

# Strategic compliance focus areas 2023-24

The Department of Resources (the department) manages the fair and responsible use of Queensland’s land, vegetation, and mineral resources through the administration of legislation that governs how these resources are accessed and used. We plan where to focus our regulatory efforts each year so that we ensure our response to non-compliance is targeted and proportionate. To do that, we consider a range of factors, including departmental priorities, areas of risk, analysis of data and learnings from previous years. We use this approach to identify focus areas to plan for compliance and assurance activities. This document outlines the focus areas we have identified for 2023-24 to provide transparency in how we intend to meet our regulatory responsibilities over the next 12 months.

Focus area	Target industries and activities	Outcomes	Targets
Lands Division			
<b>Vegetation Management</b> Since 2000, native vegetation clearing in Queensland has been regulated under the Vegetation Management Framework, being the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i> (VMA) and the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> and its predecessor Acts. This financial year the department will focus efforts and resources on targeted education and promoting compliance. The VMA continues to form an important part of the State’s policy framework, protecting Queensland’s vegetation and associated biodiversity while allowing for economic development to occur.	<b>Stakeholder group:</b> Landholders <b>Activity:</b> Clearing of regulated vegetation.  <b>Stakeholder group:</b> Renewable energy industry. <b>Activity:</b> Major development impacting on regulated vegetation areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The department is active and present in the community to educate and promote a culture of compliance.</li><li>Informed stakeholders comply with the Vegetation Management Framework.</li><li>Enforcement is used to deter non-compliance with the Vegetation Management Framework.</li><li>Stakeholders who are non-compliant with the Vegetation Management Framework are held to account.</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Vegetation Hub is serviced to provide information and clarity to our customers and stakeholders to promote compliance with the legislative framework.</li><li>40 Proactive audits of authorised clearing are undertaken, including renewable energy developments and clearing for encroachment.</li><li>40 Group stakeholder engagement activities attended to increase landholder awareness and voluntary compliance with the legislative framework.</li><li>The Early Detection System is utilised to monitor vegetation cover change across the state and proportionate action is taken for non-compliance.</li></ol>
<b>State land</b> There are 36 island tourism resorts located on leasehold land administered under the <i>Land Act 1994</i> (Land Act) of which 14 are non-operational and in various forms of dilapidation. Relevant provisions of the Land Act continue to be utilised to educate and ensure compliance with lease conditions on which these non-operating island resorts are located. The Land Act continues to form an important part of the State’s legislative framework, by enabling land administration outcomes that contribute to Queensland’s tourism industry, and particularly for regional economies.	<b>Stakeholder group:</b> Tourism industry <b>Activity:</b> Both current and future investors with an interest in operational tourism leases.  <b>Stakeholder group:</b> Government agencies comprising Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS), Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP), Department of Environment and Science (DES) and Queensland Treasury. <b>Activity:</b> To strategise a way forward, develop approaches for island redevelopment and to provide a coordinated facilitation service to investors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The department is active and present in the community to educate and promote a culture of compliance.</li><li>Informed stakeholders understand and comply with the legislative requirements of the Land Act.</li><li>Regulatory tools are used to deter non-compliance with the Land Act.</li><li>Stakeholders who are non-compliant with the Land Act are held to account.</li><li>Amplify uniquely Queensland attributes, while delivering tourism experiences that contemporary travellers from both Australia, and the world, value most – engaging, regenerative tourism experiences in naturally beautiful environments.</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Compliance pathways for non-operational islands (subject to Audits undertaken in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023) are documented and approved.</li><li>Contemporary working documents (regulatory tools) to support and communicate findings and decisions under the Land Act are drafted, approved and implemented for Statewide use.</li><li>Approved compliance pathways are implemented for each of the non-operational islands (subject to Audits undertaken in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023).</li></ol>
<b>Surveying</b> A key responsibility of the department is to maintain the integrity of the cadastre (land boundary system) which underpins the economic development in the state. This is achieved through publishing of the Cadastral Survey Requirements (CSR), auditing of cadastral surveys for compliance against the CSR, providing advice on land boundary and tenure matters and providing information session on the CSR to the industry.	<b>Stakeholder group:</b> Surveying industry <b>Activity:</b> Targeted auditing including plans and fieldwork of a sample of surveys submitted. <b>Activity:</b> Educating the surveying industry at workshops, conferences and through focused discussions (i.e. Survey Reference Group). <b>Activity:</b> Providing advice on cadastral survey related matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The integrity of the cadastre is maintained and enhanced.</li><li>Surveyors are aware of current processes, procedures and legislation and have the opportunity to provide input into changes to legislation, procedures and standards.</li><li>Timely advice is provided to ensure that surveys conform with legislation, procedures and standards.</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>A risk-based sampling approach is applied to identify and audit at least 15- surveys including the planning and field components.</li><li>85% of survey advice to the industry is provided within 10 working days.</li><li>A minimum of three information sessions are presented at workshops/discussions to explain and keep the industry informed of any changes to legislation, procedures and standards.</li></ol>

