



# ENVIRONMENTAL AND SITE AUDITS

## What Is an Environmental Audit?

Although widely used, the term 'environmental audit' has a range of meanings. In the specific context of contaminated land, environmental audit generally refers to an external review of site assessment reports or validation reports prepared by other consultants; it can also refer to the process of site remediation itself. An environmental audit is also conducted for the purpose of assessing the nature and extent (and significance, from the perspective of human health and ecological risk) of any remaining contamination, and assessing what investigation or remediation remains necessary before the land is suitable for any specified use or range of uses. The environmental audit also may allow provision of a statement as to the suitability of the land for a particular use or uses, with an accompanying audit report.

### ***New South Wales***

In New South Wales, Site Audits are now carried out under the provisions of Part 4 of the Contaminated Land Management (CLM) Act 1997, and an Auditor on completion of a Site Audit issues a Site Audit Statement and Summary Site Audit Report.

A site audit may be either statutory or non-statutory. A statutory audit is carried out to comply with requirements imposed by legislation, or by a planning instrument or development consent made under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. A non-statutory audit is carried out for due diligence purposes or to meet a requirement of a civil contract or agreement.

In practice, there is little difference in the way in which statutory and non-statutory audits are carried out by accredited auditors. In a statutory audit, however, the EPA must be notified when the audit begins, and both the EPA and the relevant local authority must be sent copies of the site audit statement.

C. M. Jewell was accredited as a Site Auditor in New South Wales upon commencement of Part 4 of the CLM Act in June 1998. This appointment is current and was last renewed for 3 years, in June 2002.

### ***Victoria***

Statutory Environmental Audits (Contaminated Land) are carried out under the provisions of Section 53 of the Environment Protection Act 1970, as amended in 1989. The Environment Protection Authority (Victoria) appoints a small number of suitably qualified and experienced persons to be Environmental Auditors (Contaminated Land) for the purposes of the Act.

As in New South Wales, auditors in Victoria conducting statutory environmental audits review all available information such as environmental assessment reports and results of validation sampling, and, if appropriate, require additional sampling and analysis to be carried out. If satisfied that the condition of the land is not detrimental or potentially detrimental to any beneficial use of the land, then the auditor may issue a Certificate of Environmental Audit for the site. Conversely, if the auditor considers that the condition of the land is detrimental or potentially detrimental to any beneficial use, then the auditor refuses to issue a Certificate and issues instead a Statement of Environmental Audit. A Statement of Environmental Audit may specify remedial action that should be carried out, or may state the beneficial uses for which the site is suitable. Conditions may be attached to use of the site.

The auditor is legally required to send copies of the Certificate or Statement and a copy of his audit report to the Environment Protection Authority (Victoria), and to the planning authority responsible for the site.

Non-Statutory Environmental Audits are carried out for due diligence purposes. They may include a review of a specific report prepared by another consultant, or a general review of available information concerning the site. There is no requirement to inform the Environment Protection Authority (Victoria).

C. M. Jewell was appointed as an Environmental Auditor (Contaminated Land) by the Environment Protection Authority (Victoria) in November 1995. This appointment is current and was last renewed in September 2004.

South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania have introduced similar schemes, using auditors with primary accreditation in NSW and Victoria.

**CMJA's expertise**

Since appointment as a Site Auditor, C. M. Jewell has completed, or has current auditor involvement in, more than 230 environmental audits in New South Wales. The bulk of these environmental audits (approximately 80 per cent) are statutory.

In Victoria, C. M. Jewell has completed six environmental audits, all of which have been statutory.

As a company, CMJA also undertakes non-audit environmental reviews. These reviews share much of the methodology of site audits, but are undertaken only for due diligence purposes, and notification is not required. These reviews are carried out in all states, including Queensland.