

Significant Development Pathway

2020 – 2025 Review

April 2025

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	2
1.1 Data Collection Method	3
2.0 Key Findings 2020-2024	5
2.1 Reliability	5
2.2 Efficiency.....	5
2.3 Consistency	5
2.4 Complexity.....	5
3.0 Discussion	6
4.0 Detailed Findings	8
4.1 Significant Development Applications	8
4.2 Significant Development Application Decisions.....	10
4.3 Significant Development Application Decision-Making Timeframes	11
4.4 Significant Development Applications and Development Outcomes	14
4.5 Significant Development Application Costs	17
Appendix 1 – Development Use Categories	19

Figure 1 - Number of Determinations by Application Type	8
Figure 2 - Number of DA Determinations by Assessment Pathway (2020-21 / 2023-24) ...	9
Figure 3 - DA Determinations through State Assessment Pathways over \$20m (2020-21 / 2023-24)	9
Figure 4 - Undetermined Applications by Status Type	10
Figure 5 - Average Days by Application Type	12
Figure 6 - Average Days to Determine DAs by Financial Year	12
Figure 7 - DA Timeliness by 100 Day Increments	13
Figure 8 - DA Timeliness through State Assessment Pathways over \$20m (2020-21 / 2023-24)	13
Figure 9 - Average Days to Determine DAs by Land Use Category	14
Figure 10 - Metropolitan v Regional (Determined and Undetermined DAs).....	15
Figure 11 - Development Use Categories (Determined and Undetermined DAs).....	15
Figure 12 - Stage of Building Completion for DA Determinations.....	16
Figure 13 - Proportional DA Value by Financial Year	17
Figure 14 - DA Value of State Government Pathways by Cost Thresholds (2020-21 / 2023-24).....	18
Figure 15 - Value of DA Determinations (2020-21 / 2023-24).....	18

1.0 Introduction

This report, prepared by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), examines the operation and performance of the significant development pathway (SDP) coordinated by the State Development Assessment Unit (SDAU) within the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) using data from all SDP decisions and current applications since the commencement of the pathway in 2020 until 1 April 2025.

This report has been developed to inform WALGA's consultation and engagement with Local Governments and development of a revised advocacy position. The revised position will sit within the context of WALGA's [Planning Principles and Reform advocacy position](#), which states that the Local Government sector supports an efficient and effective planning system guided by legislation, policy, and processes, that, amongst other things:

- facilitates the creation of sustainable and liveable communities and places
- is easy to understand, accessible and transparent
- recognises the diversity of Western Australia and ensures that local environment, context, communities and character are appropriately reflected in planning frameworks and decision making
- ensures decisions are made by the level of government closest to and most impacted by a planning proposal.

In 2020 the State Government, via the *Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020* (2020 Bill), introduced a new temporary 'flexible and streamlined approval pathway' (Part 17) for significant developments that bypassed both the Development Assessment Panels (DAPs) and Local Government assessment pathways, with the aim of streamlining significant development proposals and stimulating economic development to assist in COVID-19 recovery.

This was an opt-in pathway originally proposed for 'significant developments' of \$30 million or more, involving residential development of 100 or more dwellings, or commercial development with the total net lettable area of 20,000 m² or more.¹

The 2020 Bill was passed with a different definition of 'significant development', being developments that met a minimum monetary threshold of \$20 million in the metropolitan area and \$5 million in regional areas. These thresholds remained unchanged.

Part 17 applications are assessed by the SDAU within DPLH, instead of the Local Government, and determined by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), instead of the Local Government or a DAP.

The Part 17 Pathway has no statutory assessment timeframes and developments can be approved that vary planning instruments including local planning frameworks and controls (e.g. land use permissibility, height controls, floor space ratio, etc.).

WALGA opposed the introduction of the Part 17 pathway, noting:

- that development applications (DAs) are already efficiently processed by Local Governments
- it removed Local Government from decision making, which provided a valuable community perspective on planning proposals

¹ [Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020 Explanatory Memorandum presented In Legislative Assembly](#)

- there was no evidence to demonstrate it would have a positive effect on the state or local economies.

The pathway closed to new applications on 29 December 2023 but remains open to applications to amend approved developments and process clearances of conditions of approval.

In 2023 the State Government announced major planning reforms that included the introduction of a permanent refined version of the significant development pathway, Part 11B of the Act, via the *Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2023* (2023 Bill).

In response to the announcements, WALGA noted the establishment of the permanent significant development pathway would further erode Local Government's role in providing a valuable community perspective on planning proposals.²

When the 2023 Bill passed WA Parliament in November 2023 the State Government announced that the new permanent significant development pathway would create a *'streamlined, efficient and coordinated pathway for complex proposals'* and that it formed part of broader changes to the planning system that would boost housing supply.³

The pathway became operational on 1 March 2024. Part 11B applications are still processed by the SDAU and are determined by the Statutory Planning Committee (SPC), a committee of the WAPC.

Part 11B retains the ability for the SPC to ignore local planning frameworks but specifies the circumstances in which this can occur. A 120-day statutory timeframe for applications and a mandatory pre-lodgement meeting were also introduced.

1.1 Data Collection Method

The data in this report was collated manually from information contained in the meeting minutes and agendas of the WAPC and SPC meetings held between 2020 and 1 April 2025, and the application status of all SDAU applications. This information was sourced from DPLH's website, with some data directly provided by DPLH

Data collected for this report and the subsequent analysis relates to individual determinations. Decisions are categorised into the following categories:

- DAs (Part 17 and one Part 11B development applications determined)
- Form 17C (WAPC determined amendment to a previously approved Part 17 DA)
- Form 17C del (Delegated determined amendment to a previously approved Part 17 DA)
- SAT (determined reconsideration of a Part 17 DA following an appeal to the State Administrative Tribunal).

Data was also collected for undetermined applications currently with SDAU under the Part 17 and Part 11B pathways as of the 1 April 2025 and recorded in the following categories:

- applications lodged (Part 17 and Part 11B DAs which have not been assessed)
- under assessment (Part 17 and Part 11B DAs currently being assessed)
- amendment application (amendments to approved Part 17 DAs)
- amendment under assessment (amendments to approved Part 17 DAs currently being assessed)
- SAT Review (Part 17 DA currently being reconsidered following an appeal to the State Administrative Tribunal)

² [WALGA Media Release: 18 October 2023](#)

³ [Planning reforms to accelerate housing delivery pass Parliament | Western Australian Government](#)

- open for comment (Part 17 and Part 11B applications which are open to public consultation).

Five applications were withdrawn from the pathway and have not been included in the data.

The following fields have been collected for all applications:

- Local Government
- proposal location and description
- proposal category (see Appendix 1)
- project value
- date proposal lodged.

In addition the following fields have been collected for all determined applications:

- financial year
- Local Government recommendation
- SDAU recommendation
- number of conditions in SDAU recommendation
- WAPC decision
- number of conditions in WAPC decision
- number of conditions amended, added, or deleted in WAPC decision
- if the SDAU recommendation and WAPC decision aligned
- if the Local Government recommendation and WAPC decision aligned
- date of decision
- number of dwellings approved (where relevant)
- construction status of proposal.

For current applications the application status has also been recorded.

2.0 Key Findings 2020-2025

These headline trends provide a 'snapshot' of the data considered most relevant to illustrate the overall performance of the significant development pathway since its inception in 2020 until 1 April 2025.

