

2023»»24 Annual Report of Activities



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Acknowledgement of Country

Our department recognises the First Peoples of this nation and their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters, seas, skies, and communities. We acknowledge First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians and Lore Keepers of the oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations peoples.

Contents

Welcome	2
2023-24 Industry Activity Overview	4
About Us	8
Activity & Insights	14
OEI Licence Activity Insights	18
Petroleum Titles Activity Insights	22
Petroleum Exploration	26
Petroleum Development	28
GHG Storage Activity Insights	34
Performance Outcomes	39
Governance, Stewardship and Engagement	44
2024-27 Strategic Plan	46
Governance, Planning and Risk Management	47
Resource Stewardship	48
Annual Performance Reviews and Benchmarking	49
Late Life Resources	49
Suitability Assessments	50
External Compliance Monitoring	51
Data Management	52
Leveraging Information and Technology	53
Engagement	56
Regulatory Excellence	59
Who Does What in Government?	62
Financials	64
OPGGS Act – Cost Recovery Overview	66
OPGGS Act – Cost Effectiveness and Financial Results	68
OEI Act – Cost Recovery Overview	69
OEI Act – Cost Effectiveness and Financial Results	70



Welcome



It is my pleasure to present our 2023-24 Annual Report of Activities. The report covers outcomes associated with my statutory roles relating to both the National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA or Titles Administrator) and the Offshore Infrastructure Registrar (the Registrar). These functions are supported by staff within the NOPTA branch (the branch) of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR).

A lot can happen in 12 months, and the past year has been no exception. Last year I pointed to the significant changes that the branch was navigating with the introduction of the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021* (OEI Act) and the emergence of the greenhouse gas storage (GHG) industry. Those things have come to pass, and I am very proud to report that we have achieved many successes.

Offshore wind represents a huge opportunity for Australia on its journey towards net zero, and in April 2024, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon Chris Bowen MP, granted Australia's first feasibility licences in the offshore Gippsland declared area. Once developed, these projects could generate 25 gigawatts (GW) of electricity for the region.

On GHG, the pace is quickening, and we are seeing growing numbers of current and future projects being proposed. In June 2024, the Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, the Hon Madeleine King MP, declared Australia's first identified greenhouse gas storage formations under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (OPGGGS Act). This is a significant milestone and the first step in the commencement of injection and storage operations in offshore areas of Australia.

The size and complexity of these tasks cannot be understated. It is a credit to the enormous efforts across the entire branch to assist and enable our Ministers to make decisions with the utmost confidence.

During 2023-24, activity in the offshore petroleum sector remained steady. In May 2024, the Australian Government released its *Future Gas Strategy*¹ which outlines its plan for how gas can support the energy transition to net zero by 2050 and beyond.

Earlier in 2024, the branch published its new three-year Strategic Plan. This aligns with the DISR corporate plan² and focuses on priorities aimed at supporting effective governance and resource stewardship, leveraging ICT, engagement and regulatory excellence. A priority for me and my staff is to drive excellence and continuous improvement across our branch. I am pleased to report significant progress has been made against key areas of this plan, which includes meeting our published assessment timeframes 97% of the time for 2023-24. You can find further detail on our new Strategic Plan in this report.

Internally, we have a strong commitment to improving our capability and ensuring a competent capacity. During the past 18 months, the branch has undergone important growth as we perform new functions and ensure our quality assurance, business and legal support structures are fit for purpose. It's with the highest confidence that I can say we are a robust, highly skilled and professional regulatory branch. We are also a regulatory branch that continues to punch above its weight when compared to our international counterparts, particularly in regards to our operational and cost efficiencies. See our recent benchmarking exercise for more details.

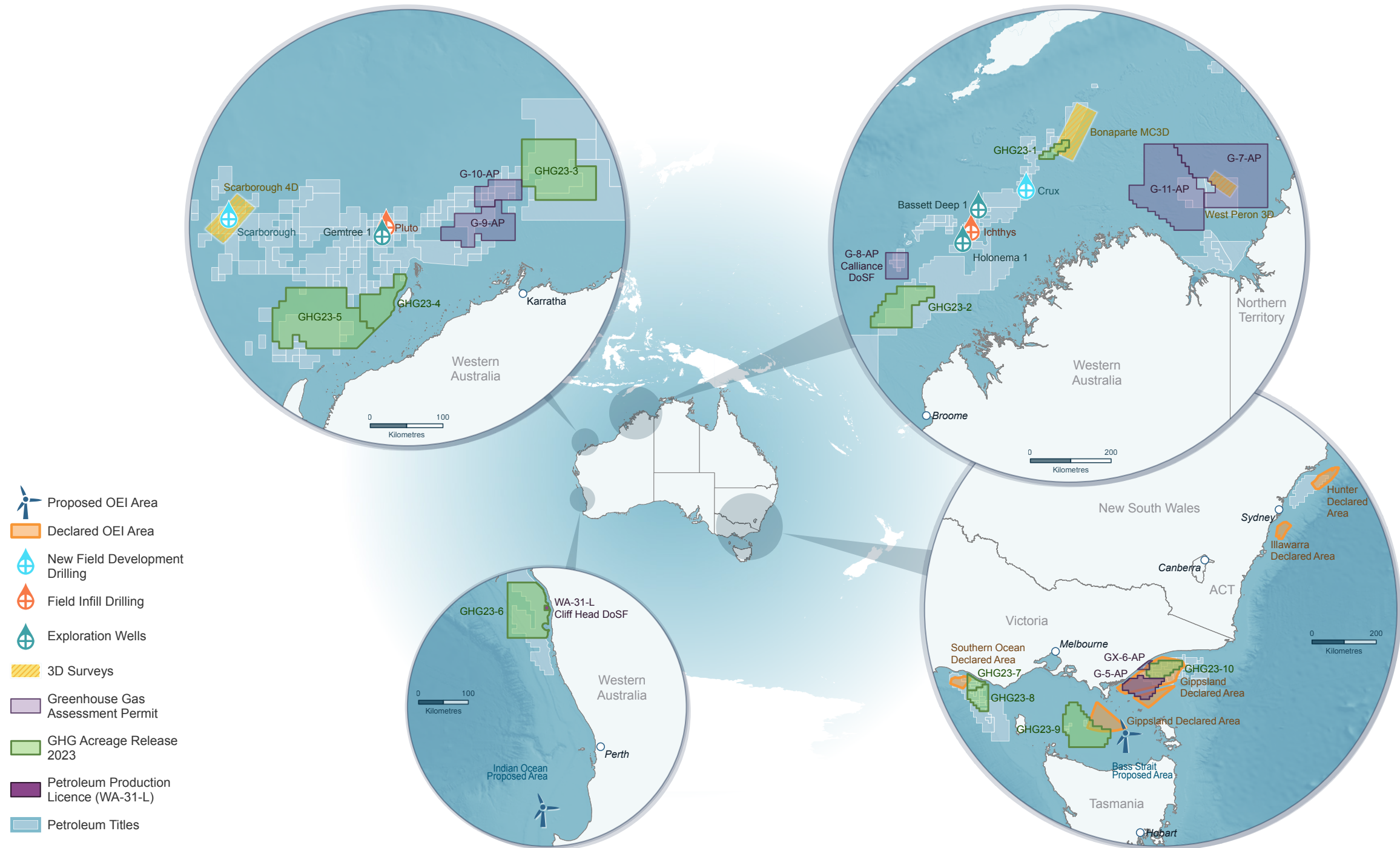
On a final note, I would like to emphasise the importance of the relationships we hold and continue to build across a widening stakeholder remit. Since inception, we have always adopted a cooperative approach to working with industry, government, and especially the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA). Regular consultation and exchange of ideas is essential for maintaining and building community trust in the administration of Australia's offshore titles and licences. As the offshore industries we regulate mature, I expect these relationships will become more important in our contribution to national prosperity.

¹ See <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/future-gas-strategy>

² See <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/corporate-plan-2023-24>



2023-24 Industry Activity Overview





Performance Highlights

97%

met target application assessment timeframes (petroleum and GHG applications)

261

petroleum applications submitted

19

GHG applications submitted

8

OEI feasibility licence applications submitted

More than
500

meetings held with stakeholders, across petroleum, GHG and OEI

2nd

annual International Upstream Forum hosted

14TB

of data authorised for public release

Industry Activity Highlights

Offshore Electricity

6 feasibility licences granted

6 feasibility licences under offer

Southern Ocean, Illawarra, Indian Ocean and Bass Strait progressing towards licensing rounds

Offshore Petroleum

1 production licence granted

4 pipeline licences granted

3 exploration wells drilled

2 seismic surveys conducted

Offshore GHG

2 Declarations of Identified Storage Formations were approved

1 seismic survey conducted

1 GHG Special Authority granted

Bidding round commenced for 2023 GHG acreage release





About Us

Established	<p>On 1 January 2012, the General Manager of the NOPTA branch was appointed the Titles Administrator under the <i>Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006</i> (OPGGS Act) by the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Science, and Resources (DISR). The Titles Administrator is assisted by staff within the NOPTA branch.</p> <p>On 16 December 2022, the General Manager of the NOPTA branch was appointed as the Registrar under the <i>Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021</i> (OEI Act) by the Secretary of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). The Registrar is assisted by staff within the NOPTA branch.</p>		
Industries Administered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Petroleum• Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Storage• Offshore Electricity		
Values	<p>We are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• innovative, enthusiastic and endeavour to improve the way we work• flexible, responsive and embrace change	<p>Our people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• act with honesty and integrity• are inclusive and respect the views of others	<p>Is seen as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• impartial, consistent and transparent• approachable, helpful and trustworthy
Purpose	<p>To advise government and decision makers on the grant and administration of titles and licences, monitor compliance with title and licence conditions, data management and resource stewardship.</p>		

Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide information, assessments, analysis, reports, advice and recommendations to the relevant decision makers under the OPGGS Act and OEI Act• Facilitate life of title/licence administration, including compliance monitoring• Engage with titleholders/licence holders on their performance in meeting regulatory obligations and expectations• Manage the submission and release of data• Act as decision maker for the approval and registration of a change in control of a company• Act as decision maker for transfers and dealings, and for granting of short-term petroleum titles and GHG titles• Maintain the public registers of offshore petroleum titles, GHG titles and offshore electricity licences• Cooperate with the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) and the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) on matters relating to the administration and enforcement of the OPGGS Act, OEI Act and associated regulations
Principles of Regulator Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous improvement and building trust• Risk based and data driven• Collaboration and engagement





Our stakeholder footprint

The Titles Administrator and Registrar has a diverse stakeholder footprint which cuts across industry, government, non-government and international agencies (Figure 1).

Regular surveys are conducted to assess stakeholder satisfaction across key areas of our functions.

Over the past year, the branch has ensured that the valuable feedback received from our 2023 survey³ is acted on and now informs key pillars of our 2024-27 Strategic Plan. The next stakeholder survey is planned for 2025.



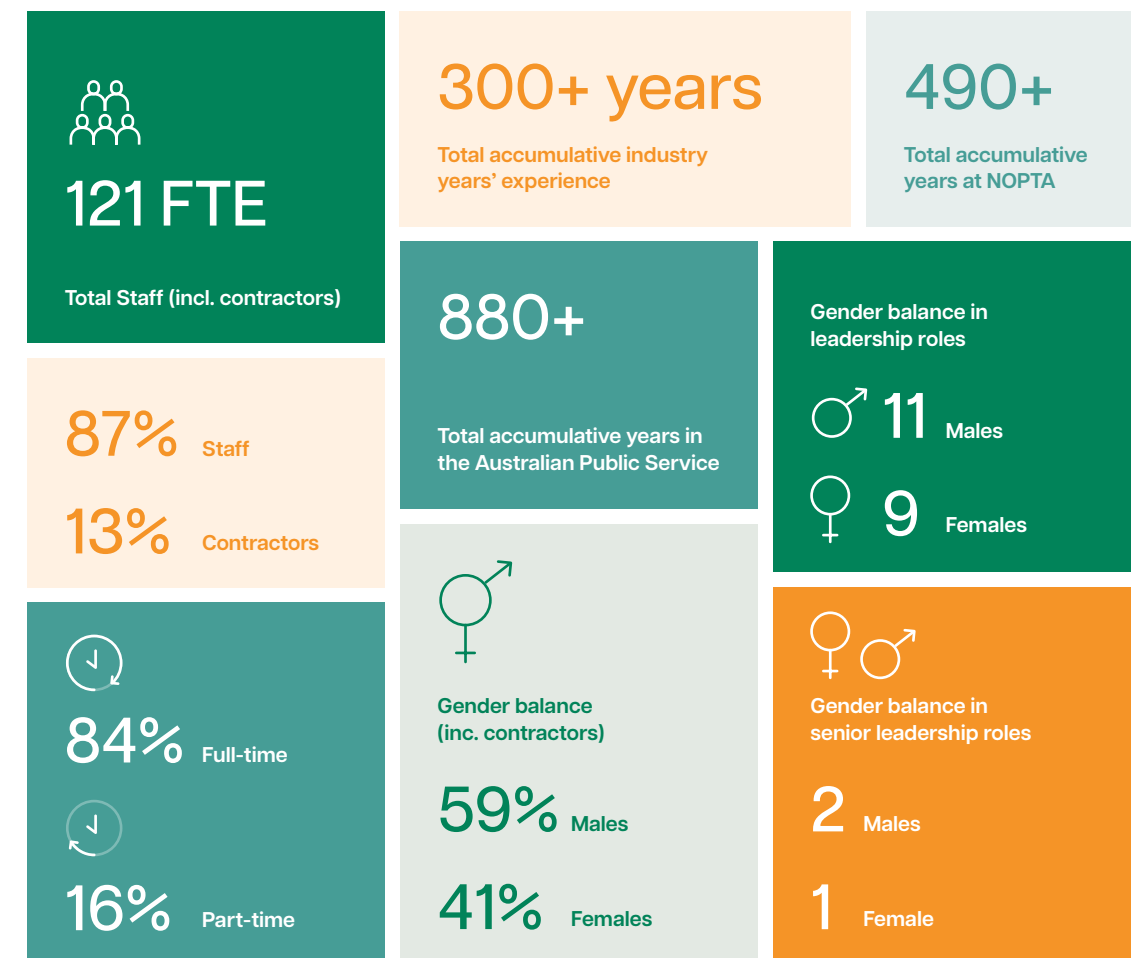
Figure 1: Titles Administrator and Registrar stakeholder footprint

³ See: <https://www.nopta.gov.au/media/stakeholder-survey/index.html>

HR Overview

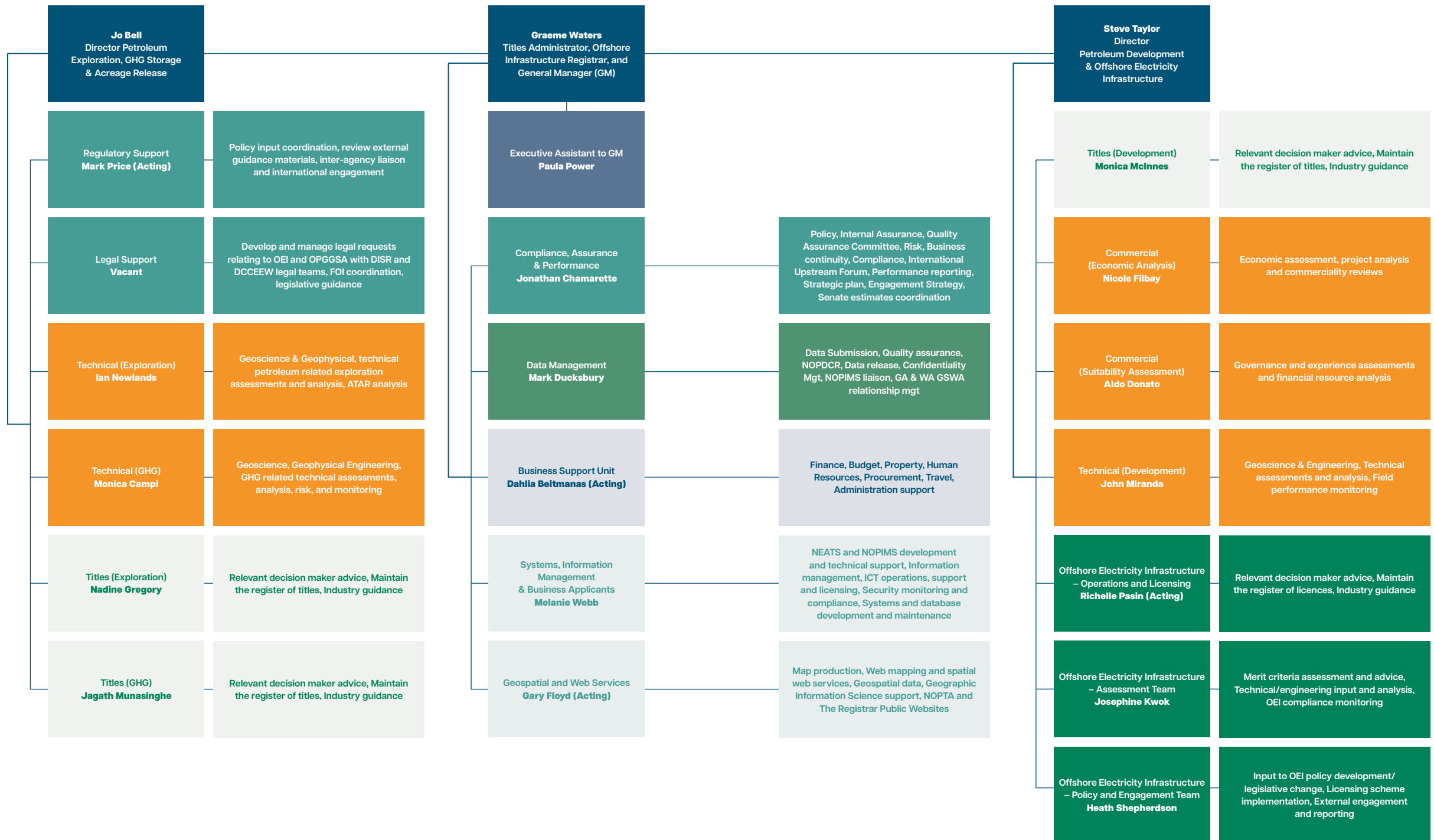
As of 30 June 2024, the branch had 121 full time equivalent (FTE) staff across our Perth and Melbourne offices, with remote workers in Adelaide, Brisbane, regional Victoria and New South Wales.

