

# SARA Key Performance Indicators and Customer Satisfaction Survey Report 2021-2022

December 2022

The Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning connects industries, businesses, communities and government (at all levels) to leverage regions' strengths to generate sustainable and enduring economic growth that supports well-planned, inclusive and resilient communities.

## Copyright

This publication is protected by the Copyright Act 1968.

## Creative Commons licence



This work, except as identified below, is licensed by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial-No Derivative Works (CC BY-NC-ND) 4.0 Australia licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit [creativecommons.org.au](https://creativecommons.org.au)

You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this publication as long as you attribute it as follows:

© State of Queensland, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, December 2022.

Third party material that is not licensed under a Creative Commons licence is referenced within this document. All content not licensed under a Creative Commons licence is all rights reserved. Please contact the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning /the copyright owner if you wish to use this material.

## Translating and interpreting service



If you have difficulty understanding a document and need an interpreter, we provide access to a translating and interpreting service. You will not be charged for this service. To contact the Translating and Interpreting Service, telephone 131 450 and ask them to telephone the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning on +61 7 3328 4811.

## Disclaimer

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, to the extent permitted by law, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses (including direct and indirect loss), damages and costs incurred as a result of decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

Any references to legislation are not an interpretation of the law. They are to be used as a guide only. The information in this publication is general and does not take into account individual circumstances or situations. Where appropriate, independent legal advice should be sought.

Copies of this publication are available on our website at [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au) and further copies are available upon request.

## Contact us

{ +61 7 3328 4811 or 13 QGOV (13 74 68)  
@ [info@dsdmip.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@dsdmip.qld.gov.au)  
🌐 [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au)  
✉ PO Box 15009, City East, Queensland 4002  
🏠 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000

# Contents

Introduction .....	2
At a glance – SARA’s activity 2021-22 .....	3
KPIs – SARA’s performance 2021-22 .....	4
Information requests .....	4
Advice .....	5
Decision timeframes .....	6
Post-decision changes – minor change, other change and extension applications .....	7
Appeals .....	9
Fast Track5 .....	9
Customer satisfaction survey – results 2021-22 .....	10
Customer satisfaction KPI results .....	10
Other customer satisfaction survey results .....	10
Continual improvement .....	11

# Introduction

The State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) was established in July 2013 to deliver a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to the state's assessment of development applications. SARA is administered by the state's planning portfolio which is located within the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

Operational challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic continued this financial year, with resourcing levels significantly impacted by staff absences due to illness or home isolation requirements. Additionally, the summer floods in South-East Queensland also contributed to service issues in the early part of the year.

Despite the pandemic and weather event, SARA received and decided a higher volume of applications than in the previous year, with an 18% increase in referral agency responses alone.

SARA continues to respond and adapt to the evolving challenges that are faced by Queenslanders and continues to perform as one of the most efficient and effective state assessment entities in the country.