2.1 Reliability

- 44 DAs and a total of 67 applications have been determined through the pathway
- The DAP system is still overwhelmingly the preferred pathway for significant developments; 85.85% of DAs valued at \$20 million or more chose the DAP pathway between 2020-21 – 2023-24
- Six determined DA's have completed construction (13.6%), another 3 DAs related to developments that were already constructed and operating (6.8%), 11 DAs that have commenced works (25.0%) and 24 which have not commenced (54.6%)

2.2 Efficiency

- The average time to determine a DA was 403 days
- The average time taken for the WAPC to determine an amendment to a DA is 177 days.
- The average time to determine a DA amendment under delegation is 103 days
- There are 26 undetermined DAs with the SDAU, including 13 Part 17 DAs which have been in the system since at least December 2023
- DAPs determined 89% of DAs valued at \$20 million or more in less than 200 days. By comparison, only 34% of DAs in the significant development pathway were processed in this timeframe

2.3 Consistency

- All Part 17 DAs were approved by WAPC and one Part 11B DA has been approved by SPC
- Almost all DAs were recommended for approval by the SDAU. There were two instances where the SDAU provided the WAPC the option of refusing or approving the DA with conditions. In both cases the WAPC chose the approval with conditions
- Local Governments broadly supported only 30% of DAs.
- Six applications (13.6% of determined DAs) have been appealed to SAT for reconsideration of conditions of approval

2.4 Complexity

- The average cost of development varies significantly with 50% of determined DAs being in the \$20m - \$50m cost bracket.
- The mixed-use development category recorded the highest proportion of determined DAs, at 45% (20 DAs). There is a clear residential component to these applications, with 85% of all determined mixed-use DAs containing dwellings.
- The approved mixed-use and residential developments account for 2,463 dwellings.
- The total value of DAs determined by the significant development pathway in 2023-24 was \$930.9 million. By comparison the DAP system and Local Government approved DAs valued at a total of \$8.91 billion and \$7.08 billion respectively.⁴

⁴ [Local Government Performance Monitoring Project](#): based off a sample of 49 Local Governments, and thus the total value of DAs approved from all Local Governments would be higher.

3.0 Discussion

In announcing the Part 17 significant development pathway in July 2020, the then Minister for Planning, Hon Rita Saffioti, stated that it was *'a temporary measure that will streamline high-quality significant development proposals that can create jobs and generate investment in the State'*⁵

In October 2023, the State Government announced that major planning reforms, including a permanent significant development pathway, would be implemented to cut unnecessary red tape and bolster housing supply in WA, with the Minister for Planning commenting that *"A permanent significant pathway is critical for ensuring that we have clear, and streamlined process for major projects, including housing developments in Western Australia"*⁶

However, analysis of the data shows that the significant development pathway is not achieving these objectives.

Only 44 projects have been approved through the pathway since its inception. When comparing the number of determined DAs within the DAP pathway, it is evident that the significant development pathway is being used sparingly, generating significantly less value. DAPs remain the preferred pathway for complex proposals, determining 85.85% of DAs over \$20 million until the end of 2023-24.

Part 17 DAs are not subject to a statutory timeframe, despite a key intent of the pathway being to streamline and expedite the approval process. The average processing time for determined DAs sits at 403 days.

Although the pathway can consider controversial developments that vary planning frameworks, and therefore may take longer to process and determine applications, the processing days are still significantly higher than the 120-day timeframe that has been introduced for Part 11B DAs. The timeframes are also excessive when compared to the DAP average timeframes for DAs, that sat at 149 days for 2023-24, the highest on record.

More concerning is the number of current DAs in the system that are yet to be determined. This includes 13 Part 17 DAs that were lodged before the end of 2023, when the pathway closed to new applications.

Considering the small number of determined DAs, the lengthy timeframes for their determination, and that over half of these DAs have not commenced construction, even five years post COVID-19, it can be concluded the Part 17 pathway has had a limited impact on the State's economic recovery, particularly when compared to the number and value of DAs determined by the Local Government and DAP pathways.

Regarding the rate of alignment between Local Government, the SDAU and the WAPC, there are two distinguishable trends. The WAPC has approved all determined DAs and for almost all DAs the SDAU has recommended approval. There were two instances where the SDAU provided the option of refusing an application or approving it with conditions. In both cases the WAPC chose to approve with conditions.

The Local Government referral process and the nuance of Local Government comments make it difficult to definitively determine the level of support or objection to a DAs. Regardless, Local

⁵ [Historic planning reforms cut red tape and open WA for business | Western Australian Government](#)

⁶ [Major planning reforms to accelerate housing delivery | Western Australian Government](#)

Governments broadly supported only approximately 30% of DAs. By comparison, Local Governments supported approximately 90% of DAP applications and approximately 99 per cent of all DAs determined by Local Governments are approved.⁷

Local Governments concerns often relate to the broad discretion applicable to Part 17 DAs that can vary the planning framework beyond what could be contemplated by the other development pathways, such as approving prohibited land uses and over height developments. This has led to several proposals becoming contentious, raising concerns about the potential negative impact of approved developments on local communities.

Part 11B pathway retains the capability to alter local planning schemes but introduces specific parameters for when this can occur. Given that only one Part 11B DA has been determined so far, it is not possible to evaluate the impact of these modified provisions.

One of the stated aims of Part 11B pathway is to assist with boosting housing supply to support the National Planning Reform Blueprint.⁸ However only one 11B DA has been approved to date, despite this pathway being operational since 1 March 2024. Further, when reviewing lodged but undetermined Part 11B DAs, only six of these have a residential component that collectively account for a total of 238 dwellings, if approved and constructed. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Part 11B pathway has had no discernible positive impact on the delivery of housing in Western Australia to date.

The Part 17 pathway has approved several mixed-use and residential developments, accounting for approximately 2,463 dwellings. While this is a positive outcome from a housing delivery perspective, this represents less than 3% of the roughly 90,000 total dwellings approved in WA from July 2020 to January 2025.⁹ Furthermore, of the 2,463 dwellings approved, only 282 have commenced construction, with only 63 of these completed. There are also 1,308 potential dwellings that could be approved in undetermined Part 17 DAs.

Conclusion

Analysis of the significant development pathway reveals that it is used infrequently and does not process applications efficiently, contrary to its intended purpose. The DAP system determined a significantly greater number of complex DAs in a timelier manner. Additionally, the pathway's other goals, such as driving economic recovery (Part 17) and aiding housing supply (Part 11B), have not been met.

The pathway has only processed 44 projects in total. Although it has approved several mixed-use developments with residential components, it has not had a tangible impact on housing delivery, specifically compared to the DAP and Local Government pathways.

⁷ [WALGA's Local Government Performance Monitoring Project and DAP Monitoring Project](#)

⁸ [National Planning Reform Blueprint | Treasury.gov.au](#)

⁹ [ABS data: Building Permit approvals July 2020 to January 2025](#)

4.0 Detailed Findings

4.1 Significant Development Applications

Figure 1 below, shows the number of applications by determination type. A total of 44 projects have been determined via this pathway to date. All determinations relate to Part 17 applications, except for one Part 11B DA that was determined in March 2025.

2023-24 recorded the highest number of DAs and determinations at 12 and 21 respectively, with all other years determining fewer than 10 DAs. 2024-25 includes data up until 1 April 2025 and additional applications may be determined prior to the end of this financial year. Given only 6 DAs have been determined to date, a greater total than the previous financial years would be unlikely.

Five development applications were withdrawn from the pathway and are not included in the data.

No specific trends have been identified, given the pathway has been operational for a short timeframe and has only determined a small number of projects.

