

Coal seam gas compliance and enforcement

Coal seam gas activities are regulated by the Department of Environment and Science to avoid and/or minimise environmental impacts. CSG compliance and enforcement activities carried out by the department during the 2020–21 financial year are detailed below. Additionally, a map 'Coal seam gas compliance and enforcement activities 2020–21' is also provided which shows the locations of the department's concentrated compliance and enforcement activities related to these CSG activities.

Reports and notifications

The department responds to Reports and Notifications of non-compliance from the community and industry, which includes resource activities such as those associated with CSG related Environmental Authorities (EAs).

123 reports and notifications



All reports were received from the Western Downs Regional Council area

Reports 23

Notifications 100



26 notifications relate to CSG water releases and the remaining relate to various other reporting requirements including fracking notifications



The department issued 21 enforcement actions where non-compliance was identified from these reports and notifications

Further information: Reports from the community include environmental nuisance and significant pollution incidents. Notifications are made by operators under the duty to notify of environmental harm (including serious and material environmental harm) under ss. 320 to 320G of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and under condition requirements of their EA.

Compliance activities

Through appropriate Compliance Activities such as Site Inspections and Desktop Actions, the department monitors the performance of licensed operators, detects and responds to unlicensed and/or non-compliant activities and ensures the environment is being protected.

90 compliance activities

Site Inspections

31

Desktop Actions

59



The majority of desktop actions involved assessment of operator reporting requirements including groundwater monitoring and regulated structure audits



The majority of site inspections were conducted within the Western Downs Regional Council area

Further information: Site Inspections include targeted, risk-based inspections. Desktop Actions can include any action that does not involve a physical inspection. This may include reviewing reports and submissions, desktop site reviews to assess culpability and environmental impacts and any other review of departmental holdings.

Enforcement

If the department identifies that a person or company has breached a condition of the relevant EA or failed to comply with an obligation under legislation, the department will take action to bring the person or company back into compliance. The type of Enforcement Action taken by the department will depend on the nature and seriousness of the offence and the most effective means to achieve compliance and minimise any impact to the environment.

21 enforcement actions



Nearly all enforcement actions were issued within the Western Downs Regional Council area



All enforcement actions were issued as a result of impacts to water and land



All infringement notices were issued in response to breaches of EA conditions

14

Warnings

3

Infringement Notice

3

Clean-up Notice

1

Prosecution Commenced

Further Information: The department's Regulatory Strategy and Enforcement Guidelines is available at <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/management/compliance-enforcement>

CSG water releases

To produce CSG, wells are drilled into underground coal seams, bringing water (CSG water) from the seams to the surface. The quality of CSG water varies greatly, however it is generally rich in salts and other minerals. The department's CSG Water Management Policy guides CSG operators in managing CSG water which includes monitoring and notification requirements under their EA.

26 CSG water release notifications



All CSG water releases were responded to by the department through compliance activities



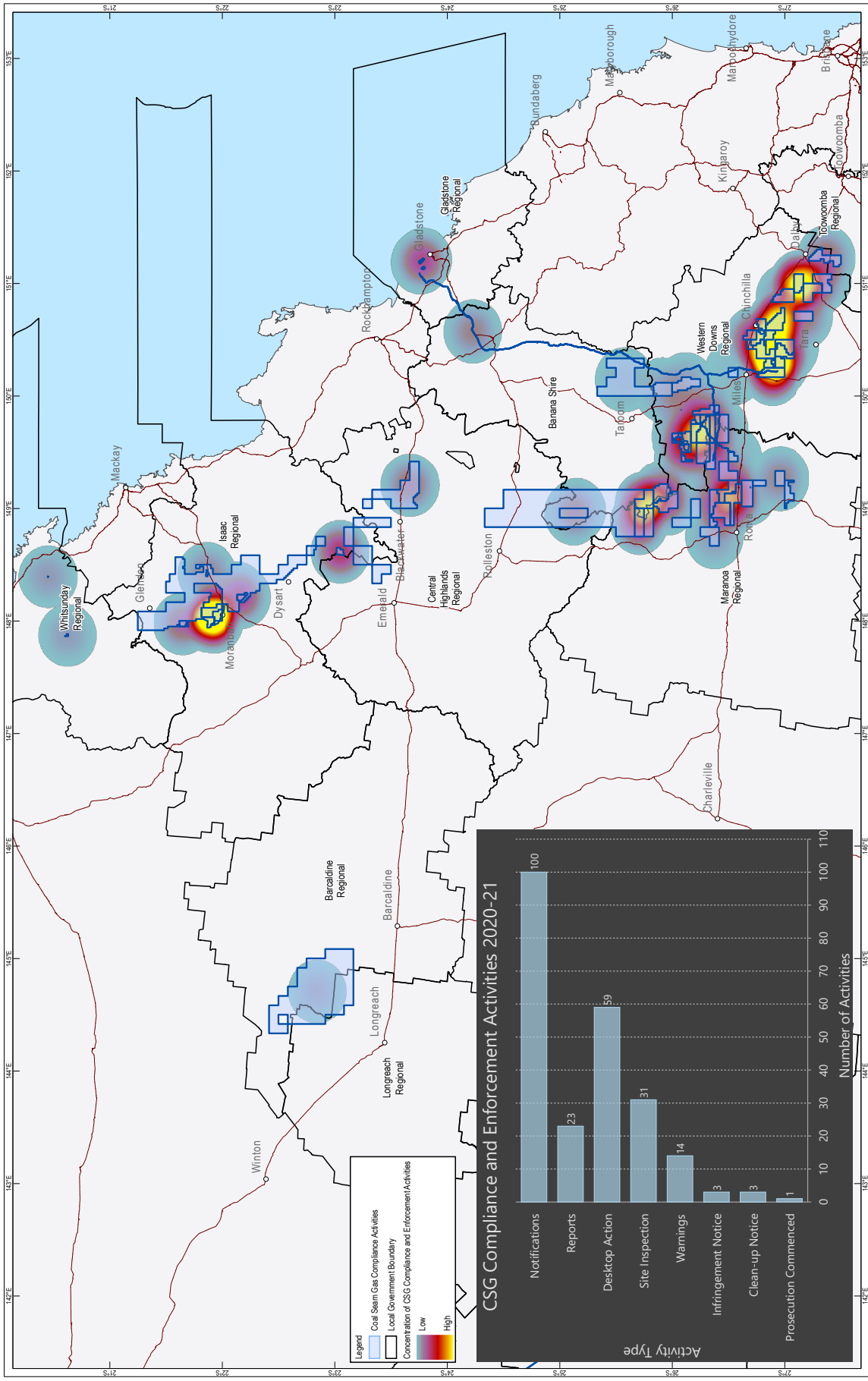
CSG water releases were predominately reported from within the Western Downs Regional Council area



In response to these notifications, 5 warnings were issued and a prosecution was commenced



Further information: https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/management/activities/non-mining/water/csg-water#csq_water_management_policy



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Coal Seam Gas Compliance and Enforcement Activities 2020-21