# Audit report of the 2024–25 annual performance statements

# Department of Industry, Science and Resources

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT on the 2024-25 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources**

**To the Minister for Finance**

***Conclusion***

In my opinion, the 2024-25 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR):

- present fairly DISR's performance in achieving its purpose for the year ended 30 June 2025; and
- are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act).

***Audit criteria***

To assess whether DISR's annual performance statements complied with Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the PGPA Act, I applied the following criteria:

- whether the entity's key activities, performance measures and specified targets are appropriate to measure and assess the entity's performance in achieving its purposes.
- whether the performance statements are prepared based upon appropriate records that properly record and explain the entity's performance.
- whether the annual performance statements present fairly the entity's performance in achieving the entity's purposes in the reporting period.

***Accountable Authority's responsibilities***

As the Accountable Authority of the Department, the Secretary is responsible under the PGPA Act for:

- the preparation of annual performance statements that accurately present DISR's performance in the reporting period and comply with the requirements of the PGPA Act and any requirements prescribed by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (the Rule).
- keeping records about DISR's performance as required by the PGPA Act, and
- establishing internal controls that the Accountable Authority determines are appropriate to enable the preparation of annual performance statements.

***Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statements***

My responsibility is to conduct a reasonable assurance engagement to express an independent opinion on DISR's annual performance statements.

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which include the relevant Standard on Assurance Engagements (ASAE) 3000 *Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information* issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

Procedures were planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the annual performance statements of the entity present fairly the entity's performance in achieving its purposes and comply, in all material respects, with the PGPA Act and Rule.

The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures depend on my judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, in the annual performance statements. In making these risk assessments, I obtain an understanding of internal controls relevant to the preparation of the annual performance statements in order to design procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my conclusion.

***Independence and quality control***

I have complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements and applied Auditing Standard ASQM 1 *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Reports and Other Financial Information, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements* in undertaking this assurance engagement.

***Inherent limitations***

Because of the inherent limitations of an assurance engagement, it is possible that fraud, error or non-compliance may occur and not be detected. An assurance engagement is not designed to detect all instances of non-compliance of the annual performance statements with the PGPA Act and the Rule as it is not performed continuously throughout the period and the assurance procedures performed are undertaken on a test basis. The reasonable assurance conclusion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Australian National Audit Office



George Sotiropoulos

Group Executive Director, Performance Statements Audit Services Group

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra

24 September 2025



Chapter 2

# Performance statements


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## Statement of preparation

As the accountable authority of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, I present the performance statements 2024–25, as required under paragraph 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

In my opinion, the performance statements accurately present the department's performance in the reporting period and comply with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

**Meghan Quinn PSM**
Secretary

13 October 2025

# Overview

The performance statements report against the 18 performance measures in the department's *Corporate Plan 2024–28,* available at industry.gov.au.

In 2024–25, the department overall achieved its purpose and delivered key activities. We met targets for 12 measures, partially met 4 measures and set a baseline for one measure. One measure was not met.

**Building a better future for all Australians through enabling a productive, resilient and sustainable economy, enriched by science and technology**

| Key activity 1.1 | Key activity 1.2 | Key activity 1.3 |
|---|---|---|
| Growing innovative and competitive businesses, industries and regions | Investing in science and technology | Supporting a strong resources sector |
| 5 measures met<br>1 measure partially met<br>1 baseline set | 4 measures met<br>1 measure partially met<br>1 measure not met | 3 measures met<br>2 measures partially met |

We formalised an enterprise performance framework during the reporting period to improve performance measurement and reporting. The framework guides how we develop, maintain and review performance information, including measures reported through these statements.

In 2024–25, the department navigated a challenging operating environment, reflected in our performance. Global and domestic challenges required adaptability and resilience to deliver Australian Government policies, programs and services under our stewardship.

We assisted the government to drive economic growth and productivity enhancing reforms. This helped secure Australia's position in global supply chains and the net zero economy. We enabled industry capability and investment, including support for science, research, critical technologies and the resources sector.

Appropriate frameworks and standards were maintained to effectively deliver the department's regulatory functions. Functions aligned with best practice principles set out in *Resource management guide 128: regulator performance.* All 6 measures relating to our regulatory functions were met.

The 2025 federal election was held in May 2025. The department adhered to government conventions during the caretaker period. No Machinery of Government changes through the Administrative Arrangements Orders impacted the department's measures in the reporting period.

Table 5 summarises results for each measure.

**Table 5: Summary of performance measure results**

| Measure | Target | Result |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Maintaining business co-investment through portfolio initiative funding<br>*Key activity 1.1*<br>*Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) program 1.1* | At least $1.20 of business co-investment for every $1.00 of grant funding for portfolio programs that require co-investment. | Met |
| 2. Maintaining Business Outreach Network engagements with regional businesses<br>*Key activity 1.1*<br>*PBS program 1.1* | 25% or more of total Business Outreach Network engagements delivered to regional businesses. | Met |
| 3. Maintaining applicant satisfaction with the business.gov.au portal grants application process<br>*Key activity 1.1*<br>*PBS program 1.1* | Year-on-year maintenance of, or increase in, the proportion of applicants who are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. | Met |
| 4. Ensuring compliance with Australian Industry Participation (AIP) plans and engagement of new suppliers<br>*Key activity 1.1*<br>*PBS program 1.1* | Maintain or increase:<br>• compliance rate (timeliness and achievement of obligations) of reporting against AIP plans<br>• percentage of reports found to be achieving the obligations of the Jobs Act via regulatory intervention<br>• percentage of new suppliers engaged from procurements undertaken.<br>Baseline set in 2024–25. | Baseline set |

| Measure | Target | Result |
|---|---|---|
| 5. Meeting legislated and World Trade Organization timeframes through Anti-Dumping Commission (ADC) case management<br>*Key activity 1.1*<br>*PBS program 1.1* | Maintain or improve timeframes for a majority of case types against the benchmark year. | Met |
| 6. Processing registrations under the R&D Tax Incentive<br>*Key activity 1.1*<br>*PBS program 1.1* | 95% of applications processed within:<br>• 40 business days for first-time registrants<br>• 20 business days for registrants that have applied within 6 months after the end of the income period<br>• 80 business days for registrations submitted from 6 to 10 months after the end of the income period. | Met |
| 7. Facilitating the establishment of research-focused collaborations by businesses through portfolio programs<br>*Key activity 1.1*<br>*PBS program 1.2* | Year-on-year maintenance of the number of businesses collaborating. | Partially met |
| 8. Growing the number of technology-related jobs to 1.2 million by 2030<br>*Key activity 1.2*<br>*PBS program 1.2* | Maintain trajectory to meet 1.2 million technology-related jobs by 2030. | Not met |
| 9. Delivering Questacon national STEM events that reach lower socio-economic, regional and remote communities<br>*Key activity 1.2*<br>*PBS program 1.2* | 50% of events reaching lower socio-economic communities and 60% of events reaching regional and remote communities. | Met |

