SARA key performance indicators and customer satisfaction survey 2015–16

March 2017

Queensland Government

Contents

1.   Introduction

Under the provisions of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA), the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning is the decision maker for all State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) referred applications. The department seeks technical advice from other government departments during the assessment of referred applications.

Since the inception of SARA, the department has been committed to SARA being one of the most efficient and effective regulatory assessment entities in the country. To support this goal, SARA's operations have been complemented by a culture of continuous improvement and a range of supporting governance initiatives.

A key element of SARA's culture of improvement has been a yearly cycle of publishing, then subsequent reporting against a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) across the various facets of SARA's functions. This cycle enables the department to regularly monitor SARA's performance relative to the documented targets. At the end of the financial year reporting cycle, actual performance against the set KPI targets is measured and documented in this report. Highlighting areas where targets are not achieved provides the department with an opportunity to focus on areas of practice that require improvement.

In many areas, SARA KPIs for 2015–16 are different to targets from previous years. These differences arose primarily due to the ability of SARA to more accurately and comprehensively analyse data and generate reports on a range of SARA performance attributes. In particular, measuring of time performance was changed to a measure of median business days rather than percentages of applications decided within certain time periods. For the 2015–16 year, KPI targets were also deliberately set to be quite aspirational to assist SARA to strive for performance that exceeds statutory timeframes as set out in the legislation.

The following report provides a summary of SARA's 2015–16 assessment activity and SARA's performance against its published 2015–16 KPI targets. To measure SARA's performance against its qualitative KPIs, the department undertakes a customer satisfaction survey.

In addition to informing outcomes for the qualitative KPIs, the broader results of this survey are also outlined in this report. Given the nature of the 2015–16 results, this report also outlines a range of strategies the department is pursuing to provide improved performance during the next financial year.

SARA's KPIs focus on the following key areas:
• Customer satisfaction.
• Overall assessment timeframes.
• Post-decision assessment timeframes.
• FastTrack5 assessment timeframes.
• Information requests.
• Pre-lodgement processes.
• Appeals.

2.   Summary of SARA activity

For the 2015–16 financial year, SARA issued a total of **4018** decisions and responses, comprising:

- 327 assessment manager decisions
- 1847 concurrence agency responses
- 229 pre-referral responses
- 1143 permissible change decisions
- 472 extensions to relevant period decisions.

Additionally, SARA provided 462 pre-lodgement meetings or pieces of written advice.

A breakdown of SARA's decisions/responses activity for the 2015–16 financial year is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1 – SARA decisions/responses breakdown for 2015–16
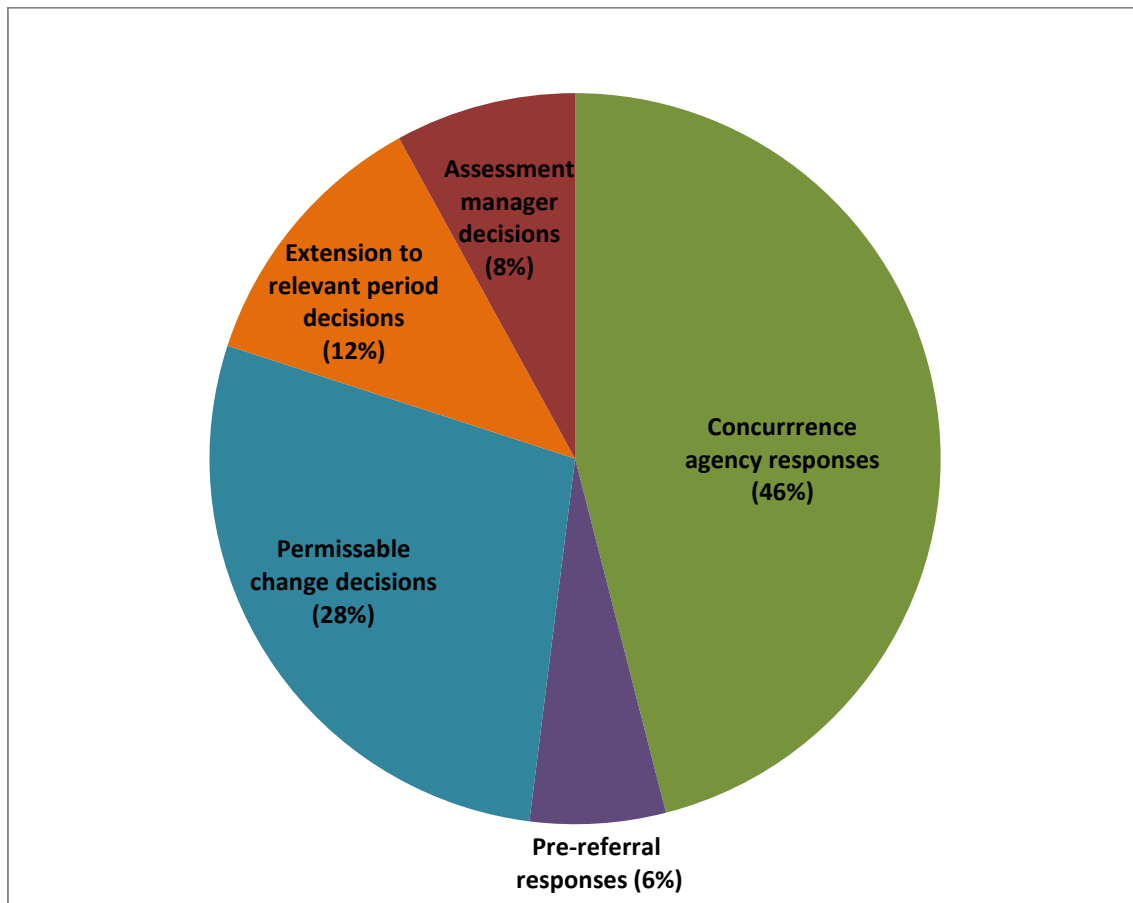
Of the total number of responses/decisions issued, only 23 appeals related to a SARA condition(s) or decision.

