



Introduction to Environmental Assessments & Approvals

Master Environmental Approvals



UDIA WA
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Introduction to Environmental Assessment & Approvals Course Outline

16 September 2026

Introduction to Environmental Assessment & Approvals offers a comprehensive introduction to Western Australia's complex environmental approval process relevant to property development projects.

This one-day in-person course blends the technical know-how with real-world case examples and interactive activities to maximise the learnings. Participants will be equipped with the essential knowledge to identify potential environmental issues, to engage effectively with regulators and consultants, and develop strategies to effectively navigate the approvals process. By understanding both WA and Federal environmental requirements, participants can better anticipate challenges and develop more effective project plans to work towards better project and environmental outcomes.

Final Program

8:30am	Welcome & Introduction
8:35am – 10:15am	Session 1: Environmental Legislation and Planning Framework in WA & Australia Presented by Andreas Biddiscombe, Emerge Associates
Morning Tea (30 min)	
10:45am – 12:30pm	Session 2: Session 2: The Environmental Assessment and Approval Process in WA Presented by Adrian Vlok, Emerge Associates
Lunch (60 min)	
1:30pm – 3:30pm	Session 3: Federal EPBC Act Compliance and Post-Approval Environmental Management Presented by Jason Hick, Emerge Associates
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Session 4: Interactive Panel Discussion Presented by Andreas Biddiscombe, Adrian Vlok & Jason Hick – Emerge Associates & Ed Schuller, DWER



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Session 1: Environmental Legislation and Planning Framework in WA

Introduction to Environmental Regulation in Property Development: What is environmental assessment?

- Why is environmental approval necessary for property development?
- Key environmental risks in land development (habitat destruction, water contamination, etc.).

Western Australia's Environmental Planning Framework

Planning and Development Act:

- Key environmental provisions, objectives and associated policy
- Considerations at different stages of planning (i.e. DSP, regional scheme amendments, local scheme amendments, LSP, subdivision, development)
- Formal interaction with the Environmental Protection Act 1986

Environmental Protection Act 1986 (WA)

- Key provisions and objectives.
- Role of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)
- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (WA)

- Protection of threatened species and ecological communities

Role of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER)

Local government's role in enforcing environmental planning requirements.

Federal Legislation: Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act):

- When does a development trigger federal environmental assessment?
- Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)
- Relationship between EPBC Act and state environmental laws.

Key Stakeholders in the Environmental Approval Process:

- Developers, planners, consultants, and government agencies
- Community engagement and public consultation requirements



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Session 2: The Environmental Assessment and Approval Process in WA

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process in WA

- When is an EIA required?
- Levels of assessment:
- Referral process.
- Public Environmental Review (PER) vs. Assessment on Referral Information (ARI).
- Timeline and submission requirements for developers.

Common Environmental Issues and Mitigation Strategies

- Clearing native vegetation: Permits and offsets.
- Water management: Stormwater, wetlands, and groundwater protection.
- Bushfire risk assessment and compliance with WA planning laws.
- Heritage and cultural considerations (including Indigenous land rights).

Understanding the Role of Environmental Consultants and Reports

- Flora and fauna surveys.
- Hydrology and stormwater management plans.
- Environmental impact statements (EIS).

Decision-Making Process and Conditions of Approval

- Who makes the final decision?
- Navigating approval conditions and compliance monitoring.

Session 3: Federal EPBC Act Compliance and Post-Approval Environmental Management

EPBC Act: The Federal Environmental Approval Process

- How to determine if your project requires EPBC Act referral.
- EPBC Act assessment pathways (Self-Assessment, Referral, EIS).



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- Case study: A residential development that triggered MNES assessment.

Coordinating WA and Federal Approvals

- Differences between EPA and EPBC Act approvals.
- How to streamline the approvals process for property developers.

Post-Approval Environmental Management and Compliance

- Environmental monitoring and compliance reporting.
- Managing rehabilitation obligations and offsets.
- Consequences of non-compliance (fines, project shutdowns, legal action).

Emerging Trends and Changes in Environmental Policy

- WA's new environmental planning initiatives
- Upcoming changes to the EPBC Act and proposed reforms

Session 4: Interactive Panel Discussion

This course will conclude with an interactive Q&A session featuring Emerge Associates presenters Andreas, Adrian and Jason, alongside Ed Schuller from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER).

The session will provide participants with the opportunity to consolidate their learning and gain a deeper understanding of DWER's role, its interaction with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH), and its responsibilities within the environmental assessment and approvals process.

Course Material Access

Please note that the course material (presentation slides) access via UDIA Educate's online learning platform will be accessible to attendees for a further week after the course concludes. The material can be downloaded for future reference.

If you have any queries, please contact educate@udiawa.com.au