



Office of the  
Registrar General

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# **Cadastral Integrity**

## **Audit Survey Procedures**

July 2025

# Document summary

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## APPROVAL

Name	Role	Section approved
David Job	Director, Cadastral Integrity	Whole document
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# 1. Introduction

The Office of the Registrar General (**ORG**) is a regulator, policy advisor, review body and independent arbitrator working to ensure the integrity of the NSW State cadastre and the NSW land title system.

ORG's responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the legislative and policy framework for land title registration, conveyancing and property development in NSW.
- Providing advice on land title policy and legal matters and administering the Torrens Assurance Fund.
- Regulating the performance of NSW Land Registry Services (**NSW LRS**), the private operator responsible for NSW titling and registry services, under a 35-year concession arrangement.
- Driving reforms in land titling such as eConveyancing.
- Providing independent arbitration of disputed title boundaries.
- Carrying out examination surveys to resolve historical survey anomalies.
- Conducting field audits of registered survey plans to ensure regulatory compliance.

NSW LRS's core services, provided on behalf of the Registrar General, include the examination and registration of survey plans and property dealings, creation of folios of the Torrens Register and the conversion of Old System land to Torrens title.

Each plan lodged for registration with NSW LRS undergoes a desktop examination to ensure that the plan complies with all Relevant Legislation and Standards as set out in Section 6 of this Procedures document.

On registration of a plan by NSW LRS, ORG may then select a plan for audit as part of its Audit Survey Program. The audit is undertaken by surveyors from ORG's Cadastral Integrity team (**ORG surveyors**), in order to further assess the plan's regulatory compliance in accordance with this Audit Survey Procedures document (**Procedures document**) and may include a desktop assessment of the plan and a field inspection.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of the Audit Survey Program are to:

- Establish procedures for conducting Audit Surveys.
- Assess and measure, in the field, a plan's or registered surveyor's compliance with the requirements of all Relevant Legislation and Standards as set out in Section 6 of this Procedures document.
- Improve the quality and consistency of plans lodged for registration.
- Improve the quality and consistency of NSW LRS' plan examination process.
- Establish and maintain processes for the continuing education of surveyors.
- Provide a process for referring cases of complaint and sustained non-compliance to the Board of Surveying and Spatial Information (**BOSSI**).

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

**The Office of the Registrar General** is responsible for:

- Implementing the Audit Survey Program in accordance with this Procedures document (Managing Surveyor, ORG Cadastral Integrity (**Managing Surveyor**)).
- Completing audits in accordance with this Procedures document (ORG surveyors).
- Recommending any further action to be taken with surveyors following non-compliant audits (Survey Audit Committee – see section 4.7).

**NSW Land Registry Services** is responsible for:

- The examination of all plans lodged for registration (including associated dealings and other instruments) to ensure compliance with the Relevant Legislation and Standards as set out in Section 6 of this Procedures document, before registration. This includes ensuring that any existing title boundary shown on a plan is correctly defined.
- Ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the Torrens register.

**The Surveyor General** is responsible for:

- Ensuring the reliability of survey and spatial information collected in NSW through the application of standards, guidelines and appropriate technology.
- Updating the *Surveying and Spatial Information Regulation*.
- Maintaining the State cadastre.

**The Board of Surveying and Spatial Information (BOSSI)** is responsible for:

- Investigating complaints and taking disciplinary action against registered surveyors. BOSSI can delegate the investigatory function to a registered surveyor.

### 3.1 Ethical conduct

All audits are carried out in accordance with the [Code of Ethics and Conduct](#) published by the Department of Customer Service.

### 3.2 Workplace health and safety

All audits are carried out in accordance with the Department of Customer Service's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* to ensure that all procedures are carried out in a safe manner and do not endanger the wellbeing of fellow staff or other people in the workplace or community.

## 4. Procedures

### 4.1 Selection of plans for audit

An ORG surveyor may make recommendations regarding the selection of plans to be audited and the way the audit is to be conducted. The ORG's Managing Surveyor is responsible for the approval of plans to be audited.