During 2023-24, the branch undertook an intensive recruitment drive to support our expanded functions and ensure our governance, risk and legal support arrangements remain strong.





Organisational Structure



Activity & Insights





Figure 2 outlines the Australian Government's process for offshore petroleum, GHG and OEI decisions under the OPGGS Act and OEI Act.

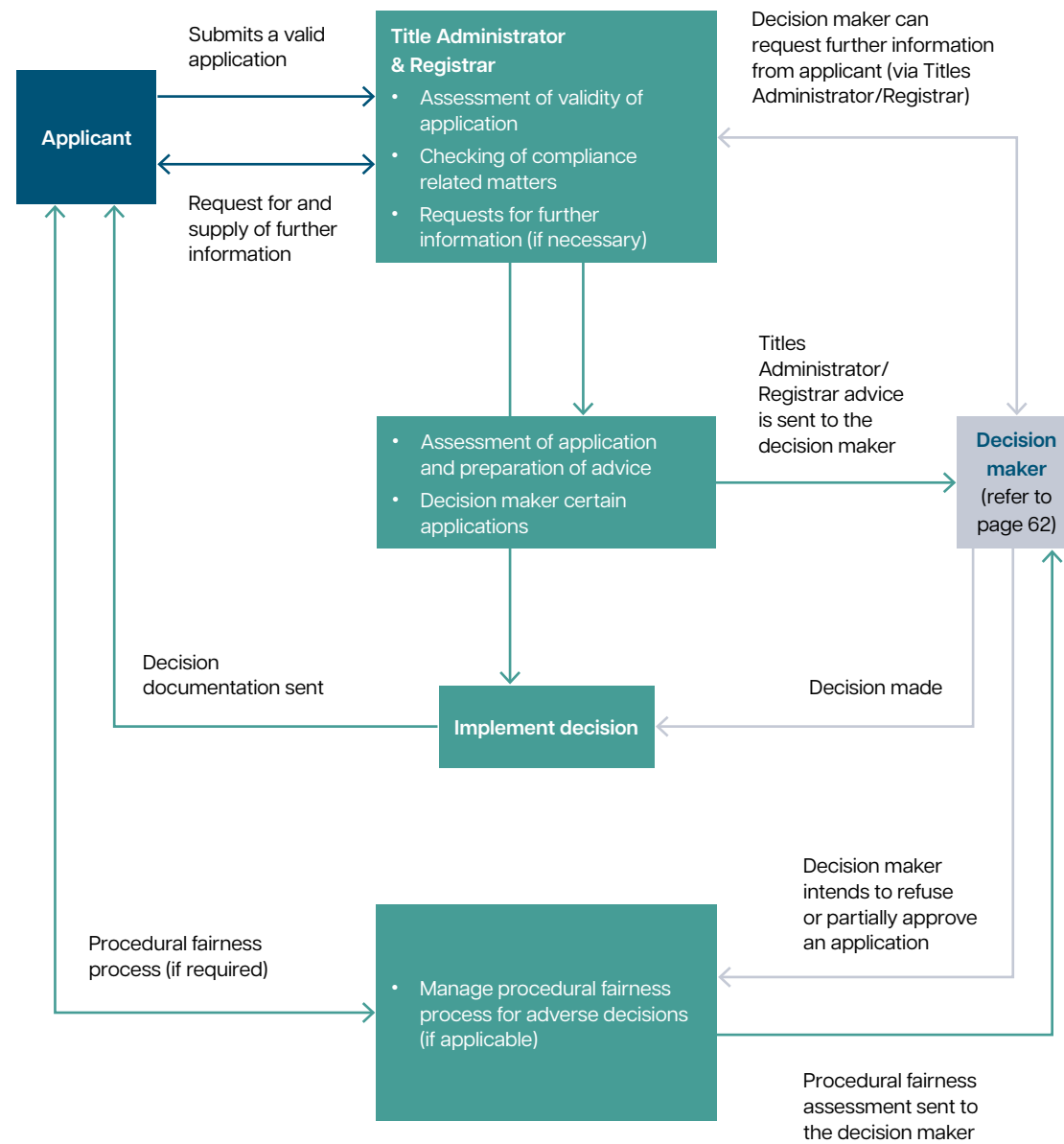


Figure 2: Application process model under the OPGGS Act and OEI Act

Image courtesy of Shearwater

OEI Licence Activity Insights

In 2023-24:

- Progress made towards awarding 12 feasibility licences – representing 25GW of proposed generation capacity
- 37 feasibility licence assessments finalised
- Additional 3 areas declared, bringing the total declared area to over 18,000km²*
- Southern Ocean, Illawarra, Indian Ocean and Bass Strait progressing towards licencing rounds

Indian Ocean Proposed Area



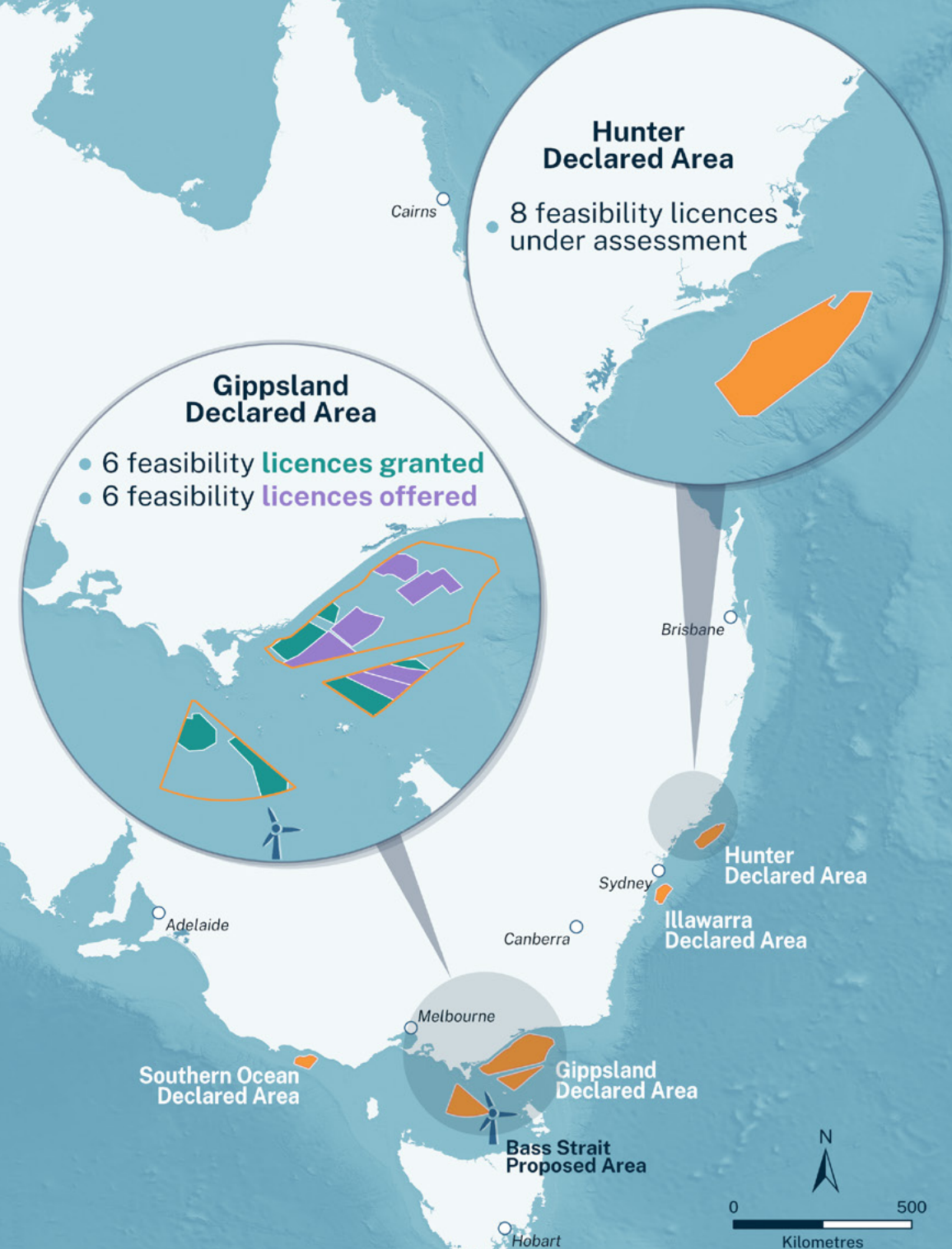
Proposed Area

Licence Granted

Declared Area

Applications Under Offer

* Declared area refers to an area being declared as suitable for renewable energy projects. This process is managed by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.





Gippsland Declared Area

After a highly competitive first feasibility licensing round in Gippsland, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy granted 6 feasibility licences, with a further 6 feasibility licences under offer to successful applicants by the end of June 2024 (Figure 3).

The offshore wind projects proposed under these licences have potential energy generation of up to 25GW. This is more than the current total installed generation capacity in Victoria (conventional generation and renewables), highlighting the future potential of offshore wind in Australia.

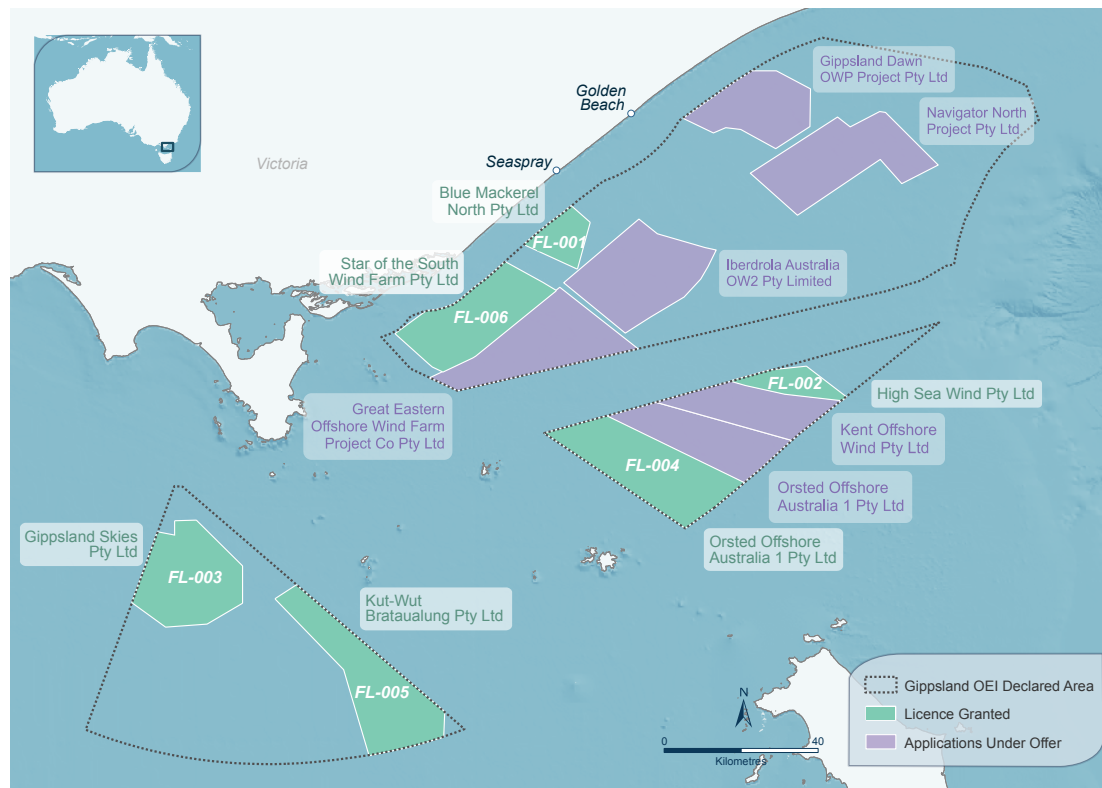
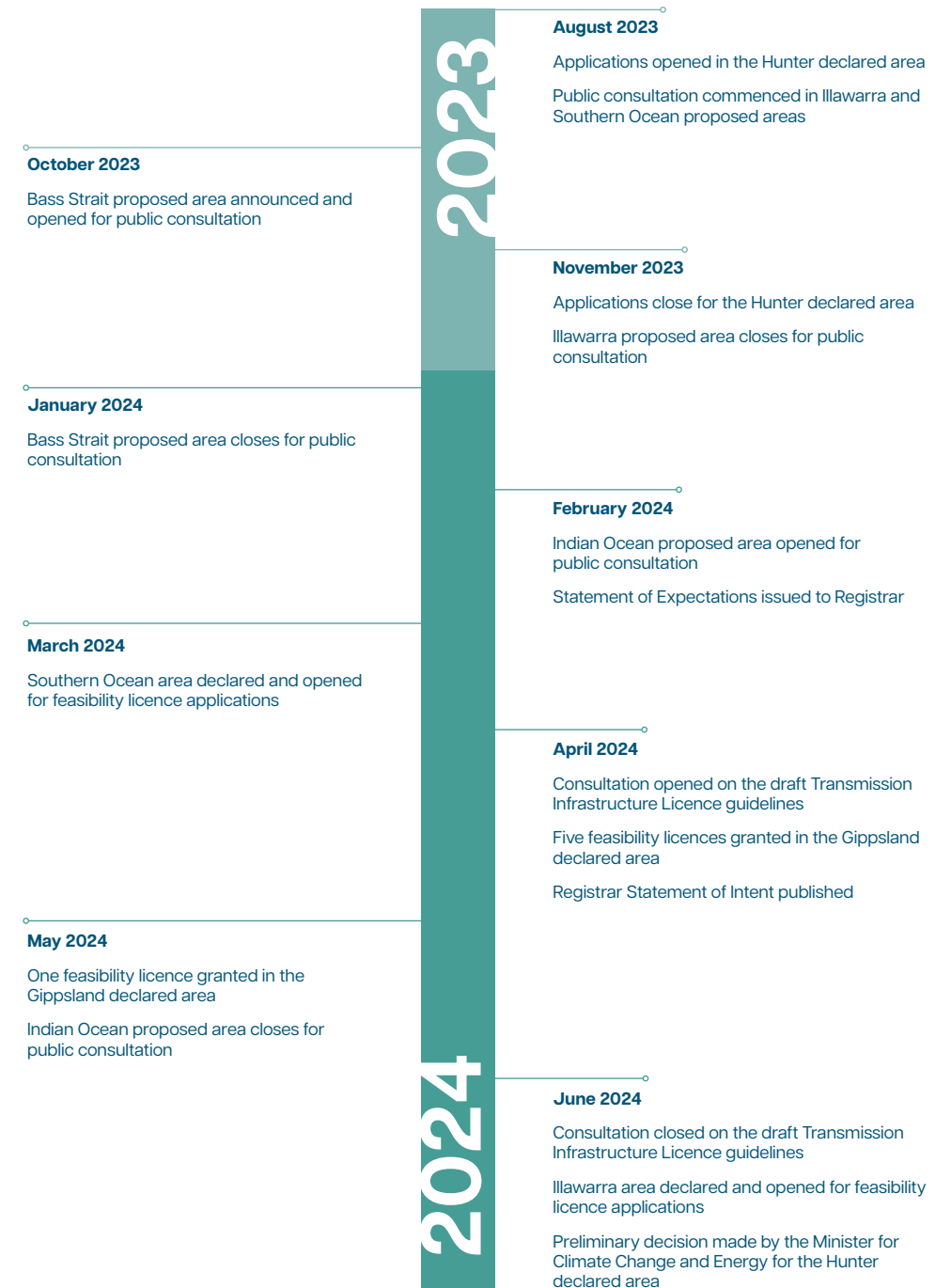


Figure 3: Gippsland Declared Area.

