



**SUBURBAN
RAIL LOOP**

SRL East Independent Environmental Auditor – Six-Monthly Findings Summary Report

November 2023 – May 2024



**SUBURBAN
RAIL LOOP
AUTHORITY**



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Table 1: GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Expanded form
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EMF	Environmental Management Framework
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EPR	Environmental Performance Requirement
GED	General Environmental Duty
IEA	Independent Environmental Auditor
ISO	International Standards Organisation
NC	Non-compliance
POSF	Public Open Space Framework
SRL	Suburban Rail Loop
SRLA	Suburban Rail Loop Authority
UDLP	Urban Design and Landscape Plans
UDS	Urban Design Strategy
WEMP	Worksite Environmental Management Plan

Table 2: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Description
Contractor	The terms 'Contractor' or 'Contractors' within this report apply to contractors engaged by SRLA to deliver a works package for SRL East and whose activities the IEA will review and audit over the course of the Project.
Early Works	Early Works are approved under the Suburban Rail Loop (East) Planning Scheme Amendment GC197 and Incorporated Document and must comply with the SRL East Environmental Management Framework. Early Works are activities primarily comprised of Preparatory Works associated with the phased delivery of SRL East. Preparatory Works are defined in the Incorporated Document.
Incorporated Document	The SRL East Incorporated Document dated August 2022
Independent Environmental Auditor	Independent Environmental Auditor appointed pursuant to the Environmental Management Framework (EMF) endorsed by the Minister for Environment and Climate Action
Minor non-compliance	The evidence demonstrates that the criteria has been partially met and at present does not fully meet the relevant project environmental obligations.
Major non-compliance	The evidence either demonstrates that the criteria has not been met, or there was an absence of evidence demonstrating that the criteria had been met. As such the corresponding aspect of the project environmental obligations is not being met.
Project environmental obligations	This refers to the environmental obligations for the Project, which cover managing risks to the environment and human health and the conditions of the SRL East approvals, including the EMF, EPRs and UDS, against which compliance of a Contractor's environmental documentation and management plans will be assessed through review and verification by the IEA as well as delivery of the IEA compliance audit program.
Suburban Rail Loop	SRL is an integrated rail and precincts program, with a new 90-kilometre orbital rail line from Cheltenham to Werribee and planning for the surrounding precincts around each SRL station.
Suburban Rail Loop Authority	Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) is the proponent for the Project and is responsible for planning and delivering Suburban Rail Loop (SRL). SRLA was established in September 2019, and became a statutory authority in December 2021, governed by the <i>Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021</i> .
Suburban Rail Loop (East)	Suburban Rail Loop (East) is the section of Suburban Rail Loop between Cheltenham and Box Hill.

1. Introduction

1.1. Role of the IEA

Nation Partners Pty Ltd (Nation Partners) is the Independent Environmental Auditor (IEA) for SRL East Early Works, pursuant to the Environmental Management Framework (EMF) endorsed by the Minister for Environment and Climate Action.

The role of the IEA as outlined in the EMF is to provide independent review and verification of compliance with the conditions of the SRL East approvals including the EMF, Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs), Urban Design Strategy (UDS) and Public Open Space Framework (POSF) and to:

- Audit compliance of contractors' construction works and operations against environmental obligations, including environmental legislation, approval conditions, construction environmental management plans (CEMPs), operational environmental management plans (OEMPs), the EMF and EPRs.
- Conduct audits of Suburban Rail Loop Authority's (SRLA) compliance to relevant EPRs and SRLA's Environmental Management System.

1.2. Report Purpose and Structure

This IEA Summary Report (Report) presents the IEA audit activities and audit findings from the second six-month period of Early Works construction of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) East Project (the Project). The Report has been prepared by the IEA and SRLA to provide specific detail relevant to the audit program for the reporting period 11 November 2023 – 10 May 2024 (the 'reporting period') and addresses the requirements under Section 6.2.1 of the Environmental Management Framework (EMF).