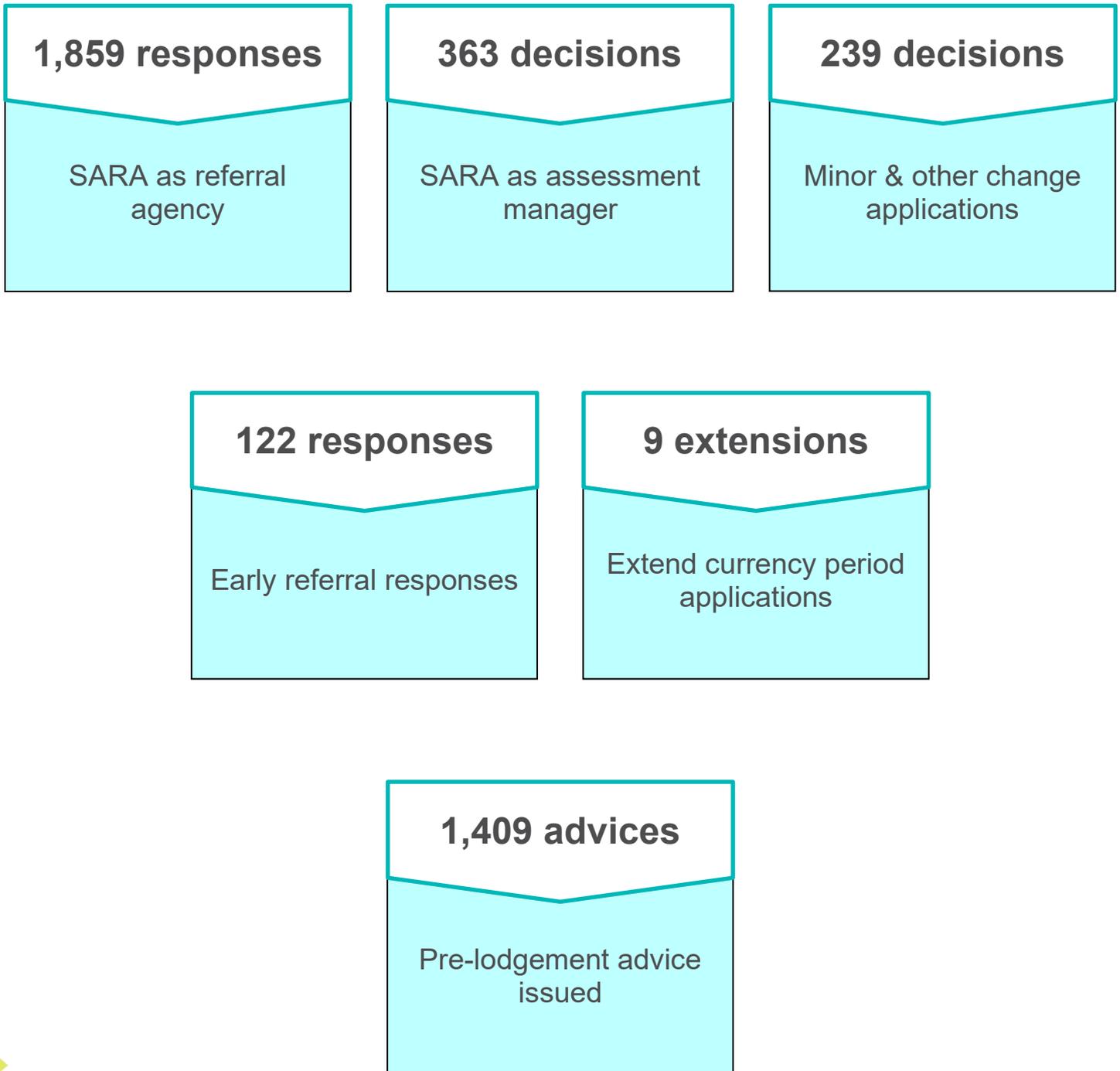
SARA's performance and improvement culture are measured against a suite of adopted key performance indicators (KPIs) and an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey, reported at the end of each financial year. This informs ongoing improvement and drives organisational change to deliver efficiency and best practice in the state's development assessment services.

SARA's KPIs for the 2021–2022 financial year focus on the key areas of:

- information requests
- overall assessment timeframes
- post-decision assessment timeframes
- FastTrack5 assessment timeframes
- appeals
- customer satisfaction.

# At a glance – SARA’s activity 2021-22

In the 2021-2022 financial year, SARA issued a total of 2,592 decisions and responses under the *Planning Act 2016* (the Planning Act).



# KPIs – SARA’s performance 2021-22

The following sections provide a snapshot of SARA’s performance against the KPIs adopted for the 2021-22 financial year. The KPIs cover the core areas of customer satisfaction, assessment timeframes, information requests, pre-lodgement processes and appeals.

The KPIs are measured against:

- » **quantitative targets**, using data sourced from SARA’s online development application lodgement system MyDAS2
- » **qualitative targets**, using data sourced from the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

## Information requests

Wherever possible, SARA seeks to minimise information requests. Where an information request is issued, it highlights deficiencies in the information submitted with the application. Through the pre-lodgement process and improved advice to applicants, SARA is working to improve the quality of application material.

There are four KPIs associated with information requests: two consider whether or not SARA issued an information request and two relate to how promptly SARA issued the information request when one was required.