3. SARA's performance against 2015–16 KPIs

The following sections provide a summary of SARA's performance against the published KPIs for the 2015–16 financial year.

The KPIs cover several core areas including customer satisfaction, assessment timeframes, information requests, pre-lodgement processes, and appeals. The KPIs are measured against:

• **Quantitative targets** – through data obtained from the digital My Development Assessment System (MyDAS).
• **Qualitative targets** – through data obtained from the customer satisfaction survey.

3.1 Quantitative targets

3.1.1 Pre-lodgement processes

KPI #	Measure	Statutory requirement	Adopted targets vs actual	Target achieved
1	The time taken to issue written pre-lodgement advice	N/A	**Adopted target** 10 median business days **Actual** 13 median business days	❌
2	The time taken to set/arrange a pre-lodgement meeting date	N/A	**Adopted target** 5^1 median business days **Actual** 5 median business days	✔️
3	The time taken to issue pre-lodgement meeting minutes	N/A	**Adopted target** 7 median business days **Actual** 12 median business days	❌

3.1.2 Information requests

KPI #	Measure	Statutory requirement	Adopted targets vs actual	Target chieved
4	As **assessment manager**, percentage of applications decided without an information request	N/A	**Adopted target** 85% **Actual** 88%	✔️
5	As **concurrence agency**, percentage of responses issued without an information request	N/A	**Adopted target** 85% **Actual** 78%	❌

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[1] This KPI reflects the time taken for SARA to arrange/set a pre-lodgement meeting time and date (regardless of the date of the meeting), from the date of the request. It ensures pre-lodgement meeting requests are processed and responded to in a timely manner. It does not address the timeframe between the date of the request and the date of the actual meeting (as this can be influenced by numerous factors despite SARA always ensuring meetings occur as soon as possible).

3.1.3 Overall assessment timeframes

KPI #	Measure	Statutory requirement vs actual	Statutory requirement achieved	Adopted targets vs actual	Target achieved
6	As **assessment manager**, the time taken to assess an application and issue a decision notice Note: excludes time taken for applicant to respond to any information request	**Statutory requirement** maximum 20^2 business days **Actual** 16 median business days	✅	**Adopted target** 17 median business days **Actual** 16 median business days	✅
7	As **concurrence agency**, the time taken to assess an application and issue a concurrence agency response Note: excludes time taken for applicant to respond to any information request	**Statutory requirement** maximum 30^2 business days **Actual** 23 median business days	✅	**Adopted target** 20 median business days **Actual** 23 median business days	❌

3.1.4 Post-decision assessment timeframes

KPI #	Measure	Statutory requirement vs actual	Statutory requirement achieved	Adopted targets vs actual	Target achieved
8	As a **relevant entity**, the time taken to assess a permissible change request and issue a written notice	**Statutory requirement** 20 business days **Actual** 14 business days	✅	**Adopted target** 10 median business days **Actual** 14 median business days	❌
9	As a **responsible entity**, the time taken to assess a permissible change request and issue a decision notice Note: KPI applies only when there is no relevant entity	**Statutory requirement** 30 business days **Actual** 25 business days	✅	**Adopted target** 20 median business days **Actual** 25 median business days	❌

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[2] Assuming no extension issued.

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KPI #	Measure	Statutory requirement vs actual	Statutory requirement achieved	Adopted targets vs actual	Target achieved
10	The time taken to assess and decide an **extension to relevant period** request	**Statutory requirement** 20 business days **Actual** 9 business days	✓	**Adopted target** 10 median business days **Actual** 9 median business days	✓

3.1.5 Appeals

KPI #	Measure	Statutory requirement	Adopted targets vs Actual	Target achieved
11	**Percentage of total decisions and responses appealed** Note: Appealable decisions includes assessment manager decisions, concurrence agency responses, permissible changes and extension to relevant periods	N/A	**Adopted target** <2% **Actual** 0.6%	✓

As shown in the above table, SARA continues to perform very well in the area of appeals. Of the total number of responses/decisions issued, only 23 appeals related to a SARA condition(s) or decision.