Registered plans may be selected for audit based on any of the following reasons:

- Referred – Registered plans referred from external sources, including private surveyors or other regulatory agencies, having identified errors and/or omissions found on the subject plan.
- Previous non-compliance – Plans prepared by registered surveyors whose previous audit(s) have been recorded as 'unsatisfactory'.
- High requisitions – Plans prepared by registered surveyors whose work continues to attract a high number of survey requisitions, including where referred by NSW LRS.
- High volume – Plans prepared by registered surveyors or surveying companies that produce large volumes of plans.
- Newly registered – Plans prepared by newly registered surveyors and interstate surveyors who have recently been accredited to practise in NSW or are eligible to practise in NSW under the provisions of the *Mutual Recognition (New South Wales) Act 1992*.
- Certificate of Currency – Plans lodged more than two years after the survey completion date which require a Certificate of Currency under the *Conveyancing (General) Regulation 2018*.
- Random – Plans prepared by registered surveyors selected at random via a search of the Integrated Titling System Services database. The search is conducted by Local Government Area (**LGA**), with due consideration given to the volume of plans submitted from that LGA and the spatial coverage of the audit process across NSW.

### 4.2 Preliminary audit procedures

The ORG surveyor undertaking a survey audit shall be responsible for all pre-audit preliminary work, referring to the Managing Surveyor for guidance when necessary. The ORG surveyor shall:

- obtain a copy of the subject plan;
- search the NSW land registry records for relevant survey information. The search may include obtaining working copies of plan examination documents or other relevant material from NSW LRS;
- liaise with the private surveyor or other external party who has referred a plan for audit, to establish the magnitude and extent of any apparent errors or discrepancies;

- examine the plan with respect to boundary definition and compliance with the Relevant Legislation and guidelines, in particular the *Surveying and Spatial Information Regulation 2024* (the **Regulation**), [Registrar General's Guidelines \(RGGs\)](#), [Surveyor General's Directions \(SGDs\)](#); and
- conduct mathematical calculations and collate information. This could include, but is not limited to:
  - performing close calculations of the subject lots and other enclosed areas on the plan;
  - performing area calculations and other complex mathematical calculations pertaining to boundary definition;
  - investigating the subject area on specialist sites such as [SDT Explorer](#) and the Cadastral Records Viewer (CRV) / Cadastral Records Enquiry (CRE), Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV); and
  - examining current and historical aerial photography records for the presence of occupations and survey monuments that may be relevant to boundary definition.

### 4.3 Field audit

The ORG surveyor undertaking an audit shall be responsible for the conduct of all fieldwork which may, depending on the scope of the audit, include supervision and direction of other ORG officers.

The auditor shall:

- attend the subject site, undertake a visual inspection, determine the presence of survey marks, monuments and information otherwise relevant to the survey and, where appropriate, take measurements, photographs and liaise with residents;
- assess the subject plan's compliance or non-compliance with the Regulation and other Relevant Legislation, RGGs and SGDs with regard, but not limited to:
  - the placement of corner and line marks;
  - the placement of reference marks;
  - connection to State Control Survey and, where required, the placement of permanent survey marks;
  - the status of survey marks and monuments, whether or not shown on the subject plan, that are relevant to survey definition;
  - the presence of occupations and monuments near the subject boundaries; and
  - the accuracy of measurements taken between selected marks and monuments.
- Where measurements have been taken, perform mathematical calculations sufficient to prove the soundness of the subject plan.

## 4.4 Audit reports

The ORG surveyor undertaking an audit shall be responsible for all internal reporting of audit findings. Where the audit has identified issues that necessitate further action by external parties, the Managing Surveyor shall be consulted prior to any requisitions or instructions being issued to those parties.

