SARA Key Performance Indicators and Customer Satisfaction Survey Report 2016–2017

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1.0 Introduction

The State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) was established in July 2013, with the objective of delivering a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to the state's assessment of development applications.

Since its inception, SARA has aspired to become one of the most efficient and effective regulatory assessment entities in Australia. To advance this goal, SARA's operations are underpinned by a strong culture of continual improvement and a range of supporting governance initiatives.

Two key elements of SARA's improvement culture have been yearly reporting against a suite of adopted key performance indicators (KPIs) and an annual customer satisfaction survey, covering the various facets of SARA's functions. At the end of the financial year reporting cycle, actual performance against the adopted KPI targets is measured and documented in this annual report.

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 services.

SARA's KPIs for the 2016–17 financial year are consistent to those adopted for the previous (2015–16) financial year and focus on the following key areas:

- Pre-lodgement processes.
- Information Requests.
- FastTrack5 assessment timeframes.
- Overall assessment timeframes.
- Post-decision assessment timeframes.
- Appeals.
- Customer satisfaction.

The adopted KPIs are therefore not only deliberately challenging, but enable a direct comparison of SARA's performance between the 2016–17 and 2015–16 financial years.

The following report provides a summary of SARA's 2016–17 assessment activity and SARA's performance against its adopted 2016–17 KPIs. To measure SARA's performance against its qualitative KPIs, the Planning Group undertook its annual customer satisfaction survey. The results of this survey are also included.

With the commencement of the *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act) on 3 July 1017, the following report is the final annual report to be prepared under the repealed *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA).

2.0 Summary of SARA Activity

For the 2016–17 financial year, SARA issued a total of 3656 decisions and responses, comprising:

- 316 assessment manager decisions
- 1711 concurrence agency responses
- 206 pre-referral responses
- 925 permissible change decisions
- 498 extensions to relevant period decisions.

Additionally, SARA provided 571 pre-lodgement meetings or pieces of written pre-lodgement advice. This equates to 28.2 per cent of the 2027 assessment manager decisions and concurrence agency responses subject to SARA's pre-lodgement services.

A breakdown of SARA's activity for the 2016–-17 financial year is shown in Figure 1 below.

