence and events that have a significant or immediate environmental risk.
- Compliance Prioritisation Model (CPM) inspections—we identify potential risk for every location in Queensland that is licensed to carry out environmentally relevant activities and undertake inspections to ensure compliance with licence conditions.

Strategic focus areas: An increased focus on these areas aims to provide insights into the performance of industry and regulatory frameworks.

Strategic focus area	Target industries and activities	Outcomes	Targets
<p>Waste management and waste levy compliance</p> <p>Since the commencement of Queensland’s waste levy on 1 July 2019, there has been significant progress in the development of strategies and work programs to identify and address compliance issues such as waste levy avoidance and illegal waste operators. This was also a key compliance focus for the 2020–2021 financial year, however, ongoing compliance effort is required to ensure the success of Queensland’s Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>Industry: Licensed waste management operations. Activity: Correct calculation, reporting and payment of the waste levy.</p> <p>Industry: Unlicensed waste management operations. Activity: Unlawfully undertaking environmentally relevant activities including transport, stockpiling and disposal of wastes.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enforcement is used to deter waste related non-compliance. 2. Poor performing and unlicensed waste operators are held to account. 3. Illegal dumping is deterred through investigation and enforcement in collaboration with local governments. 4. Waste material generated is lawfully transported, reused, recycled or disposed of to licensed facilities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The top 12 landfill sites that account for the highest contributions to Queensland’s waste levy are inspected, including volumetric surveys undertaken. 2. 90% of alleged unlicensed waste operations are inspected within four weeks of coming to the department’s attention. 3. 90% of illegal dumping incidents reported to the department have had investigations commenced, or referred to local government, within four weeks of receiving the report. 4. Target inspections conducted for waste levy exemptions based on recent intelligence data. 5. Inspections of high-risk waste generators, transporters and disposers.
<p>Coal Seam Gas</p> <p>The coal seam gas (CSG) industry has operated for a number of years in Queensland and has been the subject of significant public interest. The industry has the potential to impact upon a number of different environmental values. The industry co-exists with landholders and communities.</p>	<p>Industry: Coal seam gas Activity: Storage, management and treatment of coal seam gas water, re-injection of ground water, management of salt and brine waste, hydraulic fracture stimulation and air quality monitoring.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non-compliance associated with hydraulic fracture stimulation activities continues to be identified with appropriate enforcement action taken. 2. Continue to take appropriate enforcement action against all high-risk releases of CSG water. 3. Compliance with environmental offset requirements associated with CSG activity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake four joint audits of hydraulic fracture stimulation activities with Resources Safety and Health Queensland. 2. Respond to all high-risk unplanned releases of CSG water. 3. Undertake audits of project areas that have declared sites with an environmental offset.
<p>Great Barrier Reef</p> <p>The department has delivered a compliance program for sugarcane producers in regulated Great Barrier Reef catchments since 2016. This has recently been expanded to new commodities and areas following the introduction of the <i>Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019</i>. With a large number of regulated producers across large areas of Great Barrier Reef catchments, the compliance strategy seeks to engage, monitor and respond to environmental obligations under the reef regulations through an escalated approach to compliance consisting of: inform, enable, detect and deter.</p>	<p>Industry: Agriculture Activity: Regulated agricultural producers across the Great Barrier Reef catchments.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform and enable industry to voluntarily comply with reef protection measures under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> 2. Non-compliance is detected with enforcement action taken. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to educate agricultural producers and advisers about the requirements under Chapter 4A of the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> (EP Act) prioritising newly regulated areas and commodities. 2. Implement compliance program for newly regulated areas and commodities, as well as continuing compliance for those existing. 3. Implement Environmentally Relevant Activity 13A (Commercial cropping and horticulture in Great Barrier Reef catchment) assessment and compliance functions. 4. Focus inspection activities in areas identified as high risk for reef water quality and undertake compliance activities in accordance with the reef compliance strategy.