Figure 1 - Number of Determinations by Application Type

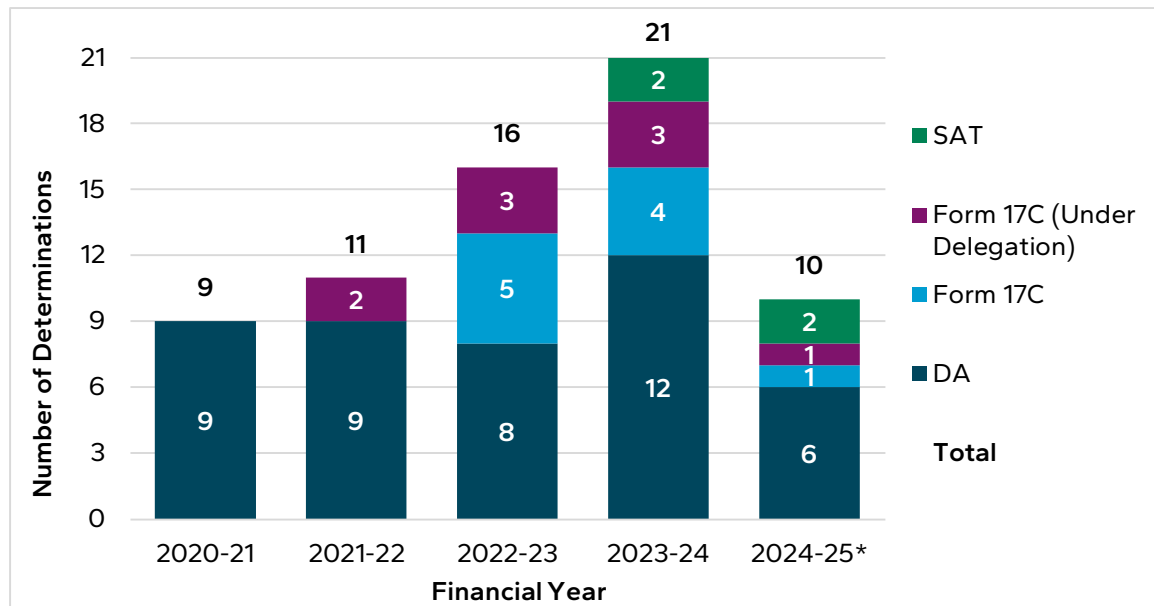


Figure 2 shows that Local Governments continue to determine the vast majority of DAs, while the DAP system remains the preferred pathway for significant development proposals.

This Figure uses data collected from WALGA's Performance Monitoring Project, and WALGA's DAP data collection. WALGA's Performance Monitoring Project currently collects data from 49 Local Governments representing approximately 92% of Western Australia's population and 94% of the State's total population growth. This analysis does not include 2024-25 as DAP or Local Government data for this year have not been collected to date.

As the figure identifies, Local Governments process the overwhelming majority to DAs given there is an entry cost threshold for the other pathways, being \$2 million for DAPs and \$5 (regional) or \$20 (metropolitan) million for the significant development pathway.

Figure 2 - Number of DA Determinations by Assessment Pathway (2020-21 / 2023-24)

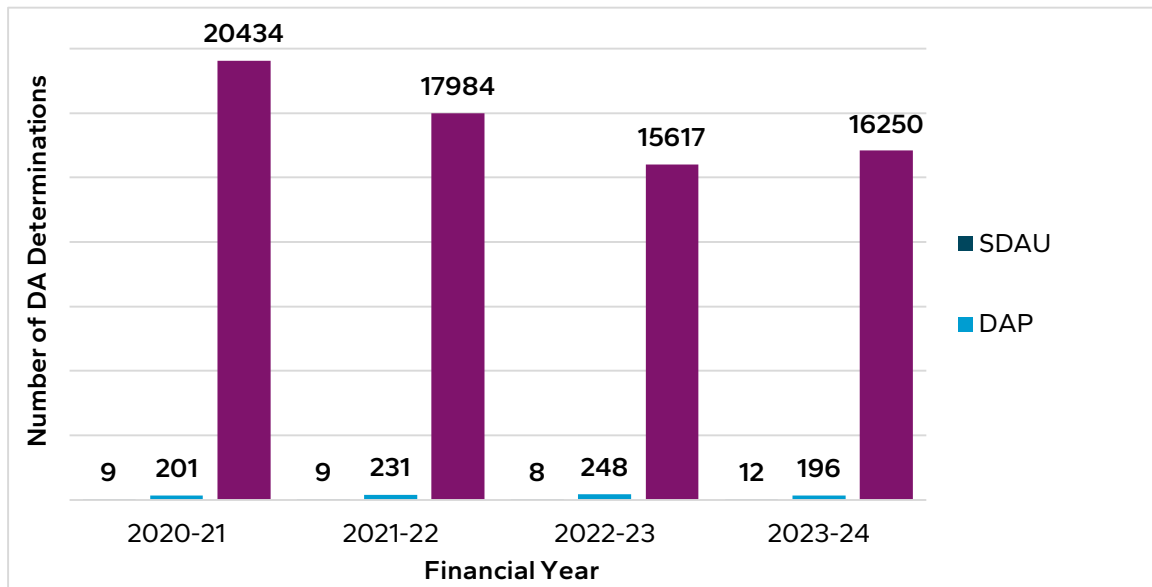


Figure 3, which compares the number of DAs per financial year (up to 2023-24) valued at greater than \$20 million determined under the State development pathways shows the DAP pathway is clearly the preferred choice, accounting for over 80% of DAs within this cost range for each financial year.

Interestingly, this percentage has remained consistent across all four financial years, indicating the significant development pathway has not gained in popularity over its existence.

Although the figure only includes data up until the end of 2023-24 and Part 11B only became operational on 1 March 2024, with only one determined Part 11B DA and 13 current Part 11B DAs, it appears that the permanent pathway has not become a more attractive option for proponents.

Proponent feedback to Local Governments reinforces this finding, with proponents expressing a preference for the Local Government pathway or DAPs over the significant development pathway due to familiar, straightforward processes that allow for a higher level of collaboration and engagement between Local Government assessing officers and proponents

Figure 3 - DA Determinations through State Assessment Pathways over \$20m (2020-21 / 2023-24)

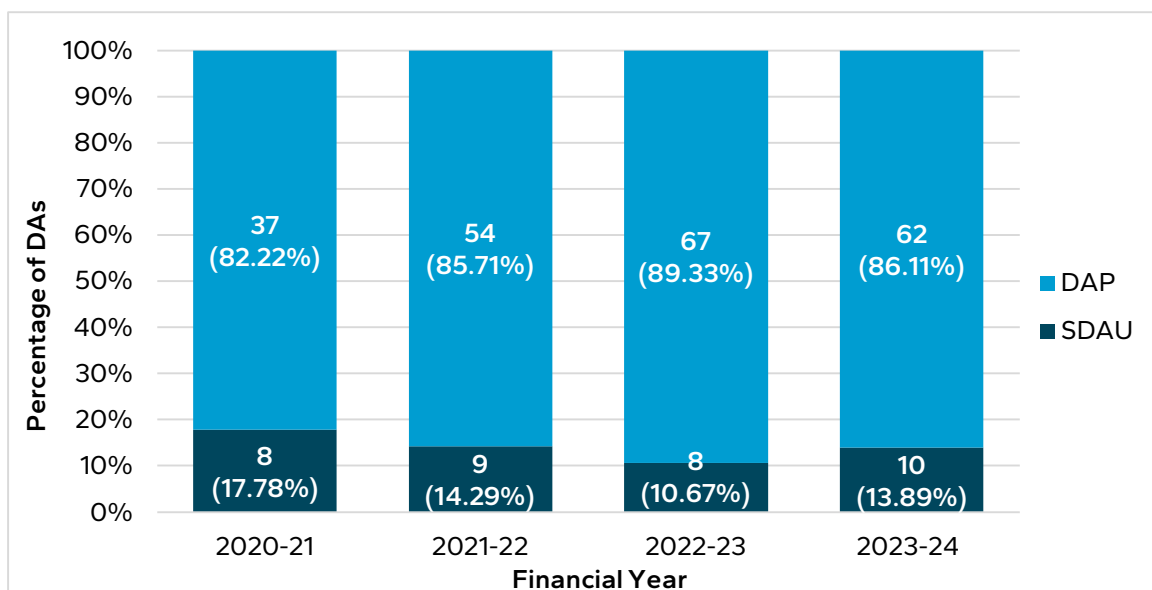


Figure 4 examines the undetermined applications currently in the system, split into Part 17 and Part 11B applications and identifies the status these applications.