This Report provides compliance status with respect to the SRL East EMF, EPRs, the Contractor's Environmental Strategy, CEMP, Worksite Environmental Management Plans (WEMPs) and other management plans or procedures as specified as being required in the EMF and EPRs. It is a requirement of the SRL East EMF that a summary report be prepared by the IEA and SRLA for each six period and be made publicly available following acceptance by the Minister for Planning.

This Report is structured under the following sections:

- Section 2: Audit Program – Objectives, scope
- Section 3: Audit Activities – details the scope of the IEA's audit activities undertaken prior to, during and after the audit.
- Section 4: Audit findings – provides the IEA's findings from compliance audits against the EMF / EPR's
- Section 5: Corrective Actions - status of actions taken to address audit findings
- Section 6: Audit Conclusion – on the Project's compliance with the requirements of the EMF / EPR's

Appendices

- Appendix A – EMF / EPR criteria audited during the reporting period
- Appendix B – Statement of Limitations and Disclaimer.

Note - Initial Works are being delivered under planning approvals obtained separately from the Early Works that were assessed as part of the SRL East Environment Effects Statement (EES). Initial Works commenced prior to Early Works, are not subject to the requirements of the EMF and fall outside the scope of the IEA's role.

2. Audit Program

2.1. Objectives

The objectives of the IEA compliance auditing program are to ensure that SRLA and Contractor activities:

- Comply with environmental duties under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* and other relevant environmental legislation
- Comply with the Project's environmental obligations
- Comply with the (IEA verified) SRLA and Contractor documents and management plans
- Appropriately mitigate risks to human health and the environment
- Include continual improvement opportunities in environmental management, performance, legislative and policy compliance.

2.2. Scope

The EMF requires that the IEA conducts the following audits:

- EMF and EPR Compliance Audits (quarterly)
- Routine Environmental Performance Audits (monthly).

For each Quarterly EMF / EPR audit, the IEA assesses compliance of the construction activities with the EMF, relevant EPRs and conditions of the Project environmental obligations. Table 3 describes the scope of EMF / EPR compliance audits in accordance with the EMF.

Table 3: EMF and EPR Quarterly Compliance Audit Details

Characteristic	Detail
Auditees	SRLA and contractors
Frequency	Quarterly. Early Works construction commenced in May 2023, and audit activities commenced three months post the commencement of construction (August 2023).
Locations	Desktop and project sites (risk based)
Scope	SRLA and Contractor compliance with, and implementation of the EPRs and the Environmental Strategy, CEMP, WEMPs, OEMP, and other plans required by the EPRs and conditions of approval. Compliance with every applicable EPR to be audited annually. High-risk activities to be audited more frequently.
Inputs	Observations of project activities Interviews with contractor / subcontractor, and SRLA personnel Review of documents and records
Stage	Construction and first two years of operation (or until Minister for Planning is satisfied that audits are no longer required)

For each Routine Monthly Environmental Performance Audit, the IEA assesses compliance of the Contractor's construction activities with the CEMP, WEMP, and associated documents through a monthly rotation of visits to each active project site. Table 4 describes the scope of Routine Monthly Environmental Performance Audits.

Table 4: Routine Monthly Environmental Performance Audit Details

Characteristic	Detail
Auditees	Contractors
Frequency	Monthly, starting 6 months from commencement of works. Early Works construction commenced in May 2023, and audit activities commenced in November 2023.
Locations	Rotation at active construction sites, compounds, laydown areas (all sites visited within a 3-month rotation).
Scope	Contractor compliance with CEMP, WEMPs and other applicable management plans
Inputs	<p>Observations of project activities</p> <p>Interviews with contractor / subcontractor, and SRLA personnel</p> <p>Review of documents and records. Documents and records to be reviewed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental monitoring, process monitoring and management performance monitoring results Work method statements, site plans Incidents and a representative set of complaints records Inspection and audit reports Soil and waste management records Surveys Meeting minutes Monthly reports Other documents relevant to assessing compliance and the technical adequacy and effectiveness of actions taken to comply with the EMF, EPRs, Environmental Strategy, UDLPs, CEMP.
Stage	Construction and first two years of operation (or until Minister for Planning is satisfied that audits are no longer required).