The ORG surveyor shall:

- update the audit database. Fields within the database are set up for data extraction, enabling the production of documents such as the audit report and correspondence to the subject surveyor, as well as further statistical analysis of the data collected. Additional updates may have to be undertaken at each of the following stages;
- generate feedback to the subject surveyor and/or NSW LRS for each plan audited;
  - Where the audit guidelines have been satisfied:
    - a notification shall be sent to the subject surveyor advising them that their plan has been audited and assessed to be compliant.
  - Where the guidelines have not been satisfied:
    - the ORG surveyor shall draft appropriate requisitions to be attended to by the subject surveyor;
    - notification may be sent directly to the subject surveyor pending further action, following consultation with the Managing Surveyor;
    - the subject surveyor may be requested by the Managing Surveyor to attend a meeting to discuss the audit findings; and
    - amendment action may be initiated through NSW LRS's Plan Review Section.
- consider feedback from the subject surveyor and respond appropriately. Actions may include:
  - further discussions with the subject surveyor;
  - consultation with NSW LRS Plan Review staff; and
  - the drafting of additional requisitions.

## 4.5 Assessment

On completion of a survey audit, the auditing officer shall assess the standard of the registered survey plan by rating any errors in the survey as 'Major non-compliances', 'Minor non-compliances' or 'Non-actionable breaches'. A Major non-compliance is one that will, if left undetected:

- introduce significant error(s) into the title register,
- detrimentally affect the State cadastre, or
- potentially result in a claim against the Torrens Assurance Fund.

Common non-compliances are listed, by category, below. The list is not intended to be an exhaustive set of all possible non-compliances.

#### **4.5.1 Category 1 Actionable breaches**

##### **1A – Major non-compliances**

- Existing boundaries are incorrectly defined or boundary definition is otherwise unsatisfactory.
- The subject plan is not mathematically sound, including:
  - Dimensions around the subject land or connections to the surrounding cadastre and State Control Survey are either missing or incorrect.
  - The plan reveals incorrect survey measurements have been made.
  - The survey is not satisfactorily connected to State Control Survey.
  - Incorrect or insufficient easement information has been provided.
  - Areas of the subject lots have been calculated incorrectly.
- The subject land is either not marked or has been marked inaccurately.
- Reference marks or permanent survey marks have either not been placed, been placed incorrectly, or an insufficient number of marks have been placed as required by the Regulation.
- The plan contains an incorrect description (age and nature) of fences and monuments around the subject land when dealing with Old System and Limited Title land.
- Natural boundaries have been incorrectly identified or defined.
- Insufficient information has been provided to support an ad-medium-filum claim.
- The plan does not show the site(s) of all new affecting interests referred to in an accompanying section 88B instrument.
- The site, nature and origin of all existing affecting interests have not been defined on the plan.
- Requisite certificates and approvals on the administration sheet are incomplete or have been incorrectly executed.
- The plan has not been satisfactorily oriented onto the appropriate datum.
- The nature and position of reference marks and monuments are not correctly shown, including:
  - Essential reference marks have not been connected to the survey, or their status otherwise not shown.
  - There is insufficient marking or monumentation shown in relation to newly created boundaries.
  - Term “party wall” has been used incorrectly for boundaries between lots sharing a common wall.

## **1B – Minor non-compliances**

- The description and location of any substantial structure, including fencing, within one metre of a subject boundary or otherwise relevant to the boundary definition have not been shown on the plan.
- Relevant alignment information, including the age, nature and position of kerbing has not been shown on the plan.
- Survey marks placed or found have not been adequately described on the plan or are not approved marks as defined in Schedules 1-4 of the Regulation.
- The plan contains missing or incorrect dimensions (excluding Category 1A non-compliances).
- The plan shows insufficient connection from State Control Survey or the surrounding cadastre into the survey (excluding Category 1A non-compliances).
- An insufficient number of line marks have been placed on unfenced rural boundaries.

### **4.5.2 Category 2 Non-actionable breaches**

## **2 – Minor non-compliances**

- Terminals of the adopted datum have not been identified on the plan.
- The origin of reference marks, corner marks or other forms of monumentation has been omitted or shown incorrectly.
- The relevant schedules (coordinate, height, height difference, GNSS validation) are either inaccurate or incomplete.
- Quoted MGA coordinate values or AHD heights lie outside the allowable six-month period before date of completion of the survey.
- The plan contains drafting or typographical errors (excluding Category 1 non-compliances).
- Plan details, including the heading, purpose, LGA, locality, parish, county and surveyor's reference details are either incomplete, incorrect or do not match on plan and administration sheets (excluding Category 1A non-compliances).
- Description of affecting interests created does not match on plan, administration sheet and/or section 88B instrument.
- Adjoining cadastral information is insufficient or incorrect.
- The plan has not been drawn to acceptable standards, rendering it unsuitable for imaging and reproduction.

## 4.6 Actions arising from an unsatisfactory survey audit

An individual surveyor or survey plan will fail the audit process if the plan contains one or more Major non-compliances from Category 1A or three or more instances of Minor non-compliance from Category 1B. Depending on the nature of the error, the surveyor may also be requested to attend a meeting with the Managing Surveyor and referred to the Survey Audit Committee (**the Committee**).

Three audit failures by a surveyor in any two-year period will be referred to the Committee for further action. A surveyor will also be referred for further action by the Committee through the accumulation of six or more Category 1B non-compliances across any three audited plans in any two-year period, notwithstanding that an individual plan may not have automatically failed the audit.

Issues of regulatory non-compliance listed in Category 2 shall be dealt with by the issue of requisitions to the subject surveyor, and generally not render that surveyor liable for further action. However, the Managing Surveyor may consider that exceptional cases of repeated and excessive infringement should also be referred to the Committee.

## 4.7 Survey Audit Committee

ORG's Survey Audit Committee, comprising of the Director, Litigation and Policy and the Director, Cadastral Integrity, shall meet as required, when cases are referred to it.

In dealing with cases referred to it, the Committee may:

- determine to take no further action against the surveyor;
- recommend continued monitoring of the surveyor through further audits; or
- advise the Managing Surveyor to lodge a formal complaint against the offending surveyor to BOSSI.

## 4.8 Complaint to BOSSI procedure

For cases where the Survey Audit Committee advises the lodgment of a formal complaint against a surveyor to BOSSI, the Managing Surveyor will complete the formal complaint documentation and forward to BOSSI together with the relevant Audit Report(s) and any correspondence with the surveyor.

## 5. Reporting audit results

### 5.1 Analysis

The Managing Surveyor and Audit Surveyor from the ORG Cadastral Integrity team will analyse issues of non-compliance at least biannually so as to:

- identify surveyors whose repeated infringements necessitate further monitoring;
- identify surveyors whose ongoing non-compliance in response to requisition notices raised by NSW LRS or ORG necessitates notification to the Survey Audit Committee for further action (see section 4.7); and
- identify those clauses of the [Surveying and Spatial Information Regulation 2024](#), [RGGs](#) and [SGDs](#) with which surveyors are having the greatest compliance difficulties. This could lead to further action at an industry level in the form of publications, seminars and Continuing Professional Development sessions, or may be the catalyst for revising industry standards and reviewing the Relevant Legislation.

### 5.2 Activity report

The Managing Surveyor shall prepare biannual activity reports, which will include the following:

1. the number of plans audited;
2. the number of surveyors audited; and
3. the number of non-compliant plans, including such details as:
  - a. plan number;
  - b. name of the subject surveyor;
  - c. reasons for a non-compliant rating; and
  - d. action to be taken:
    - (i) none;
    - (ii) continued monitoring of the subject surveyor through additional audits;
    - (iii) requesting an interview with the subject surveyor; or
    - (iv) lodgment of a formal complaint with BOSSI.

## 6. Relevant Legislation and Standards

[Community Land Development Act 2021](#) and its associated Regulation

[Conveyancing Act 1919](#) and its associated Regulations

[Real Property Act 1900](#) and its associated Regulation

[Strata Schemes Development Act 2015](#) and its associated Regulation

[Surveying and Spatial Information Act 2002](#) and its associated Regulation

[Lodgment Rules](#)

[Registrar General's Guidelines](#)

[Surveyor General's Directions](#)

## 7. Review date

This Procedures document will be reviewed and amended when any of the following occurs:

- process change is identified;
- Biennially (from final sign-off);
- following recommendations from an internal or external audit of the survey audit program;  
or
- legislative amendments necessitate change.

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