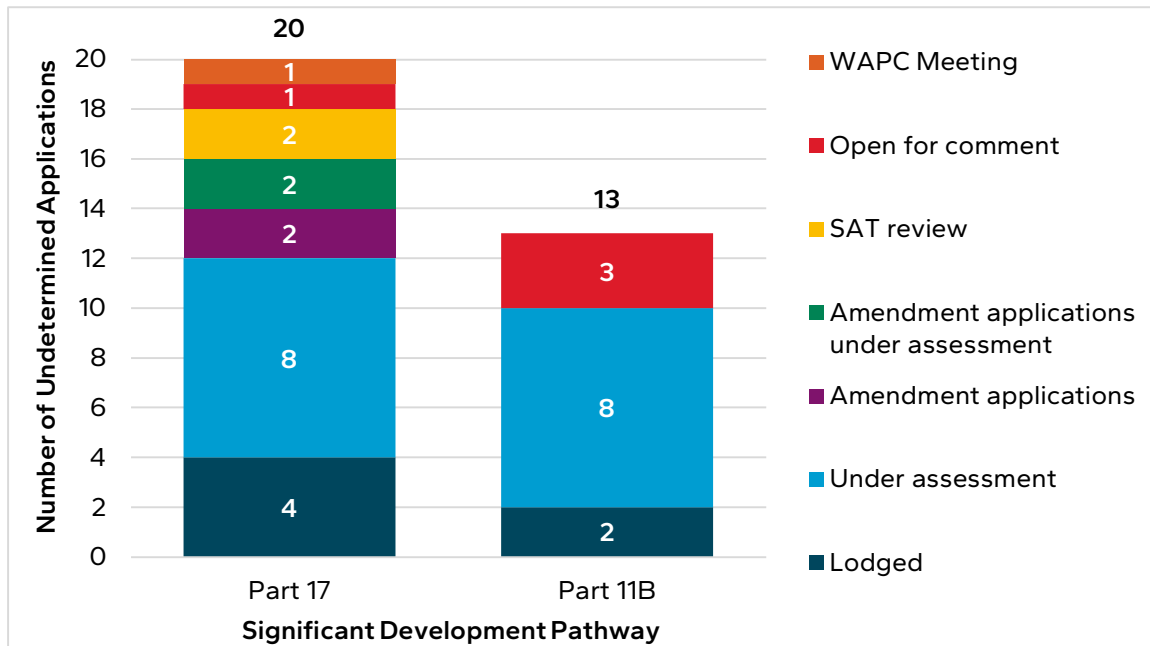
There are 33 current applications, 20 applications for Part 17 and 13 current Part 11B DAs. Among the Part 17 applications, there are 13 DAs. This means 13 projects were submitted through the Part 17 pathway before it closed to new DAs at the end of 2023 and remain undetermined over a year later.

Six DAs, including four Part 17 DAs, are still at the application lodged stage, meaning they are yet to progress to public consultation.

When considering amended DAs (Form 17C), 45% of DAs have sought or currently seeking an amendment and six DAs have sought multiple amendments. This is unsurprising given the pathway is intended to process complex DAs that are often subject to multiple refinements and adjustments.

In relation to SAT applications, six DAs (13.6% of determined DAs) have been appealed to SAT to reconsider approved conditions. Four DAs have been reconsidered by WAPC and two are still with SAT for final determination. The remaining two DAs are currently with SDAU for reconsideration

Figure 4 - Undetermined Applications by Status Type



4.2 Significant Development Application Decisions

The WAPC has approved all Part 17 DAs. The one Part 11B DA that has been determined was approved by the SPC, a subcommittee of the WAPC.

Almost all applications were recommended for approval by the SDAU. There were two instances where the SDAU provided the WAPC the option of refusing a DA or approving it with conditions. In both cases the WAPC chose the latter option.

While the SDAU recommendation and WAPC decision are important, the comments and recommendation of the Local Government is another important indicator as to the effectiveness of the pathway and the value of the decisions.

The Local Government referral process and detailed comments provided by Local Government make it difficult to identify if Local Governments clearly support or do not support a DA.

Local Government comment sometimes provided objection or support for specific elements of a DA or recommend elements of the DA be modified. Further, DAs are often modified following Local Government official referrals comments and subsequent engagement with Local Government has varied.

Regardless, Local Governments broadly supported only approximately 30% of DAs. By comparison, Local Governments supported approximately 90% of DAP applications and approximately 99 per cent of all DAs determined by Local Governments are approved.¹⁰

As Part 17 DAs have largely unfettered discretion to vary planning frameworks Local Government comments often objected to proposed variations to local planning schemes, specifically the consideration of prohibited land uses or significant variations to height limits. Local Government comments often noted that DAs were pre-emptively approving developments rather than following orderly and proper planning process.

It is acknowledged that Part 11B limits the extent of discretion and introduces specific parameters for when local planning frameworks can be varied. Given that only one Part 11B DA has been determined so far, it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these modified provisions.

WAPC also approved 10 Form 17C amendment applications, with another 9 Form 17C amendment applications approved under delegation by officers at DPLH.

4.3 Significant Development Application Decision-Making Timeframes

Figure 5 shows the average time taken to determine an application via application type. Figure 6 shows the average time taken to determine a DA by financial year.

There has been an increase in the time taken to determine a DA since the inception of the pathway and for the last three years DAs have taken over 500 days to determine.

Part 17 DAs are not subject to a statutory timeframe. Applications may logically take a significant time to process as the pathway caters for contentious applications, that can vary planning frameworks beyond what is allowed by the Local Government or DAP pathways. Given this, applications are required to be robustly assessed by the SDAU, resulting in often lengthy and comprehensive reports

However, these timeframes are excessive, particularly when compared to the DAP average timeframes for DAs that sat at 149 days for 2023-24, the highest on record.

These timeframes are also substantially greater than the 120-days statutory timeframe allocated for Part 11B DAs or the 60 (no advertising) or 90 days (advertising) statutory timeframes for DAs determined by DAPs or Local Governments, acknowledging these include 'stop the clock' provisions.

More critically, the excessive timeframes fail to meet a key intent of the pathway, that being to provide streamlined and expedited approvals for significant developments.

Concerningly, 13 current Part 17 DAs that were lodged before the end of 2023 are still undetermined.

¹⁰ [WALGA's Local Government Performance Monitoring Project and DAP Monitoring Project](#)

Part 11B applications have a 120-day statutory timeframe, excluding the holiday period days or an agreed extension of time between the applicant and the WAPC (referred to as 'stop the clock'). Part 11B applications are also required to go through a mandatory pre-lodgement process that is not included in the statutory timeframe.

To align with WALGA's reporting on the DAP system and for ease of data collection, timeframes have been calculated as total calendar days by comparing the lodgement date and determination date of a DA. As per this calculation the one determined Part 11B DA took 161 days to process. The SPC agenda item noted that this DA took 130 processing days with agreed extensions.

