

SARA referral pathways under the *Planning Act 2016*

Updated June 2018

FACT
SHEET

This fact sheet outlines some key points for you to consider when deciding which referral pathway is right for you.

Your options

If you are making a development application in Queensland that requires referral to the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA), there are three options available for obtaining a response. These are:

- request a response before an application is made (**‘pre-referral request’**) as per section 57 of the *Planning Act 2016* (the Act)
- refer via SARA’s **FastTrack5** pathway
- refer via the **standard statutory process** under the Act and Development Assessment Rules (DA Rules).

Pre-referral requests

Under section 57 of the Act, SARA can give a ‘pre-referral response’ before a development application (for which SARA would be a referral agency) is lodged. A pre-referral response is taken to be that agency’s referral response. However, it does not convey the same rights and certainty as a referral agency response issued under section 56 of the Act because it:

- cannot be changed should the proposal be amended
- does not afford appeal rights
- does not provide statutory processes or timeframes for providing additional information
- does not provide a statutory requirement for a pre-referral response to be given.

Pre-referral responses are currently being issued by SARA in relation to certain minor development proposals for tidal works for private structures, such as pontoons, jetties and boat ramps. Further information on these types of applications is available on the department’s website in the fact sheet [‘Accelerated assessment pathways for tidal works \(private structures\)’](#).

FastTrack5 referrals

SARA's [FastTrack5 assessment framework](#) is a streamlined referral and assessment process that:

- helps applicants reduce project costs and development assessment timeframes for low-risk development
- increases certainty for qualifying proposals.

Unlike a pre-referral response, a referral agency response given through FastTrack5 is provided under section 56 of the Act; therefore, it has the same statutory effect as a referral agency response provided through the standard assessment pathway.

Under FastTrack5, SARA will provide a referral agency response or decision within five business days of receiving a development application that qualifies for FastTrack5 assessment.

Applicants can determine if their proposal qualifies for assessment through the FastTrack5 referral pathway by referring to Appendix 2 of the [State Development Assessment Provisions \(SDAP\)](#).

Standard referrals

If your development application does not qualify for FastTrack5 assessment, a referral agency response can always be issued through SARA's standard assessment process. This assessment pathway follows the standard statutory process and timeframes under the Act and DA Rules.

Continuous improvement

SARA is committed to continuous improvement and is always looking for ways to streamline the state's role in development assessment. Recent improvements include:

- the expansion of the FastTrack5 framework to apply more broadly to a greater number of proposal types
- ability for SARA to provide landowner consent for those tidal works proposals that meet the FastTrack5 qualifying criteria, including for pre-referral requests
- refinement of referral triggers and associated fees under the Planning Regulation 2017 to reduce red-tape and costs to applicants.

More information

Further information is available through the department's website, or from your [local SARA regional office](#).