OEI Milestones





Petroleum Titles Activity Insights

In 2023-24, there were 336 active petroleum titles in offshore Commonwealth waters (Figure 4). During this period, 5 new titles were granted. These include: 4 pipeline licences (3 in Western Australia relating to the Julimar Development and one in the Northern Territory for the Barossa Project) and one production licence (T/L5) in Tasmanian waters.

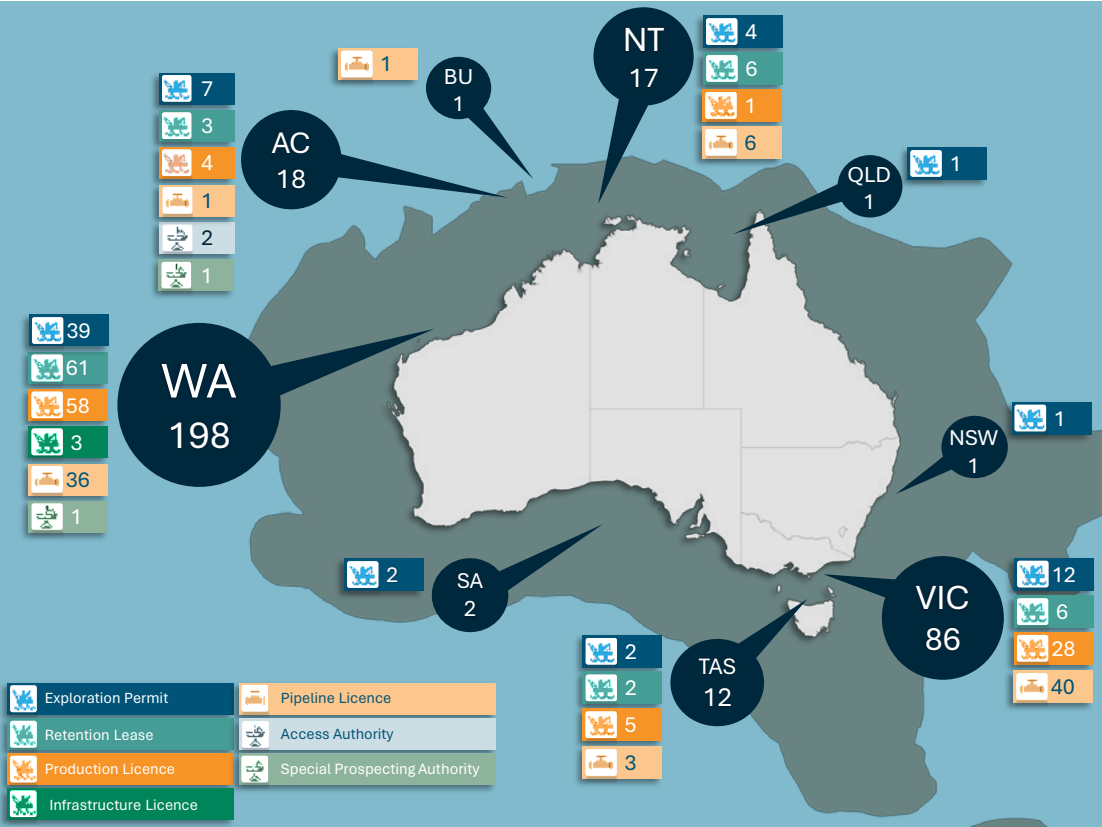


Figure 4: Total number of offshore petroleum titles (as at 30 June 2024).

Applications submitted

During the 2023-24 period, 259 applications were submitted (Table 1).

Table 1: Applications submitted 2023-24.

Decision Maker	WA	SA	NT	VIC	AC*	NSW	QLD	TAS	BU**	Total
Joint Authority	38	0	4	22	7	0	0	1	0	72
Titles Administrator	139	0	4	17	6	0	0	19	2	187
Total	177	0	8	39	13	0	0	20	2	259

*Ashmore and Cartier ** Bayu Undan

Most of the applications received in this period related to: change in control, change of company name, and transfer and dealings (Figure 5), followed by suspension, extension and variations (Figure 6).

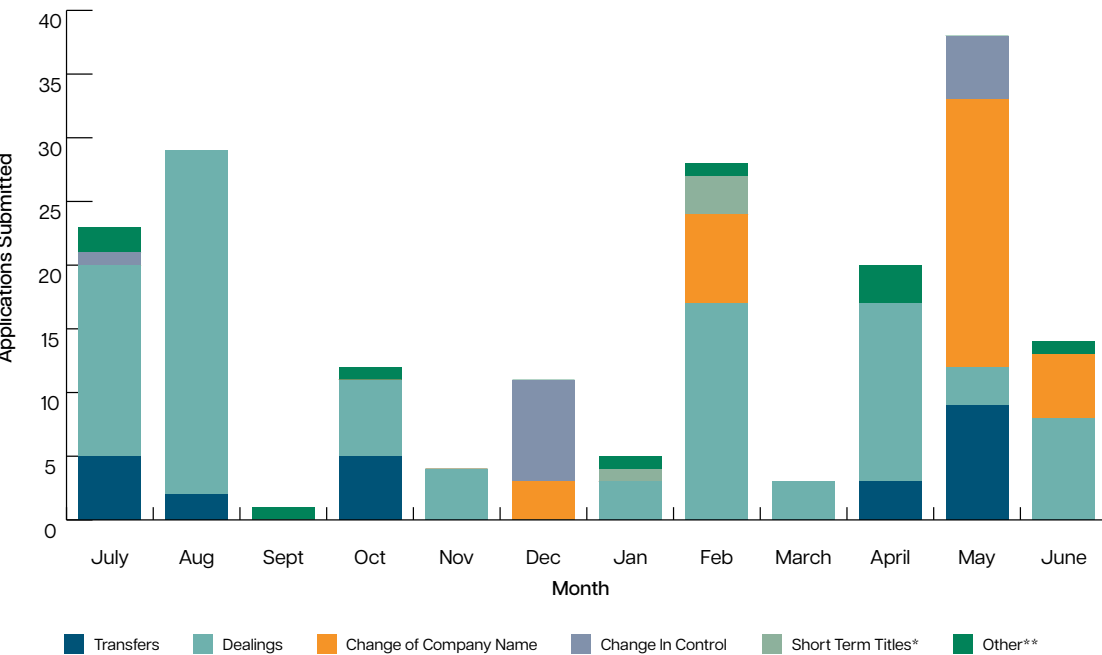


Figure 5: Titles Administrator applications submitted in 2023-24.

* includes Access Authority and Special Prospecting Authority

** includes Credit, Extension of Time to Lodge Renewal, Revocation, Location Extension

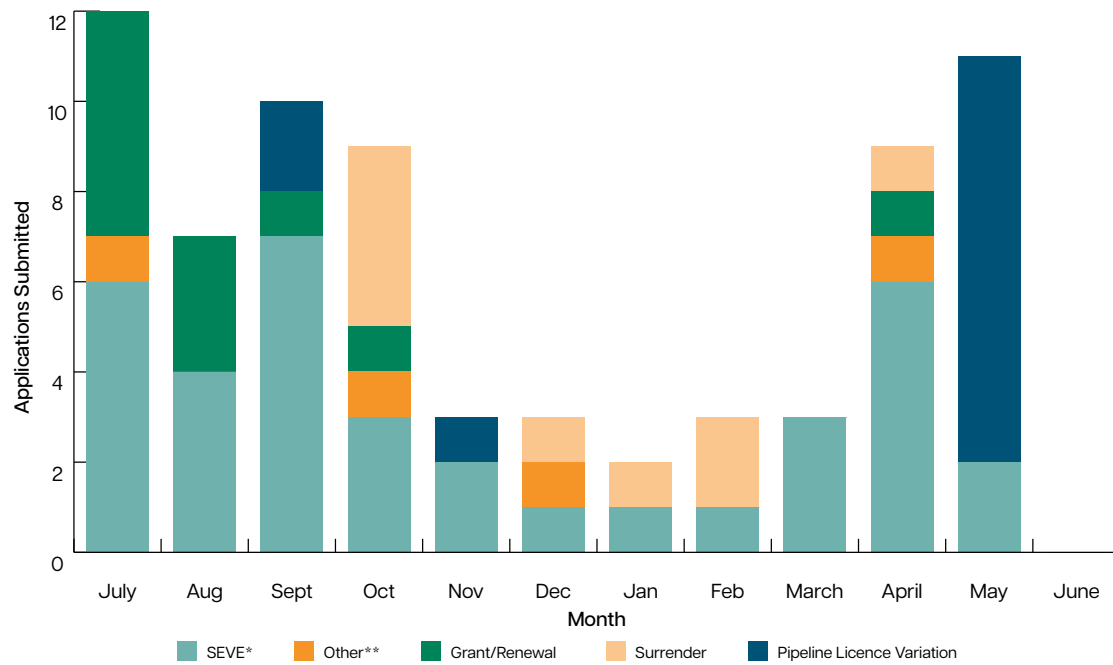


Figure 6: Joint Authority applications submitted by month in 2023-24.

* includes Suspension, Extension, Variation and Exemption

** includes Field Development Plan, Declaration of Location, Location Revocation

See Figure 7 for a five-year comparison of total applications submitted. See Figure 8 and 9 for a breakdown of Joint Authority and Titles Administrator comparisons over 5 years.

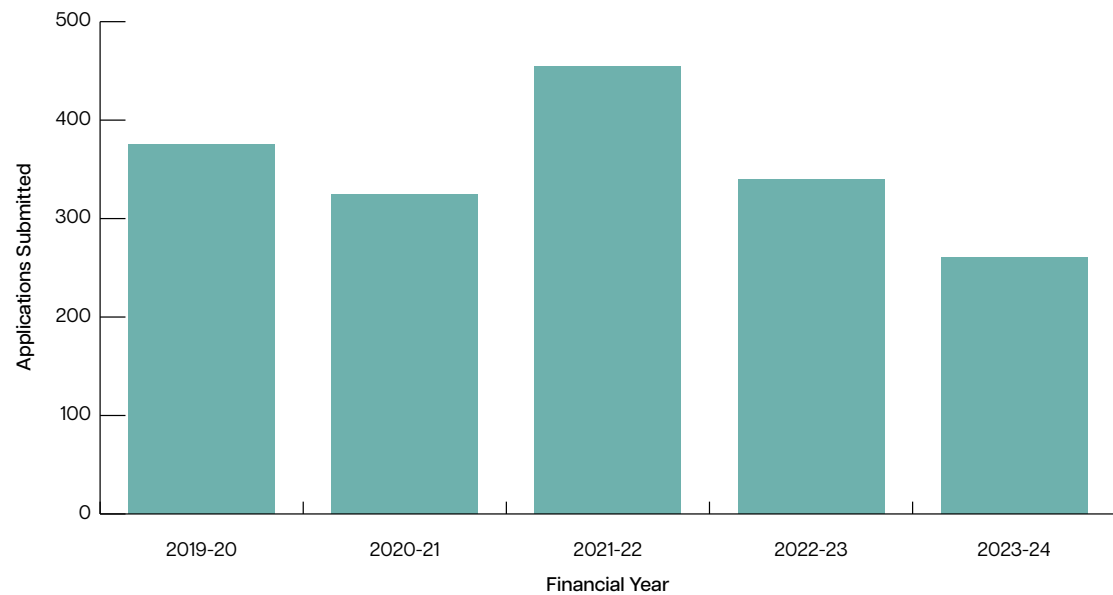


Figure 7: Total Applications submitted from 2019-20 to 2023-24.

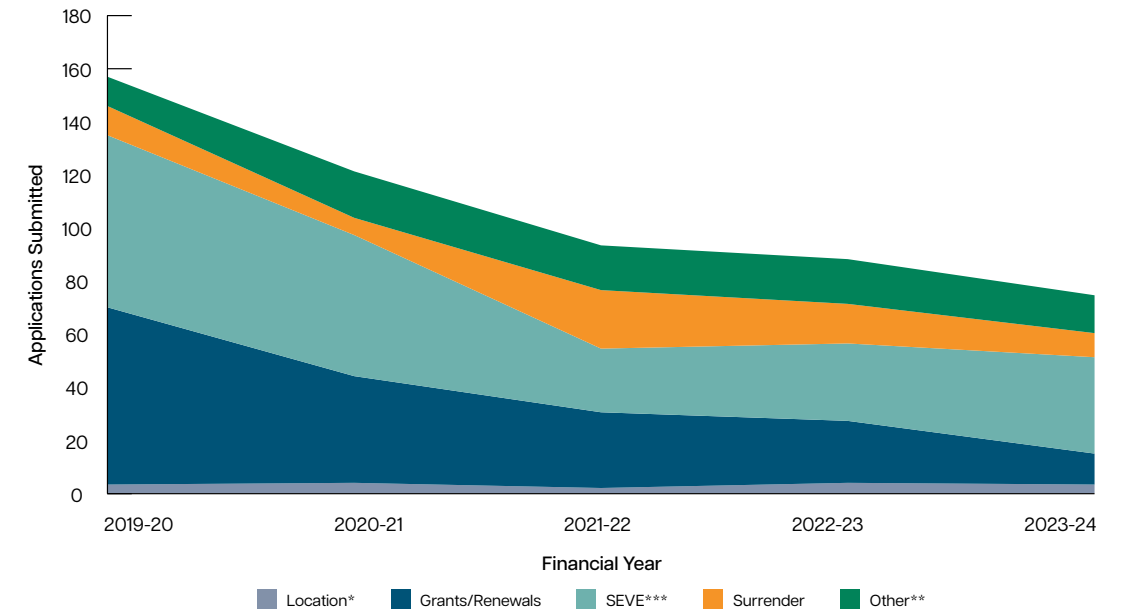


Figure 8: Joint Authority applications submitted from 2019-2020 to 2023-24.

* includes Declaration of Location and Location Revocation

** includes Cancellation, Equipment and Procedures, FDP, FDP Variation, Pipeline Licence Variation, Rate of Recovery

*** includes Suspension, Extension, Variation and Exemption

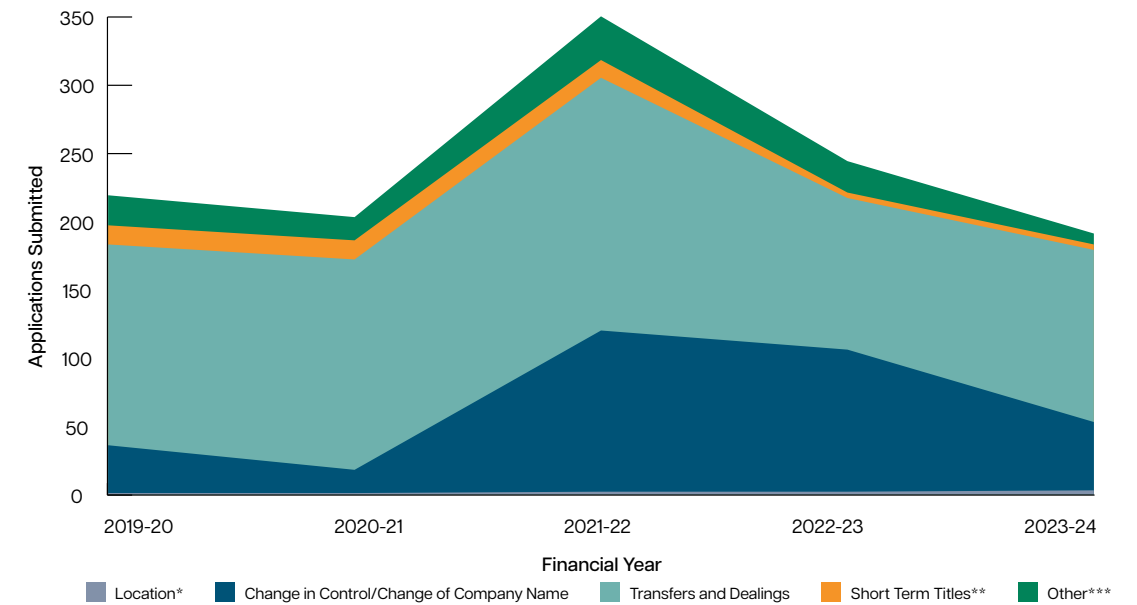


Figure 9: Titles Administrator applications submitted from 2019-20 to 2023-24.

* includes Location Extension and Location Revocation

** includes Access Authority and Special Prospecting Authority

*** includes Credit, Devolution of Title, Extension of Time to Lodge Renewal, Revocation

Petroleum Exploration

The OPGGS Act governs Australia's offshore petroleum regulatory framework and establishes the framework of rights, entitlements and responsibilities of governments and industry. The legislative framework enables for the progression from exploration through to production and decommissioning.