Figure 5 - Average Days by Application Type

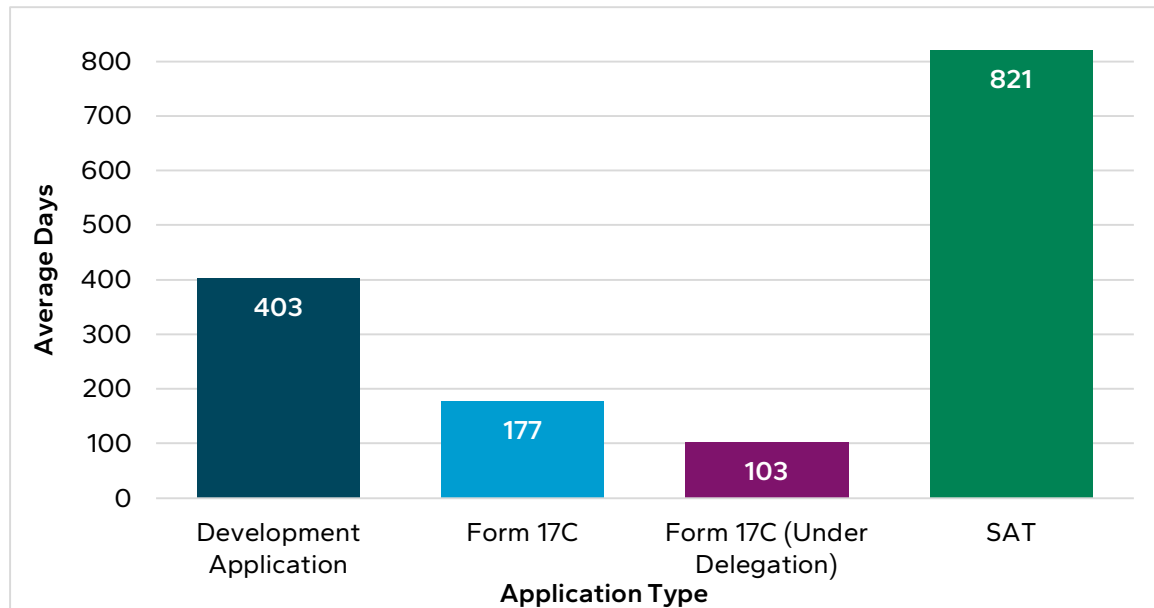


Figure 6 - Average Days to Determine DAs by Financial Year

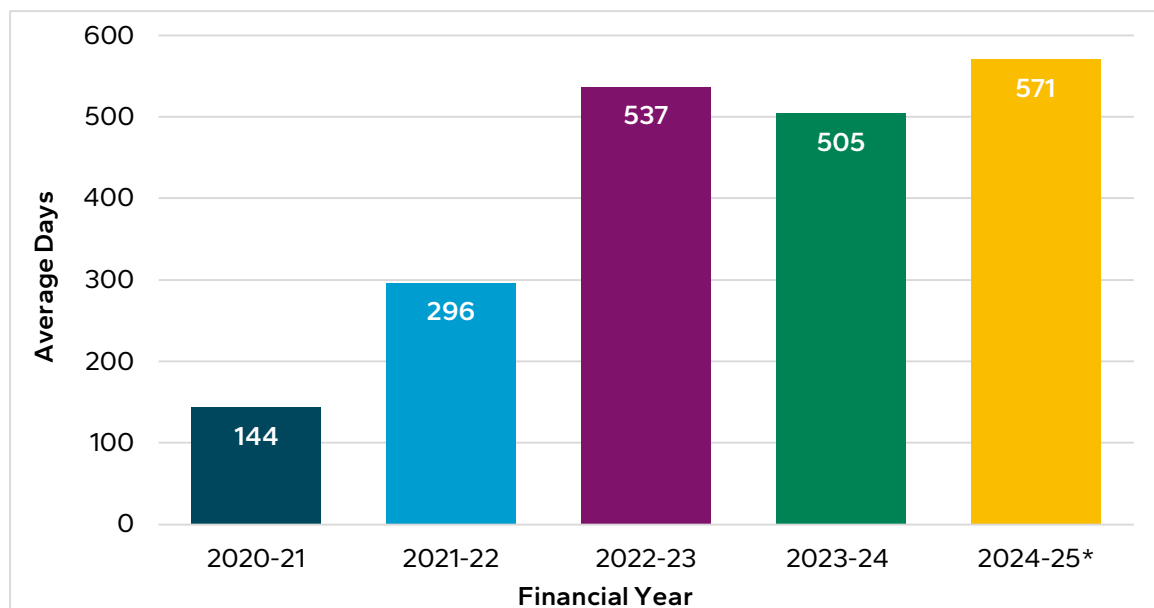


Figure 7 below shows the proportion of DA determination times in 100-day increments. Concerningly, almost half the DAs took greater than 300 days to determine, with just over 30% of DAs taking over 500 days.

Three DAs took over 1000 days to determine, with the longest being 1091 days.

Figure 8 includes DAs valued at \$20 million or greater from 2020-21 to 2023-24, comparing the significant development pathways with the DAP system. The DAP system demonstrates greater efficiency, processing 89% of these DAs in under 200 days, whereas only 34% of DAs in the significant development pathway were processed within this period.

Figure 7 - DA Timeliness by 100 Day Increments

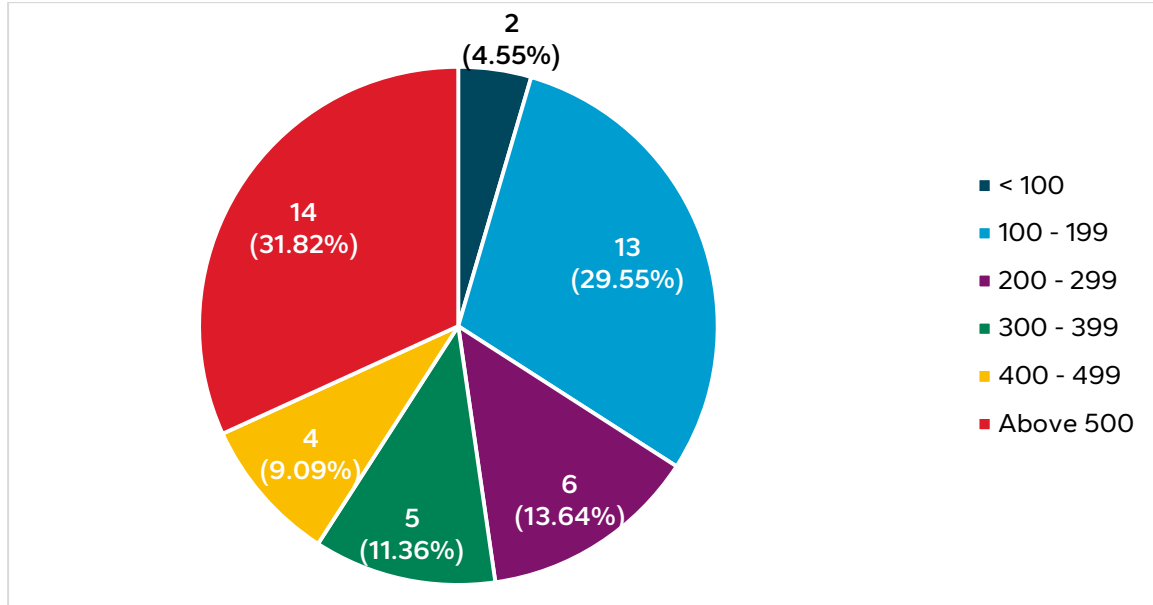


Figure 8 - DA Timeliness through State Assessment Pathways over \$20m (2020-21 / 2023-24)

