



What are levels of assessment?

In November 2010, changes to the EPA's Administrative Procedures reduced to two the levels of assessment that are applied to the assessment of a significant proposal. This change in assessment practice was designed to make the process simpler and more transparent for both proponents and the public. The two levels of assessment are Assessment on Proponent Information (API) and Public Environmental Review (PER).

Assessment on Proponent Information

API is applied to proposals where the environmental acceptability or unacceptability of the proposal is apparent from the information provided in the referral information. For example, there is sufficient information about the proposal, its environmental impacts and management processes for the EPA to make an informed decision. Pre-referral stakeholder consultation is considered an important criterion in determining an API level of assessment.

Where a proposal is straightforward and the proponent has provided sufficient information on environmental impacts at the referral stage, the EPA may set a level of API category A.

If a proposal has significant and unmanageable environmental impacts, the EPA will set a level of API category B - a "quick no". In some instances, it is possible for the EPA to make a judgement that the proposal is fundamentally and fatally flawed, based on the proponent's referral information, specialist advice sought by the EPA, the EPA's own knowledge and experience in dealing with similar environmental risks and impacts, and the application of the precautionary principle.

Both category A and B processes give proponents a timely, simple response. There is no public review period on the API level of assessment.

Public Environmental Review

Proposals that are complex, of regional or State-wide significance, or which generate a high level of public interest are subject to rigorous scrutiny through a PER level of assessment. At this level of assessment, the proponent is required to conduct a detailed environmental review - the form, content and timing of which is determined by the EPA. Having completed the environmental review, the proponent is required to provide information to the EPA (PER document). Provided the review and the information meets the EPA's expectations, the proponent is then required to release its PER document for a public review period. The public review period is generally from four to 12 weeks, depending on the significance of the proposal and on level of public interest.



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See the related fact sheets for more detailed explanation of the criteria upon which these levels of assessment are assigned and their assessment processes.

When does the EPA not assess a referred proposal?

A proposal will not be assessed if the EPA determines the proposal will have no significant effect on the environment and/or could be appropriately regulated under other statutory provisions.

Even though the EPA may decide not to assess a proposal, it expects that proponents and decision making authorities will take appropriate measures to protect the environment. To that end, the EPA may provide advice to proponents and decision making authorities on the environmental aspects of a proposal.

When the EPA decides not to assess a proposal, it will record its decision in one of the following ways:

- Not assessed – no advice given
- Not assessed – public advice given
- Not assessed – recommended that the proposal be dealt with under Part V Division 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (Clearing of Native Vegetation).

How do I find out what decisions on assessment have been made by the EPA?

The records of decisions and levels of assessment set are published every Monday on the EPA's website as **Chairman's Determinations**. You can also subscribe to this page using RSS feeds.

References

Environmental Impact Assessment (Part IV Divisions 1 and 2) Administrative Procedures 2012, Western Australian Government Gazette No.223, 7 December 2012

Environmental Assessment Guidelines No. 6 (EAG6) – Timelines for Environmental Impact Assessment of Proposals, Environmental Protection Authority, November 2010

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