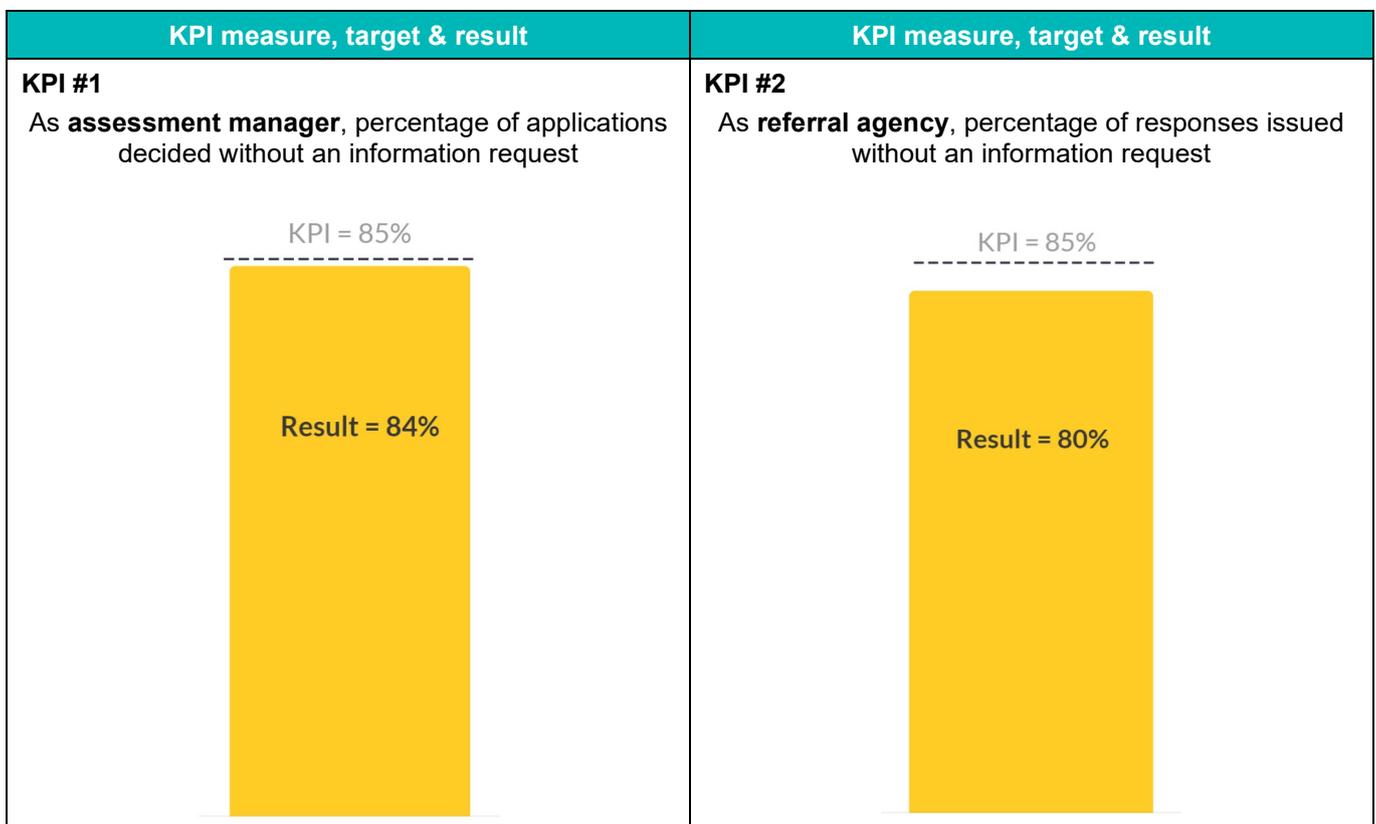
In 2021-22 SARA issued:

- » 77 information requests as assessment manager
- » 707 information requests as referral agency.

In terms of whether an information request was issued, SARA did not achieve KPI #1 or KPI #2. However, SARA did successfully reduce the proportion of information requests issued compared with the previous year where the result was 82% for KPI #1 and 75% for KPI #2.

SARA achieved the timeframes for KPI #3 and KPI #4, which is the same as the previous year.

SARA met all statutory timeframes associate with information requests (KPI #3 and KPI #4).







## Decision timeframes

In 2021-22 SARA issued:

- » 363 decisions as assessment manager
- » 1,859 referral agency responses
- » seven decisions on representations as assessment manager
- » 94 decisions on representations as referral agency.

In its role as assessment manager, SARA did not meet the KPI targets associated with issuing decisions (KPI #7) or assessing change representations (KPI #9). In the previous year, SARA reported 22 business days for KPI #7 and 7 business days for KPI #9. Opportunities to improve on these KPI results will be a focus for the coming year.

SARA also did not meet its KPI target as referral agency for change representations (KPI #10). For the 1,859 referral agency responses issued during 2021-22, SARA did meet the target of 20 business days for KPI #8.

SARA issued all decisions and responses within the statutory timeframes.