In 2023-24:

- 2 surveys were conducted in the Scarborough and Bonaparte basins (Figure 10)
- 3 exploration wells were drilled in the Northern Carnarvon and Browse basins (Figure 10), and
- one declared location was approved over Maitland-Davis gas field which was defined by drilling in 2016.

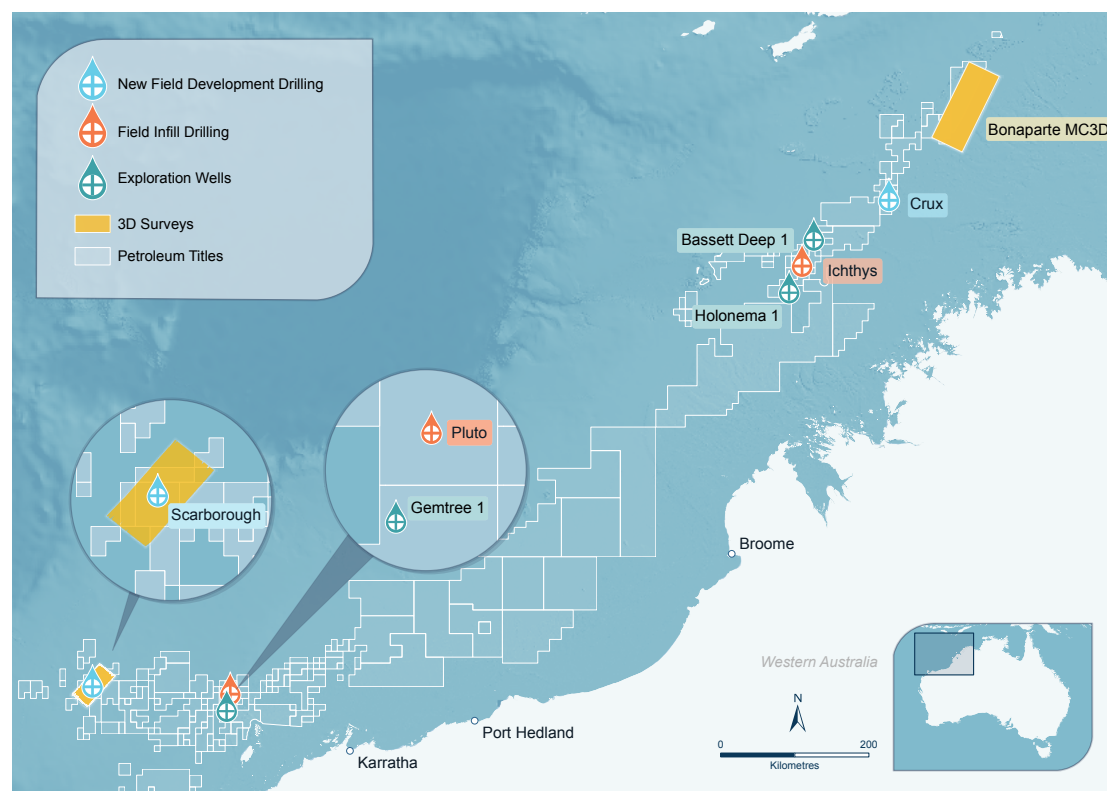


Figure 10: Petroleum seismic and drilling activity 2023-24.



Image courtesy of VALARIS MS-1-3
(Santos – Barossa)

Petroleum Development

Developments – Committed and in Progress

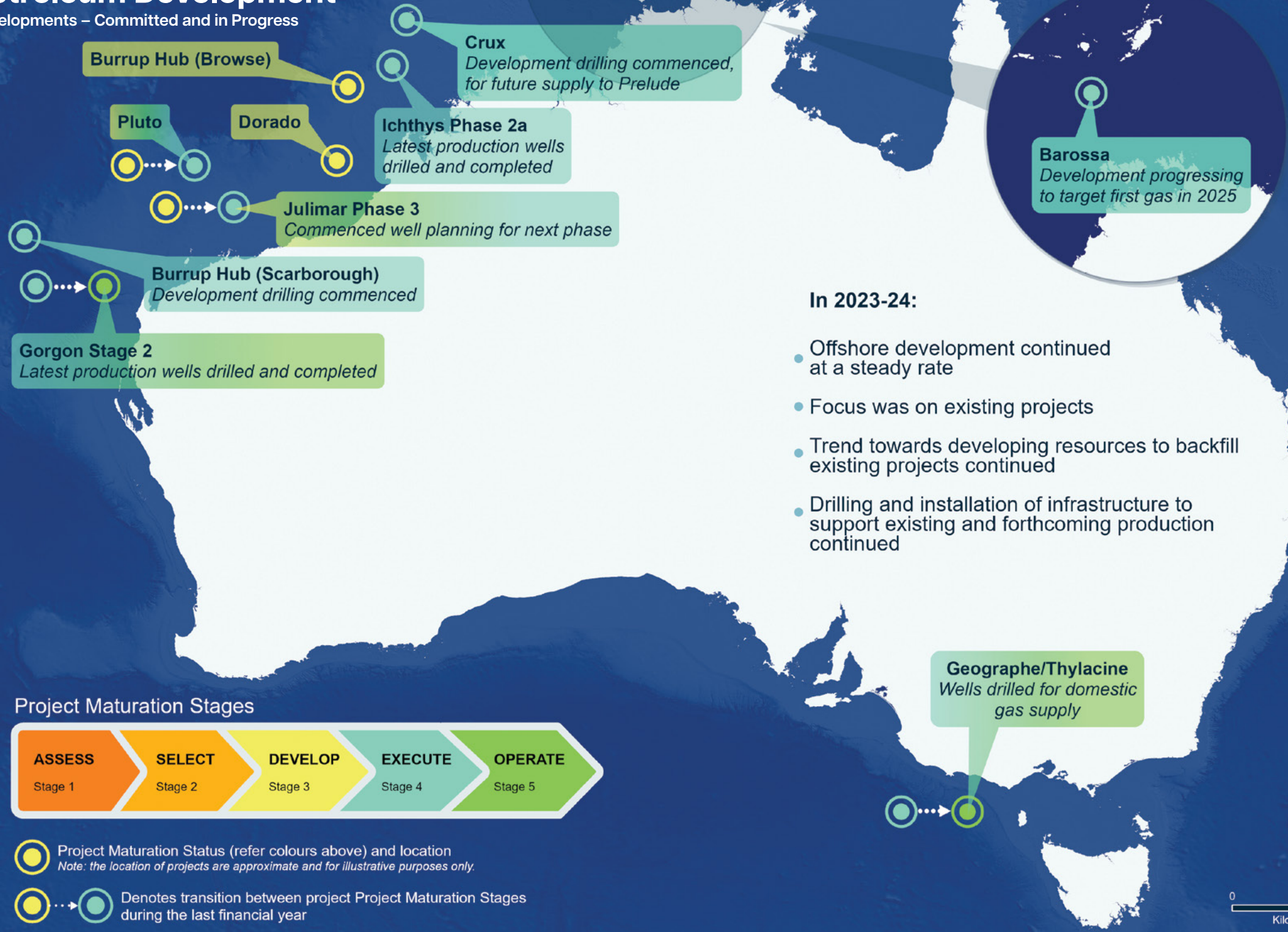




Image courtesy of Shell
(Crux-render)

New & Emerging Developments

In 2023-24:

- one new production licence (Trefoil T/L5) was granted, and
- 2 production licence applications were received (both applications pending decision from the Joint Authority).

As of 30 June 2024:

- 7 production licence applications are pending Joint Authority decisions, and
- 2 new field development plans are anticipated to be submitted for assessment in the coming 12 months.

Production – Offshore Basins

Australia's total annual offshore production during 2023 decreased slightly from the record levels reached in 2022 (Figure 11). However, total production over the last 5 years remains at plateau-high levels, underpinned by stabilised raw gas production associated with LNG projects across the northwestern basins.

Ongoing development activity is largely aimed at extending this plateau as long as possible by halting the progressive decline expected from major projects.

Minimising ullage availability continues to be an area of focus across the industry. Despite these efforts, production from some mature fields across both the Northern Carnarvon and Gippsland basins continue to decline.

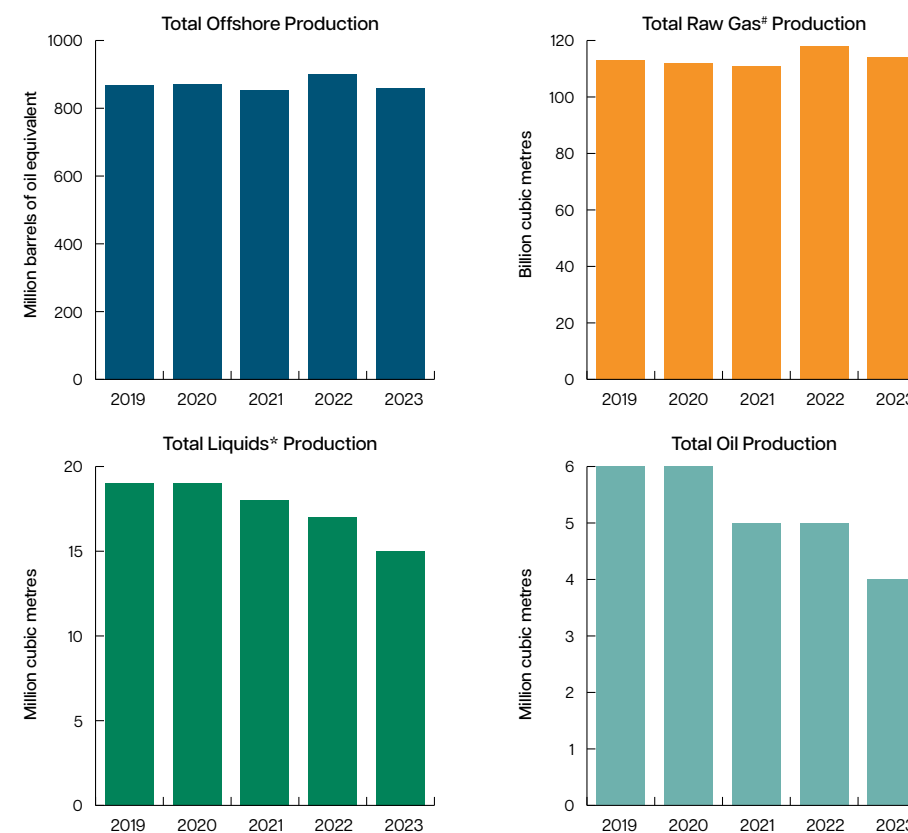


Figure 11: Production trends for the different hydrocarbon resources produced from offshore Australia, as reported to NOPTA over the last 5 years.

^{*} Liquids includes Condensate, Natural Gas Liquids and Crude Oil.

[#] Raw gas is gas produced offshore from the full wellstream minus water content and condensate recovered from offshore facilities.



The Northern Carnarvon Basin remained the largest source of raw gas and liquids (crude oil, condensate and natural gas liquids) production, accounting for 76% and 57% (respectively) of the total across offshore Australia during 2023 (Figure 12).

The Browse Basin is the second largest contributor, representing 17% of total raw gas production and increasing during 2023, to account for 28% of total liquids production.

The remaining offshore basins combined contributed approximately 8% of total raw gas and 15% of total liquids production respectively.

Although total reported raw gas production remains at near-record levels, oil production during 2023 was the lowest reported to NOPTA in the past decade. This trend is unlikely to be reversed unless new investment occurs within emerging basins, such as the Roebuck sub-basin, or existing projects receive an economic boost via favourable international oil prices.

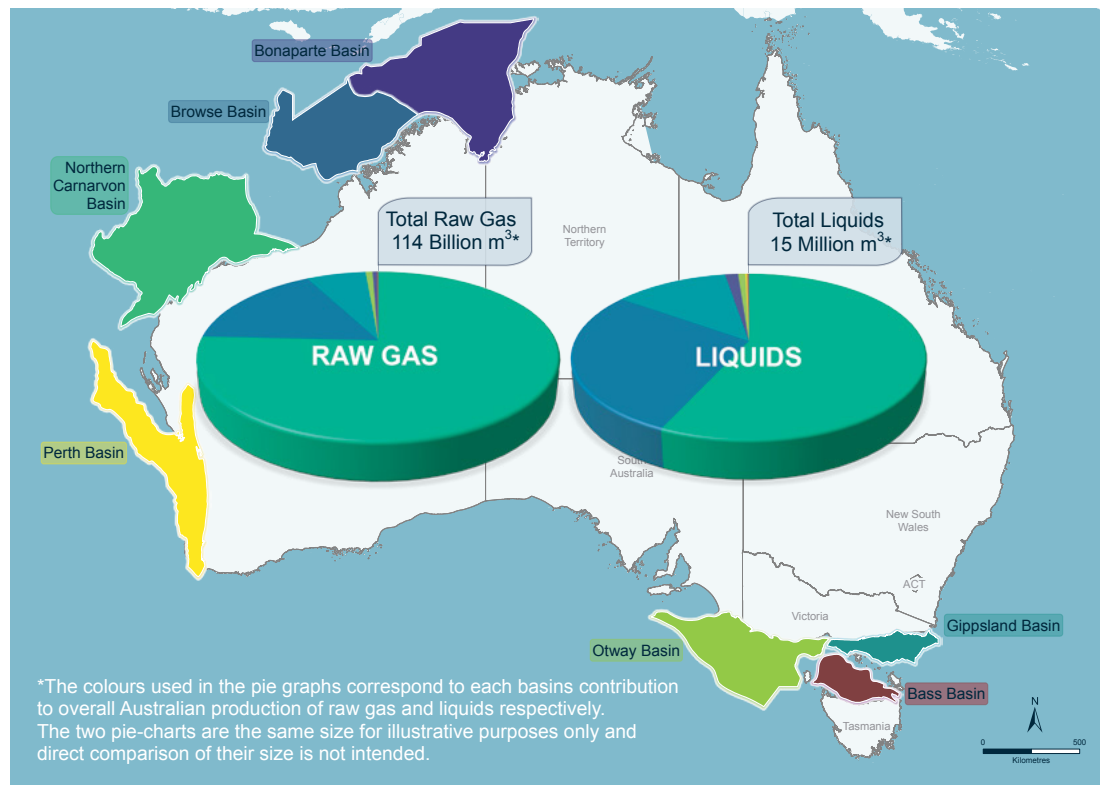
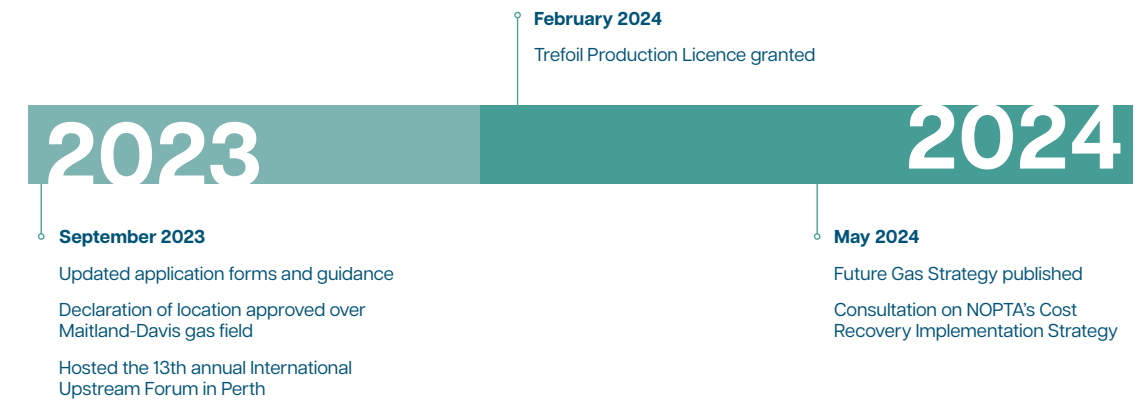


Figure 12: Location map of Australia's producing offshore basins and their relative contribution to total raw gas and liquids (condensate, natural gas liquids and crude oil) production in 2023.

Petroleum Administrative Milestones 2023-24





GHG Storage Activity Insights

As of 30 June 2024, there were 7 existing GHG titles in Commonwealth waters.

On 28 August 2023, 10 new areas were released for work-program bidding by the Responsible Commonwealth Minister (Figure 14). The bidding period closed on 28 November 2023 and 13 applications were received. The Title Administrator's advice on these applications was finalised at the end of June 2024.

Applications submitted

During 2023-24, a total of 19 applications were submitted (Table 2).

Table 2: GHG applications submitted in 2023-24

Application type (GHG)	No. of applications
Initial Grant – Assessment Permit (via Acreage Release)	13
Renewal	1
Transfer	1
Dealings	1
Declaration of an identified GHG storage formation (DoSF)	1
Approval for Key Greenhouse Gas Operation (KGO)	1
GHG Special Authority	1

Titles granted

On 7 December 2023, the first GHG Special Authority G-1-SLA was granted. SLAs are short term titles that allow existing titleholders permission to undertake operational activities (other than making a well) outside of their title boundary.