| Measure | Target | Result |
|---|---|---|
| 10. Raising awareness of the importance of STEM through the delivery of portfolio initiatives<br>*Key activity 1.2*<br>*PBS program 1.2* | 87% or more Australians (parents, educators and young Australians) consider STEM skills important when considering employment. | Partially met |
| 11. Maintaining National Measurement Institute (NMI) measurement services through third-party accreditations to meet national and international best practice<br>*Key activity 1.2*<br>*PBS program 1.2* | Maintain:<br>• global acceptance of over 320 measurement capabilities under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the International Committee of Weights and Measures<br>• NMI's 28 National Association of Testing Authorities accreditations across calibration and testing, reference material production, and proficiency testing functions<br>• World Anti-Doping Agency accreditation for NMI's sports drug testing capability. | Met |
| 12. Increasing compliance with fair measure regulations through National Measurement Institute trader engagement<br>*Key activity 1.2*<br>*PBS program 1.2* | Follow-up trader audit compliance rate is higher than the initial trader audit compliance rate. | Met |
| 13. Assuring the safety and security of civil space activities through regulation administered by the Australian Space Agency<br>*Key activity 1.2*<br>*PBS program 1.2* | Zero fatalities, serious injuries or damage to other property as a result of authorised Australian space activities. | Met |

| Measure | Target | Result |
|---|---|---|
| 14. Growing Australia's critical minerals sector, including by supporting development of downstream processing capacity<br>*Key activity 1.3*<br>*PBS program 1.3* | Year-on-year increase in the number, progress and total capital expenditure of critical minerals projects. | Partially met |
| 15. Increasing opportunities for resources project investment<br>*Key activity 1.3*<br>*PBS program 1.3* | Reframe any future Commonwealth offshore exploration acreage releases consistent with the government's *Future Gas Strategy*. | Partially met |
| 16. Assessing *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* applications through the National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator<br>*Key activity 1.3*<br>*PBS program 1.3* | 90% of assessment timeframes met. | Met |
| 17. Supporting radioactive waste disposal policy for Nuclear-Powered Submarines through Australian Radioactive Waste Agency advice<br>*Key activity 1.3*<br>*PBS program 1.4* | Evidence-based advice provided on or before agreed timeframes. | Met |
| 18. Decommissioning the Northern Endeavour and remediating the Laminaria-Corallina oil fields<br>*Key activity 1.3*<br>*PBS program 1.3* | Progress towards completing Phase 1 decommissioning works by the expected vessel disconnection and towing window on 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025, while ensuring safety and protection of the environment. | Met |

## Changes to performance measures

Table 6 describes changes to performance measures reported in these statements from how they appeared in the *Corporate Plan 2024–28*.

**Table 6: Changes to performance measures**

| Performance measure | Change from Corporate Plan 2024–28 |
|---|---|
| 5. Meeting legislated and World Trade Organization timeframes through ADC case management | Assessment against target of 'maintain or improve timeframes for a majority of case types against the benchmark year' (from 'year-on-year maintenance of, or improvement in, timeframes for a majority of case types'). Editorial update from corporate plan. |
| 8. Growing the number of technology-related jobs to 1.2 million by 2030 | Assessment against target 'maintain trajectory to meet 1.2 million technology-related jobs by 2030' (from 'year-on-year increase in the number of technology related jobs'). Improvement to methodology from corporate plan. |
| 11. Maintaining NMI measurement services through third-party accreditations to meet national and international best practice | Assessment against target of '320 measurement capabilities under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement' (from '300') and '28 National Associate of Testing Authority accreditations' (from '25'). Editorial update from corporate plan. |

# Detailed results

This section presents the individual performance measure results. Each measure is assessed against its respective target and methodology as met, partially met, not met or, where applicable to new measures, baseline set. Assessment relies on data sources for each measure set out in the *Corporate Plan 2024–28*, including publicly available information and departmental records. Results from previous years are included to show performance over time where applicable.

## Key activity 1.1 – Growing innovative and competitive businesses, industries and regions

This activity supports the growth of innovative and competitive businesses, industries and regions. It aims to build a diversified, flexible, resilient and dynamic economic base that can identify and adapt to new markets and emerging opportunities. It relates to PBS 2024–25 Outcome 1, Programs 1.1 and 1.2.

### 1. Maintaining business co-investment through portfolio initiative funding

Business co-investment in targeted industries, including manufacturing and commercialisation, supports sustainable, private sector-led growth and job creation, which benefits the broader economy. It provides evidence of business commitment to delivering on the project or activity and contributes to growing innovative and competitive businesses in these industries. This effectiveness measure tracks business co-investment in programs across targeted industries.

#### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| At least $1.20 of business co-investment for every $1.00 of grant funding for portfolio programs that require co-investment. | $2.83 | $1.78 | $1.64 |
| **Assessment** | Met | Partially met[1] | Met |

#### Analysis

The result is based on the sum of business co-investment across grant programs, divided by grant funding. The target is met where the result is above $1.20. Details of the programs with grants in-scope are listed in Table 7.

Business co-investment was required for 8 programs and 126 grant agreements in 2024–25. The Cooperative Research Centres Program played a key role in achieving the overall co-investment target. The program achieved $3.06 co-investment in Grants Round 25 and $1.62 in Projects Round 16. The other 6 programs all had minimum co-investment requirements below $1.20.

From 2024–25, the requirements for at least half of all in-scope programs to meet the $1.20 target was removed to acknowledge the continued investment in emerging sectors, where recipients may have limited capacity to provide matched contributions.

1 The assessment methodology previously required at least half the contributing programs to achieve the $1.20 target. The methodology changed for 2024–25 to reflect the intent of the co-investment requirement for some in-scope programs.

**Table 7: In-scope programs**

| Program name | Total agreed grant amount | Total business contribution | Co-investment | Number of contracts |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cooperative Research Centres Grants Round 25 | $92,500,000 | $282,650,150 | $3.06 | 2 |
| Cooperative Research Centres Projects Round 16 | $55,320,359 | $89,855,750 | $1.62 | 23 |
| International Partnerships in Critical Minerals Program | $40,000,000 | $45,112,610 | $1.13 | 8 |
| Industry Growth Program – Commercialisation and Growth | $82,320,023 | $90,225,425 | $1.10 | 43 |
| Industry Growth Program – Early-Stage Commercialisation | $3,119,034 | $3,408,119 | $1.09 | 17 |
| Maker Projects – Community STEM Engagement grants 2024 | $1,996,263 | $1,206,113 | $0.60 | 26 |
| Moon to Mars Initiative – Supply Chain Capability Improvement Grants intake 11 | $3,997,662 | $2,316,864 | $0.58 | 6 |
| Moon to Mars Initiative – Trailblazer Stage 2 | $42,000,000 | $11,755,804 | $0.28 | 1 |
| **Total** | **$321,253,341** | **$526,530,835** | **$1.64** | **126** |

Three of the 8 programs in-scope had minimum co-investment requirements below $1.00 (both Moon to Mars programs and Maker Projects). These programs have grant recipients with reduced capacity to co-invest. They target the emerging Australian space industry and learning activities for young people.