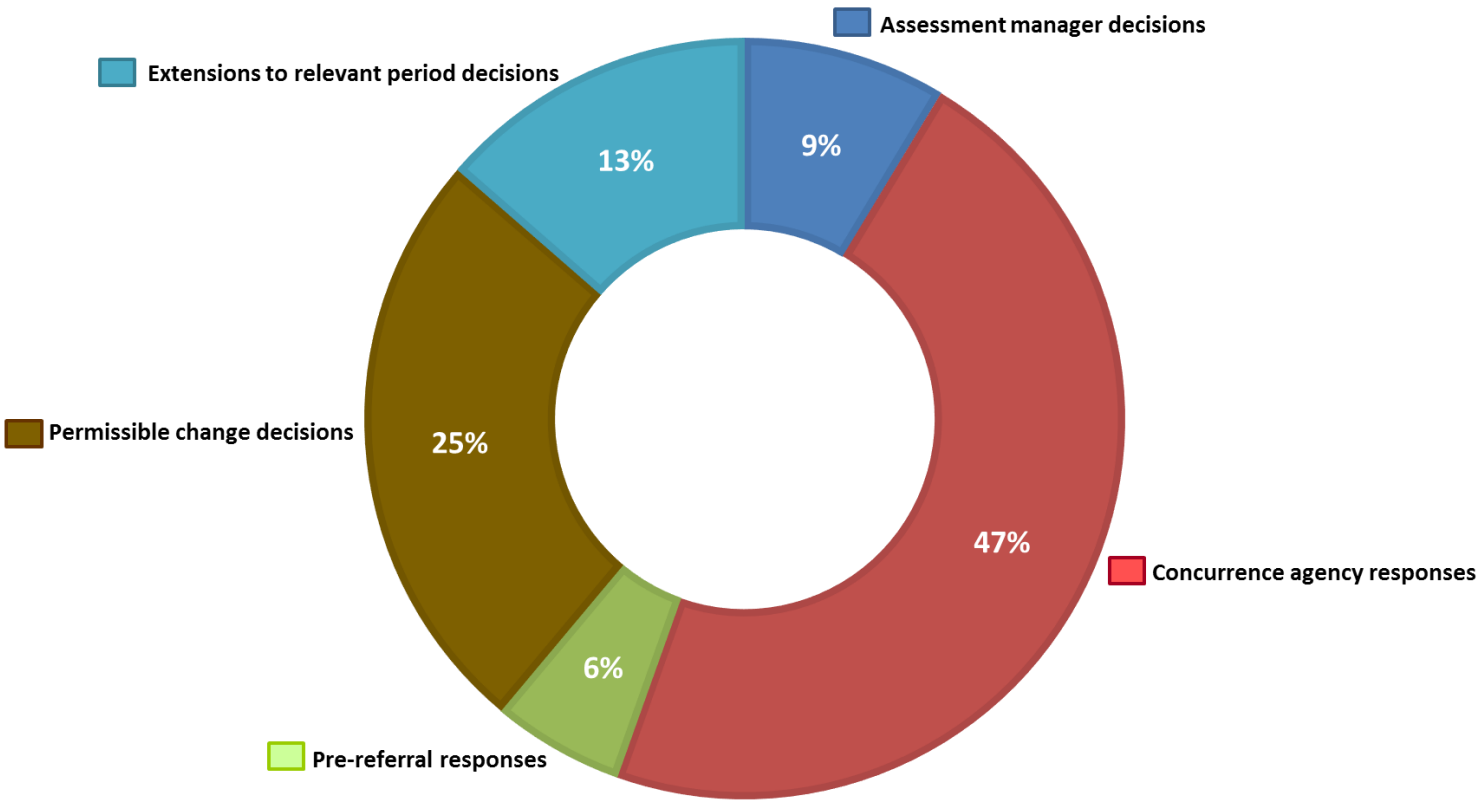

Figure 1 – SARA's activity breakdown for 2016–17

Of the total number of responses/decisions issued, only 16 appeals related to a SARA condition(s) or decision.

3.0 SARA's performance against 2016–17 KPIs

The following sections provide a snapshot of SARA's performance against the adopted KPIs for the 2016–17 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 satisfaction surveys.

As indicated in the below tables, SARA's performance in all areas, including where SARA did not achieve the adopted target, except for pre-lodgement advice, has improved when compared against the 2015–16 survey results.

3.1 Quantitative targets

3.1.1 Pre-lodgement processes

KPI #	Measure			Adopted Target Achieved?
1	The time taken to issue written pre-lodgement advice	**Adopted target**	**10 median business days**	✗
		2016–17 result	**11 median business days**	
		2015–16 result	13 median business days	
2	The time taken to arrange a pre-lodgement meeting date[1]	**Adopted target**	**5 median business days**	✓
		2016–17 result	**3 median business days**	
		2015–16 result	5 median business days	
3	The time taken to issue pre-lodgement meeting minutes	**Adopted target**	**7 median business days**	✗
		2016–17 result	**12 median business days**	
		2015–16 result	12 median business days	

[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 pre-lodgement request. It ensures pre-lodgement 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 endeavouring to ensure meetings occur as soon as possible).

3.1.2 Information requests

KPI #	Measure			Adopted Target Achieved?
4	As **assessment manager**, percentage of applications decided without an information request	**Adopted target**	**85%**	✓
		2016–17 result	**87%**	
		2015–16 result	88%	
5	As **concurrence agency**, percentage of responses issued without an information request	**Adopted target**	**85%**	✓
		2016–17 result	**89%**	
		2015–16 result	78%	

3.1.3 Overall assessment timeframes

KPI #	Measure			Adopted 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	✓
		Adopted target	**17 median business days**	
		2016–17 result	**17 median business days**	
		2015–16 result	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	✗
		Adopted target	**20 median business days**	
		2016–17 result	**25 median business days**	
		2015–15 result	23 median business days	

3.1.4 Post-approval processes: extension relevant period

KPI #	Measure			Adopted Target Achieved?
8	The time taken to assess and decide an **extension to relevant period** request	Statutory requirement	20 business days	✓
		Adopted target	**10 median business days**	
		2016–17 result	**9 median business days**	
		2015–16 result	9 median business days	

[2] Assuming no extension issued.

