

Annual strategic compliance priorities 2020–2021

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 in Queensland and safeguards Queensland’s environmental values by minimising or preventing environmental harm.

This plan outlines key strategic and operational priorities for the next 12 months, however our core compliance work continues 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 state-wide 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.	Waste management and waste levy compliance Queensland’s Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy, underpinned by the introduction of a waste levy on 1 July 2019, has re-shaped Queensland’s waste landscape. The levy aims to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, encourage waste avoidance and increase the capacity for resource recovery. There is a risk that some people and operators may not take their waste to landfill in order to avoid the waste levy, leading to an increase in illegal dumping and unlicensed waste management operations. There is also a risk that landfill operators may implement waste management behaviours which unintentionally or intentionally result in waste levy miscalculation or evasion.	Target industries and activities Industry: Licensed waste management operations. Activity: Correct calculation, reporting and payment of the waste levy. Industry: Unlicensed waste management operations. Activity: Unlawfully undertaking environmentally relevant activities including transport, stockpiling and disposal of wastes.	Outcomes 1. Waste operators clearly understand expectations of performance and how to comply. 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 under the Local Government Illegal Dumping Partnerships Program. 4. Serious matters involving offences under the <i>Criminal Code Act 1899</i> , e.g. fraud, are addressed through referral to the Queensland Police Service.	Targets 1. The top 70% of total waste levy contributors (landfills) 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. 100% of matters involving offences under the <i>Criminal Code Act 1899</i> , e.g. fraud, are referred to the Queensland Police Service.
	Coal seam gas operators The coal seam gas 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.	Target industries and activities Industry: Coal seam gas industries 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.	Outcomes 1. Develop effective response to causative factors for unplanned releases of CSG water. 2. Enhance reporting on regulation of the CSG industry. 3. Improve community confidence in the management of risk associated with the CSG industry.	Targets 1. Validation that industry risk assessment process for 90% of wells hydraulically fractured in Queensland meet or exceed regulatory requirements. 2. All high risk unplanned releases of CSG water are investigated and where appropriate enforcement action and/or remediation is undertaken. 3. Publish CSG industry specific compliance data on the department’s website with links to partner regulatory agencies. 4. Undertake audits of integrity and management of high risk salt management systems and brine storage.
	Estimated rehabilitation costs From 1 April 2019, all mining companies are required to develop Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans. These new financial assurance arrangements protect the State from financial risk in the event that there is failure to comply with environmental management and rehabilitation obligations.	Target industries and activities Industry: mining and resource companies Activity: Compliance with the legislated requirements for Estimated Rehabilitation Costs (ERC).	Outcomes 1. Development and implementation of a risk-based compliance monitoring and enforcement response related to the Estimated Rehabilitation Costs.	Targets (active environmental authorities) 1. Reduction in number of outstanding sureties that were overdue as of 30 June 2020. 2. Develop and implement an Estimated Rehabilitation Costs Recovery Strategy to minimise the State’s risk from a failure to comply with environmental management and rehabilitation obligations.
Ongoing operational compliance priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to community reports and environmental incidents • Reef compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odour Abatement Taskforce • Pre-wet season inspections • Compliance Prioritisation Model inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal compliance • Heritage compliance • Illegal operators 	