KPI measure, target & result	
<p><b>KPI #7</b> As <b>assessment manager</b>, median time taken to assess an application and issue a decision</p>	<p>KPI = 22 BD Result = 25 BD Statutory timeframe is 35 BD</p>
<p><b>KPI #8</b> As <b>referral agency</b>, median time taken to assess an application and issue a response</p>	<p>KPI = 20 BD Result = 20 BD Statutory timeframe is 25 BD</p>

KPI measure, target & result	
<p><b>KPI #9</b> As <b>assessment manager</b>, median time taken to assess change representations</p>	<p>A gauge chart for KPI #9. The scale ranges from 0 BD to 20 BD. A teal segment represents the KPI target at 12 BD. A yellow segment extends to the actual result of 17 BD. A grey segment extends to the statutory timeframe of 20 BD. The text 'Result = 17 BD' is centered below the gauge. Below the gauge, it says 'Statutory timeframe is 20 BD'.</p>
<p><b>KPI #10</b> As <b>referral agency</b>, median time taken to assess change representations</p>	<p>A gauge chart for KPI #10. The scale ranges from 0 BD to 11 BD. A teal segment represents the KPI target at 10 BD. A yellow segment extends to the actual result of 11 BD. The text 'Result = 11 BD' is centered below the gauge.</p>

## Post-decision changes – minor change, other change and extension applications

An applicant may request to change their approval by making a change application. There are two types of change applications: a minor change application and an application for a change other than a minor change (other change).

SARA’s role in assessing a change application is determined by the nature of the change being requested and SARA’s role in assessing the original application.

An applicant may request to extend the currency period of their approval by making an extension application. An extension application must be made to the assessment manager for the original application before the development approval lapses.

In 2021-22 SARA assessed:

- » 30 applications (with no affected entities) for a minor change
- » four ‘other change’ applications as assessment manager
- » 89 ‘other change’ applications as referral agency
- » nine extension applications.

This year’s results show a decline in SARA’s performance against all four KPIs related to change or extension applications compared with the previous year. However, SARA successfully achieved all statutory timeframes.

KPI measure, target & result	
<p><b>KPI #11</b> As <b>responsible entity</b>, median time taken to assess a minor change application and issue a decision notice <i>Note: this KPI is limited to applications without an affected entity</i></p>	<p>KPI = 14 BD Result = 20 BD Statutory timeframe is 20 BD</p>
<p><b>KPI #12</b> As <b>assessment manager</b>, median time taken to assess an 'other change' application and issue a decision notice</p>	<p>KPI = 22 BD Result = 32 BD Statutory timeframe is 35 BD</p>
<p><b>KPI #13</b> As <b>referral agency</b>, median time taken to assess an 'other change' application and issue a referral agency response</p>	<p>KPI = 20 BD Result = 21 BD Statutory timeframe is 25 BD</p>
<p><b>KPI #14</b> As <b>assessment manager</b>, the time taken to assess and decide an extension to relevant period request</p>	<p>KPI = 7 BD Result = 10 BD Statutory timeframe is 20 BD</p>

## Appeals

Appeals under the Planning Act might be brought about if:

- » an applicant is dissatisfied with a development decision or condition
- » a submitter (someone who has made a properly made submission about a proposed development) is dissatisfied with a development decision.

The department manages a range of court proceedings under the Planning Act including those that involve SARA. These generally relate to disputes involving decisions or conditions issued by SARA including as part of the change application process. In 2021-22, 114 appeals were served on the department relating to applications where SARA has been involved with the assessment process. Of the 114 the department joined 19 of these proceedings. The reason for joining was for different reasons, including disputes against a SARA decision, response or condition.

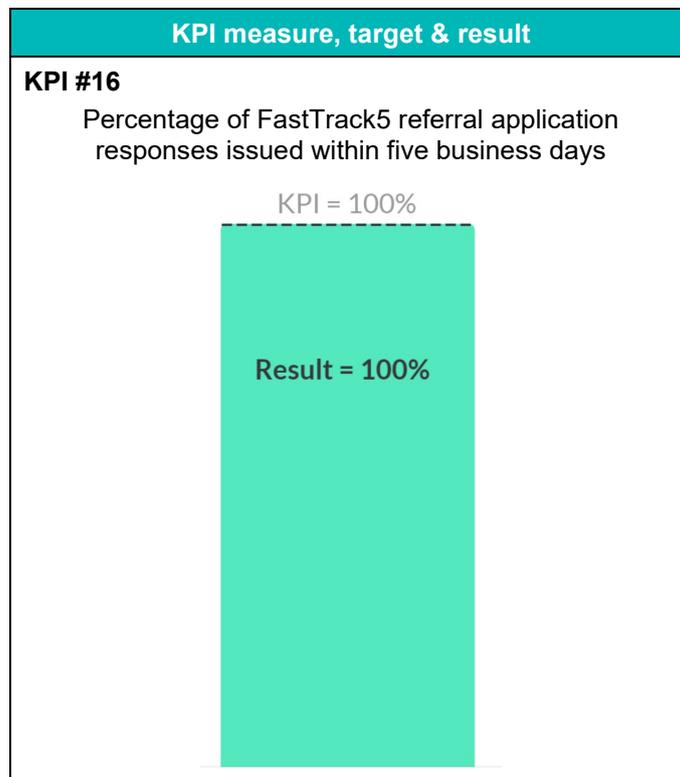
SARA successfully achieved the target for KPI #15. There is no statutory timeframe associated with this KPI.

