



Approvals Performance Report – Fourth Quarter 2009

The Department of Mines and Petroleum is pleased to present the fourth quarter approvals performance report for 2009, which continues to demonstrate improvements against timeline targets for key approval processes.

Considerable improvements in environmental approvals have been achieved:

- petroleum environmental approvals achieved 100 per cent compliance in the third and fourth quarters for all key approvals;
- mining exploration approvals (Programmes of Work) maintained a level of compliance in excess of 90 per cent throughout the year; and
- the level of compliance for mining proposals, shown in Figure 1, steadily increased from 60 to 88 per cent by the fourth quarter.

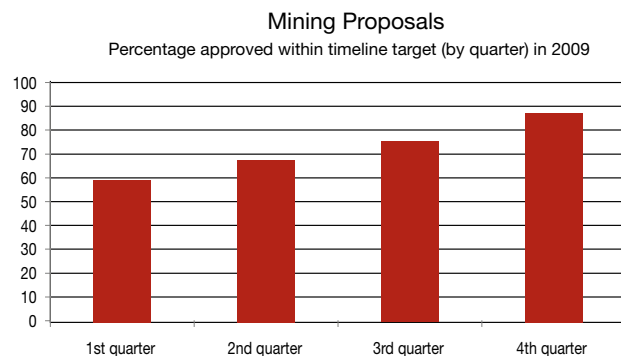


Figure 1.

For mining tenure applications, internal tracking has only been applied to applications received since 1 January 2009, and reporting on compliance data did not commence until the third quarter. Nevertheless, the performance data shows important trends in the number of applications received and processed:

- the number of pending applications has been reduced from 10,480 (as at 1 January 2009) to 8628 by the end of the year; and
- a recovery of mineral exploration activity resulted in substantial increases in exploration licence applications over the course of the year (see Figure 2).

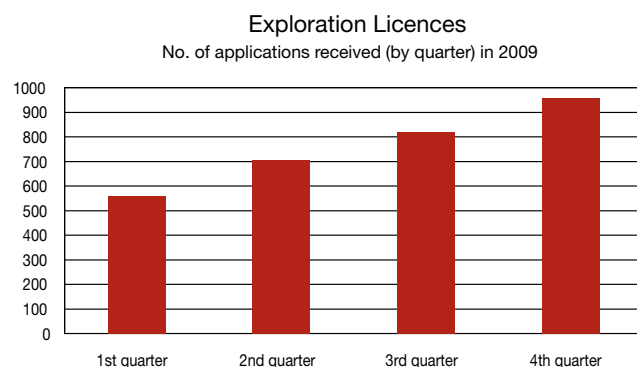


Figure 2.

The Department's efforts to improve its performance with respect to petroleum and geothermal tenure applications has resulted in improved timelines for all application types throughout the year. A notable exception, however, was the compliance of petroleum and geothermal exploration permits in the fourth quarter. Only two of the 14 applications for exploration permits were approved within the target timeframe, in large part due to issues surrounding the need to modify the grant procedures for geothermal exploration permits. These issues have now been resolved.



Government Initiatives

During the quarter, the Government has continued to implement significant reforms to the State's approval processes. In October 2009 the Premier announced:

- a new “lead agency” framework,
- greater independence for the Environmental Protection Authority; and
- a suite of legislative changes to streamline the approvals system.

The lead agency framework formalises a number of initiatives which the Department of Mines and Petroleum began progressing earlier in 2009. During the quarter, progress with implementation included:

- enabling application tracking for all mineral title applications received since 1 January 2009 via Mineral Titles Online;
- deploying a significantly upgraded version of the Petroleum and Geothermal Register for industry use, including displaying environmental registrations against individual titles (eventually leading to the linking of related project applications) as well as providing spatial depictions of titles (announced in January 2010);
- provision of facilities to enable online lodgement of Programmes of Work and pipeline licence applications; and
- as a first step to providing whole-of-government approval coordination services, a dedicated project coordinator for the emerging uranium sector was appointed.

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| | Timeline target (business days) | No. carried over from previous quarter | No. received | No. approved | No. otherwise dealt with ¹ | No. approved within timeline target ² | % approved within timeline target | No. carried over to next quarter |
|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Mining Environmental Approvals^{3,4} | | | | | | | | |
| Programme of Work (exploration) | 30 | 195 | 454 | 414 | 45 | 393 | 95% | 190 |
| Mining Proposal | 30 | 114 | 106 | 78 | 27 | 69 | 88% | 115 |
| Petroleum Environmental Approvals^{3,4} | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Plan | 30 | 4 | 21 | 18 | 5 | 18 | 100% | 2 |
| Environmental Management Plan | 30 | 4 | 16 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 100% | 6 |
| Oil Spill Contingency Plan | 30 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100% | 1 |
| Mining Tenure Applications^{4,5} | | | | | | | | |
| Prospecting Licence | 65 | 2205 | 377 | 388 | 137 | 128 | 84% | 2057 |
| Exploration Licence | 65 | 4082 | 960 | 341 | 318 | 189 | 60% | 4383 |
| Mining Lease | 65 | 1867 | 40 | 71 | 150 | 5 | 100% | 1686 |
| Miscellaneous Licence | 65 | 397 | 59 | 48 | 14 | 9 | 69% | 394 |
| General Purpose Lease | 65 | 134 | 32 | 35 | 31 | 27 | 100% | 100 |
| Retention Licence | 65 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 5 | – | – | 8 |
| Petroleum and Geothermal Tenure Applications⁶ | | | | | | | | |
| Exploration Permit | 120 | 57 | 31 | 14 | 6 | 2 | 14% ⁷ | 68 |
| Production Licence Retention Lease | 90 | 31 | 2 | 14 | 0 | 11 | 79% | 19 |
| Pipeline Licence | 90 | 16 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 100% | 13 |
| Well | 40 | 28 | 20 | 25 | 6 | 25 | 100% | 17 |
| Survey | 40 | 34 | 19 | 22 | 3 | 22 | 100% | 28 |

Explanatory notes:

- 1 Applications “otherwise dealt with” include those that have been refused, lapsed, rejected or withdrawn.
- 2 All approvals timelines under are subject to the ‘Stop the Clock’ mechanism, whereby the timeline target is adjusted to not include the time taken by processes outside DMP’s control, such as referrals to other government agencies, during a prescribed public comment period or where additional information has been requested from applicants.
- 3 The Department of Environment and Conservation website began reporting on all Native Vegetation Clearing Permit statistics for the WA Government in May 2009. Results are available at www.dec.wa.gov.au.
- 4 Some discrepancies between the number of applications carried over to the next quarter may occur due to ongoing auditing of pending applications.
- 5 For mining tenure applications, the number approved within the timeline target only applies to applications received since 1 January 2009.
- 6 Includes grant or renewal of Exploration Permits, Production Licences and Retention Leases; grant, renewal or variation of Pipeline Licences; “Surveys” also incorporate Special Prospecting/Access Authorities and Scientific Investigations.
- 7 The low compliance figure for exploration permits was due to issues surrounding the need to modify grant procedures for geothermal exploration permits. These issues have now been resolved.