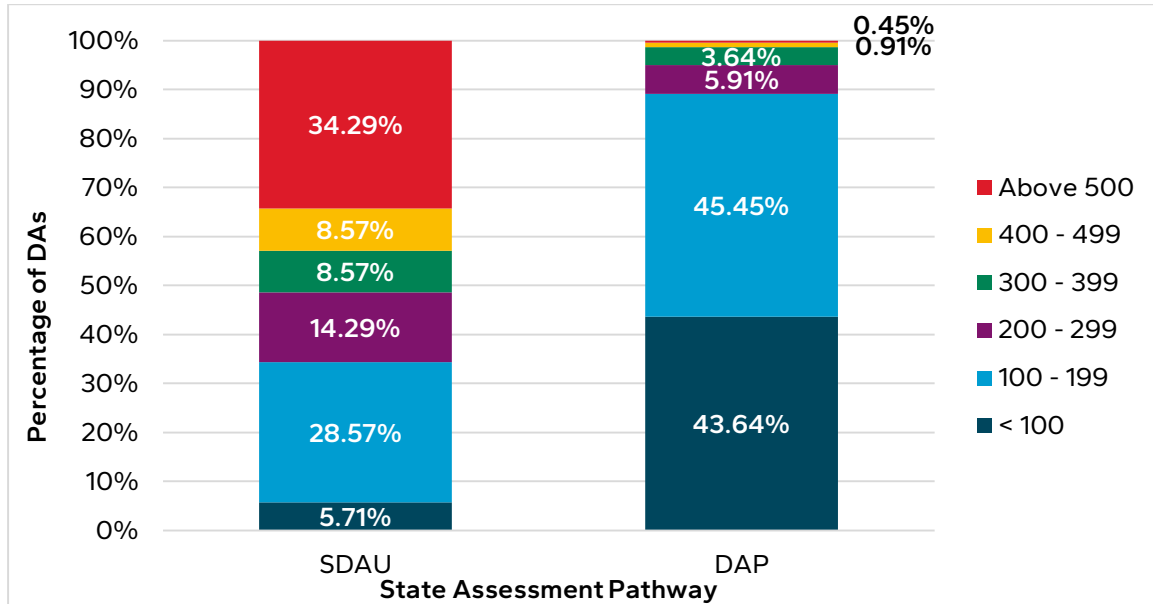


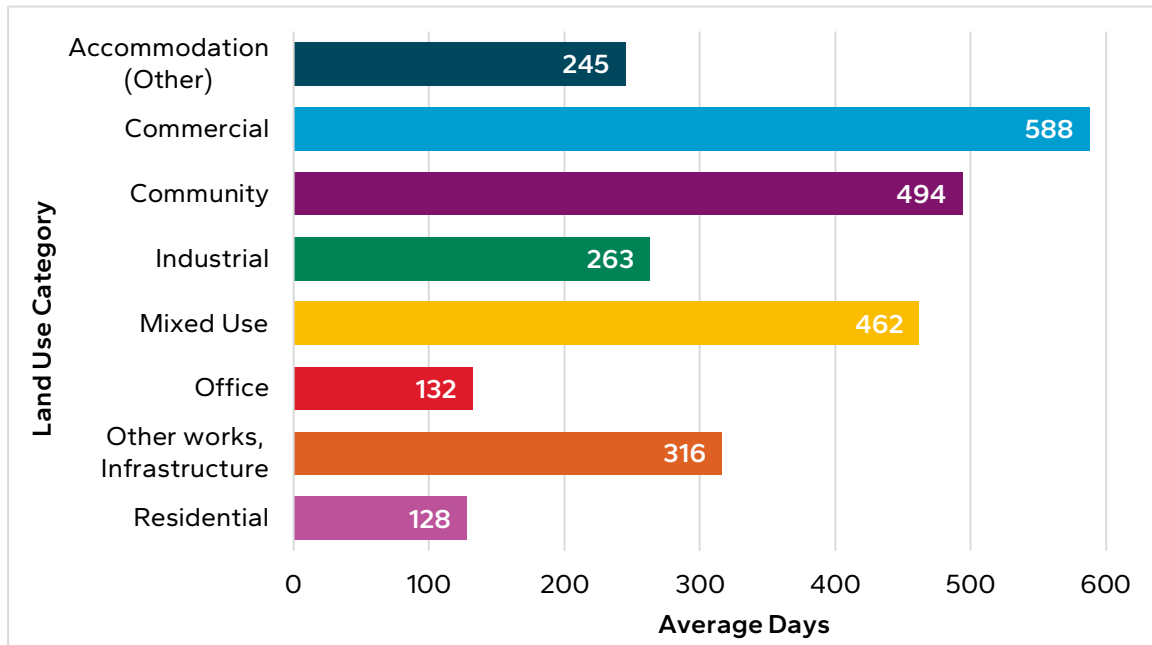
Figure 9 provides a breakdown for the average days to determine an application for each applicable development use category. It is difficult to identify any trends given the overall low number of DAs determined by this pathway. By way of example, the office and residential land use categories only processed one DA each.

The commercial and community categories take the longest to process on average. There were only eight determined DAs across both these categories. Three of these DAs took over 800 days to process, increasing average timeframes.

Unsurprisingly the mixed-use category, the largest category with a total of 20 determined DAs, recorded the third highest average days at 462 days.

Commercial and mixed-use DAs also recorded high average processing days per category in the DAP system. However, these average processing timeframes sat at 181 days and 158 days respectively for 2023-24, substantially less than the significant development pathway timeframes for these categories.

Figure 9 - Average Days to Determine DAs by Land Use Category



4.4 Significant Development Applications and Development Outcomes

Figure 10 shows the DAs breakdown between the metropolitan and regional areas for determined and undetermined DAs. Although most determined DAs are situated in the metropolitan area, the number and proportion of undetermined DAs are increasing in regional areas.

Three of the 5 determined regional DAs relate to gas plants. Undetermined regional DAs include a wider range of developments incorporating tourism, housing and commercial land uses.

Determined metropolitan DAs predominately included mixed-use developments. Residential apartments, including as part of mixed-use developments, were also a key feature of undetermined DAs in the metropolitan area.

Figure 10 - Metropolitan v Regional (Determined and Undetermined DAs)

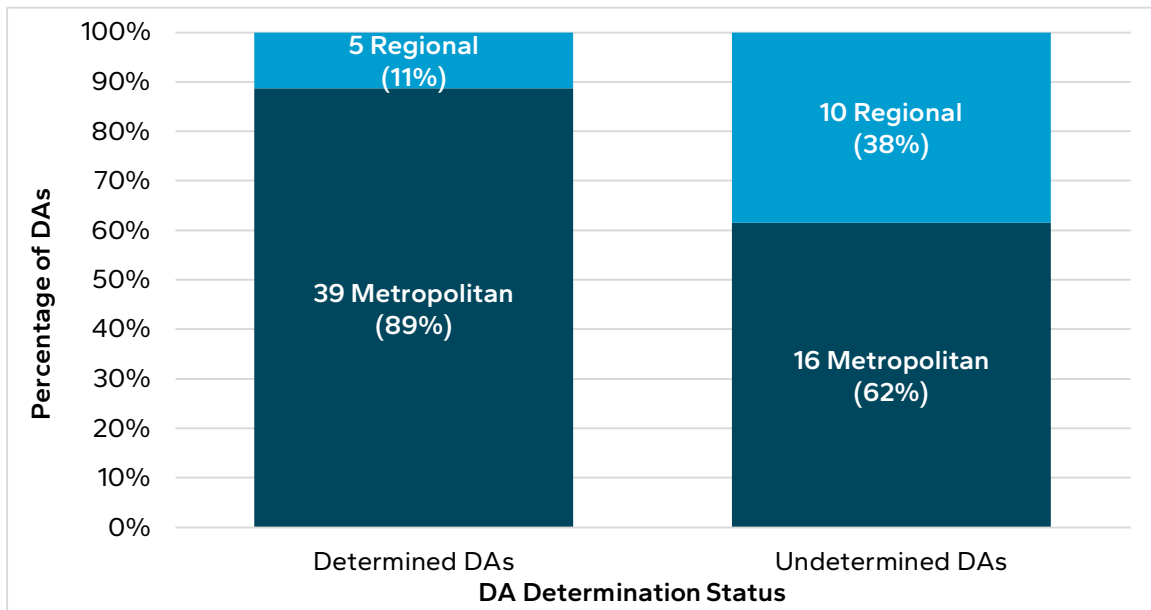
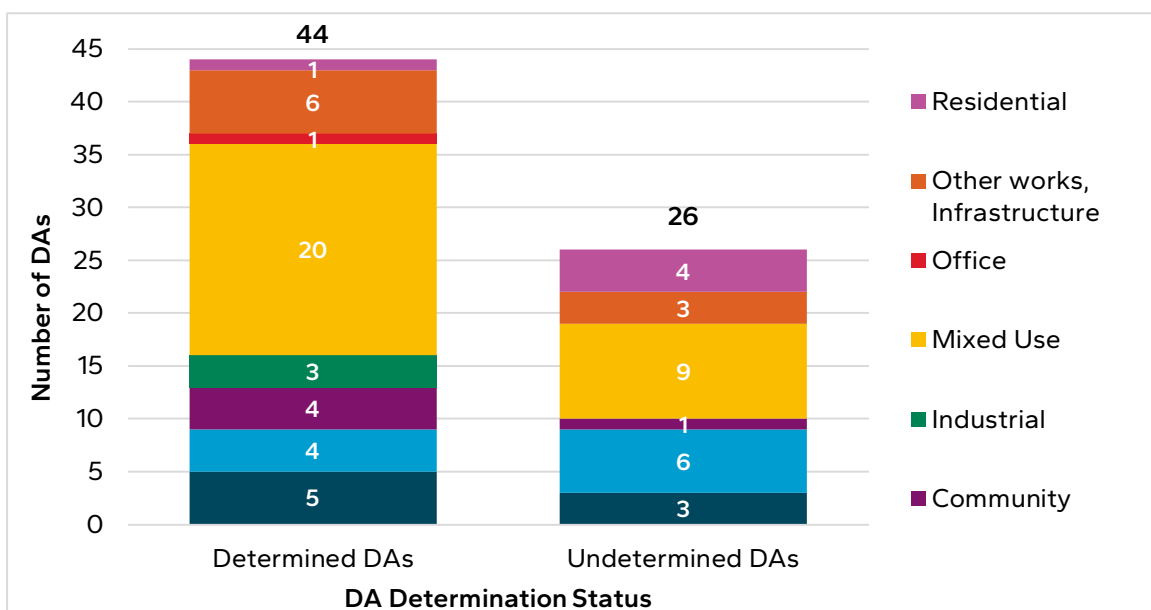


Figure 11 shows the number of determinations per development category for determined and undetermined DAs. The mixed-use development category is clearly the largest development category, accounting for 41% of all determined and undetermined DAs.