3.1.5 Post-approval processes: permissible change

KPI #	Measure			Adopted Target Achieved ?
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	✗
		Adopted target	**20 median business days**	
		2016–17 result	**26 median business days**	
		2015–16 result	25 business days	
10	As a **relevant entity**, the time taken to assess a permissible change request and issue a written notice	Statutory requirement	20 business days	✗
		Adopted target	**10 median business days**	
		2016–17 result	**11 median business days**	
		2015–16 result	14 median business days	

3.1.6 Appeals

KPI #	Measure			Adopted 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	**Adopted target**	**<2%**	✓
		2016–17 result	**0.46%**	
		2015–16 result	0.6%	

3.1.7 FastTrack5 timeframes

KPI #	Measure			Adopted Target Achieved?
12	Percentage of FastTrack5 referral responses issued **within five business days**[3]	**Adopted target**	**100%**	✓
		2016–17 result	**100%**	
		2015–16 result	96%	

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

3.2 Qualitative targets

3.2.1 Customer satisfaction

KPI #	Measure			Adopted Target Achieved?
13	Level of customer satisfaction with **the pre-lodgement process**	**Adopted target**	**90%**	✗
		2016–17 result	**44%**	
		2015–16 result	56%	
14	Level of customer satisfaction with overall performance as **assessment manager** or **concurrence agency**	**Adopted target**	**80%**	✓
		2016–17 result	**82%**	
		2015–16 result	71%	

4.0 Customer satisfaction survey results

The 2016–17 customer satisfaction results draw on two streams of input, being:

- SARA's customer satisfaction survey, delivered via the online survey program, Survey Monkey, and sent to applicants
- The Planning Group's Voice of the Customer Survey, which included an online SARA client satisfaction survey delivered through Survey System, and sent to frequent users of SARA's services, namely planning consultants.

SARA's 2016–17 customer satisfaction survey results are therefore an aggregate of data obtained via the two streams of input. Combined, a total of 75 responses were received.

The surveys were conducted between June 2017 and September 2017 and included a number of questions covering a range of SARA functions, services and tools, including:

- pre-lodgement advice
- information requests
- decision notice, concurrence agency responses and conditions
- staff service
- MyDAS.

The 2016–17 satisfaction survey results are shown in the following table, together with a comparison against last year's results.

SARA customer satisfaction survey results	2015–16 Survey	2016–17 Survey	Improvement on 2015–16?
Pre-lodgement advice			
Pre-lodgement advice clearly communicated SARA's position, expectations and advice	67% agreed	35% agreed	✗
Information requests			
The information request was clear and concise	57% agreed	62% agreed	✓
The information request was reasonable	50% agreed	71% agreed	✓
Decision notices, concurrence responses and conditions			
The conditions were reasonable	72% agreed	76% agreed	✓
The conditions were clear and concise	75% agreed	77% agreed	✓
The conditions included reasonable timing/ timeframes for required actions	75% agreed	87% agreed	✓
Staff service			
How satisfied were you with the level of service provided by SARA officers?	74% Satisfied	88% satisfied	✓

As the survey questions relating to MyDAS have remained constant since the 2014–15 financial year, the following table shows how customer satisfaction relative to MyDAS has tracked over time.

As shown, MyDAS represents a clear area for improvement, however it is encouraging to again see improved results in all measures. This data will again be examined in the year ahead to monitor the changes implemented through MyDAS2, which came into operation on 3 July 2017.

MyDAS	2014–15 survey	2015–16 survey	2016–17 survey	+/- from 2015–16 survey
How satisfied were you with MyDAS?	37% satisfied	45% satisfied	61% satisfied	+ 16%
The lodgement process was simple and user-friendly?	28% agreed	29% agreed	57% agreed	+ 28%
It was easy to pay my fee?	37% agreed	45% agreed	65% agreed	+ 20%
I could log in any time and track my application?	54% agreed	68% agreed	84% agreed	+ 16%

5.0 SARA under the Planning Act

To advance SARA's continued improvement under the Planning Act, the Planning Group has undertaken a range of actions and initiatives, including:

- investment and implementation of MyDAS2, delivering:
  - faster uploading/downloading
  - improved functionality
  - a more intuitive dashboard interface
  - enhanced reporting capabilities
- second generation State Development Assessment Provisions, delivering:
  - clearer assessment benchmarks
  - simplified decision making
  - a more user friendly and concise format
  - greater consistency in drafting across the full suite of state codes
  - a solid foundation for efficient performance-based assessments
- an expanded FastTrack5 framework capturing more types of development, including low impact tidal works
- ensuring very high quality pre-lodgement processes to:
  - identify and resolve issues prior to lodgement
  - provide constructive feedback in a timely and flexible manner
  - promote lodgement of 'decision ready' applications
  - support efficient assessments post-lodgement.

Additionally, new KPIs for 2017–18 financial year, which are relevant to the *Planning Act 2016*, have been adopted and are available on the department's planning website https://dilgpprd.blob.core.windows.net/general/sara-key-performance-indicators-2017-18.pdf.

SARA will publish its annual KPI report, detailing actual performance against the adopted KPIs at the completion of the 2017–18 financial year.