3.1.6 FastTrack5 timeframes

KPI #	Measure	Statutory requirement	Adopted targets vs actual	Target achieved
12	Percentage of FastTrack5 referral responses issued **within five business days**[3]	N/A	**Adopted target** 100% **Actual** 96%	✗

SARA promotes its FastTrack5 assessments with a guaranteed five day turnaround time, hence the target of 100 per cent desired performance delivery. However, meeting this short timeframe is contingent on application fees being fully processed prior to the issuing of a SARA response/decision. The small number of occasions where the five day period was exceeded can be attributed to credit card payment anomalies.

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[3] When payment made by applicant via credit card.

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3.2 Qualitative targets[4]

3.2.1 Customer satisfaction

KPI #	Measure	Target	Actual	Target achieved
13	Level of customer satisfaction with **the pre-lodgement process**	90%	56%	❌
14	Level of customer satisfaction with overall performance as **assessment manager or concurrence agency**	80%	71%	❌

While disappointing, the above results highlight scope for improvement with SARA's performance with pre-lodgement processes. KPI 14 also reflects applicants' experiences with the MyDAS system. This is investigated in more detail in section 4.

4. Customer satisfaction survey results

In addition to delivering responses to KPIs 13 and 14 above, the satisfaction survey provided insights from SARA customers on more detailed aspects of SARA performance.

The survey was conducted through an optional online survey, using SurveyMonkey, which was triggered each time an applicant finalised an assessment manager or concurrence agency application, and each time an applicant participated in the pre-lodgement process.

The survey was conducted during a two-month period from July to August 2016. The survey questions covered a broad range of SARA functions, services, and tools including:
• pre-lodgement advice
• information requests
• conditions
• staff service
• MyDAS.

A total of 56 survey responses were received.

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[4] No statutory requirements.

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4.1 Survey results

SARA's 2015–16 survey results are shown in the following tables.

SARA customer satisfaction survey results	2015–16 survey
SARA pre-lodgement survey	
Pre-lodgement advice addressed specific queries.	67% agreed
Pre-lodgement advice clearly communicated SARA's position, expectations, and advice.	67% agreed
SARA development application survey	
Information requests	
The information request was clear and concise.	57% agreed
The information request was reasonable.	50% agreed
Conditions	
Conditions were reasonable.	72% agreed
Conditions were clear and concise.	75% agreed
Conditions included reasonable timing/timeframes for required outcomes.	75% agreed
Staff service	
How satisfied were you with the level of service provided by SARA officers?	74% satisfied
SARA officers were friendly.	94% agreed
SARA officers were knowledgeable.	76% agreed
SARA officers provided timely advice.	82% agreed

Based on data from previous years, the MyDAS system constitutes a known area of discontent, with a high proportion of respondents indicating they are unsatisfied.

Although the 2015–16 survey results are disappointing, they do represent improvements when compared against the corresponding 2014–15 results.

Encouragingly, the results indicate that MyDAS improvement processes are having a positive impact on levels of customer satisfaction. This is demonstrated in the following table.

MyDAS	2014–15 survey	2015–16 survey	+/-
How satisfied were you with MyDAS?	37% satisfied	45% satisfied	+8%
The lodgement process was simple and user-friendly.	28% agreed	29% agreed	+1%
It was easy to pay my fee.	37% agreed	45% agreed	+8%
I could log in any time and track my application.	54% agreed	68% agreed	+14%

5.   SARA performance improvements

SARA's KPIs and annual customer satisfaction survey inform ongoing improvement and drive organisational change to deliver efficiency and best practice in the state's development assessment system.

In responding to this year's results, SARA will undertake the following:

- **MyDAS2** – implement a new and improved MyDAS system – 'MyDAS2' with the commencement of the *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act) to:
  — significantly improve the user experience for applicants lodging an application
  — improve the application tracking functionality
  — support greater efficiencies with application processing
  — provide enhanced reporting and monitoring capabilities
  — align with the requirements of the Planning Act.
- **Prepare SDAP version 2.0** – for commencement with the Planning Actto:
  — improve the clarity of assessment criteria within self-contained codes
  — facilitate more efficient performance-based assessments
  — remove duplication and unnecessary provisions
  — reflect the changes associated with the Planning Act and regulation.
- **Staff training** – provide comprehensive training programs to:
  — improve technical knowledge
  — improve condition and information request drafting
  — support consistent assessment and decision-making
  — enhance and improve pre-lodgement services.
- **FastTrack5** – expand and refine FastTrack5 to:
  — capture more types of development
  — improve clarity in relation qualifying criteria
  — further streamline the state's development assessment system
  — free up resources for more complex assessments.
- **Customer satisfaction survey** – develop strategies to:
  — increase response rates
  — enhance data collection.