



Property Developers

Site Contamination Auditing for Property Developers

Australian Environmental Auditors (AEA) is one of Australia's leading environmental contaminated land auditing organisations.

AEA specialise specifically on auditing combining a pragmatic and technical approach to achieve results. We are advantaged to have multiple auditors in most states.

Our auditors are some of the most experienced in Australia and have access to leading technical specialists. This experience allows us to focus on practical audit outcomes whilst meeting our statutory obligations.

The site contamination audit system provides a mechanism for assuring planning and responsible authorities (e.g. Shires and Councils), landholders and other stakeholders that a contaminated site is suitable for use.

The audit system is set up such that protection of human health and the environment is achieved in a manner sustainable with development and progress in our country.

The auditor plays an important role in ensuring appropriate guidelines and legislation are followed. Done properly, audited sites can be the most effective and protective means for site development projects.

AEA provides land and property purchasers with holistic and tailored services to help mitigate risk and maximise potential for improved property assets.

If you are considering purchasing or developing a potentially contaminated site, please call the AEA team on 08 8223 3488.

Contaminated Land Experience

AEA is well known in contaminated site auditing and has worked on numerous projects, ranging from sensitive development of former industrial land to large complex sites with significant hazardous problems within the government and property/land development industry.

A large focus of our business is in the property development space with our experienced professionals having been involved in hundreds of audits throughout the country.

Developing Contaminated Land

The purchaser/owner of land or property needs to recognise liabilities for contamination, or the status of environmental compliance, regardless of whether or not the current owner actually created the contamination.

It is important to understand your environmental exposure during acquisitions and transactions, or operations in either developing or developed environmental regulatory systems.

Compliance & Regulation

Site contamination audits can be required by legislation (statutory audits) for redevelopment or in response to regulatory notices. Audits are the most reliable method of ensuring compliance in developing contaminated sites in all of Australia.

AEA is able to provide the definitive technical review, with Site Contamination Audit Statements (SCAS) required for a property 'change of use' in the various jurisdictions.



Audit Process

A site contamination audit is a review by an SA EPA-accredited Site Contamination Auditor to independently verify your consultant's information and conclusions on the contamination status of the site and suitability for its proposed use.

Once the auditor is satisfied that all the necessary assessment and remediation (if any) has been completed and documented in accordance with EPA guidelines, the auditor will be in a position to prepare the site contamination audit report and statement and therefore complete the audit.

The extent of work required to reach this point depends on the nature, extent and complexity of the contamination issues at the site and the proposed land use. A flow chart of the audit process is provided.

The auditor may issue Interim Audit Advice (IAA) prior to completion of the audit report. This is a good mechanism to defer contamination matters (i.e. audit) and allow development to continue unimpeded.

The accredited auditor must comply with the Environment Protection Act 1993 and all relevant EPA regulations and guidelines.

AEA has six auditors, with two experienced SA EPA accredited auditors, Mr Phillip Hitchcock and Mr Jean-Paul Pearce.



Audit Triggers

Site contamination audits are undertaken for one or more of the following reasons:

- To satisfy requirements of the planning process under the Development Act 1993. The development approval authority should request a site contamination audit when assessing development applications that propose to convert a potentially contaminated site to a more sensitive use. A site may be considered contaminated if a preliminary site investigation identifies that it may have been used for a potentially contaminating activity as defined in Planning Advisory Notice 20 and others. For example, converting a service station or engine workshop to residential dwellings.
- To satisfy requirements of the Environment Protection Act 1993. The SA EPA may request a site contamination assessment and remediation order (SCAO and SRO), or site contamination audit when contamination has migrated beyond the site boundaries and may present a risk to human health and/or the environment. For example, migration of a petrol plume in groundwater from a service station beneath surrounding residential properties.
- For other purposes, such as due diligence to assist in reducing future risk and understand potential contamination management measures.



Commercial Considerations

AEA has completed audits (from EPA notification to submission of audit report) within one month. However, audits typically take longer due to the need for the environmental consultant to collect data or undertake remediation or specialist studies to satisfy EPA guideline requirements (and therefore auditor requirements). To avoid delays to a development, the auditor should be engaged as early as possible.

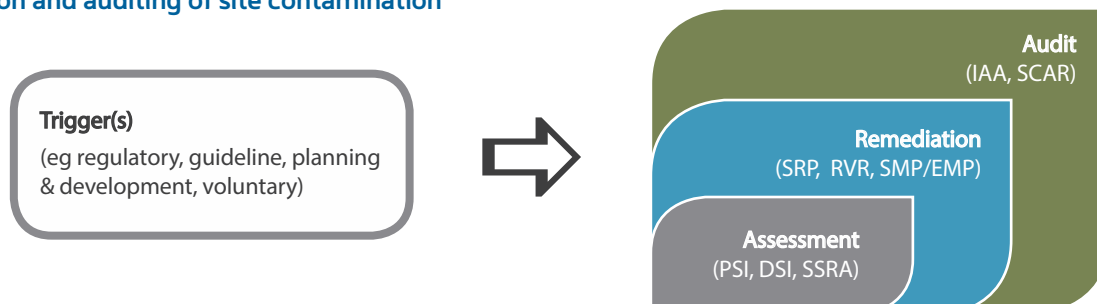
When engaged early, AEA can help minimise any uncertainties by offering pragmatic advice on the scope of work required to assess the nature and extent of contamination.

