



Australian Government
**National Environmental
Protection Agency**

Compliance Audit Report

**Lee Point Master-planned Urban Development,
Darwin, Northern Territory (EPBC 2015/7591)**

Defence Housing Australia

**Report prepared by
Environmental Audit Section**

September 2026

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Document Control

Version	Description	Approval	Date
0.1	Draft Audit Report		18 September 2026
0.2	Draft released to Auditee		18 September 2026
1	Final Audit Report		23 September 2026

Audit Details

Report Title	Compliance audit of Lee Point Master-planned Urban Development, Darwin, Northern Territory (EPBC 2015/7591)
Auditee Name	Defence Housing Australia
Main Auditee Contact Details	Mark Anderson Director Development, Development and Construction Level 5, 111 Phillip Street Parramatta, NSW 2150
Audit Lead	Assistant Director audit@nationalepa.gov.au
Audit Team	Senior Auditor
Audit Date	31 July 2026 – 17 September 2026
On-site Audit Details	Date of on-site audit: 20 August 2026 Location: Defence Housing Australian NT regional office. Level 1, Building 4/631 Stuart Hwy, Berrimah NT 0828 and onsite at Lee Point Road, Lee Point, NT 0810 Attendees: National EPA officers in attendance: • Assistant Director/Lead Auditor, Environmental Audit Section • Senior Auditor, Environmental Audit Section Auditee representatives in attendance: • Mark Anderson – Director. Development & Construction, Defence Housing Australia • Luke Wilks – Site manager, Defence Housing Australia

Background

On 17 March 2019, a delegate for the Minister administering the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) approved the Lee Point Master-planned Urban Development, Darwin, Northern Territory (EPBC 2015/7591). The approval contains 14 conditions and includes requirements to avoid, mitigate and offset the impacts to listed threatened species and communities and listed migratory species from the construction of an urban residential development.

A variation to the conditions of the approval was issued on 15 June 2023 and 27 July 2025 where several conditions were deleted, replaced and additional conditions were added. Definitions were also revoked, amended and added.

The action commenced on 29 September 2021, and at the time of the audit no active clearing was occurring whilst the Golden Finch strategy and Offset Management plan was being assessed by the National Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and Black-footed Tree-ray Offset Plan had been approved by the Minister. The approval has effect until 31 December 2035.

On 31 July 2026 the National Environmental Protection Agency (National EPA) commenced a compliance audit to determine if Defence Housing Australia (auditee) was complying with the conditions of the EPBC 2015/7591 approval. The compliance audit was enabled under condition 11 of the approval.

Audit Methodology

This section of the report details the methodology for the compliance audit of Lee Point Master-planned Urban Development, Darwin, Northern Territory against the conditions of the EPBC 2015/7591 approval and its associated plans. Information to assess compliance was gathered from internal holdings, open-source searches, information requests, and an on-site audit.

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to effectively assess the auditees compliance with the conditions of the approval and associated management plans.

Audit Criteria

The audit checklist and criteria were developed to address obligations required under the relevant approval instrument and measures required by associated management plans. Conditions that had multiple elements were broken down into separate criteria to assess compliance.

Audit Scope

The scope of this audit was to assess compliance with disturbance (land clearing), offset and commencement notification conditions.

The following conditions were within scope of this audit 1, 2A, 2B, 7, 8, 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 9, 10, 12, 12A, 12B and 14.

Audit Process

On 31 July 2026 a letter of intent to audit was sent to the auditee to ensure they were suitably informed to participate in the audit. The letter outlined the scope of the audit.

An on-site audit was conducted on 20 August 2026 and included an opening meeting, discussions with auditee personnel, a document review, a site inspection, and a closing meeting.

The analysis of all collected data and preparation of audit findings was completed in September 2026.

Audit Terminology

The following terms were used to record findings during this audit.

Compliant	Sufficient and appropriate information presented to demonstrate the compliance of a particular requirement.
Not applicable	An element of the criteria was not activated or was not required within the scope of the audit.
Observation	An observation may be made about issues relevant to the protection of a matter of national environmental significance when the issue is not strictly related to compliance or non-compliance with a condition.

Audit Findings

This section details the findings of the compliance audit. Of the 16 conditions assessed under the approval, the audit determined the following:

- **Compliance** with 8 of the 16 conditions of approval examined (1, 2A, 7, 8, 8A, 8B, 9 and 10).
- At the time of the compliance audit, 8 conditions were **not applicable** (2B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 12, 12A, 12B and 14).

Summary of audit findings

A summary of the audit findings for each condition examined are contained in the table below. For a full list of conditions, please refer to the EPBC approval provided at **Attachment A**.

Condition	Audit Finding	Summary
1	Compliant	All clearing to date has occurred within the project area and less than 110 ha has been cleared.
2A	Compliant	The submitted Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) has been approved by the Minister.
2B	Not Applicable	Clearing has not been undertaken in the Casuarina Coastal Reserve (CCR).
7	Compliant	Written agreement from the Northern Territory government has been provided to the National EPA.
8	Compliant	At the time of the audit the Black-footed Tree-rat Offset Plan had been submitted and approved by the Minister.
8A	Compliant	Clearing of Gouldian Finch breeding and foraging habitat at the time of the audit did not exceed 94.64 ha and 62.05 ha respectively within the project area.
8B	Compliant	The auditee has submitted a Gouldian Finch Strategy and Offset Plan (GFSOP) to the National EPA for approval.
8C	Not Applicable	At the time of the audit the GFSOP was under assessment by the National EPA.
8D	Not Applicable	Environmental Offset had not been secured for the Gouldian Finch as the GFSOP has not been approved.
8E	Not Applicable	The Conservation area at Muirhead North has not been transferred to another entity.
9	Compliant	The auditee notified commencement of the action with the required time frame.
10	Compliant	The auditee has maintained accurate records and provided them on request to the auditor.
12	Not Applicable	The management plans had not been revised at the time of the audit.
12A	Not Applicable	The management plans had not been revised at the time of the audit.
12B	Not Applicable	The management plans had not been revised at the time of the audit.
14	Not Applicable	The action commenced within 5 years of the approval date.

Audit Observations

The auditors made the following observations during the audit:

- The offsets have yet to be secured for Muirhead North Black-Footed Tree-rat offset plan, negotiation are underway with the Northern Territory Government to secure crown land and land currently owned by Power and Water Corporation.
- No indirect offset projects have been submitted to the National EPA to offset the impacts to the Black-footed Tree-rat.
- The GFSOP had yet to be approved by the Minister at the time of the audit.

Auditee Comments

Defence Housing Australia reviewed the draft audit report and had no comments to provide.

Recommendations

The auditee must continue to adhere to all conditions of EPBC Act approval EPBC 2015/7591 for the life of the approval, including any approved management plans, monitoring, reporting, record-keeping and offset requirements, to ensure ongoing protection of EPBC Act listed species and the environment.

Attachments

Attachment	Title
Attachment A	Variation of conditions attached to approval (EPBC 2015/7591 – dated 27 July 2025)

Final Report Distribution

- Defence Housing Australia
- The National EPA