2.3. Risk Based Approach

The IEA adopts a risk-based approach to conducting compliance audits, founded in the guiding principles of AS/NZS ISO19011:2019 – *Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems*. Compliance with all EPRs is audited at least once every 12 months and higher risk activities may be audited more frequently. Higher risk activities are determined through consideration of (but not limited to):

- Outputs from SRLA and Contractor risk assessments
- Work activities with an inherent higher risk of environmental impact
- Work activities being undertaken in locations proximal to environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., watercourses, ecologically sensitive areas, residences)

- Intensity / amount of work in progress at each site
- Work activities with the potential to contribute to cumulative environmental impacts
- Complaints received, recent incidents, and/or non-compliances
- Results of previous audits including corrective action rectification.

Audit sites are selected by the IEA on the basis that they provide a representative sample of the locations in which Project construction activities are being undertaken. The nature of the risk associated with the activities, including their interface with sensitive receptors, namely the environment and surrounding communities is considered. Each active construction site is visited at least once each quarter.

2.4. Compliance Status

In accordance with *AS/NZS ISO19011:2019*, a qualitative scale is used to categorise audit findings as described in Table 5.

Table 5: Quarterly Audit Outcome Compliance Status

Audit Outcome Status	Definition
Compliant	The evidence demonstrates that the criteria under consideration has been met.
Minor Non-compliance (Minor NC)	The evidence demonstrates that the criteria has been partially met and at present does not meet the relevant project environmental obligations.
Major Non-compliance (Major NC)	The evidence either demonstrates that the criteria has not been met, or there is an absence of evidence demonstrating that the criteria has been met. As such the corresponding aspect of the project environmental obligations is not being met.

Table 6: Monthly Audit Outcome Compliance Status

Audit Outcome Status	Definition
Low risk finding	Non-conformity with CEMP or sub-plan which will not result in direct environmental harm. Minimal, localised environmental impact / low potential for health and well-being impacts.
Moderate risk finding	Issue that may result in non-compliance with a project approval. Potential or actual environmental harm or impact to human health over an extended period of time and/or requires considerable remediation.
High risk finding	Non-compliance with regulatory requirement or project approval. Permanent or long-term serious environmental harm or long-term harm to health and well-being.

2.5. Corrective Actions

Corrective actions to address compliance audit findings are the responsibility of SRLA and its Contractors. Corrective actions are not prescribed by the IEA, but are determined, implemented and tracked by the Contractor and/or SRLA. The IEA is responsible for auditing corrective action status, including the effectiveness of remedies and the status of actions taken to address findings (i.e. whether the IEA considers the finding has been adequately addressed and can be closed), prior to, or during the subsequent compliance audit.

The IEA monitors the technical adequacy of corrective actions to address non-compliances through the compliance audit program and provides its opinion on the status of findings.

3. Early Works Audit Activities

As per Section 5 of the EMF and as required by the EPR's, the documentation outlined in EMF Table 5.1 is subject to a process of review or verification and approval or acceptance. The IEA has continued its work in the review and verification of environmental documentation and management plans against the overarching Project environmental obligations and the EPRs as new stages of work have commenced and post major revisions of previously verified documentation. The IEA during its review process considered the technical adequacy and effectiveness of actions proposed in the documentation.

In addition, the IEA monitors Contractor compliance with approval conditions during its construction activities via a program of regular compliance audits. The following compliance audits were conducted during the reporting period:

- Quarterly Audits
 - Quarterly Audit #2 : November 2023
 - Quarterly Audit #3 : February 2024
- Monthly Audits
 - Monthly Audit #1 : November 2023
 - Monthly Audit #2 : December 2023
 - Monthly Audit #3 : January 2024
 - Monthly Audit #4 : February 2024
 - Monthly Audit #5 : March 2024
 - Monthly Audit #6 : April 2024

Early Works were the only active construction works during the reporting period. Active construction sites visited during the reporting period included Box Hill, Burwood, Glen Waverley, Monash, Clayton, and the Stabling Facility (Heatherton).