### Limitations

The department uses contracted co-investment and grant amounts in the reporting period. Actual co-investment cannot be determined until a grant is finalised, which often occurs outside the reporting period. The department monitors project progress so that grantees meet contractual requirements.

Co-investment ratios may indicate the effectiveness of grants in stimulating private sector investment. The measure does not capture further contributions these investments may make to broader economic activity, which would increase the impact of grants over time.

## 2. Maintaining Business Outreach Network engagements with regional businesses

Regions are a significant contributor to Australia's economy. Helping to unlock their economic potential through supporting regional businesses to enable job creation is key to supporting Australia's long-term growth and sustainability.

Regional managers are based across Australia to connect businesses to government initiatives. They help businesses overcome the barriers of distance, complexity and innovation, and seize the opportunities of digital transformation, globalisation and sustainability. This output measure tracks the department's engagement with regional businesses.

### Result

| Target | 2024–25[2] |
|---|---|
| 25% or more of total Business Outreach Network engagements delivered to regional businesses. | 43% |
| **Assessment** | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the number of regional manager engagements (appointments, phone calls and emails) with regional businesses as a proportion of their engagements with all businesses. As the proportion is above the target of 25% or more, the measure was met.

In 2024–25, 43% of engagements were with regional or remote businesses, exceeding the target. The department achieved this high proportion of engagement through consistent regional manager coverage and strong business engagement.

Regional managers supported regional and remote businesses facing challenges in growing their operations, commercialising their ideas and accessing new markets. They engaged across the country, including managing business impact intelligence reporting for natural disasters in New South Wales and Queensland.

The department only engaged with businesses reactively during the caretaker period for the federal election which resulted in lower engagement.

2 This was a new measure in 2024–25.

### Limitations

Of the 3,290 in-scope records, 23 had insufficient address information. This figure represents 0.7% of records (not material to the result).

## 3. Maintaining applicant satisfaction with the business.gov.au portal grants application process

The Business Grants Hub processes thousands of grant applications each year from businesses and other organisations through the business.gov.au portal. In 2024–25, the Business Grants Hub delivered programs on behalf of the department and 10 other client agencies.

An application process that meets the needs of applicants makes it easier for businesses to engage with government, access the support they need to grow and have consistency when engaging with government grants. This effectiveness measure indicates whether applicants are satisfied with the application process.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year-on-year maintenance of, or increase in, the proportion of applicants who are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. | 90% | 86% | 87% |
| **Assessment** | Baseline set | Partially met | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the proportion of applicant responses that report being satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of the application process. The result met the measure's target as it was above the 2023–24 result of 86%.

A total of 11,278 responses were received across 93 programs:

- 87% of respondents reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the grant application process
- 12% of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 1% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Stronger Communities Program Round 9 (1,720 responses) and On Farm Connectivity Program Round 2 (2,231 responses) accounted for around 35% of responses. The programs recorded satisfaction rates of 89% and 86%, respectively.

The highest and lowest satisfaction rates were observed in programs with relatively few responses. Thirty-one programs achieved a satisfaction score of 100% (100 responses). The lowest satisfaction score of 0% was recorded in 3 programs, each with one respondent.

When factoring in program type, the performance result is similar for eligibility programs and higher for merit programs compared to the 2023–24 financial year:

- eligibility programs: 88% (88% in 2023–24)
- merit programs: 86% (83% in 2023–24).

### Limitations

The application form states that the satisfaction question is not considered in the assessment process. It is possible some applicants may still believe a positive response would result in a more favourable assessment.

Satisfaction scores were not available for 21 applications due to a system issue. This figure represents 0.19% of applications (not material to the result).

## 4. Ensuring compliance with Australian Industry Participation plans and engagement of new suppliers

The Australian Industry Participation (AIP) Authority is the regulator of the *Australian Jobs Act 2013* (Jobs Act). It assists proponents of major projects to understand the obligations of the Jobs Act and monitors actions undertaken by proponents, as described in AIP plans and compliance reports. This helps Australian entities to have full, fair and reasonable opportunity to supply goods and services to major projects. This effectiveness measure tracks how the department maintains compliance with AIP plans and supports new suppliers to become part of the supply chain.

### Result

| Target | 2024–25[3] |
|---|---|
| Maintain or increase: | |
| • compliance rates (timeliness and achievement of obligations) of reporting against AIP plans | 59% |
| • percentage of reports found to be achieving the obligations of the Jobs Act via regulatory intervention | 75% |
| • percentage of new suppliers engaged from procurements undertaken. | 27% |
| **Assessment** | Baseline set |

3 This was a new measure in 2024–25.

### Analysis

The result, which set a baseline for future assessment, is based on the record of decisions made by the AIP Authority during the reporting period.

The department will monitor statistics over time, collecting evidence of outcomes at a system-wide level. This aligns with the regulator performance best practice principle of continuous improvement and building trust.

The AIP Authority monitored compliance on 176 major projects. Of the 217 compliance reports, 59% (129) were compliant.

The AIP Authority made 72 decisions on revised compliance reports (reports found non-compliant on first submission and resubmitted after feedback was implemented), finding 75% (54) compliant with obligations on resubmission.

Proponents had 28 days to address feedback and resubmit a revised compliance report. By working with proponents to increase their understanding of processes, the AIP Authority builds trust through open communication, aligning with the regulator performance best practice principle of collaboration and engagement.

This measure's consideration of new suppliers engaged supports awareness of how Australian businesses, who are new suppliers to project proponents' supply chains, can be competitive when given the opportunity to bid for the supply of new goods and services. By winning the tender to deliver work packages, these new suppliers become part of the supply chain.

Project proponents reported awarding 90% of the 1,244 procurements of key goods and services during 2024–25 to Australian businesses, with 27% (342) awarded to Australian suppliers new to the project proponents' supply chains. Key goods and services are those with a value of $1 million or more.

During the reporting period, a non-compliance register was established on the AIP Authority's website at industry.gov.au, strengthening ongoing visibility of compliance. No instances of non-compliance by proponents were published during 2024–25.

### Limitations

Some records may be updated as part of the AIP Authority's ongoing maintenance and quality assurance of processes and records.

## 5. Meeting legislated and World Trade Organization timeframes through Anti-Dumping Commission case management

The Anti-Dumping Commission (ADC) administers Australia's anti-dumping system, supporting industry and the economy by remedying proven instances of unfair international trade. The ADC investigates Australian industry claims of dumping and subsidisation of imported goods.

Anti-dumping and countervailing investigations contribute to overall economic stability. This helps maintain a balanced trade environment where domestic industries are not undermined by unfair trade practices from foreign producers. This efficiency measure tracks the ADC's timely management of anti-dumping and countervailing cases.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maintain or improve timeframes for a majority of case types against the benchmark year. | Baseline set for 7 case types (see Table 8) | 3 of 6 case types had maintained or improved completion timeframes | 5 of 6 case types had maintained or improved completion timeframes |
| **Assessment** | Baseline set | Partially met | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on data from the ADC's case management system. As a majority of case types were maintained or improved (within a 5% allowance) against the benchmark year, the result met the measure's target.

Most case types are subject to a statutory limit for resolution set out in Australia's domestic anti-dumping legislation, the *Customs Act 1901* and the *Customs Tariff (Anti-Dumping) Act 1975*. Time limits for case types are also in line with Australia's international obligations as a World Trade Organization member in the Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994* and the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures. Completing cases in expected timeframes builds trust with stakeholders, aligning with the regulator performance best practice principle.

**Table 8: Results per case type 2024–25**

| Case type | Statutory time limit | Benchmark (2022–23) | Cases completed | Days (average length) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dumping and/or subsidy investigation | 155 days (extendable) | 484 | 2 | 462 |
| Review of measures | 155 days (extendable) | 347 | 4 | 376 |
| Duty assessment | 155 days (extendable) | 350 | 14 | 317 |
| Accelerated review | 100 days (non-extendable) | 89 | 3 | 55 |
| Continuation inquiry | 155 days (extendable) | 280 | 4 | 267 |
| Anti-circumvention inquiry | 155 days (extendable) | 215 | 0 | N/A |
| Exemption inquiry | No statutory limit | 324 | 2 | 234 |

While timely investigations are important, so is achieving thoroughness and accuracy for the integrity of the trade remedies system. Factors impacting case resolution time include total caseload and resourcing, complexity and volume of information of cases, and the timely cooperation of parties such as importers and exporters. The benchmark set in 2022–23 included timeframes beyond the statutory time limit where legislation provided for extension. In 2024–25, the ADC completed 4 'review of measures' cases, with 3 completed outside benchmark days. The longer time taken reflected the ADC's caseload prioritisation in managing case type risks and available resourcing.

The ADC leveraged data and its case management system to manage operational risk over the reporting period. This followed enhancements to the case management system in 2023–24 to improve the recording and tracking of resolution times. Additionally, the ADC set up a new performance analysis team to monitor outcomes and drive improvements. Appropriate performance monitoring and reporting will continue to be a focus for future years, noting the challenges of an uncertain global trade environment.

## 6. Processing registrations under the Research and Development Tax Incentive

The Australian Government's Research and Development Tax Incentive (R&DTI) Program helps stimulate and grow innovative and competitive Australian businesses. Timely processing of registrations enables program benefits to flow quickly into the economy, allowing businesses to reinvest in additional research and development activities. This efficiency measure tracks the department's processing of registrations within allotted time limits.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 95% of applications processed within: | | | |
| • 40 business days for first-time registrants | 100% | 99% | 99% |
| • 20 business days for registrants that have applied within 6 months after the end of the income period | 99% | 99% | 98% |
| • 80 business days for registrations submitted from 6 to 10 months after the end of the income period. | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the number of days between a submission date and the date the department registered it. This gives the proportion of companies processed in the allotted time limits. As each of the 3 elements exceeded 90%, the result met the measure's target.

The department takes a risk based approach to registrations, in alignment with the regulator performance best practice principle to be risk based and data driven. Risk assessments can result in the department undertaking pre-registration engagement with the company and in-depth assessments. The 95% target accommodates extended processing times for these occasions. The department exceeded the target even though there was a 3.2% increase in the number of applications received compared to the previous reporting period.[4]

The R&DTI Program is jointly administered between the department and the Australian Tax Office. The agencies have clearly defined operational scopes and share relevant information. This supports alignment with the regulator performance best practice principle of continuous improvement and building trust.

4 Data is incomplete at time of reporting. Businesses have up to 10 months from the end of the financial year in which activities are conducted to register for the R&DTI Program.

## 7. Facilitating the establishment of research-focused collaborations by businesses through portfolio programs

Bridging science and industry through business–research collaboration is essential to Australia solving problems and bringing new technologies, products and services to the market. To create this collaborative culture, the department runs several initiatives to support business–research collaborations.

Collaborative partnerships work on industry-identified problems to improve the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of Australian industries. This effectiveness measure focuses on the department's administration of the Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) program. In 2024–25, the department provided grant funding to support industry-led collaborative partnerships through CRCs Grants Round 25 (Grants Round 25) and CRCs Projects Round 16 (Projects Round 16).

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year-on-year maintenance of the number of businesses collaborating. | 252 partners | 304 partners | 255 partners |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Partially met |

### Analysis

The result is based on all project partners for relevant programs. The 255 collaborating partners represented 89.6% of a 3-year average. This is within the 70–90% range where performance is assessed as partially met.

In 2024–25, the department facilitated collaboration with 255 partners, as shown in Table 9. Contract negotiations for Grants Round 25 were impacted by the timing of the federal election and caretaker period. The one remaining Grant Round 25 agreement was executed in early 2025–26. Had this negotiation been finalised in the reporting period, the measure would have been met.

**Table 9: Breakdown across programs**

| Program name | Number of partners | Number of agreements executed |
|---|---|---|
| **Grants Round 25** | 146 | 2 |
| **Projects Round 16** | 109 | 23 |
| **Total** | **255** | **25** |

### Limitations

The ability to meet the measure depends on the number of partners in grant agreements. Potential limitations include the number of suitable applications received, approved and executed, and waiting periods for funding decisions, public announcement and finalising agreements.

## Key activity 1.2 – Investing in science and technology

This activity aims to boost our science and technology capability to facilitate the development and uptake of new ideas and technology and build a strong base for science in Australian decision-making. It relates to PBS 2024–25 Outcome 1, Program 1.2.

### 8. Growing the number of technology-related jobs to 1.2 million by 2030

Australia's technology and digital capability are central to our national interest and have the potential to help solve national challenges, deliver well-paid jobs and strengthen international partnerships. Technology-related jobs underpin almost all aspects of Australian industry and society, including research, advanced manufacturing, transportation, clean energy, healthcare, defence and national security.

This effectiveness measure tracks the growth of Australia's direct and indirect technology sectors as part of the department's work to support the development and adoption of critical technologies. The measure monitors progress towards reaching 1.2 million technology-related jobs by 2030.

#### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maintain trajectory to meet 1.2 million technology-related jobs by 2030. | 944,996 | 980,506 | 949,172 |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Not met |

#### Analysis

The target for this measure was updated to improve the assessment of economic and industry conditions. The result is based on technology sector taxonomy outlined on pages 17–18 of *Australia's tech jobs opportunity* report, available at techcouncil.com.au/research. The measure was not met as the trajectory is not on track to reach the target by 2030 (see Figure 2).

The number of technology-related jobs was 949,172 in May 2025 (6.5% of total employment). This was a 3.7% decline since May 2024. In contrast, the broader labour market grew by 2%.

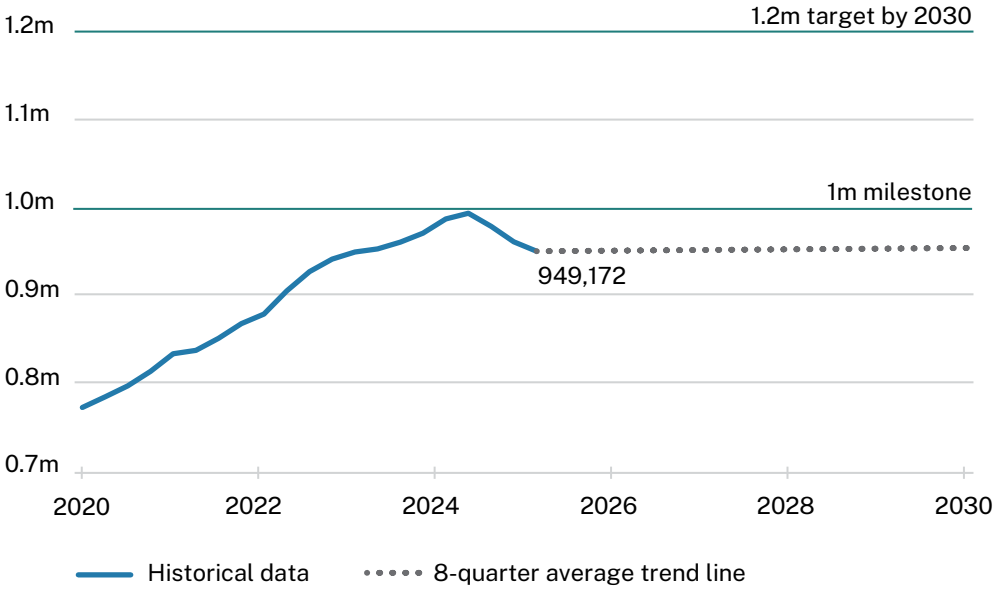
Compared to May quarter 2024, technology jobs in non-technology industries declined 3.9%, making them the largest contributor to the annual decline in the sector. There was also a 3.6% reduction in technology jobs in technology industries, which was consistent with global trends, and a 3.2% reduction in non-technology jobs in technology industries over the same period.

A decline in successive quarters throughout the year indicates a potential ongoing trend.

The quarterly decline in Australian technology jobs contrasts with an Australian labour market that grew by 0.6% over the same quarter. National employment growth was driven by energy (8.3%) and non-market sectors such as healthcare (3.6%) and education (2.8%). However, the decline in tech jobs aligned more closely with declines in some traditional industries, including information, media and telecommunications (-6.9%), manufacturing (-2.3%) and administrative services (-2%).

The average annual growth rate of technology-related jobs over 5 years from May 2020 to May 2025 was 4.6%. The average annual growth rate of total jobs over 5 years from May 2020 to May 2025 was 2.8%.

**Figure 2: Quarterly technology related jobs 2020 to 2030**




The department has a range of initiatives that focus on the significant 'supply side' challenges in ensuring that Australia has the workers with the skills to take on these technology-related jobs. These include:

- administering targeted initiatives that directly support the development of skills in emerging technologies, including:
  - Next Generation Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technology Graduate Programs which are expected to attract and train over 500 job-ready graduates
- funding up to 20 PhDs in quantum research as part of the Next Generation Quantum Graduates Program (as announced in the October 2022–23 Budget)
- the department's diversity in STEM initiatives that aim to increase participation in the technology workforce by historically underrepresented cohorts. In the 2024–25 Budget, $38.2 million was allocated over 8 years to support a skilled and diverse STEM workforce.

The department also has a range of initiatives that drive the 'demand side', supporting a thriving technology-enabled economy and workforce. These include:

- investments through the National Reconstruction Fund and Industry Growth Program which will include a focus on critical technologies
- implementation of the National Quantum Strategy (including the Critical Technologies Challenge Program)
- implementation of the National Robotics Strategy
- provision of $17 million in grants for 4 AI Adopt Centres
- other AI initiatives to capture the opportunity of AI, including the development of a National AI Capability Plan and the work of the National AI Centre.

### Limitations

Data is based on a sample and covers up to the end of May 2025.

There are different definitions of the technology sector which may result in different results in other publications.

## 9. Delivering Questacon national STEM events that reach lower socio-economic, regional and remote communities

Questacon's Canberra centre attracts up to half a million visitors each year from the public and schools to enjoy exhibits, shows and inspirational learning experiences.

The government is committed to overcoming social disadvantage and geographic isolation as a barrier to engagement with science, technology and innovation. Questacon's national touring and virtual programs let Australians engage with programs from any location. Programs are free for schools, reducing cost barriers to participation. This output measure tracks Questacon's national STEM events reaching lower socio-economic, regional and remote communities, as an important aspect of its work.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 50% of events reaching lower socio-economic communities | 58% | 54% | 58% |
| 60% of events reaching regional and remote communities | 80% | 71% | 74% |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the percentage of:

- schools engaged that had an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage value of <1000 and the percentage of communities engaged in postcodes that had a Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas decile value of <6
- schools and communities engaged from postcodes defined as inner regional, outer regional, remote or very remote under the ABS Remoteness Structure.

As both factors reached their target percentages, the result met the measure's target.

In 2024–25, Questacon delivered 1,339 national STEM events for young Australians, educators and the broader Australian community. Of these events, 58% reached lower socio-economic communities and 74% reached regional and remote communities.

Tour planning for in-person experiences aimed to maximise national reach, while considering school uptake in proposed touring locations. Considerations included:

- need – preferencing under-served communities (defined by location, socio-economic status and proximity to STEM learning infrastructure)
- equity – length of time between visits to different states and regions
- feasibility – density of schools and populations, and available infrastructure.

Questacon's commitment to reaching under-served communities across Australia is highlighted in Figures 3 and 4. Figure 3 shows Questacon's greater reach to lower socio-educational status schools compared to all Australian schools. Figure 4 shows Questacon's significantly higher engagement with regional schools when compared to the distribution of all Australian schools.

**Figure 3: Questacon's reach to schools based on socio-educational status**

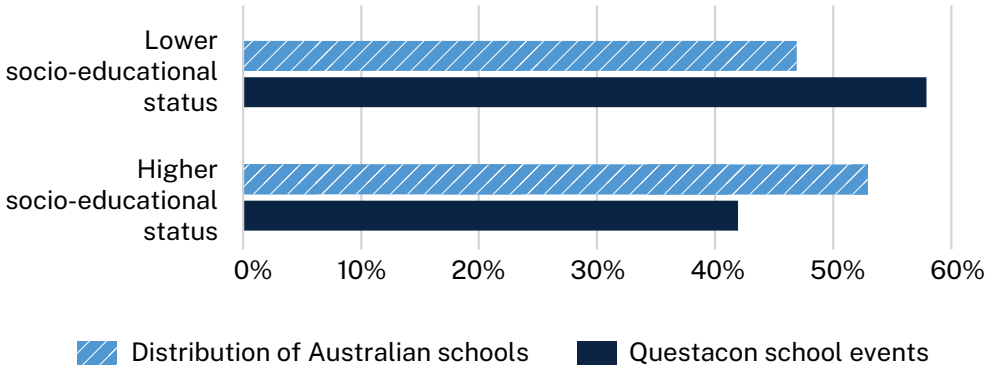
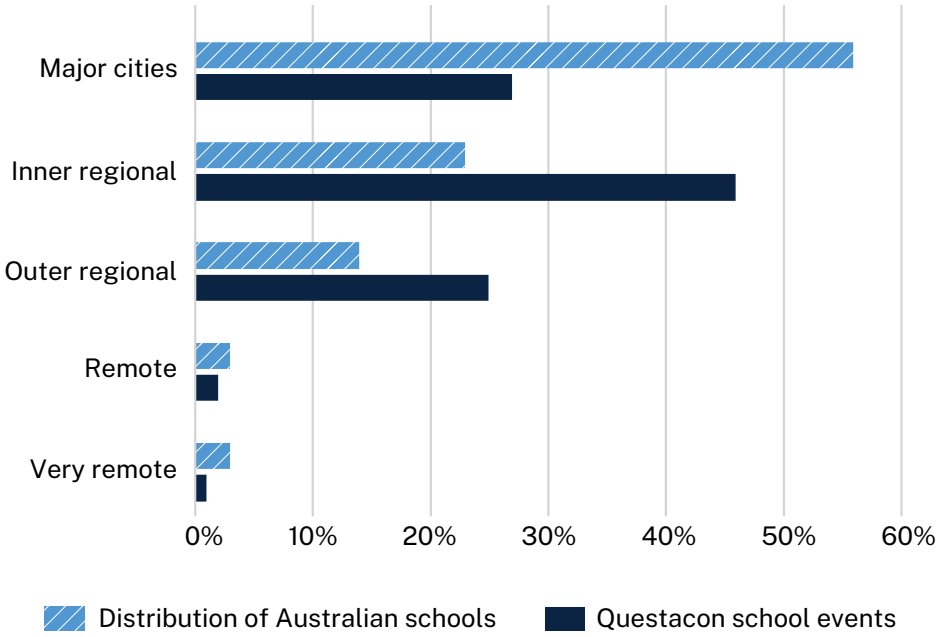


**Figure 4: Questacon's engagement with schools based on location**




### Limitations

Location data was not available for 116 events, 8% of the total (not material to the result). Events were almost entirely virtual, endpoint geolocational data was not recorded by the webinar platform.

## 10. Raising awareness of the importance of STEM through the delivery of portfolio initiatives

STEM awareness, understanding and capability is an important part of a skilled workforce for a Future Made in Australia. The department leads government policy and programs to support community-wide STEM engagement, including among girls, women and people from diverse backgrounds. These include the National Science Week, Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, and Superstars of STEM.

This effectiveness measure is a proxy based on 3 surveys to understand the extent to which STEM engagement measures raise perception of the importance of STEM skills.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 87% or more Australians consider STEM skills important when considering employment: | | | |
| • young Australians | N/A | 92% | N/A |
| • parents | 81% | N/A | 84% |
| • educators | 89% | N/A | 85% |
| **Assessment** | Partially met | Met | Partially met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the surveys in 2024–25 of parents and educators and one survey in 2023–24 of young Australians. The measure was partially met as the parents and educators' results were between 77% and 86% (range for partially met under the methodology).

The primary purpose of the surveys is to inform the annual STEM Equity Monitor. Surveys are conducted and reported by Youth Insight, the research arm of Student Edge, which provides national surveys for government and industry organisations. The calculation methodology for the STEM Equity Monitor and its supporting data sources can be found in the methodology chapter of the monitor, available at industry.gov.au.

Eighty-four percent of parents and 85% of educators considered STEM important. The proportion of parents who considered STEM skills important when considering future employment increased from 81% in the 2022–23 survey to 84% in 2024–25. This could be because of increases in the perception among parents of the importance of some individual STEM skills when considering future employment:

- technology skills 90% (up from 87% in the previous survey)
- mathematics skills 87% (up from 83% in the previous survey).

Educators' perceptions of the importance of STEM skills were above target at 89% in 2022–23 but decreased to 85% in 2024–25. This could be because of decreases in the perception among teachers and career advisors of the importance of some individual STEM skills when considering future employment:

- science skills 84% (down from 85% in the previous survey)
- engineering skills 68% (down from 73% in the previous survey)
- mathematics skills 92% (down from 93% in the previous survey).

The Youth in STEM survey was last conducted in 2023–24. The target was met in that year as 92% of surveyed young people perceived STEM skills as important when considering future employment.

### Limitations

The surveys did not ask respondents to explain why they provided their ratings. There are several influences on perceptions of STEM, such as individual's experience in the education system, the impact of other programs and initiatives, and current events and media coverage.

A representative sample was surveyed. Each survey sample was analysed to represent the intended population. Weighting was applied in some cases for under-representation or over-representation within the sample and additional methodological information was available in research reports.

## 11. Maintaining National Measurement Institute measurement services through third-party accreditations to meet national and international best practice

Australia is a trade-oriented economy. A trusted measurement system is needed to manage critical infrastructure, develop scientific capabilities and enable new technology. This reduces barriers to trade, helps businesses engage in international and domestic markets and maintains Australia's standing with trading partners.

The National Measurement Institute (NMI) is the Australian Government's national authority on measurement. This effectiveness measure tracks NMI's measurement capabilities and accreditations that support government, industry and the community.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23[5] | 2023–24[6] | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maintain: | | | |
| • global acceptance of over 320 measurement capabilities under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the International Committee of Weights and Measures | 313 | 344 | 343 |
| • NMI's 28 National Association of Testing Authorities accreditations across calibration and testing, reference material production, and proficiency testing functions | 25 | 28 | 28 |
| • World Anti-Doping Agency accreditation for NMI's sports drug testing capability. | Maintained | Maintained | Maintained |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Met |

5 Target numbers in 2022–23 were 'over 300' and '24', respectively.

6 Target numbers in 2023–24 were 'over 300' and '25', respectively.

### Analysis

The result is based on information from NMI's internal databases that maintain data for each of the measure's 3 elements. As each of the elements were met or exceeded, the result meets this measure's target.

At 30 June 2025, NMI held:

- 343 internationally recognised Calibration and Measurement Capabilities – 138 in chemistry and biology and 205 in general physics
- 28 National Association of Testing Authorities accreditations across calibration and testing, reference material production, and proficiency testing functions
- World Anti-Doping Agency accreditation for sports drug testing capability.

Independent accreditation of NMI measurement expertise and services is essential for promoting trust in Australia's measurement system. It supports recognition of the system in global mutual recognition frameworks established at treaty level. It also provides confidence that NMI's role in Australia's quality infrastructure meets globally accepted best practice.

Maintaining measurement capabilities and accreditations required professional expertise and high-quality service delivery. NMI hosted independent experts reviewing its capabilities, attended global and regional governance forums and took part in ongoing staff training, research and collaboration with domestic and international stakeholders.

## 12. Increasing compliance with fair measure regulations through National Measurement Institute trader engagement

Each year, over $1 trillion of trade in Australia relies on accurate measurement. Accurate and reliable measurement supports efficient markets where businesses have a level playing field and consumers get what they pay for.

As part of its regulatory function, NMI engages with traders to increase compliance with the *National Measurement Act 1960*. Improvements in compliance deliver flow-on benefits for consumers, businesses and the economy. This effectiveness measure tracks how NMI engagement increased compliance with legislation.

### Result

| Target | 2023–24[7] | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|
| Follow-up trader audit compliance rate is higher than the initial trader audit compliance rate. | 12% improvement | 13% improvement |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met |

7 This was a new measure in 2023–24.

### Analysis

The result compared the compliance rate for follow-up trader audits against the compliance rate for initial trader audits. The follow-up rate needed to be at least 10% higher than the initial rate for the target to be met.

In 2024–25, the initial trader audit compliance rate was 71%, and the follow-up trader audit compliance rate was 84%. The 13% improvement shows interactions between trade measurement inspectors and businesses improved understanding of measurement requirements.

Inspectors focused on education and advice (particularly for new retailers or businesses) to encourage compliance and decrease the need to escalate to enforcement activities. This aligns with the regulator performance best practice principle of collaboration and engagement. Inspectors work with the retailer or business so that they understand their obligations under measurement legislation, the nature of any alleged non-compliances and how to achieve compliance.

## 13. Assuring the safety and security of civil space activities through regulation administered by the Australian Space Agency

The Australian Space Agency (ASA), through the Office of the Space Regulator, is responsible for regulation of Australian space and high-power rocket activities under the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* (SLR Act). This seeks to enable technology entrepreneurship and space sector growth while assuring risks are managed. This effectiveness measure tracks how the ASA's regulatory function is performing in relation to authorised space activities.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Zero fatalities, serious injuries or damage to other property as a result of authorised Australian space activities. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the number of incidents caused by authorised Australian space activities. As there were zero incidents from 20 authorised space activities in 2024–25, the result met the measure's target.

The volume and complexity of Australian space activity continues to grow. There was an increase in authorised space activities in 2024–25[8], compared to previous years (9 activities in 2023–24, 4 in 2022–23 and 5 in 2021–22). This trend is expected to continue as space launch and return becomes more accessible for organisations seeking to operate from Australia and by Australian nationals overseas. Activities are expected to become more complex, including increased launch and returns, on-Earth orbit manoeuvring and lunar operation proposals.

The Office of the Space Regulator follows regulator best practice principles. Factors contributing to the result included:

- regulatory assessments and ongoing oversight under the SLR Act performed by personnel to a standard commensurate with international counterparts
- appropriate guidance material to support sector engagement and inform proponents of obligations under the SLR Act
- continuous improvement to the regulatory framework, guidance materials, training and internal assessment procedures based on Australian space activity experience and international best practice.

### Limitations

The number or trend of authorised space activities associated with this measure do not reflect total Australian commercial space activity. The SLR Act applies only to limited activities, typically involving spaceflight. Most Australian commercial space firms operate in other areas of the sector value chain (including communications, position, navigation and timing, earth observation, space situational awareness, robotics and artificial intelligence, space medicine, planetary science, and astronomy).

## Key activity 1.3 – Supporting a strong resources sector

This activity aims to support the sustainable development of the resources sector, attract private sector investment and encourage innovative technologies. It relates to PBS 2024–25 Outcome 1, Program 1.3 and 1.4.

### 14. Growing Australia's critical minerals sector, including by supporting development of downstream processing capacity

Australia has significant reserves of critical minerals and the potential to process them. Growing our critical minerals sector will create economic benefits for Australians, including through increased trade and job creation. It will also contribute to diversifying global supply chains and position Australia as an ethical, reliable and secure supplier.

This effectiveness measure tracks the growth and progress of critical minerals projects, as reported in the *Resources and energy major projects report 2024* (2024 REMP), available at industry.gov.au.

8 Space activities authorised may not be undertaken within the same reporting period. A single authorisation may cover more than one space activity.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year-on-year increase in the number, progress and total capital expenditure of critical minerals projects. | 6 of 6 categories increased | 5 of 6 categories increased | 3 of 6 categories increased |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Partially met |

### Analysis

The result compared the number, stage and investment in mining and processing operations from the current year and previous year. As there was an increase in 3 of the 6 categories, the result partially met the measure's target. The measure required an increase in the majority of categories for it to be met.

The 2024 REMP report showed an increase in total Australian critical minerals projects, led by an increase in the number of early-stage projects. However, the number and value of late-stage projects declined.

The decline in the value of late-stage projects is attributed to project completions and challenging global conditions for lithium and nickel. A combination of strong supply growth and softer than expected demand for both lithium and nickel have seen prices fall as market surpluses develop. Prices for nickel have fallen by over a third between 2022 and 2024, while prices for lithium have fallen by 80%. Current prices are below the 'incentive price' required for many projects to be commercially viable.

**Table 10: Result by category[9]**

| Category | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | Result |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project pipeline** | $26 billion | $20 billion | Decrease |
| **Total projects** | 105 | 119 | Increase |
| **Publicly announced** | 53 | 79 | Increase |
| **Advanced feasibility** | 22 | 25 | Increase |
| **Committed** | 21 | 9 | Decrease |
| **Completed** | 9 | 6 | Decrease |

Publicly announced projects are not included in capital expenditure figures, as these projects tend to have a higher uncertainty of making commercial production and capital expenditure commitments are subject to a greater degree of change. An assessment of the full critical minerals pipeline, including early-stage projects, shows an increase in capital expenditure from $54 billion to over $58 billion between 2023–24 and 2024–25.

9 Data prior to 2023–24 cannot be directly compared to later years, which include the impact of nickel related projects.

### Limitations

Progress in critical minerals are not directly comparable year-on-year due to methodology changes in the REMP report. Adjusted figures are used to provide a more direct comparison of progress over time. Adjustments seek to improve the coverage and quality of the data, including by incorporating relevant project information that may not have been identified in previous years.

For example, in 2023, definitions of categories were strengthened by changing a category from 'feasibility' to 'advanced feasibility'. There was also a change to reporting capital expenditure commitments from a range to a point estimate. In 2024, nickel was added as a critical mineral and has been included in this measure's result.

Additionally, the REMP reporting period is 1 November to 31 October (not per financial year). Data may not include all ongoing projects, including those undertaken by private companies with fewer reporting obligations. Operations worth less than $50 million are also not captured.

This measure does not consider progress of projects within stages (where a project may progress without changing categories).

## 15. Increasing opportunities for resources project investment

The *Future Gas Strategy* includes Action 1: prevent gas shortfalls. As part of this, the government has committed to reframe Commonwealth offshore exploration acreage release arrangements. Reframed arrangements will focus on optimising existing discoveries and infrastructure in producing basins, prioritise energy security and align with net zero emissions targets. This output measure tracks progress in the department's policy work to reframe arrangements for future releases.

### Result

| Target | 2024–25[10] |
|---|---|
| Reframe any future Commonwealth offshore exploration acreage releases consistent with the government's *Future Gas Strategy.* | Work progressed but not complete. |
| **Assessment** | Partially met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the department's policy work to reframe future releases and advice to government, consistent with the *Future Gas Strategy* and within agreed timeframes. The result partially met the measure's target, based on:

- offshore policies and guidance material has been updated, and public consultation completed
- work commenced to reframe the acreage release process.