Courtesy of Shearwater
(West Peron 3D over G-7-AP)

Declaration of an Identified Storage Formation

The declaration of a storage formation as an 'identified GHG storage formation' by the Responsible Commonwealth Minister, is a critical step in establishing the viability of a potential storage site for GHG injection and storage operations. To be declared as an identified GHG storage formation, it must be deemed capable of permanently storing a particular amount of an injected GHG substance, injected over a period at specific injection points, with or without engineering enhancements, and with a suitable sealing mechanism.

Figure 13 shows the possible pathways which a declaration of storage formation can be declared, and the resulting titles.



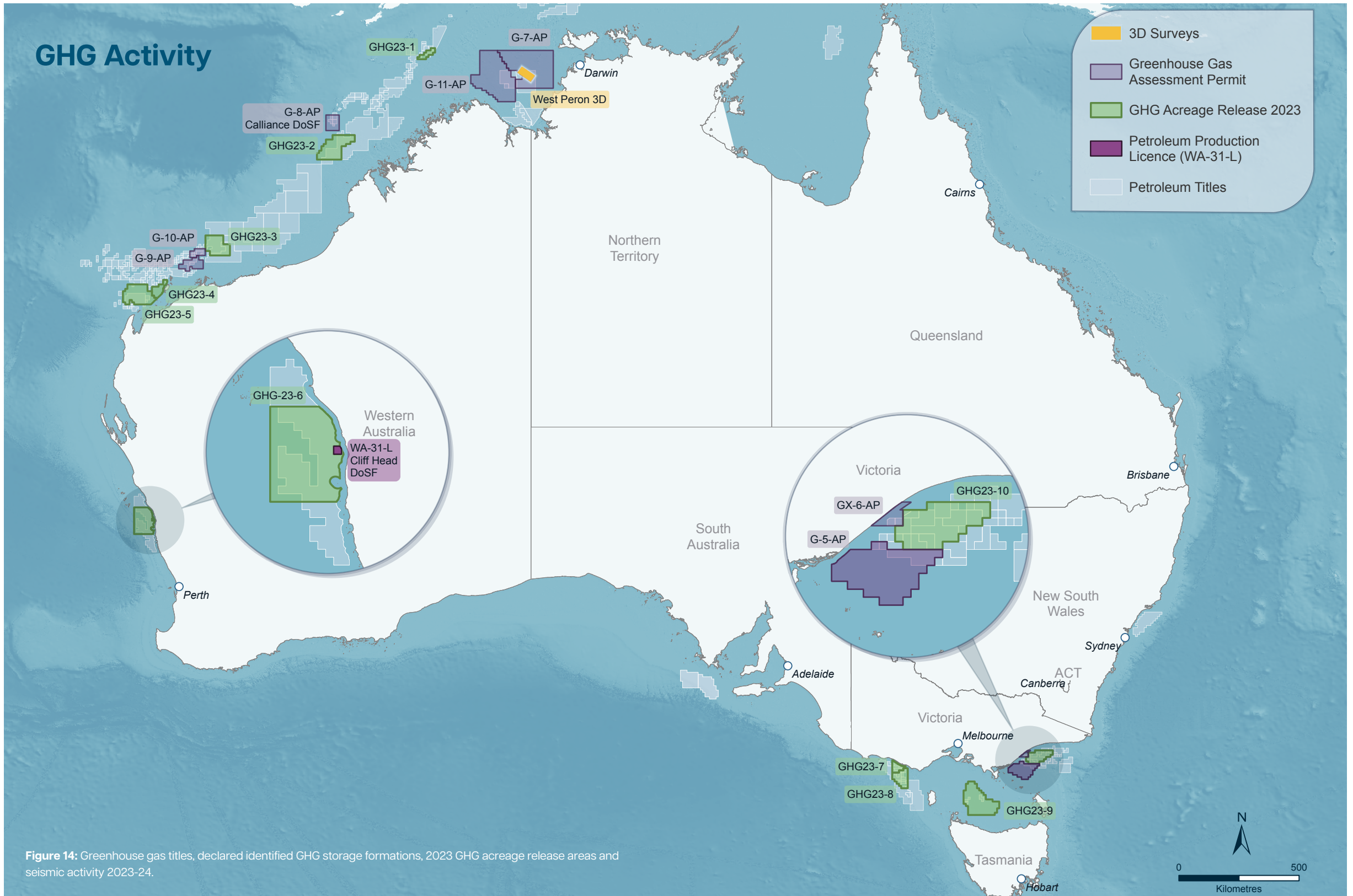
Figure 13: Pathways to a declaration of identified storage formation and resulting titles.

The first 2 Declarations of an Identified Storage Formations (DoSFs) under the OPGGS Act were declared by the Responsible Commonwealth Minister on 10 June 2024.

The Cliff Head Storage Formation was declared within Petroleum Production Licence WA-31-L and the Calliance Storage Formation was declared within GHG Assessment Permit G-8-AP (Figure 14 – overleaf).

A register of identified GHG storage formations can be found on NOPTA's website⁴.

⁴ See: <https://www.nopta.gov.au/application-processes/greenhouse-gas/ghg-register-dosf.html>





Performance Outcomes

Indicative assessment timeframes for offshore petroleum and GHG applications⁵ have been published⁶. The Titles Administrator is subject to a related performance measure under the DISR Corporate Plan⁷. In 2023-24, we met the indicative target timeframes (consistent with the DISR performance measure) for assessing Joint Authority, Titles Administrator and Responsible Commonwealth Minister applications 97% of the time (Figure 15).

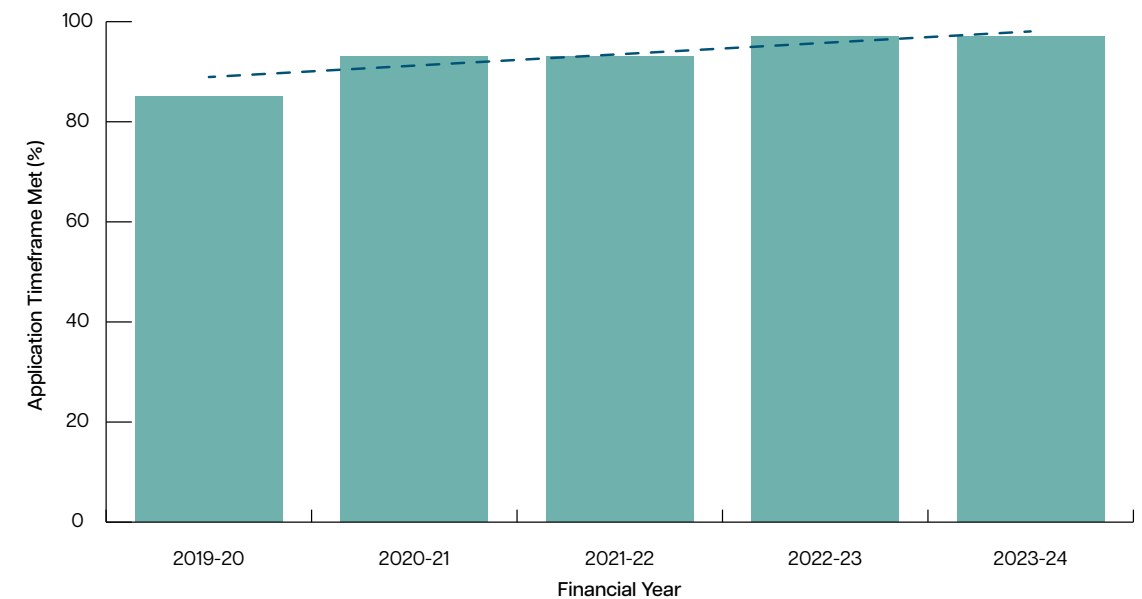
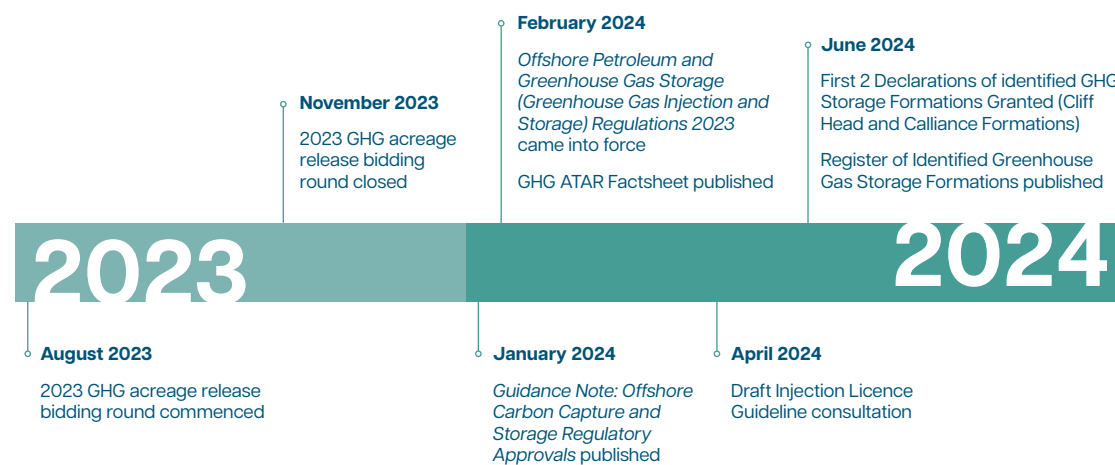


Figure 15: Percentage of applications that met the target assessment timeframes per financial year.

GHG Administrative Milestones 2023-24



⁵ When all relevant information for assessment has been received

⁶ See: <https://www.nopta.gov.au/legislation-and-compliance/legislative-overview/application-assessment-timeframes.html>

⁷ See: PM15 <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/corporate-plan-2023-24>



Figure 16 shows the average number of days spent at each application stage for Joint Authority related applications in 2023-24.

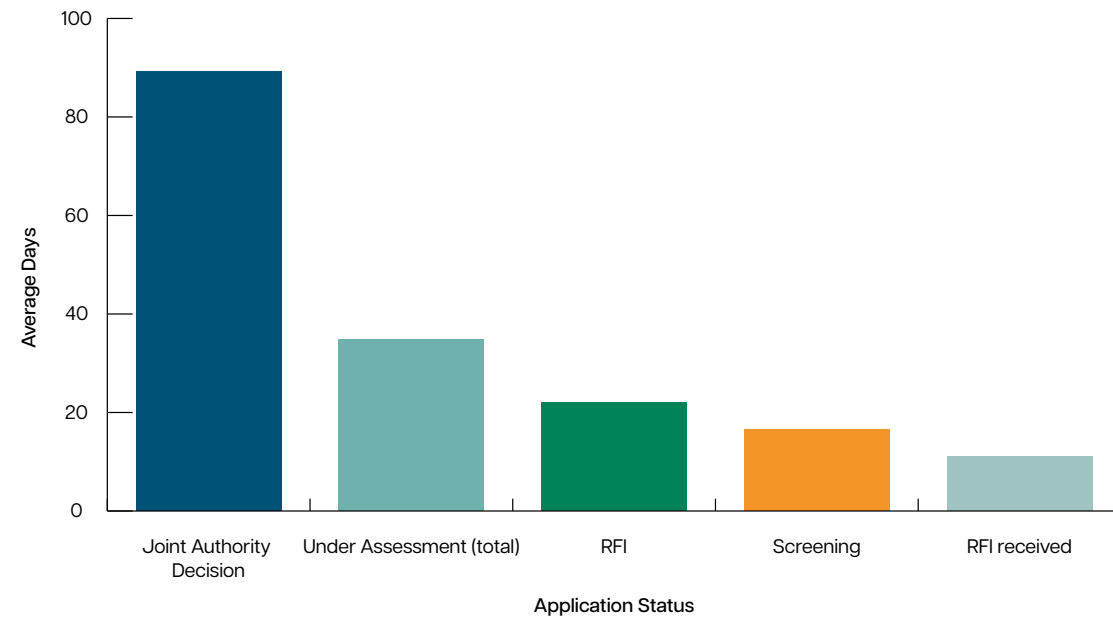


Figure 16: Completed Joint Authority applications (2023-24) - average days at each major stage of application processing.

Figure 17 shows the average number of days at each major stage of application processing per Joint Authority application type during 2023-24.

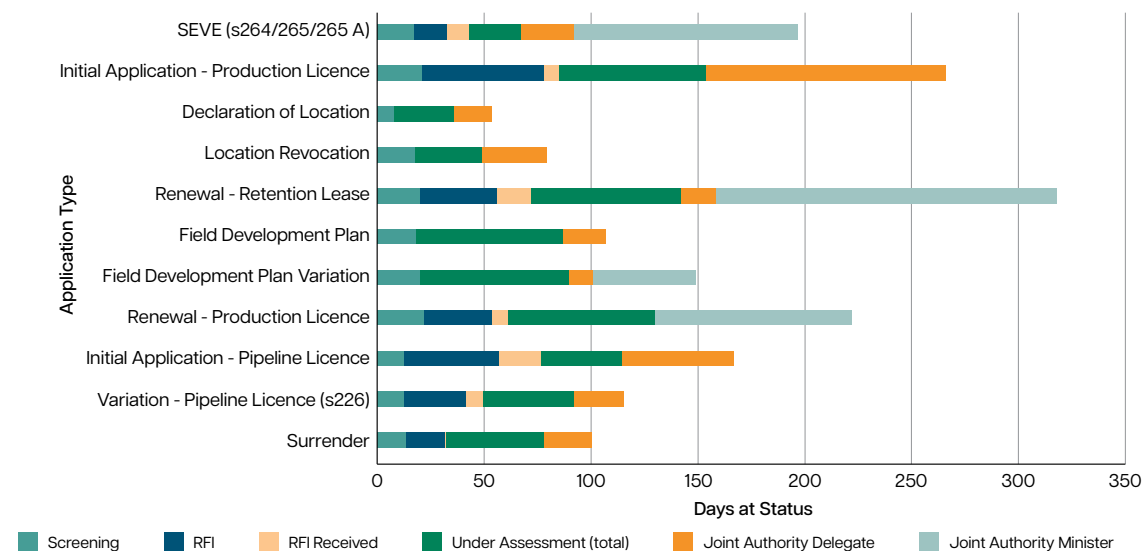


Figure 17: Completed Joint Authority Applications (2023-24) - average days at each major stage of application processing per application type.

Figure 18 shows the average number of days spent at each application stage for Titles Administrator related applications in 2023-24.

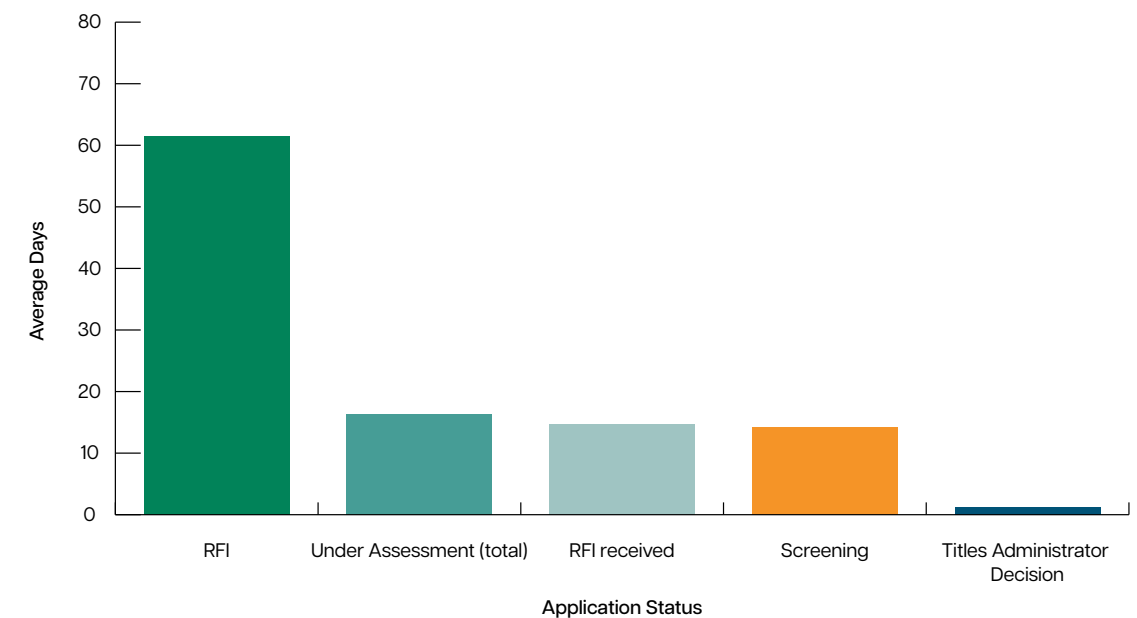


Figure 18: Completed Titles Administrator applications (2023-24) - average days at each major stage of application processing.