The scope of the Compliance Audits were determined and agreed by relevant stakeholders with a draft Audit Plan issued for comment prior to finalisation of the agreed scope. The IEA sought input and verification from SRLA on the relevancy of select EPRs to Early Works. As a result, a number of EPRs remain out of scope, as all or key parts of these EPRs have not been triggered by Early Works to date, or they do not apply to Early Works (refer to Table A-1)

During the reporting period, the IEA monitored Contractor progress to address audit findings. At the commencement of the reporting period, there were two audit findings open that were raised in the prior reporting period.

4. Early Works Audit Findings

4.1. Environmental Performance Requirements

The IEA found that the majority of the 58 EPRs audited during this reporting period were considered compliant. Seven Minor Non-compliances (Minor NC) were raised, of which three were closed out during the reporting period. The following sub-sections summarise the audit findings.

The Early Works Contractor (Laing O'Rourke) is responsible for compliance with the majority of EPRs listed below unless otherwise noted. SRLA is responsible for compliance with several EPRs, and some have been assessed as not applicable to Early Works or have not as yet been triggered by the works.

4.1.1. Environmental Management

Four Environmental Management EPRs (EMF1 – EMF4) were audited during this reporting period and were deemed compliant, with the exception of three Minor NC's pertaining to CEMP permit processes, tree protection and removal, and document management. The IEA audited the Contractor's implementation of the Environmental Strategy, the CEMP and WEMPs (across all locations visited).

The Minor NC findings were closed during the reporting period to the satisfaction of the IEA.

4.1.2. Air Quality

Two EPRs were audited (AQ1 and AQ2) and found to be compliant.

4.1.3. Business

Four EPRs were audited (B1, B2, B3, B4) and found to be compliant.

4.1.4. Contaminated Land

Four EPRs were audited (C1, C2, C3 and C6) and found to be compliant.

4.1.5. Historical Heritage

Seven EPRs were audited (HH1, HH2, HH3, HH4, HH5, HH6, and HH8) and found to be compliant.

4.1.6. Landscape and Visual

Five EPRs were audited (LV3, LV4, LV5, LV6 and LV7) and found to be compliant.

4.1.7. Noise and Vibration

Nine EPRs were audited (NV1, NV2, NV3, NV4, NV5, NV6, NV7, NV8 and NV11) and deemed to be compliant with the exception of four Minor NCs pertaining to implementation of the Residential Support Guidelines regarding offsite management measures (x1), implementation of specific conditions in an Out of Hours Work Permit (x1), noise monitoring (x1) and document management (x1).

The Contractor progressed actions to address these findings during the reporting period. The IEA has received regular updates and is monitoring progress.

4.1.8. Social and Community

Two EPRs were audited (SC1 and SC2) and found to be compliant.

4.1.9. Surface Water

Three EPRs were audited (SW1, SW2 and SW7) and found to be compliant.

4.1.10. Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas

Five EPRs were audited (SGG1, SGG2, SGG8, SGG9, SGG10) and found to be compliant.

4.2. Routine Environmental Performance Audits

During Routine Monthly Environmental Performance Audits, the IEA through a process of document and record review, interviews and site observations, assessed the Contractor's compliance against the CEMP, site based WEMPs and associated sub-plans. During its audit program within the reporting period, the IEA identified sixteen audit findings against audit criteria, eleven of which were closed in the reporting period. Findings were rated as Low, Moderate or High risk as defined in Table 6. Two Moderate risk findings were identified (Cultural & Historical Heritage x 2), and no High-risk findings raised.

4.3. Trends in Performance

The IEA has completed a review of audit findings raised during the reporting period. It has identified an emerging trend in environmental performance relating to compliance with requirements specified in Noise and Vibration EPRs. The specific findings have been noted in Section 4.1.7 of this report. The IEA recognises that the Contractor is progressively working through addressing these outstanding findings, some of which have been open since November 2023.

5. Early Works Corrective Actions

During the reporting period, the IEA made:

- Seven Quarterly EMF / EPR Minor NC findings, three of which were addressed by the contractor during the reporting period and evaluated by the IEA as being closed. As at the end of this reporting period, six EMF / EPR Quarterly Audit findings remained open, two of which are a carryover from the prior reporting period.
- Sixteen (16) Routine Monthly Environmental Performance Audit findings, eleven of which were addressed by the contractor during the reporting period and evaluated by the IEA as being closed. Five findings remained open at the completion of the reporting period.

6. Early Works Conclusions

SRL East's Project compliance with its EMF, EPRs (as audited during the reporting period), CEMP and other relevant management plans has been evaluated. Both the Contractor and SRLA have addressed the requirements of the EMF through the ongoing preparation, implementation and updating of Project-specific environmental management plans (as specified within the EMF and its associated EPRs).

Overall, Project activities were found to be largely compliant with the 58 EPRs against which construction activities were audited. The IEA does not consider the audit findings to present material risks to the environment or human health. The IEA will continue to monitor Contractor progress in relation to corrective actions taken to address audit findings as well as any emerging trends.

Appendices

A. EMF / EPR Criteria Audited During the Reporting Period

Table A1: EMF / EPR criteria audited during the reporting period

Topic	Criteria
EMF and EPRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs EMF1 – EMF4 • Environmental Strategy • CEMP • WEMPs – across all locations visited
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs AQ1 to AQ2 • Environmental Air Pollution & Dust Monitoring Plan (EAPDMP)
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs B1 to B4 • Business Disruption Mitigation Plans (BDMPs) • Business Disruption Management Framework (BDMF) • SRL Business Support Guidelines • CSEMP • Employee Assistance Strategy
Contaminated Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs C1 to C3 and C6 • CEMP • Spoil, Contaminated Land and Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plan
Historical heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs HH1 to HH6 and HH8 • CEMP Historic Heritage Sub-plan • Archaeological Management Plans • Heritage Interpretation Strategy
Landscape and visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs LV3 to LV7 (as it pertains to relocated Box Hill tram station) • Land Use Interface Plan • Environmental Strategy
Noise and vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs NV1 to NV8 and NV11 • Out of Hours Works (OOHW) Notifications • Construction Noise & Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) • Residential Support Guidelines
Social and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs SC1 to SC2 • Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEMP)
Surface water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs SW1 to SW2 and SW7 • CEMP Stormwater Management Sub-plan
Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs SGG1 to SGG2 and SGG8 to SGG10 • Sustainability Management Plan

Note: SRLA and the IEA have determined that the following EPR's had either not as yet been triggered or are not applicable to Early Works : EPRs B5 to B8, C5, C7, E5, EMI1 to EMI3, GM4, GW6, HH7, LV2, NV1A, NV9 to NV10, NV12 to NV18, SC6, SW5, SW8, SGG3 to SGG7 and T6 to T8.

B. Statement of Limitations and Disclaimer

The IEA and SRLA have prepared this Report for the purposes set out in section 1.2.

The contents of this Report and any related audit findings described in this Report reflect industry practice based on information available to SRLA and the IEA as at the date of this Report and the scope of services, methodologies, and resources to which the audit activities and audit findings relate. The IEA relied on information provided by SRLA and its Contractor(s) in performing the audit activities and, except as expressly provided, has not carried out any separate verification of such information provided.

This Report and the audit findings described in this Report are therefore innately limited in respect of such available information and the scope of related services and resources, and also as a result of inherent uncertainties that exist in relation to environmental conditions that relate to any information in this document (if applicable).

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