Mixed-use applications include a range of development outcomes and land uses. However, there was an obvious residential component to most of these applications, with 17 DAs, representing 85% of all determined mixed-use DAs, containing multiple dwellings.

Interestingly, the number of mixed-use DAs in the DAP system has declined slightly since 2021-22. According to the latest DAP data, 25 mixed-use DAs were determined by DAPs in 2022-23 and 2023-24 combined. Despite this decrease, these DAs still accounted for 71% of all mixed-use DAs in these two years, as the significant development pathway determined only 10 mixed-use DAs in this same timeframe (five each year).

Figure 11 - Development Use Categories (Determined and Undetermined DAs)



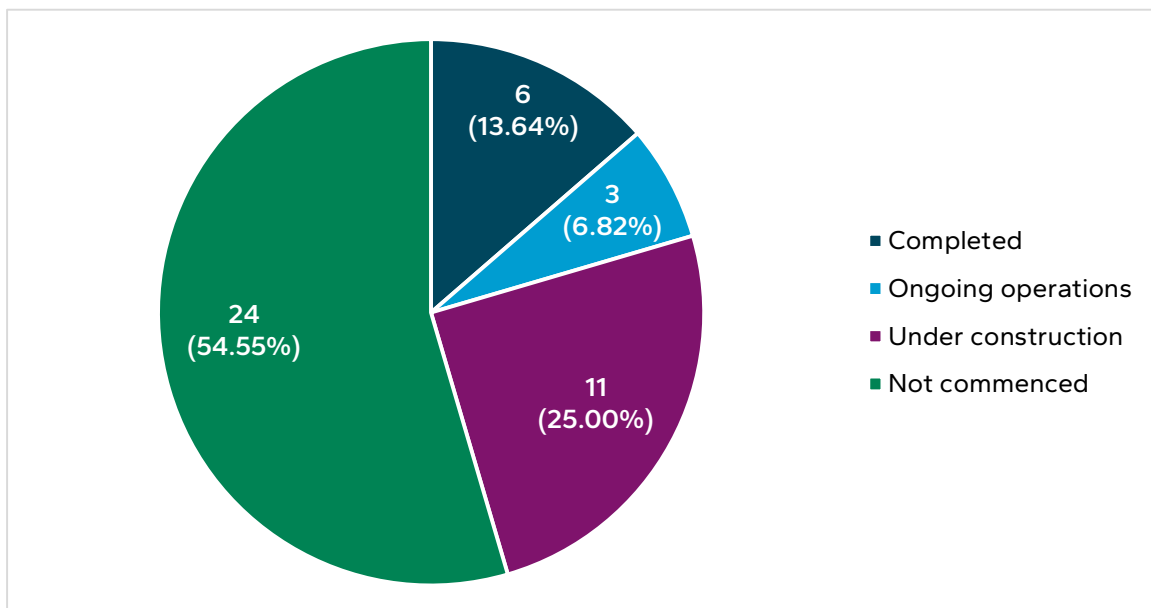
One of the stated key purposes of the Part 17 pathway was to provide for development that could be approved and constructed quickly to stimulate the economy during COVID-19. It was intended that projects would be approved and commence construction and associated activities within 18-months (end 2021) or soon as possible after the pathway was introduced. The need for the projects to be 'shovel-ready' was a requirement for consideration in the Part 17 pathway. This was reflected in the pathway being time-limited and restrictions on the proponents' ability to extend development approvals.¹¹

By the end of 2021-22, only 18 DAs had been determined by the pathway, and as demonstrated in the previous section, were not approved in a timely manner. Further, as demonstrated in Figure 12, over half of all determined DAs have not commenced construction to date.

Regardless, given it has been five years since COVID-19, it is unclear what benefit the 20 projects that have proceeded have provided to the economic recovery of the State, specifically in comparison to other approval pathways.

This also demonstrates that planning processes, while important, have limited influence on actual on-ground development and that other economic drivers such as construction costs, labour shortages, supply constraints and the presence of enabling infrastructure play more critical roles.

Figure 12 - Stage of Building Completion for DA Determinations



The Part 11B pathway was also intended to assist with boosting housing supply to support the National Planning Reform Blueprint.¹² The 11B pathway is yet to deliver on this, given only one DA has been approved under this pathway.

The Part 17 pathway has approved several mixed-use and residential developments, accounting for approximately 2,463 dwellings, mostly multiple dwellings. This is a positive step, but only accounts for a small fraction (2.78%) of the approximately 90,000 dwellings approved from July 2020 to January 2025.¹³ WALGA's review of commenced and completed projects found that of the 2,463 dwellings approved, only 282 have commenced construction, and only 63 of these having been completed.

¹¹[Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020 Explanatory Memorandum](#)

¹²[National Planning Reform Blueprint | Treasury.gov.au](#)

¹³[ABS data: Building Permit approvals July 2020 to January 2025](#)

Another 1546 dwellings or more dwellings could be approved through the pathway as there are 12 Part 17 and Part 11B undetermined DAs that incorporate residential component. Specifically, the Part 11B pathway has six undetermined DAs with residential component accounting for a total of 238 dwellings if approved. Interestingly, one Part 17 DA proposes 1040 multiple dwellings, accounting for the bulk of the proposed dwellings.

The pathway has also approved two DAs for student accommodation and three DAs for aged care facilities, that will accommodate 809 and 330 beds respectively.

4.5 Significant Development Application Costs

Figure 13 shows the proportional value of DAs per financial year in increments. Given the limited timeframe of the pathway, the small number of DAs and the range of project values, the average cost has fluctuated, and no obvious trends can be identified.

There have been some projects approved by the pathway that have been of very high value, including 5 DAs worth more than \$250 million.

These high valued projects include the St John of God Hospital expansion, the Fremantle Traffic Bridge, a gas processing facility and associated workers accommodation in Mount Horner and shopping centre expansions at Westfield Booragoon and the Cockburn Gateway Shopping Centre, with this Cockburn DA valued at over \$1 billion.