Figure 19 shows the average days at each major stage of application processing per Titles Administrator application type during 2023-24.

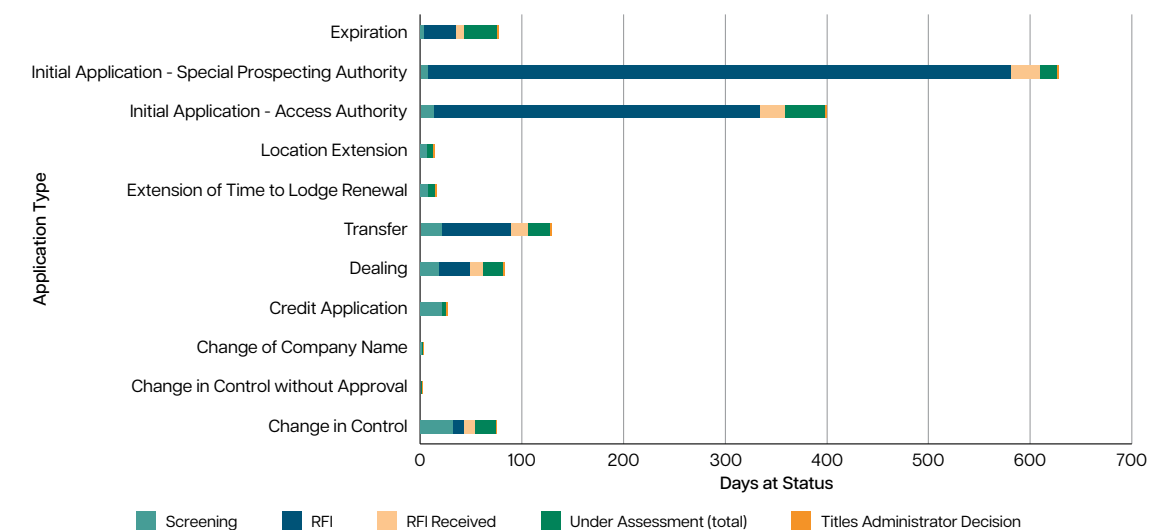


Figure 19: Completed Titles Administrator Applications (2023-24) - average days at each major stage of application processing per application type.



Figure 20 shows the average days spent at each application stage for Responsible Commonwealth Minister GHG related applications in 2023-24.

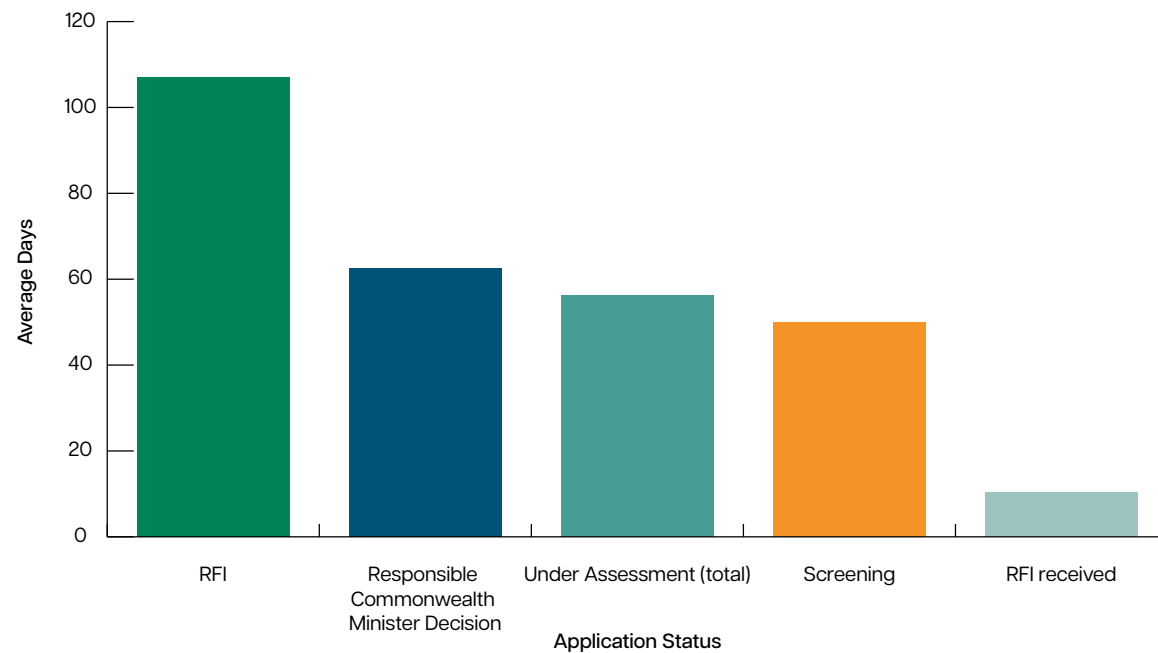


Figure 20: Completed Responsible Commonwealth Minister applications (2023-24) - average days at each major stage of application processing.

Figure 21 shows the average days at each major stage of application processing per Responsible Commonwealth Minister application type during 2023-24.



Figure 21: Completed Responsible Commonwealth Minister Applications (2023-24) - average days at each major stage of application processing per application type.

Governance, Stewardship and Engagement





2024-27 Strategic Plan

In January 2024, the branch published its 2024-27 Strategic Plan⁸. The Strategic Plan operationalises the DISR corporate plan⁹ in relation to our functions across offshore petroleum, GHG and OEI. It is supported by a comprehensive internal implementation program.

The Strategic Plan focuses on 4 key pillars:



Image courtesy of Woodside
Pluto LNG Plant, Karratha.

⁸ See: https://www.nopta.gov.au/_documents/NOPTA-Strategic-Plan-2024-2027.pdf

⁹ See: <https://www.industry.gov.au/corporate-governance/corporate-plans>

Governance, Planning and Risk Management

Our Strategic Planning process follows on from the DISR corporate plan, which filters down to our strategies, systems, team plans, assurance reviews, and performance reporting. Risks in the form of threats and opportunities exist at all levels and need to be managed (see Figure 22).

Our approach to governance and planning ensures that there are multiple lines of defence built into how risk is treated and managed across the branch.

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) consisting of the Senior Leadership Group, provides governance oversight and is responsible for endorsing strategic performance and risk outcomes across the branch.

The below sections of the report provide an overview of how the branch is actively meeting its strategic objectives to support our key stakeholders.

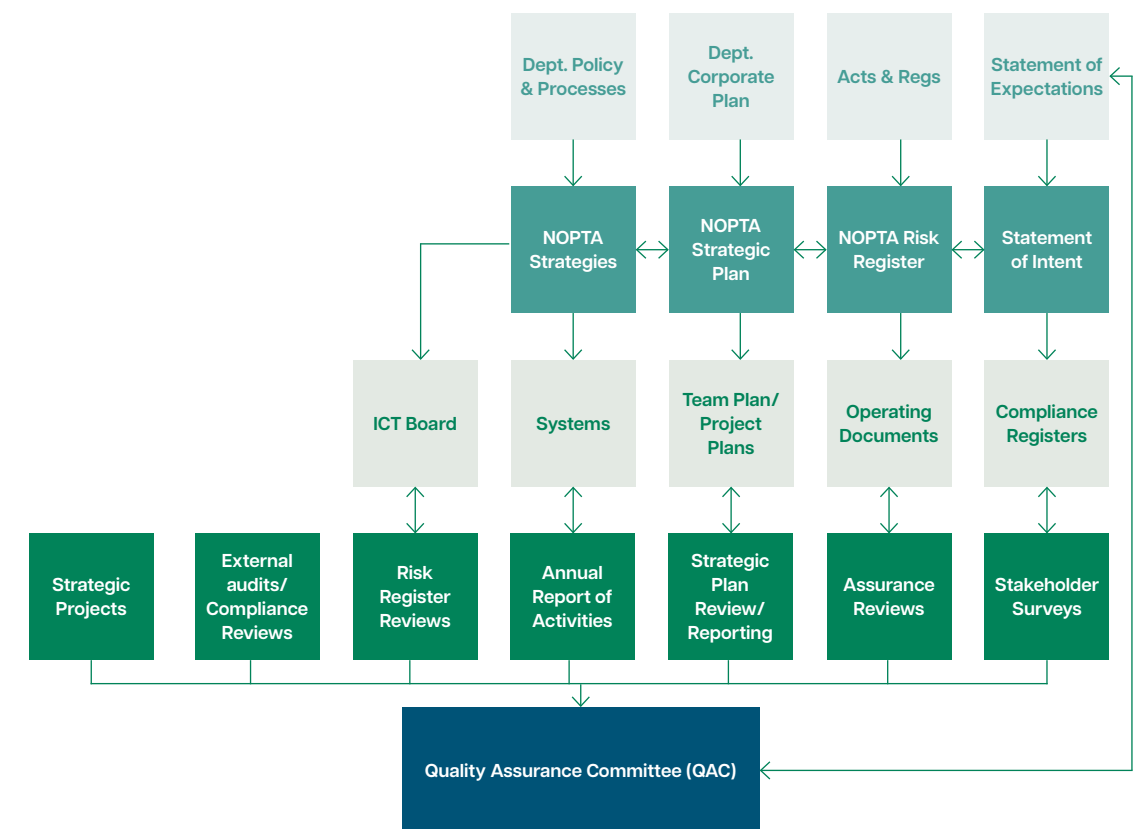


Figure 22: NOPTA's Strategic Management Framework



Resource Stewardship

Resource stewardship encompasses the full life cycle of petroleum, GHG and OEI activities. The branch undertakes a range of activities to ensure the actions of titleholders comply with the Australian Government's policy objectives. This includes encouraging the efficient and timely development of resources, monitoring the performance of titleholders and identifying and managing emerging issues, such as late life title management and stewardship of projects to facilitate the energy transition.

NOPTA monitors and analyses annual trends in offshore production as well as resources and reserves replacement¹⁰.

In 2023-24, the level of overall reserves replacement remained balanced at ~97% (Figure 23). Current reserves/production ratio (R/P) is estimated at ~15 years on an MMboe basis (Figure 23).

The reserves/production trend over the last 5 years suggests a stabilisation following the relatively sharp drop experienced between 2015-2019. This period was characterised by the start-up of major LNG export projects that (at the time) eroded a large portion of Australia's existing offshore reserves base.

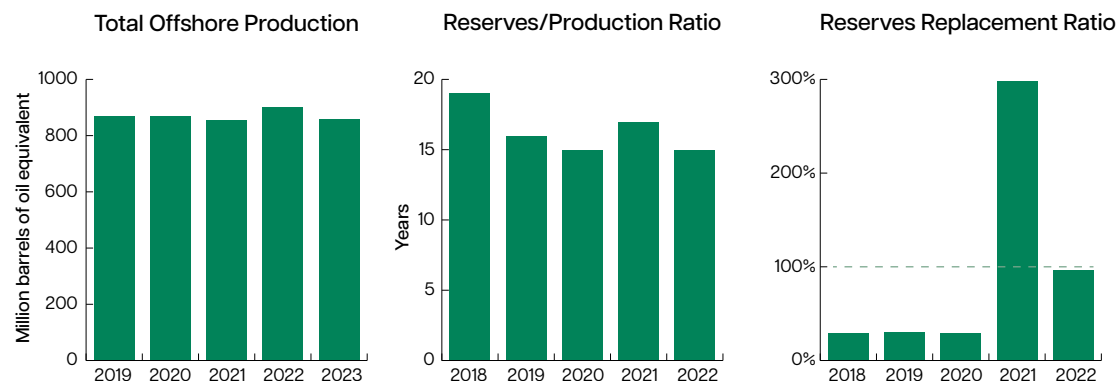


Figure 23: Annual trends in reserves replacement and production. The dashed line in the Reserves/Replacement ratio represent a 100% ratio, allowing comparison against ideal scenarios of relative reserve replenishment to offset production.

¹⁰ Similar analysis will be provided for OEI and GHG in future

Annual Performance Reviews and Benchmarking

Annual performance meetings were held with all titleholders responsible for offshore production projects in 2023-24. Engagements this period were characterised by face-to-face technical workshops and complemented by online contact. These meetings provided valuable insights into well, field and project performance, and were an opportunity for titleholders to discuss forthcoming project activities and related applications process.

This information complements data gained via annual reporting, and is used to assess various aspects of reservoir, field and facilities performance, and provides strategic advice to government.

This broad perspective informs our advice on optimum long-term recovery across all of Australia's offshore basins.

In addition, the branch continues to compile and analyse industry data to assist with both internal performance monitoring purposes and compliance.

The recent growth in GHG titles, and the coming increase in related data submitted to the Titles Administrator and the Registrar, creates an opportunity to build on this work and facilitate the ongoing stewardship of offshore energy resources. This will be particularly important as Australian basins become host to a growing diversity of offshore energy projects.

Late Life Resources

As production matures across projects, the branch has maintained engagement with titleholders responsible for late-life fields, focusing on understanding the current operational, commercial and economic conditions.

A focus remains on ensuring that all opportunities to extend production of available resources are considered,

while confirming that adequate decommissioning planning is occurring for existing infrastructure.

During 2023-24, decommissioning planning and operational activity continued to take place, with various work scopes undertaken for projects in the Gippsland, Northern Carnarvon and Bonaparte basins¹¹.

¹¹ The branch is leveraging learnings from these processes to inform OEI and GHG projects as they progress



Suitability Assessments

Persons that wish to participate in Australia's offshore petroleum, GHG storage, or energy infrastructure regime as a titleholder or licence holder must meet certain criteria which is tested on entry into the regime and at major decision-points.

When making a decision at these points, the decision-maker will consider a range of factors, including (but not limited to) those shown in Figure 24.



Figure 24: Factors relevant to suitability assessments

2023-24 Outcomes

OEI:

Eight feasibility licence applications submitted. Of this total:

- 100% required a financial resources assessment, and
- 100% required a corporate governance assessment.

GHG:

19 applications were submitted. Of this total:

- 79% required a financial resources and technical advice assessment, and
- 74% required a history of compliance and corporate governance assessment.

Petroleum:

261 applications were submitted. Of this total:

- 35% required a financial resources and technical advice assessment, and
- 13% required a history of compliance and corporate governance assessment.

External Compliance Monitoring

The Titles Administrator and the Registrar through the provision of guidelines, assistance and education prioritises voluntary compliance and early engagement to address potential non-compliance. Every team within the branch is accountable for implementing and ensuring adherence with our compliance and enforcement policy.

During 2023-24, titleholders continued to demonstrate very high levels of voluntary compliance with the OPPGS Act and related regulations. Of the 2% of recorded non-compliance, the late submission of Annual Title Assessment Reports (ATARs) and Well Operations Management Plans (WOMPs) continues to represent areas of focus (Figures 25). As at the end of June 2024, all compliance matters have been closed.

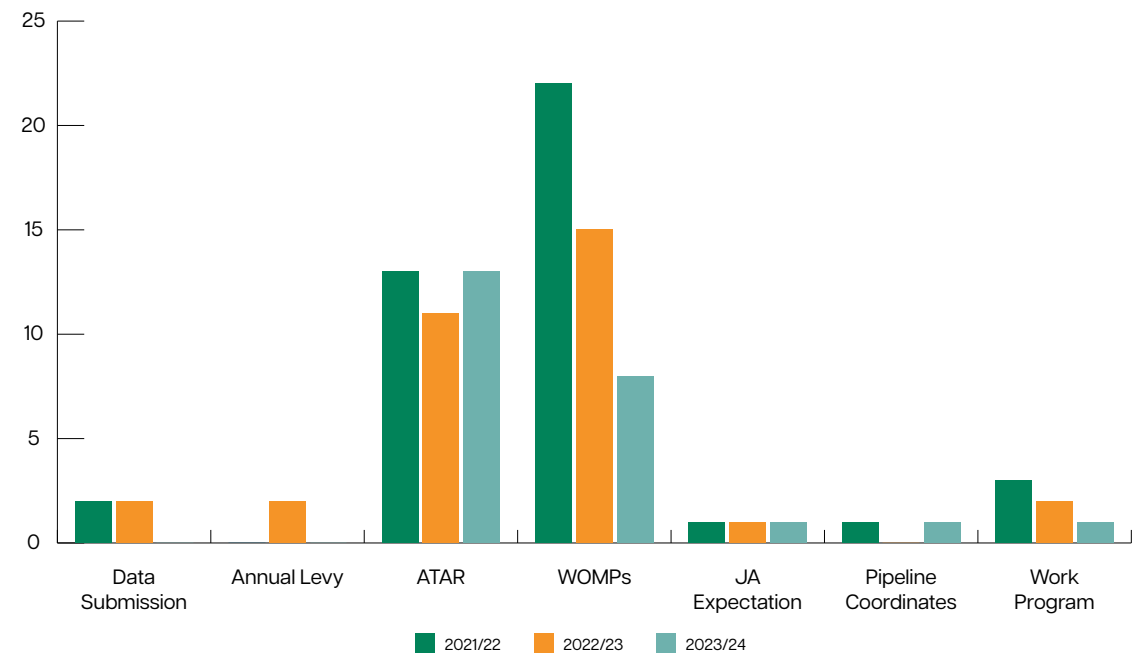


Figure 25: Total incidences of non-compliant activity (year-on-year comparison)



Data Management

The Titles Administrator has responsibility for the submission and release of documentary information and petroleum mining samples (petroleum data), in accordance with Part 7 and Part 8 of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Resource Management and Administration) Regulations 2011* (RMA Regulations).