KPI measure, target & result		
<b>KPI #15</b> Percentage of total decisions and responses appealed	KPI = <2%	Results = <1%

## Fast Track5

Certain types of low-risk development may be eligible to be assessed under SARA's FastTrack5 framework, which provides a shorter five-day assessment timeframe and reduced application fee. It is the responsibility of the applicant at the time of lodgement to nominate their application as being eligible under the FastTrack5 framework. The applicant must provide as part of their application material the necessary supporting information and FastTrack5 application fee.

SARA met the KPI target for the FastTrack5 process, improving on its result of 97% in the previous year. There is no statutory timeframe associated with this KPI.



# Customer satisfaction survey – results 2021-22

Data for qualitative KPIs is gathered annually from the SARA customer satisfaction survey. For this financial year, the survey was carried out in April 2022. This qualitative data provides a valuable insight into the experiences and satisfaction levels of SARA customers and stakeholders with the SARA process. The survey was emailed to a range of stakeholders, including MyDAS2 registered users, and 252 responses were received.

## Customer satisfaction KPI results

The SARA customer satisfaction survey invites feedback about SARA's pre-lodgement process, information requests, conditions and staff service. These qualitative responses provide valuable insight to customer experience, including opportunities for how SARA might be able to improve this in the future.

SARA did not quite meet the KPI target for overall customer satisfaction. The result is consistent with the previous year. While customer satisfaction with SARA's pre-lodgement process improved from the previous year, SARA did not achieve the KPI target. These results, and the comments associated, will be used to inform the ongoing review into SARA's engagement with customers including the pre-lodgement experience.

KPI measure	KPI target	2021-22 result
Level of customer satisfaction with overall performance as assessment manager or referral agency	80% satisfied	 79% satisfied
Level of customer satisfaction with the pre-lodgement process	90% satisfied	 75% satisfied

## Other customer satisfaction survey results

In addition to the results above that relate to SARA's KPI measures on customer satisfaction, the following provides a summary of additional results around SARA's service during the pre-lodgement and assessment processes.

Question	2021-22	2020-21
<b>Pre-lodgement advice</b>		
Pre-lodgement advice clearly communicated SARA's position, expectations and advice	51% agreed	68% agreed
<b>Information requests</b>		
Information request was clear and concise	78% agreed	70% agreed
Information request was reasonable	69% agreed	67% agreed
<b>Decision notices, concurrence responses and conditions</b>		
Conditions were reasonable	80% agreed	81% agreed
Conditions were clear and concise	81% agreed	80% agreed

Conditions included reasonable timing/timeframes for required actions	85% agreed	85% agreed
<b>Staff service</b>		
How satisfied were you with level of service provided by SARA officers?	81% agreed	83% agreed

Overall, the customer satisfaction levels throughout 2021-2022 remained mostly consistent with 2020-2021, with the exception of an improvement in information requests being clear and concise. There was a decrease in the sentiment around how clearly SARA's position, expectations and advice are communicated in pre-lodgement advice.

## Continual improvement

SARA has an ongoing commitment to continual improvement to improve its performance. Both the KPI results and the annual SARA Customer Satisfaction Survey provide valuable insights into opportunities for further refinement of SARA operations.

Each year SARA focuses on key areas to improve. These are not one-off initiatives but targeted work as part of the larger, sustained continuous improvement cycle. In 2022-2023 SARA will focus on the following three areas:

- SARA performance in responding to post approval changes through investigating the challenges with these applications
- consistency across SARA offices through the consolidation of guidance material and improving knowledge sharing and experience between SARA officers
- SARA conditions by engaging across SARA to update and streamline existing SARA conditions to ensure they are concise, contemporary and include reasonable timeframes for required actions.

Department of State Development,  
Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning  
PO Box 15009 City East Qld 4002 Australia  
Tel 13 QGOV (13 74 68)  
[info@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au)  
[www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au)  
Connect with us @GrowingQld