Figure 13 - Proportional DA Value by Financial Year

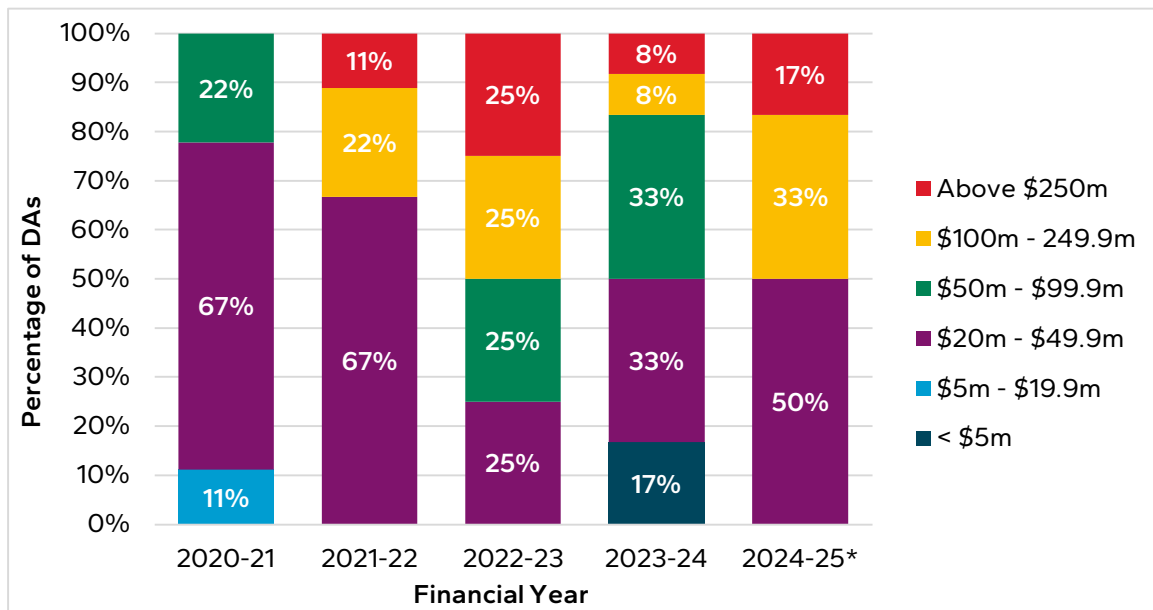
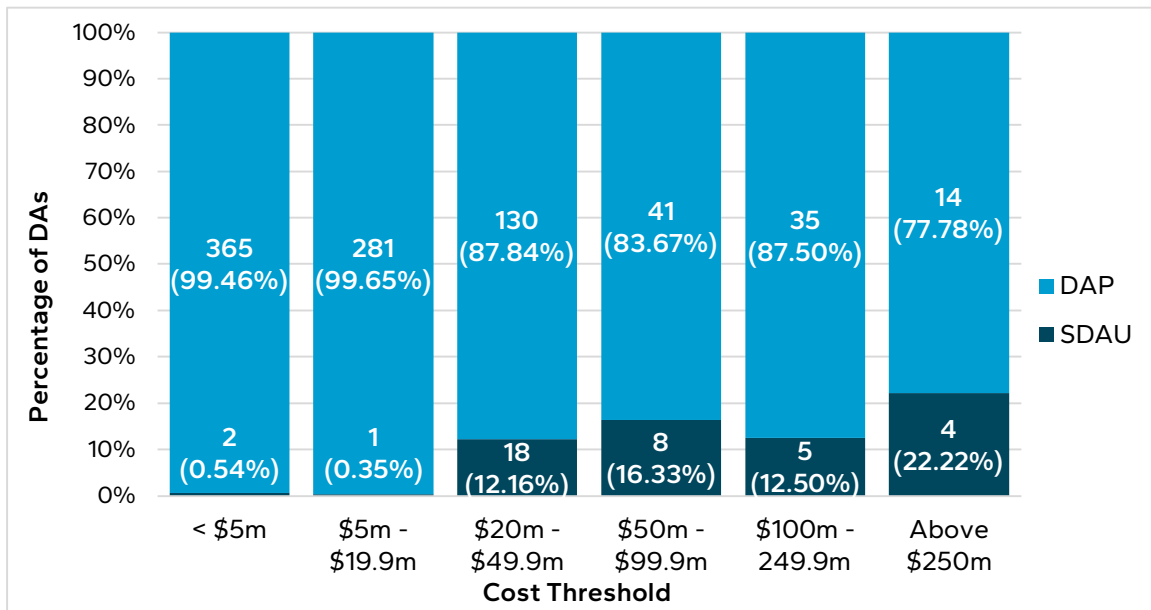


Figure 14 compares the number of projects to the end of 2023-24 that have progressed through the significant development pathway compared to the DAP system by cost thresholds. Given project thresholds for the significant development pathway, DAPs unsurprisingly determined the vast majority of DAs that are valued at less than \$20 million.

Notably, when looking at projects valued at \$20 million or greater, it is evident that the DAP system continues to determine the overwhelming majority of these high-cost DAs, processing 85.85% of these projects. This figure reiterates that the significant development pathway is used infrequently and that DAPs are the preferred pathway for complex applications.

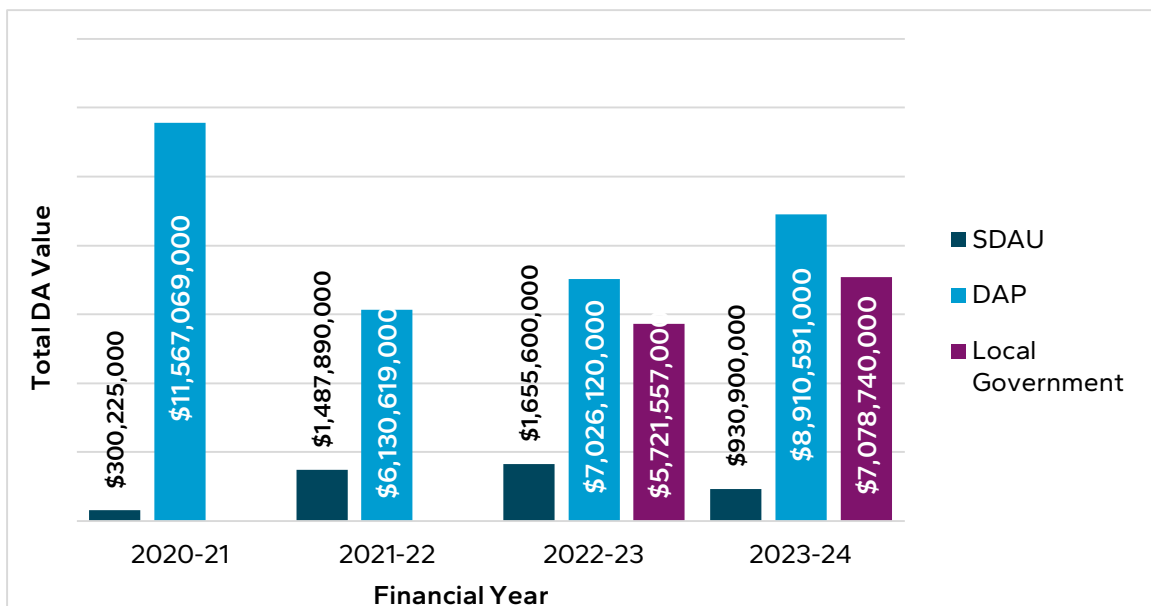
Figure 14 - DA Value of State Government Pathways by Cost Thresholds (2020-21 / 2023-24)



When comparing the value of DAs determined across the different pathways, unsurprisingly, Figure 15 demonstrates the DAP system has the highest value of determinations. This figure also includes the value of all DAs determined by the Local Government pathway for 2022-23 and 2023-24.¹⁴

Direct comparisons between the different pathways are challenging since they each have different entry cost thresholds. Regardless, it does illustrate that both the DAP, particularly in 2020-21, and the Local Government pathway played significantly greater roles in stimulating the economy during and post COVID-19 than the significant development pathways.

Figure 15 - Value of DA Determinations (2020-21 / 2023-24)



¹⁴ [WALGA's Performance Monitoring Project](#)

Appendix 1 – Development Use Categories

Accommodation (Other)	Aged Care	Serviced Apartments
	Holiday - Tourist Accommodation	Workers Accommodation
	Hotel	
Commercial	Alcohol Licenced Premise (Pub-Bar)	Hired Goods
	Beauty Studios	Restaurant
	Car Wash	Retail
	Cinema	Shopping Centres
	Fast Food	Showroom
	Fuel Filling Station	Vehicle Sales
Community	Airport, Railway, Bus Station	Public Open Space
	Family Day Care	School
	Health - Medical Facility	Sporting Facility
	Library	Veterinary Hospital
	Places Of Worship	
Industrial	Food Production Facility- Abattoir - Mill	Recycling Facility
	Light Industrial	Vehicle Repairs & Dismantling
	Mining Operation	Workshops
	Power Station	
Mixed Use	Any development with multiple components that fall into different development categories	
Office	Office	Television Studio
	Research And Development And Laboratory Facilities	
Other Works, Infrastructure	Additions And Alterations	Miscellaneous Works
	Earthworks	Outbuilding
	Infrastructure Works - Substation - Water Corp Facility etc	Renewable Energy Facility
	Landfill	Vehicle Parking
Residential	Residential Accommodation	
Warehouse, Storage and Distribution	Distribution Facility	Transport Depot
	Storage	Warehousing