

Additional information: DOC work on permissions

24 June 2025

- In the past few months DOC has focussed on clearing the permissions backlog, and this backlog has now halved.
- DOC is meeting statutory processing timelines for decisions under the Resource Management Act, and is meeting Fast-track Approvals Act statutory deadlines.
- 81% of permissions applications were processed within target timeframes in June (to date).

Permissions processing targets set by the Minister of Conservation			
Overall targets	Target timeframes from the date a complete application is received	Target for end of 24/25 FY	Target for end of 25/26 FY
No active applications older than one year (exceptions may be identified) by the end of 25/26 FY	Permits	90% within 4 months	95% within 4 months
	Permits for one-off drone use	70% within 1 week	95% within 1 week
Achieve set target timeframes	Wildlife Act authorities	80% within 6 months	95% within 6 months
Additional expectations	Non-notified licences and easements	80% within 7 months	95% within 7 months
Clear specific applications by set dates	Leases and notified licences	70% within 9 months	95% within 9 months
Clear applications currently over one year old by June 2025	Mining access arrangements	70% within 6 months	95% within 6 months

Pending applications

- In the last week DOC's pending applications dropped below 600. That's a significant step forward and reflects the consistent focus and collective mahi across the team.
- This week, DOC is tracking to go well below 500.

Decisions made

- Since 28 February, DOC has made decisions on 1,237 applications and remains on track to meet the targets agreed with the Minister.
- Applications older than 1 year:
 - A target was set to close 248 applications that had been in the system for more than a year by 1 June 2025.
 - This target has been met.
- In June, 73% of Wildlife Act authority applications were processed to a decision within the 6-month statutory timeframe. There are currently 83 applications pending under the Wildlife Act.

Outcomes

Since the beginning of this year, of all applications processed:

- 86.2% were approved
- 10.8% were withdrawn
- 3% were declined (2.3%) or returned (0.7%)

Increased processing volumes

- DOC's processing improved in April and May compared to the same period last year.
- DOC closed 813 applications in April and May this year, compared to 312 in April and May 2024.

	Received	Closed
April and May 2024	326	312
April and May 2025	401	813

- April and May 2025 show an improvement in processing of 160% over the same period in 2024.

Applications received

- All permission applications received in 24/25 to date = 2,384
 - Of these, concession applications = 1,527
- Average number of incoming permissions per month: around 200, or 50 per week with seasonal variations.

Changes to processing system

- More changes are coming to the processing system that will improve the processing pace.
- DOC is implementing new technology to streamline workflows, automate processes and improve customer touch points. The new technology being implemented will be the start of a rolling programme to improve application efficiency and improve applicant visibility of the processing work.
- DOC is improving operating rules and process, simplifying application and decision processes and publishing position statements and standards.
 - An example of this is the improved processes for drones. Since implementing the more streamlined process, DOC is processing 100% of drone applications within 5 working days, surpassing the target of 90%.
- DOC is also piloting new ways of processing applications to speed up processing and decisions by case management, batching similar applications and using internal panels to consider a suite of applications at one time.

Regional economic development

- DOC processes major economic development initiatives under a range of legislation including Fast Track, the RMA and Wildlife Act. These cover, for example, roading, hydro, solar, wind, mining, and ski fields.
- DOC is currently working on 61 Fast Track applications at various stages in the process (both referral decisions and substantive applications lodged with EPA). DOC is meeting all timeframes associated with that work.
 - For example, DOC is currently in pre lodgement consultation on applications for Bathurst Resources, the Southland Wind Farm, Wainui Energy Park and the Mahinerangi Wind Farm.
 - DOC has recently completed its review of the Ports of Auckland application for Bledisloe Wharf.
- Recent DOC approvals under the Wildlife Act to support regional economic development initiatives include:
 - Candys Creek Road retaining wall on SH73.
 - The Otaki to North of Levin section of SH1 in April.

Mining

- Since 1 January this year, 67% of mining applications were processed to a decision within 6 months.
- The current interventions are working and 55 decisions on mining applications have been made since 28 February.
- 36 mining applications are pending as at 24 June, of which:
 - 13 were received in the last 4 weeks.
 - 5 relate to Wildlife Act authorisations.