Focus area	Target industries and activities	Outcomes	Targets
Georesources Division			
<b>Small scale mining activities</b> Queensland’s extensive opal, sapphire and other gemstone-bearing fields are authorised to be mined by the more than 1900 mining claims that are current as at 1 July 2023. Compliance efforts for this sector will be focused on three main areas: existing holders that are not actively mining, or that have erected structures and whether sufficient security is held; applicants proposing new structures; and education/guidance around legal obligations.	<b>Stakeholder Group:</b> Holders and Authorised Holder Representatives of small-scale mining tenements in the small-scale mining communities in Queensland. <b>Activity:</b> Targeted engagement activities and targeted compliance activities of small-scale mining activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Better co-existence outcomes between small-scale mining tenement holders, landholders and the broader communities.</li><li>More appropriate levels of security are held for mining claims which may be used for rehabilitation and improvement restoration in instances of abandonment.</li><li>A better baseline of mining claim conditions is established to support the roll-out of any future reforms to the regulatory framework to small-scale mining.</li><li>Small-scale mining communities are more informed and aware of their legal obligations.</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>80% of renewal applications received for small-scale mining tenements will be inspected in the field for evidence of active mining, structures, and any other issues relevant to the renewal, and while also obtaining accurate geospatial boundary coordinates (where required).</li><li>A minimum of two face-to-face engagement events will be held in small-scale mining communities to provide ongoing information, guidance and education for holders of mining claims on how to meet regulatory requirements.</li><li>New structures being proposed under a mining claim application (new or renewal) will be monitored.</li></ol>
<b>Active tenure management of resource activities</b> As a modern regulator for resource activities, the department uses active tenure management to ensure that companies optimise their development and use of State resources. Periodic	<b>Stakeholder Group:</b> Holders of resource tenements; Authorised Holder Representatives of resource tenement holders; Assessment Hubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Collaborative ‘active tenure management’ and periodic reviews highlight issues of concern to both the department and resource tenement holders (or their representatives).</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Requests for desktop and field review of relevant issues will be prioritised and undertaken to support active tenure management.</li></ol>

<p>reviews at the time of renewal provide an opportunity to ensure that resource tenements continue to operate in the best interests of the State, the resource permit holders, and the community. Resource permits holders are expected to comply with their legal obligations so that the resource activity can continue under a renewed permit. If not, the department has an obligation to take appropriate and proportionate compliance action, which may include the refusal of a renewal, or order for the area to be made available for another party to explore or develop the resource.</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> Assessment Hubs will actively engage with resource tenement holders throughout the term of their tenement to ensure they are continuing to meet legislative requirements. The department will undertake periodic desktop and field reviews of relevant issues, with a view that they are resolved collaboratively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues raised may relate to compliance with work programs and development plan obligations, whether a workable quantity of the resource remains, whether the renewed term sought is appropriate, whether the permit holder continues to have financial and technical resources available to undertake the resources activities, and whether the renewal of the permit is in the public interest.</li> <li>Issues are resolved collaboratively (or through compliance actions where applicable) so that the majority of existing tenement holders can continue to meet legislative requirements and have terms of permits renewed.</li> </ul>	<p>2. 90% of resource permit holders are found to be compliant with regulatory requirements of the relevant Resources Act(s) when assessed at renewal. (NB - This does not include Mining Claims).</p>
<p><b>Pathways to compliance for resource activities</b></p> <p>The Georesources Division seeks to support our stakeholders and the community to do the right thing. It uses both proactive and reactive methods to monitor compliance, with specific focus on high-risk areas and high-risk activities. Previous instances of compliance action taken against a resource tenement holder activity will be followed-up by the Georesources Division to ensure that the non-compliance has been addressed, and that the tenement holder has returned to a state of compliance, so that it can continue to operate.</p>	<p><b>Stakeholder Group:</b> Holders and Authorised Holder Representatives of resource tenements that have had prior compliance action taken against them by the Field and Compliance Team.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Follow-up undertaken and recorded with any resource tenement holder that has been the subject of non-compliance action by the department.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The department will ensure that it remains active and present in relevant resource communities to continue to provide information and guidance to stakeholders about their regulatory requirements, and to promote a culture of compliance.</li> <li>Enforcement is used to deter non-compliance within the resources sector and are expected to be held to account to take action to remedy non-compliance.</li> <li>The department will follow-up non-compliant resource tenement holders to ensure compliance, with an aim to reduce the number of repeat offences, communicate our responsiveness, and meet Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan recommendations.</li> </ul>	<p>1. All compliance actions taken include a clear requirement for actions required to return to compliance, a timeframe by when the action must be taken, and a request that evidence is provided to the department to demonstrate that the action has been taken and compliance has been achieved.</p> <p>2. Follow-up with resource authority holders that have had compliance action taken against them to gauge levels of compliance when reviewed at periodic intervals.</p>