



Assessment process for New South Wales minor works

FACT SHEET

Review of Environmental Factors

A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is completed before the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) undertakes an activity that is permitted without a more detailed environmental planning instrument such as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A REF is undertaken to meet the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

A REF examines likely environmental impacts of a proposal and helps to determine whether it is likely to significantly affect the environment.

If the impact is significant or the capital value of the project exceeds \$50 million, an EIS is required and the proposal may become State Significant Infrastructure requiring Ministerial approval.

If the impact is not significant and the capital value remains below \$50 million, ARTC may self-approve and undertake the activity in accordance with the REF.

A REF can be used for minor rail-related works which have a lower level of environmental and community impact and cost. This includes activities such as:

- ▶ investigations and preparatory works for more substantial projects
- ▶ removal of rail infrastructure facilities
- ▶ maintenance and repair of rail infrastructure facilities
- ▶ construction, operation and use of minor rail infrastructure facilities (including rail sidings, loops and signalling systems) in existing rail corridors.

Who decides which process should be followed?

To decide whether an EIS or REF is required for a particular project, we follow the requirements of the EP&A Act, its associated regulation, and the ARTC Code of Practice for environmental impact assessment of development proposals in NSW. ARTC can self-assess and approve certain works through a REF. The Code of Practice is approved by the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces under the EP&A Act.

Who carries out the review?

A REF is generally prepared by an environment planning and approvals expert specialising in environmental impact assessment, engaged by ARTC. The specialist also assesses whether the activity described in the REF is likely to significantly affect the environment or not. If the impact on the environment is not likely to be significant, the REF is reviewed and recommended for approval by an ARTC Environmental Manager, and then determined by an authorised ARTC Manager under the Code of Practice and EP&A Act.

What factors are covered by the review?

A REF describes the existing environment, identifies environmental impacts of the proposed works and defines appropriate mitigation measures to manage those impacts. If ARTC considers that a proposal is likely to substantially affect residential areas in the vicinity of that proposal or affect other areas, notification and/or public exhibition processes may be undertaken.

Step-by-step guide to a Review of Environmental Factors

- 1 Determine the process** – ARTC determines that the project does not exceed the threshold of \$50 million and significant impact under the EP&A Act, and a REF is required.
- 2 Preparation** – The REF is prepared by an environment planning and approvals specialist engaged by ARTC.
- 3 Review** – ARTC Environmental Officer reviews the REF and identifies if public exhibition is required.



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- 4 Exhibition (if needed)** – The REF may be exhibited online and in select locations such as local council offices relevant to the project for a minimum of 28 days. Anyone can submit a response to ARTC online or by post.
- 5 Response to submissions (if exhibition takes place)** – ARTC will address the responses received during public exhibition via a Submissions Report. As part of this process, ARTC may undertake further community engagement and impact assessment to support responses. Once all submissions are addressed, ARTC will publish the submissions report online.
- 6 Assessment** – Once the above steps are satisfied, an ARTC Environmental Officer will assess the project to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and make a recommendation for determination.



Want to know more?

ARTC is committed to working with landowners, communities, state and local governments as a vital part of our planning and consultation work, and we value your input. If you have any questions or comments, please let us know.

- 📞 1800 732 761
- ✉ inlandrailnsw@artc.com.au
- 📧 ARTC Inland Rail, GPO Box 14, Sydney NSW 2001

inlandrail.com.au



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The Australian Government is delivering Inland Rail through the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), in partnership with the private sector.

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