In 2023-24, the Titles Administrator:

- received 4,542 activity reports¹²
- received 379 regulatory submission items¹³ and
- authorised the public release of 67 items, equal to 14TB of data (Figure 26).

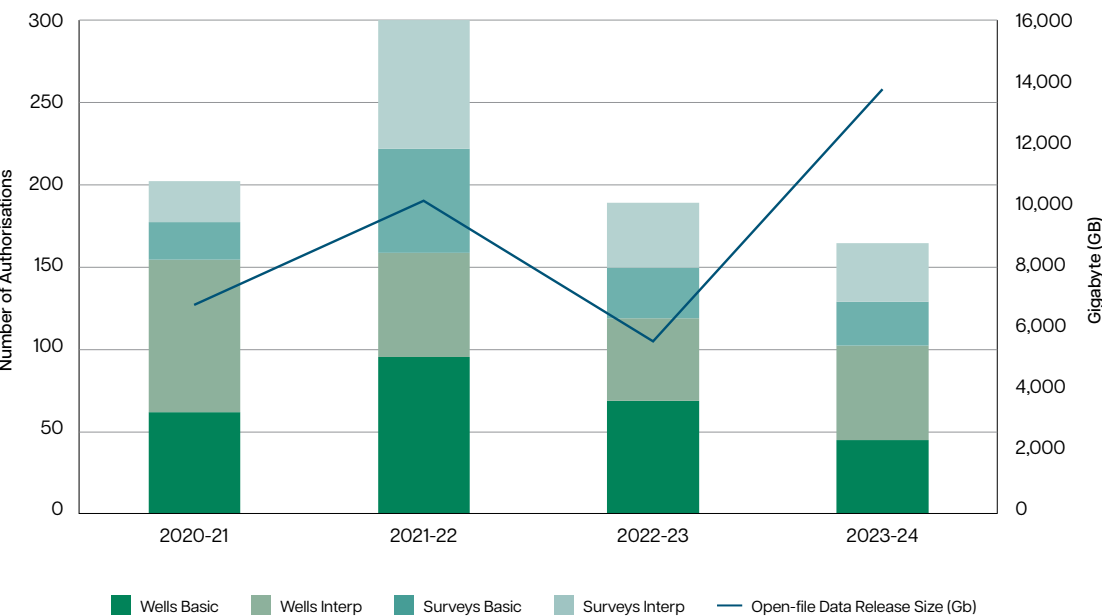


Figure 26: Open-file data release authorisations 2020-21 to 2023-24

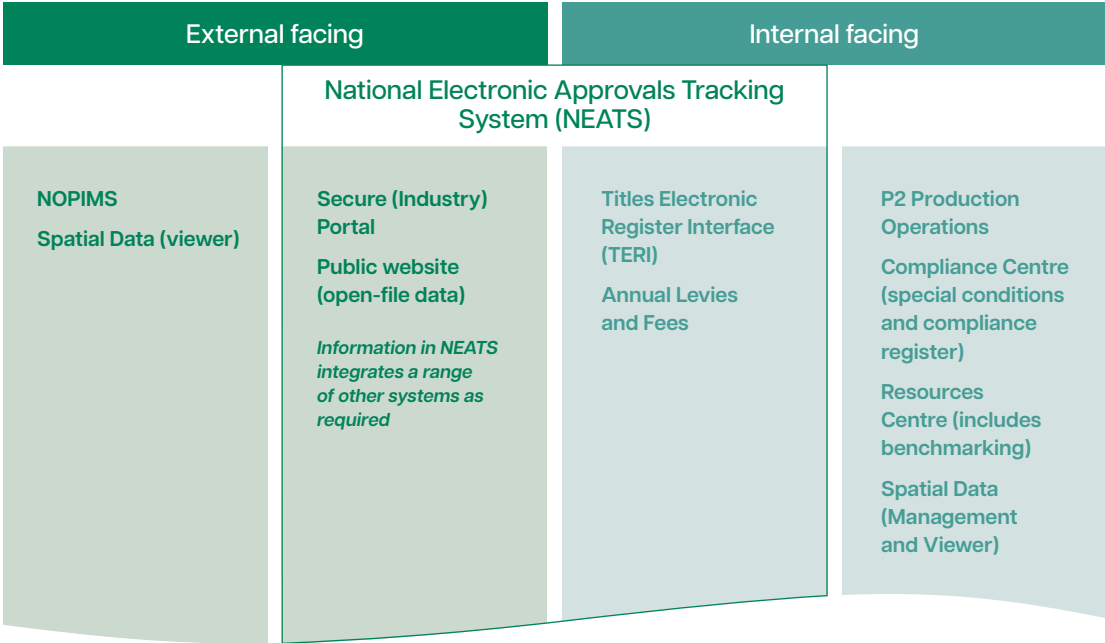
¹² Includes: 1120 production reports, 3,397 drilling reports, 25 survey reports

¹³ Includes: 110 wells basic reports, 69 wells interpretation reports, 157 survey basic reports, 43 survey interpretation reports

Leveraging Information and Technology

Technology landscape

The branch utilises the following platforms to improve flow and access of data and information between stakeholders:



NOPIMS and NEATS Integration

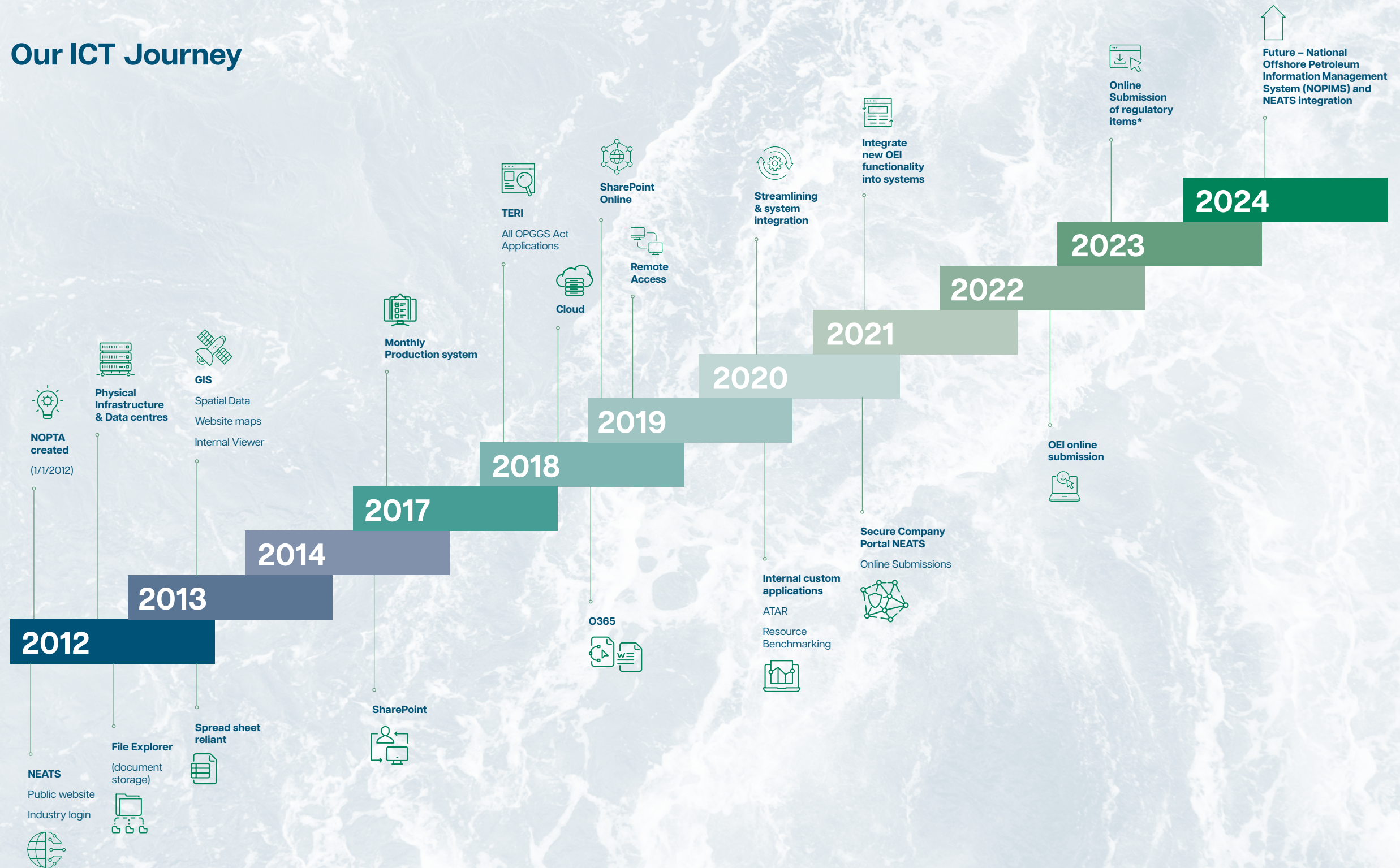
Work is currently underway to redevelop NOPIMS to modernise and integrate with NEATS. Phase 1 is due to be released in late 2024.

This will allow for future development and integration of the two systems to reduce duplication and to streamline the management of title and licence processes for all stakeholders.





Our ICT Journey



* With required approval

Engagement

We value collaborative and open consultation with stakeholders to build a shared understanding of regulatory obligations and to provide opportunities to raise and clarify issues as they occur.

In 2023-24, the branch held more than 500 meetings across a range of regulatory, administrative and operational matters, with OEI and GHG matters representing around half of these engagements (Figure 27).

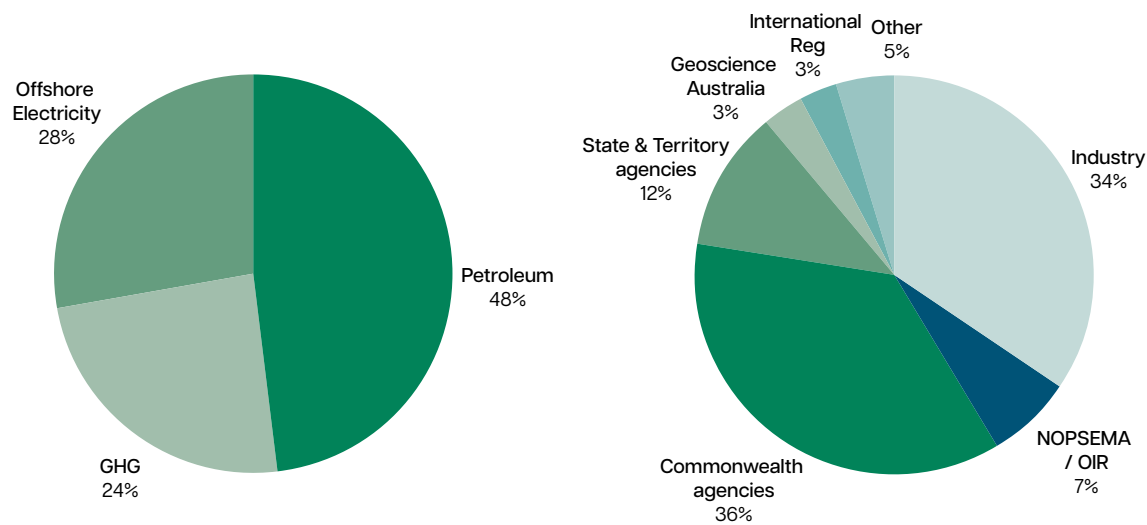


Figure 27: Meetings held against functional breakdown during 2023-24.

Figure 28: Breakdown of stakeholders engaged during 2023-24.

During the year, the branch continued to consult with a range of industry and government stakeholders to build and maintain confidence in the Titles Administrator's and Registrar's role (Figure 28).

International Engagement

During 2023-24, we continued ongoing interactions with overseas regulators and participation in relevant international forums. These include:

- a skills exchange program with the United Kingdom's North Sea Transitional Authority (NSTA) in relation to GHG matters
- the 2023 Global Offshore Wind Regulators Forum
- International Regulators Forum
- hosting the 2023 International Upstream Forum in Perth (see below).

International Upstream Forum

On 28-29 September 2023, NOPTA hosted the 13th annual International Upstream Forum (IUF) in Perth. The IUF consists of international regulators responsible for offshore petroleum, carbon capture and storage (CCS) and emerging offshore renewable industries. It was an opportunity to discuss common challenges and opportunities across the sectors and to create and strengthen relationships. This year's forum was attended by 19 delegates from the United Kingdom, Norway, USA, Canada, Ghana and Australia (Figure 29).

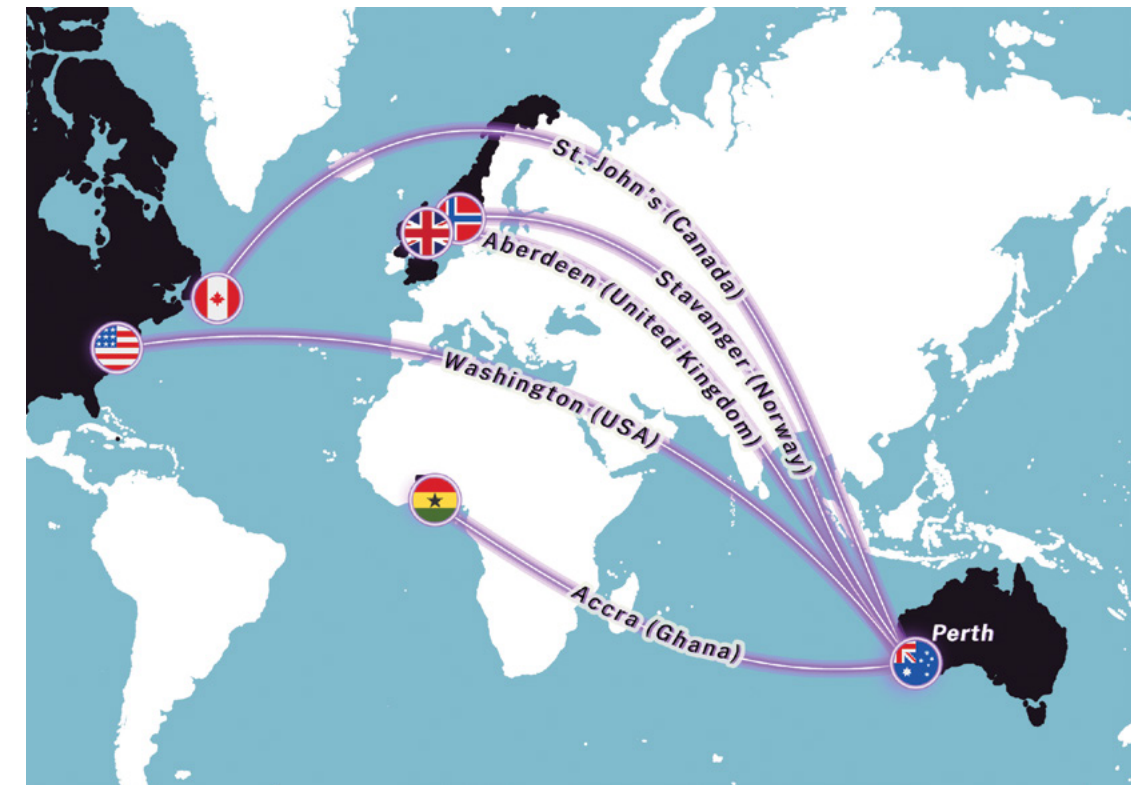


Figure 29: Locations of IUF members.

The theme for this year's Forum was the maturing and evolving nature of the offshore petroleum industry. Key topics of discussion included decommissioning, regulatory reform, GHG, resource management, and the diversification of traditional regulatory roles changing into broader energy mandates, such as offshore wind.

Outcomes included a commitment from all delegates to closer ongoing engagement and sharing of learnings from what are very similar global challenges.