10 This measure was assessed against a new target in 2024–25.

The department updated existing offshore petroleum bid guidelines to align with the *Future Gas Strategy*. On 5 March 2025, the Minister for Resources agreed to commence public consultation. Public consultation was undertaken from 20 March 2025 to 30 May 2025 after being extended due to the federal election and caretaker period.

More broadly, the department engaged with, and supported, the Minister for Resources on the *Future Gas Strategy* and offshore reforms over the reporting period.

In 2025–26, this measure will continue to track the progress of this important policy work.

## 16. Assessing *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* applications through the National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator

The National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA) is responsible for the efficient and effective administration and regulation of Australia's offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas activities. It administers petroleum and greenhouse gas titles in Australian Commonwealth waters in accordance with the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (OPGGS Act). This efficiency measure tracks NOPTA's processing of industry applications within published timeframes.

### Result

| Target | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 90% of assessment timeframes met. | 97% | 97% | 99% |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the percentage of applications meeting assessment times under the OPGGS Act. As the result was above 90%, it met the measure's target. At 30 June 2025, NOPTA finalised 99% of 239 applications within published timeframes, an increase from previous years.

Processing of 3 applications did not meet the timeframes due to the application complexity. This included additional financial materials needing review, delay in receiving commercial input for an assessment and delay pending the outcome of a related application decision.

This measure and the activities of NOPTA align with the regulator performance best practice principle of continuous improvement and building trust. Efficient processing of applications supports a strong offshore resources sector by creating business certainty and reducing project timelines.

### Limitations

Assessment timeframes are indicative, strictly adhering to them could impact the quality of assessment or introduce legal risk. Data may be subject to minor change following the end of the reporting period as records are finalised.

## 17. Supporting radioactive waste disposal policy for Nuclear-Powered Submarines through Australian Radioactive Waste Agency advice

The Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) is responsible for the safe and secure long-term management and disposal of Australia's radioactive waste. ARWA provides expert advice to the Department of Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency to support development of technical solutions and plans to manage and dispose of radioactive waste from the nuclear-powered submarines program. This output measure tracks ARWA's delivery of this advice within agreed timeframes.

### Result

| Target | 2023–24[11] | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|
| Evidence-based advice provided on or before agreed timeframes. | Advice provided on or before agreed date | Advice provided on or before agreed date |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met |

### Analysis

The result is based on the delivery of advice on or before agreed timeframes.

ARWA provided advice on development of a Waste Acceptance Criteria for the HMAS Stirling Controlled Industrial Facility in December 2024. It also advised on draft Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulations in January 2025 (first round) and May 2025 (second round).

Over the reporting period, ARWA had regular engagement with the Department of Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency.

Funding for the nuclear-powered submarines program (PBS 2024–25, Outcome 1, Program 1.4) ceased on 30 June 2025. This measure has now concluded and will not be reported in future years.

## 18. Decommissioning the Northern Endeavour and remediating the Laminaria-Corallina oil fields

The Northern Endeavour Floating Production Storage and Offtake facility (Northern Endeavour) decommissioning program is one of the largest in Australia and the first undertaken by the Australian Government. The Government stepped in to manage the facility as a result of the operator entering liquidation. The Northern Endeavour is moored between the Laminaria and Corallina oil fields, north-west of Darwin in the Timor Sea.

11 This was a new measure in 2023–24.

The program is being delivered in 3 phases, more detail is available at industry.gov.au. Phase 1 decommissioning planning began in 2020–21 and works began in 2022–23, continuing throughout 2024–25. The scope of Phase 1 has fundamentally changed, driven by the May 2023 decision by secured creditor Castleton Commodities Merchant Asia to forfeit possession of the Northern Endeavour. This decision transferred responsibility for the vessel's tow and recycling to the Commonwealth, introducing a suite of complex and high-cost activities including hull protrusion removal, international tow logistics, and compliance with stringent environmental and biosecurity requirements.

The program will be fully cost recovered through the Laminaria and Corallina Decommissioning Cost Recovery Levy (the Levy). The Levy will continue to be in place until 2030 unless reduced or terminated earlier by the Minister for Resources to avoid over-recovery. The Australian Taxation Office has reported that the Levy collected $780 million since 2021–22 and estimates it will provide $368 million for 2023–24.

This effectiveness measure tracks the department's progress to decommission the Northern Endeavour and remediate the Laminaria and Corallina oil fields in compliance with regulatory requirements and approval permits.

### Result

| Target | 2023–24[12] | 2024–25 |
|---|---|---|
| Progress towards completing Phase 1 decommissioning works by the expected vessel disconnection and towing window on 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025, while ensuring safety and protection of the environment. | Decommissioning progressing as planned to enable meeting the expected vessel disconnection window.<br><br>Compliance with safety and environmental requirements. | Decommissioning progressing as planned to enable meeting the expected vessel disconnection window.<br><br>Compliance with safety and environmental requirements. |
| **Assessment** | Met | Met |

12 This was a new measure in 2023–24.

### Analysis

The result is based on:

- progress towards meeting the expected vessel disconnection and towing window of 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025
- the number and type of safety incidents and the findings of any National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) safety inspections
- the number and type of environmental incidents and the annual compliance report on the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) approval with conditions to Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

As all elements met the objectives, the result met the measure's target.

Petrofac Facilities Management Limited is the lead contractor for Phase 1 works. Petrofac was the registered operator of the Northern Endeavour throughout 2024–25 and was contracted to deliver activities. Xodus Group provided independent technical and assurance advice and Ngamuru Advisory provided commercial support and advice.

The department progressed disconnection and towing of the Northern Endeavour on the planned timeline. All wells were suspended and flushed by 7 March 2025, and the Northern Endeavour was disconnected by 21 April 2025. The facility is now held in place by mooring chains.

The Northern Endeavour will be towed from the operational area to Singapore to complete hull preparation and final sea-fastening works between 1 July 2025 and 30 September 2025. Once works in Singapore are complete, it will be towed to the recycling facility in Denmark.

The regulatory environment for the Northern Endeavour is rigorous. The department delivers the program under the EPBC Act approval which sets out 34 controlled action conditions that the department and its contractors must adhere to. NOPSEMA regulates Petrofac through an approved safety case. NOPSEMA also oversees well integrity matters.

There were no instances of non-compliance with environmental requirements as of 30 June 2025. This was supported by Petrofac reporting on all health, safety and environment related incidents. No serious incidents[13] occurred during the reporting period. The outcomes of regular NOPSEMA safety inspections supported this finding.

In 2025–26, the target for this measure will be to finalise Phase 1 works and progress Phase 2. This includes the successful delivery of the Northern Endeavour to its final recycling destination and securing a lead contractor for Phase 2 works.

### Limitations

The Northern Endeavour program is high-risk and complex. The vessel's size, location, weather and condition may cause delays in decommissioning.

13 An incident is considered serious when it meets the principles of a 'lost time injury' of more than 3 days, as established in NOPSEMA's Guidance Note *Notification, reporting and recording requirements for incidents.* More information is available at nopsema.gov.au.