Financiers may want certainty that auditor requirements have been met prior to lending.

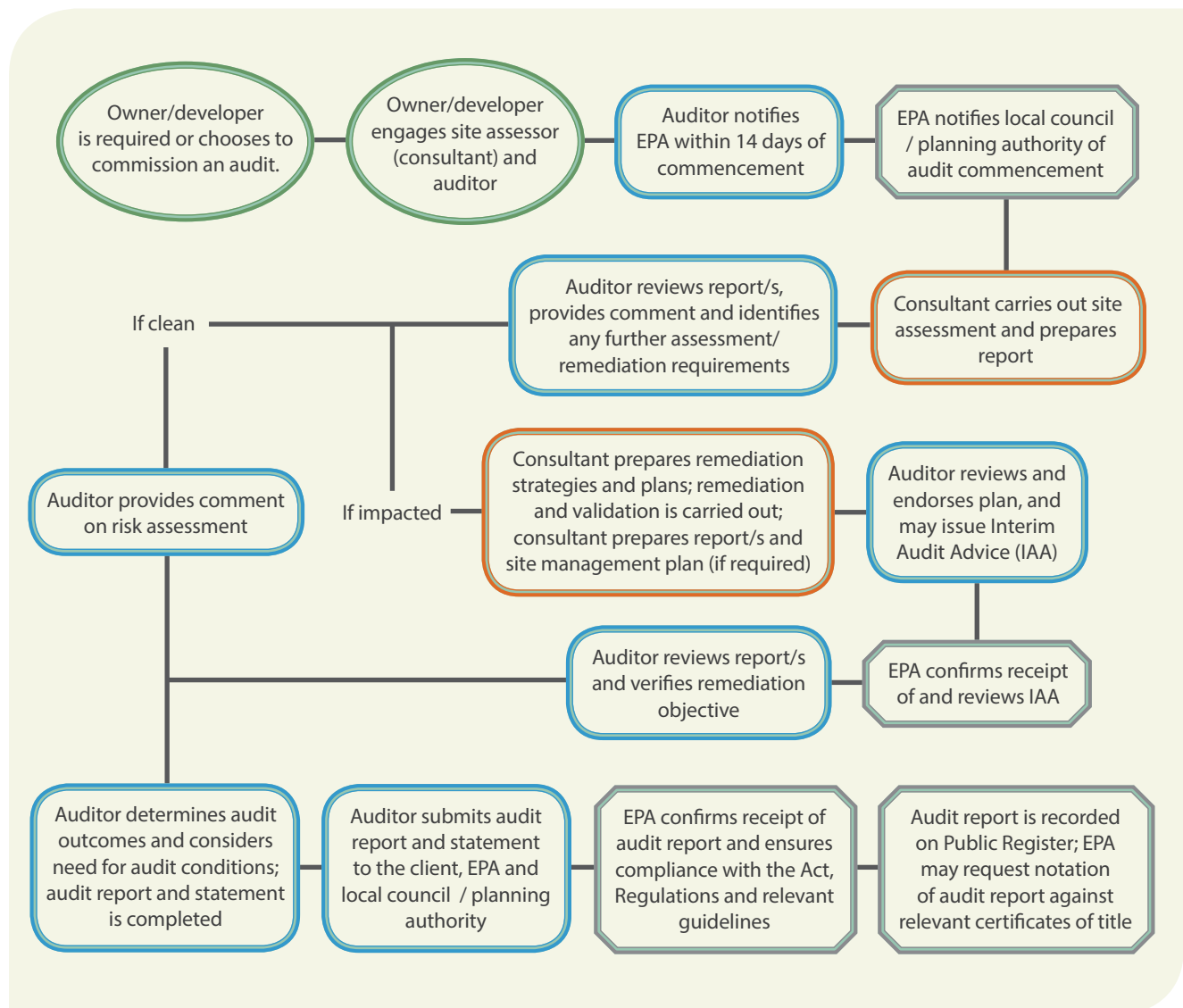
Higher density land uses (i.e. apartments) typically allow for more flexibility in the management of contamination issues than lower density land uses (detached dwellings) due to less potential for exposure to contamination.

Auditors are a key part of the development approval process and careful consideration should be exercised in appointing the right auditor. Experience, communication, outcome-focused, sustainable, quality, amenable; are all qualities that form a good, reliable auditor and AEA are pleased to uphold these merits.

Indicative relationship and stages of the assessment, remediation and auditing of site contamination



Typical Audit Process - South Australia



Phil Hitchcock

Managing Director
Principal Auditor

30+ professional years

BSc (Hons) (Geology), MAppSc
(Hydrogeology and Contaminant
Management), CEnvP



Jean-Paul Pearce

Auditor

20+ professional years

BEng (Hons)(Civil & Environmental),
CEnvP