Image of the IUF 2023 Delegates and host country staff

Regulatory Excellence

During the year, the branch:

- collaborated with DISR on the review and remake of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Greenhouse Gas Injection and Storage) Regulations 2023*. These regulations were remade on 24 November 2023 and came into force on 24 February 2024
- assisted with the development and publication of an offshore carbon capture and storage (CCS) regulatory approvals guidance note
- participated in the ongoing Review of the Offshore CCS Regime being led by the Offshore Strategy Branch of DISR
- continued to assist DISR with the remake of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Resources Management and Administration) Regulations 2011*. This is expected to continue in 2024-25
- continued collaboration with DISR on the offshore petroleum decommissioning framework review
- collaborated with DCCEEW on the implementation of the OEI licensing framework, including the development of regulations and guidance
- updated a range of regulatory guidance materials and forms to assist eligible persons and stakeholders, to understand the requirements and processes of feasibility licence applications under the OEI Act.

- collaborated with NOPSEMA to support compliance monitoring and enforcement of titleholder obligations in relation to offshore oil and gas activities, including matters relating to seismic surveys, pipelines, decommissioning and abandonment
- continued its engagement with NOPSEMA on the shared digital transformation projects occurring between the two agencies.

Internal Assurance Reviews

Our internal assurance review program ensures compliance with policies, procedures, and guidance, enhancing workflow efficiency. These quality measures validate reliability, accuracy, and consistency, promoting continuous improvement and risk control oversight.

In 2023-24, we reviewed internal processes, procedures and systems in the following areas:

- financial and technical information received for suitability assessments
- legislative forms (forms 2-7)
- standard operating procedure for governance assessments
- company administrator requests within NEATS
- application audit procedures
- handling of legal advice, and
- procurement.



International Benchmarking

In May 2024, a benchmarking exercise was conducted amongst 5 international offshore petroleum and GHG administrators and regulators. These were:

- Australia: NOPTA (or the Titles Administrator)
- United Kingdom: North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA)
- Norway: (Norwegian Offshore Directorate (NOD))
- U.S.A: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
- Canada: Canada-Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB).

The benchmarking focused solely on activities relating to offshore petroleum and GHG titles and used 2022-23 data.

The results show that the Titles Administrator compares favourably in relation to all key metrics.

The comparison shows that at the end of 2022-23, the Titles Administrator:

- had the lowest full-time equivalent (FTE) headcount of all regulators
- administered the largest total acreage under active license (320,162 km²). This is more than the total combined acreage of the comparative regulators at 223,923 km²
- oversaw more active titles (344) than Canada, but fewer than the USA, UK, and Norway, and
- had the lowest annual operating budget of all the regulators (\$16.965M) which combined with the smallest FTE headcount (86), achieved the second lowest average annual operating cost per title (\$48,333) compared to the other regulators (Figure 30).

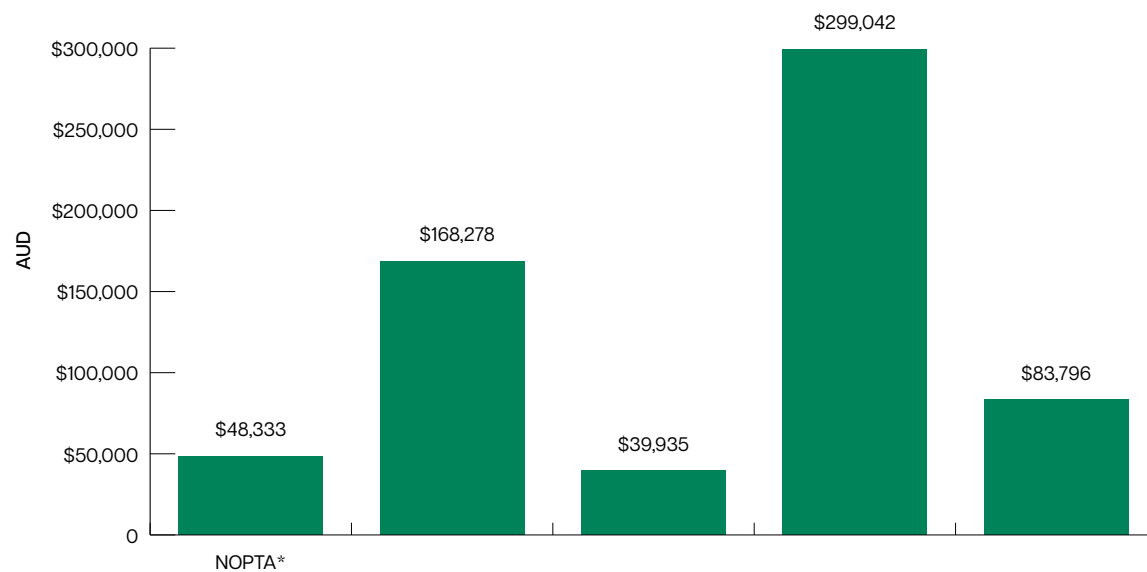


Figure 30: Average operating cost per title.

*Other regulators not shown to ensure anonymity.





Who Does What in Government?

Function	Administration / Regulation					Policy
	Titles Administrator	Joint Authority	Cross-boundary Authority	Responsible Commonwealth Minister	NOPSEMA	DISR
Petroleum	Decision maker for the approval and registration of change in control of a registered titleholder, transfers and dealings, and for granting of short-term titles. Provides advice and recommendations to the relevant decision makers under the OPGGS Act and associated regulations. Facilitates life of title administration including compliance monitoring. Manages the submission and release of data. Maintains the public registers of offshore petroleum and GHG titles.	Decision maker for the grant, renewal, variation, surrender and cancellation/ termination (as applicable) of offshore petroleum exploration permits, retention leases and production licences. Decision maker for petroleum and GHG pipeline and infrastructure licences. Comprises of the relevant State/NT and/or the responsible Commonwealth Minister. Decision maker for petroleum and GHG pipeline and infrastructure licences.	N/A	N/A	Regulator for health, safety, infrastructure and well integrity, and environmental management for offshore petroleum and GHG storage in Commonwealth waters, and in coastal waters where regulatory powers and functions have been conferred.	Policy relating to OPGGS Act.
GHG / CCS			Decision maker for cross boundary assessment permits, holding leases and injection licences.	Decision maker for GHG grants, renewal, variation, surrender and cancellation/ termination (as applicable) of assessment permit, holding lease, injection licence, and short-term titles. Currently, Minister for Resources, the Hon Madeleine King MP.		
Offshore Infrastructure / Wind	OEI Registrar	Minister for Climate Change and Energy			Offshore Infrastructure Regulator	DCCEEW
	Decision maker for change in control of a licence holder. Provides advice and recommendations to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy under the OEI Act. Facilitates life of licence administration, including compliance monitoring. Maintain the public Register of Offshore Infrastructure Licences.	Decision maker for all licensing decisions, including declaring areas suitable for offshore renewable energy infrastructure. Decision maker for transfer of licence. Currently, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy is the Hon Chris Bowen MP.			Regulator for overseeing work health and safety, infrastructure integrity, and environmental management for offshore renewable energy infrastructure and offshore electricity transmission infrastructure in the Commonwealth offshore area.	Policy relating to OEI Act.

Financials



OPGGS Act – Cost Recovery Overview

The Titles Administrator's functions are fully funded through the charging of levies and fees for the administration of offshore petroleum and GHG storage titles under the OPGGS Act. The current cost recovery arrangements are outlined in its Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) 2022¹⁴. A review of its 2022 CRIS and consultation with stakeholders was recently completed. The funds are managed through an administered Special Account consistent with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Levies

The total annual levy collected during 2023-24 was \$15.7 million. This is 89% of NOPTA's total revenue (Table 3)¹⁵. The levy amount that NOPTA charges is prescribed in the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Regulatory Levies) Regulations 2022*. The levy is payable upon the grant of a title and is due annually thereafter within 30 days of the anniversary date of the title.

Table 3: Annual Titles Administration Levy 2023-24

Title Type	No. of Titles	No. of Blocks	Length Km	Levy Amount
Exploration Permit	74	NA	NA	\$814,000
Refunds of Surrendered Exploration Permits	-6	NA	NA	-\$66,000
Refunds of Expired Exploration Permits*	-1	NA	NA	-\$5,545
Greenhouse Gas Assessment Permit	7	NA	NA	\$69,014
Infrastructure Licence	3	NA	NA	\$82,500
Pipeline Licence	87	NA	4822	\$530,420
Production Licence	96	323	NA	\$7,106,000
Production Licence Renewals (Part Year)*	1	4	NA	\$84,624
Retention Lease	78	313	NA	\$6,886,000
Retention Lease Renewals (Part Year)*	2	19	NA	\$220,362
Refunds of Expired Retention Lease	-1	0	NA	-\$22,000
Refunds of Ceased Retention Lease*	-1	0	NA	-\$9,644
Annual Levy				\$15,689,731

* Part year amounts calculated on number of days title is in force

¹⁴ Cost Recovery Implementation Statement Template (nopta.gov.au)

¹⁵ Table 3 is not intended to reflect the number of titles in force at 30 June 2024 (refer to Figure 2)

Fees

Application fees are prescribed in the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Resource Management and Administration) Regulations 2011*.

Under these regulations, application fees are payable at the time that an application is submitted for approval to enable titleholders to undertake certain regulated activities. In 2023-24 application fee revenue was \$1.96 million or 11% of total revenue (refer to Table 4).

Table 4: Application Fees 2023-24

Application Type	No. of Applications	Fee Amount
Renewal Exploration Permit	4	\$33,000
Retention Lease	1	\$8,250
Production Licence	2	\$16,500
Pipeline Licence	4	\$33,000
Variation Pipeline Licence	12	\$99,000
Special Prospecting Authority	1	\$8,250
Transfer	25	\$206,250
Dealing	111	\$915,750
Change in Control	11	\$90,750
Access Authority	3	\$24,750
Suspension and Extension; Variation; Exemption (per title)	36	\$297,000
Declaration of Location	1	\$8,250
Surrender	9	\$74,250
Declaration of GHG Storage Formation	1	\$8,250
Acceptance of a Field Development Plan	1	\$8,250
Work-bid GHG Assessment Permit	13	\$107,250
Renewal GHG Assessment Permit	1	\$8,250
Transfer GHG	1	\$8,250
Dealing GHG	1	\$8,250
Application Fees	238	\$1,963,500



OPGGS Act – Cost Effectiveness and Financial Results

While NOPTA is structurally a branch within DISR, its functions are legislated under the OPGGS Act. This provides a clear separation from DISR and enables easy identification of the costs recovered from industry. DISR provides the governance structure, access to corporate support and systems, and pays workers’ compensation and other insurances. It also charges directly attributable costs to the branch.

Table 5 outlines financial performance for 2023-24 compared to 2022-23.

In 2023-24, DISR recouped \$0.77 million for operational costs relating to its Titles Administrator functions and \$0.12 million for its Registrar functions. A further \$1.62 million was spent on ICT capital.

NOPTA operates a Special Account under the PGPA Act. The balance of the Special Account was \$8.48 million as at 30 June 2024.

Table 5: NOPTA’s financial performance for 2023-24 compared to 2022-23

Income Statement	2023-24 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000
Revenue - Cost Recovery		
Levies	15,690	15,999
Application Fees	1,963	1,650
Other	53	26
Total Revenue	17,706	17,675
Expenses		
Employee Benefits	11,045	8,082
Suppliers	3,740	4,002
NOPDCR	1,382	1,354
ICT and Telecommunications Costs	1,943	1,939
Depreciation and Amortisation*	1,228	1,073
Overhead Recharging Allocation	773	515
Total Expenses	20,111	16,965
Surplus / (deficit)	(2,405)	710

* Includes Right of Use Asset Amortisation totalling \$0.692 million in 2023-24 (\$0.441 million in 2022-23)

OEI Act – Cost Recovery Overview

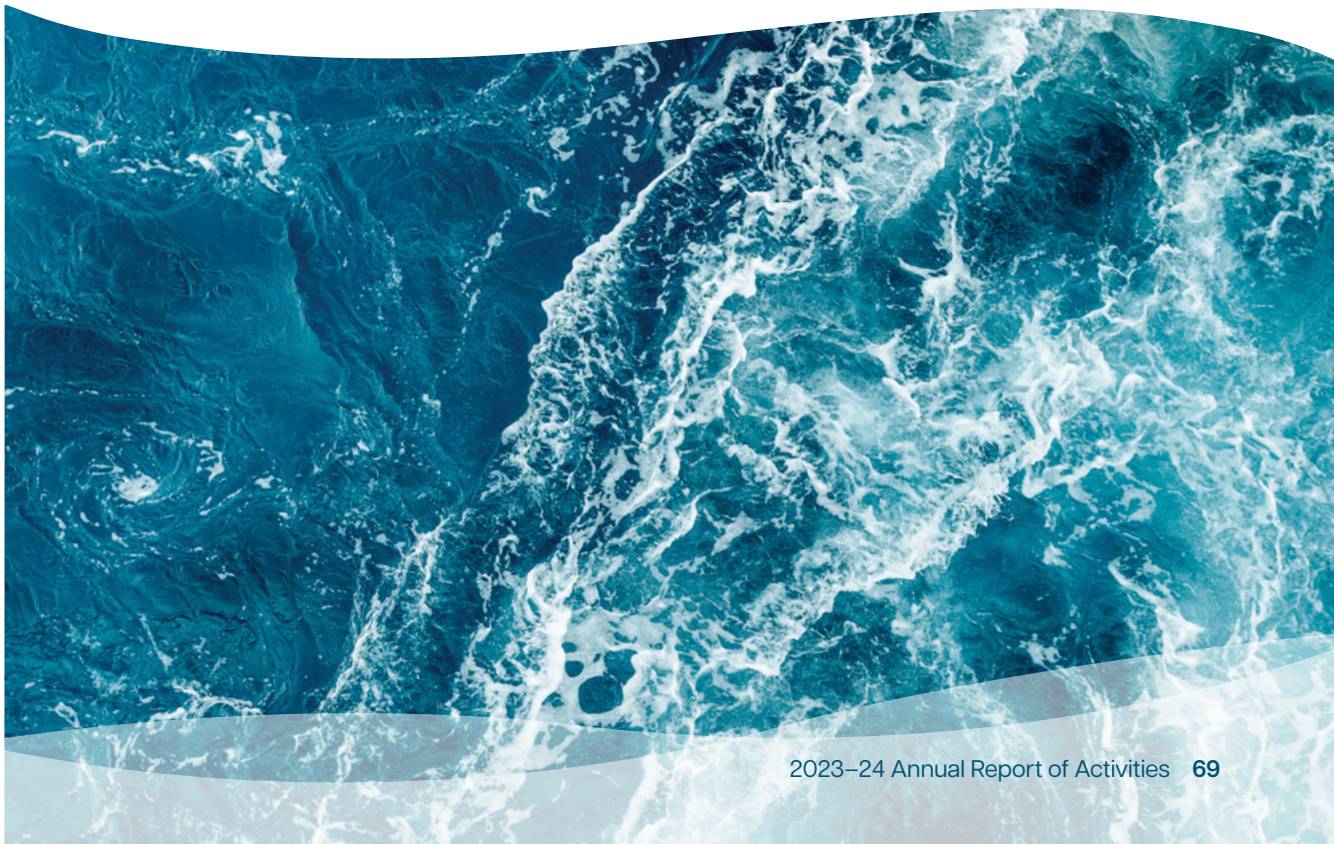
The Registrar’s ability to effectively undertake its functions under the OEI Act is underpinned by access to sufficient resources, capacity and qualified personnel. The Registrar must be able to retain a competent capacity to undertake its advisory and compliance roles under the OEI regime. The Registrar is fully funded through the cost recovery charges imposed under the OEI legislation and manages the funds through an administered Special Account. The Registrar’s current cost recovery arrangements are outlined in its 2022 CRIS¹⁶.

Table 6 outlines financial performance for 2023-24 compared to 2022-23.

The Registrar recovers its costs via application fees and annual licence levies.

The total annual levy collected during 2023-24 was \$0.95 million (Table 6). The annual licence levy amount is imposed on holders of OEI licences in accordance with the OEI Act, the *Offshore Infrastructure (Regulatory Levies) Act 2021* and the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure (Regulatory Levies) Regulations 2022*. The annual levy is payable 30 days after the grant of a licence and is due annually thereafter within 30 days of the anniversary of the licence.

Application fees are payable, in accordance with the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Regulations 2022*, at the time that an application is submitted to the Registrar. In 2023-24 application fee revenue was \$2.40 million (Table 6).



OEI Act – Cost Effectiveness and Financial Results

On 30 June 2024, the balance of the Registrar’s Special Account was \$13.39 million.

Table 6: Registrar’s financial performance for 2023-24 compared to 2022-23

Income Statement	2023-24 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000
Revenue - Cost Recovery		
Levies Registrar	953	0
Application Fees	2,400	11,100
Revenue - Other		
Fees collected on behalf of other agencies	3,080	0
Total Revenue	6,433	11,100
Expenses		
Employee Benefits	1,780	805
Suppliers	1,790	408
Depreciation and Amortisation	21	0
Overhead Recharging Allocation	121	91
Total Expenses	3,712	1,304
Surplus / (deficit)	2,721	9,796



Australian Government
Offshore Infrastructure Registrar



Australian Government
National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator