



Office of the
Environmental Protection Authority

The influence of social media in Australian EIA

A Western Australian Case Study

Anthony Sutton and Donna Weston

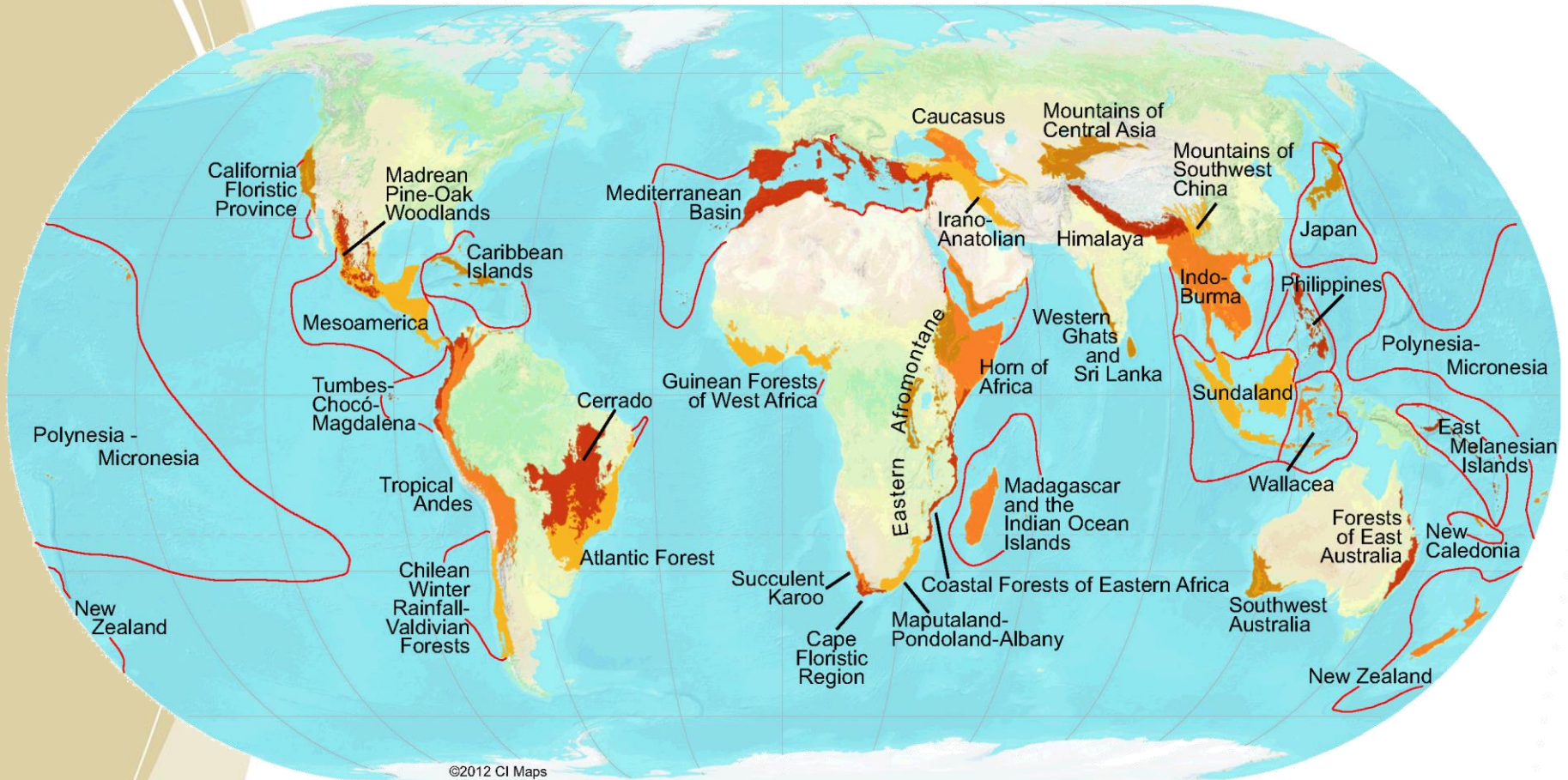
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Overview

- Global and Regional context
- Social media – the landscape
- The methodology – using a case study
- The Western Australian approach
- EIA and social media in 2014
- Analysis
- Conclusion



Global context



biodiversity hotspot

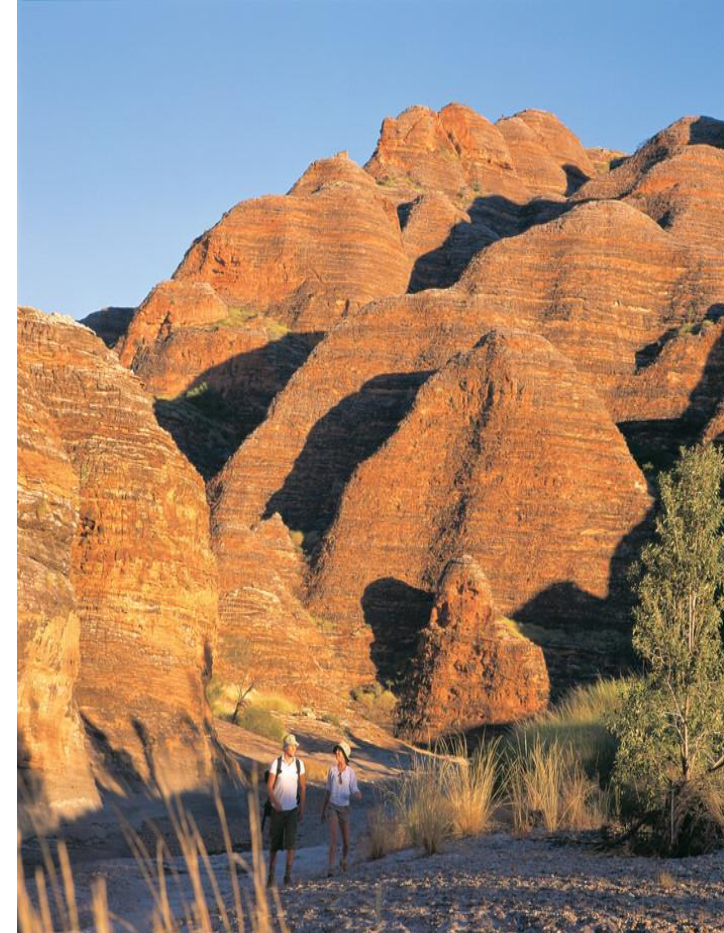
Regional Context - Western Australia



Meelup Beach, near Dunsborough



Salmon Holes, Albany



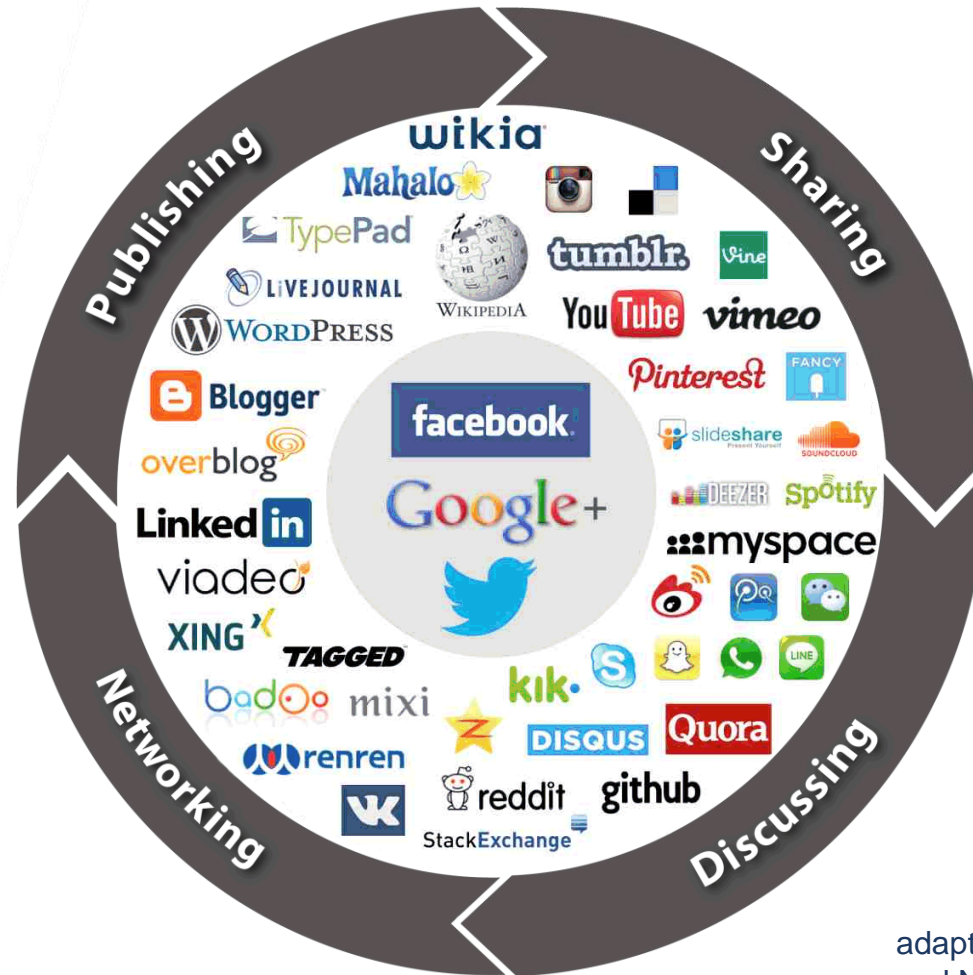
Purnululu National Park

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Broad social media landscape



adapted from Cromity, 2012
and Nagle and Pope, 2013

Why use a case study approach?

- “How” or “Why” questions
How effective is social media in positively influencing assessment processes and outcomes?
- Limited control over behavioural events
We had no control over the community’s use of or influence through social media.
- Focus on contemporary phenomenon within real-life context.
The focus was on the use of social media in relation to a number of assessments during 2014.

The Western Australian approach

Public opportunity to provide comment and submissions at defined stages during the assessment process, e.g:



- Three levels of assessment:
 - Public Environmental Review
 - Assessment on Proponent Information – A (readily managed)
 - Assessment on Proponent Information – B (environmentally unacceptable)

The Western Australian approach

The screenshot shows the EPA consultation hub website. At the top left is the EPA logo and the text 'ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'Consultation Hub' selected, and other options: 'Find Consultations', 'We Asked, You Said, We Did', and 'Mailing List Signup'. The main content area is titled 'EPA consultation and public comment' and includes a welcome message, a paragraph about public participation, and a note about appeals. Below the text are three tables: 'Forthcoming Consultations', 'Open Consultations', and 'Closed Consultations', each with an RSS icon.

Forthcoming Consultations	
No forthcoming consultations at this time.	

Open Consultations	
Title	Date Ends
Goldfields Highway	12 Apr 2015
Portlink Project - Main Roads Western Australia	2015
Public Environmental Review - Christmas Creek Iron Ore Mine Expansion	20 Apr 2015

Closed Consultations	
Title	Date Closed
Koombana Bay Marine Structures - South West Development Commission	7 Apr 2015
Orebody 31 Iron Ore Ore Mine Project - BHP Billiton Iron Ore	1 Apr 2015
Pilbara Iron Ore Project - Revised Proposal	30 Mar 2015
West Angelas - Revised Proposal (Deposit A west	27 Mar 2015

- The EPA's consultation hub:
- central point to manage all consultation activity;
 - create consultations and surveys;
 - publish and promote EIA consultations;
 - analyse and report on responses; and
 - feed back to the public.

[https:// consultation.epa.wa.gov.au](https://consultation.epa.wa.gov.au)

- Email autoresponse with unique ID for respondents to recover their submissions
- Subscriber mailing list for notification of any new items

Citizen Space

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The Western Australian approach

The screenshot shows the EPA's consultation hub interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the EPA logo and the text "ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY" and "Seven-day comment on new referral". Below this, there are four tabs: "Consultation Hub", "Find Consultations", "We Asked, You Said, We Did", and "Mailing List Signup". The main content area is titled "Jackson 4 Iron Ore Mine and Haul Road". It includes an "Overview" section with a brief description of the project, a "Related Documents" section with links to various reports and forms, and a "Feedback" section with three sub-sections: "We Asked", "You said", and "We did". On the right side, there is a "Contact" section with the name "Nyomi Bowers" and her contact information, a "Key Dates" section with the consultation period, and an "Other Information" section with details about the audience and interests.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY
Seven-day comment on new referral

Consultation Hub Find Consultations We Asked, You Said, We Did Mailing List Signup

Jackson 4 Iron Ore Mine and Haul Road

Overview

Polaris Metals Pty Ltd proposes Jackson 4 Iron Ore Mine and Haul Road. The proposal is to construct and operate an iron ore mine, haul road and mine infrastructure in the eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia, 50 kilometres north of Koolyanobbing.

Related Documents

- [Referral Form](#), 4.0 MB (PDF document)
- [Referral Document](#), 79.4 MB (PDF document)
- [Appendix 1 - Flora and Vegetation Assessment](#), 24.6 MB (PDF document)
- [Appendix 1a - Flora and Vegetation Assessment Species Site Matrix](#), 358.2 kB (PDF document)
- [Appendix 2 - Terrestrial and Subterranean Fauna Assessment](#), 10.0 MB (PDF document)
- [Appendix 3 - Endorsement of Botanical Survey Methods \(DPAW\)](#), 688.7 kB (PDF document)
- [Appendix 4 - Environmental Operating Procedures](#), 391.9 kB (PDF document)
- [Appendix 4a - Environmental Forms](#), 294.5 kB (PDF document)

Feedback

We Asked Public comment was invited on the referral to help the EPA determine the appropriate level of assessment.

You said There were 399 comments on the referral, most of which called for a level of API category B.

We did The EPA determined to assess the proposal at the level of API category A. The proposal is located on a low-lying outcrop of lower environmental value BIF. No rare or threatened species are present. Rehabilitation is to be managed by the DMP under the Mining Act.

Share This Consultation

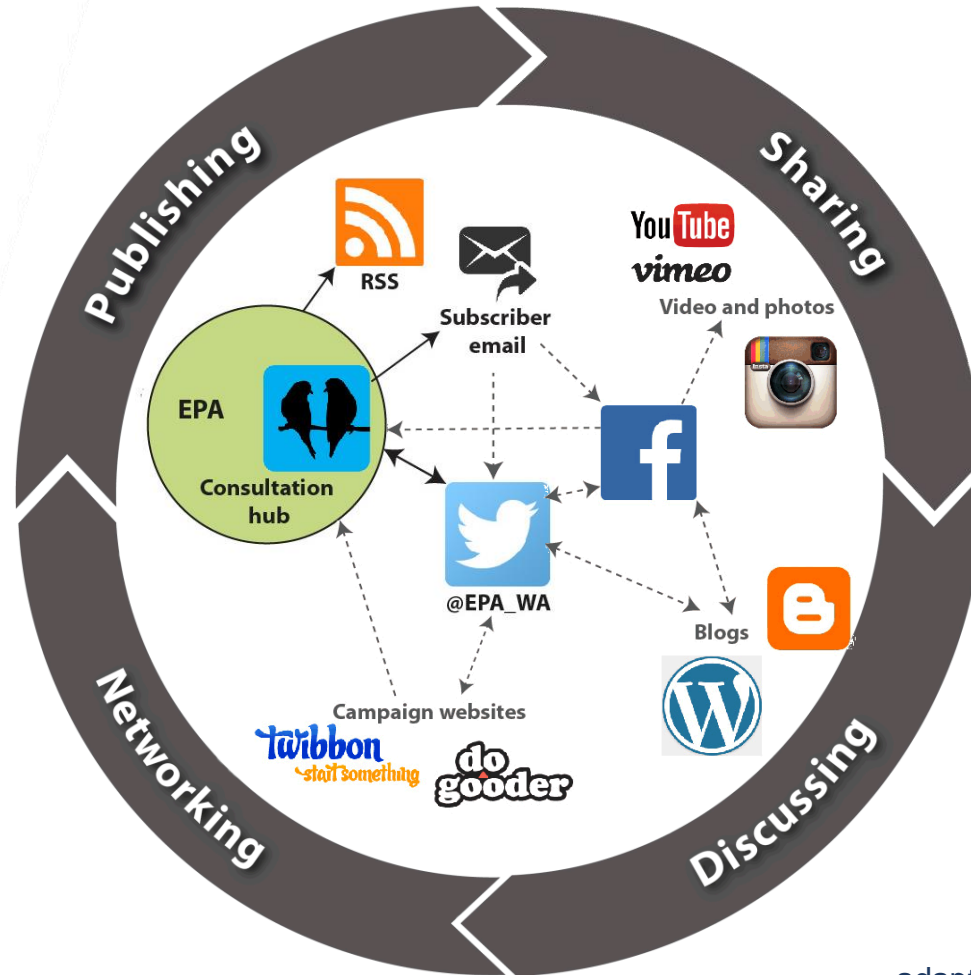
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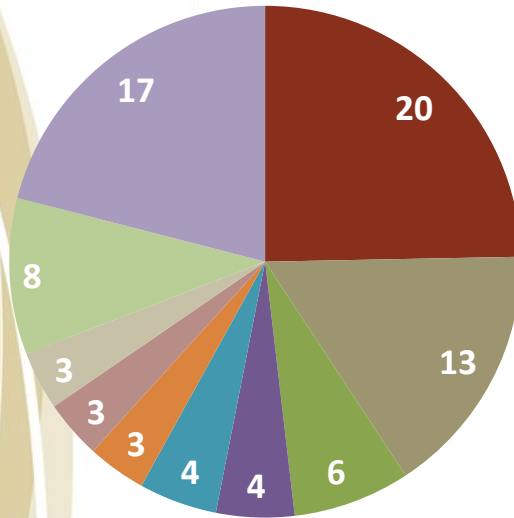
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The EPA's engagement in social media



adapted from Cromity, 2012
and Nagle and Pope, 2013

Social media in EIA in 2014



81 consultations

Infrastructure	178
Iron ore mining	569
Sand mining	27
Gold mining	209
Uranium	197
Oil and gas	45
Waste to energy	151
Shark mitigation	14,794
Clearing	27
Other	138

16,335 formal responses (hub)

Proforma responses

On-line campaigns and petitions on sharks (~25,000), iron ore mining on high biodiversity BIFs, uranium mining; organised community responses on (for example) gold mining, waste to energy



@EPA_WA
319 followers
271 tweets



re tweet™

26 tweets



214 conversations



#NoWASharkCull
1,496 followers
3,570 tweets

How effective is social media in influencing EIA?

Principles of EIA Best Practice (IAIA 1999)

Purposive	✓✓	Rigorous
Cost-effective and efficient	✓✓	Practical and relevant
Adaptive	✓✓	Focused
Participative	✓✓	Interdisciplinary and integrated
Credible	✓✓	Systematic
Transparent	✓✓	

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Conclusion

The Western Australian experience has shown that social media influences the EIA process through:

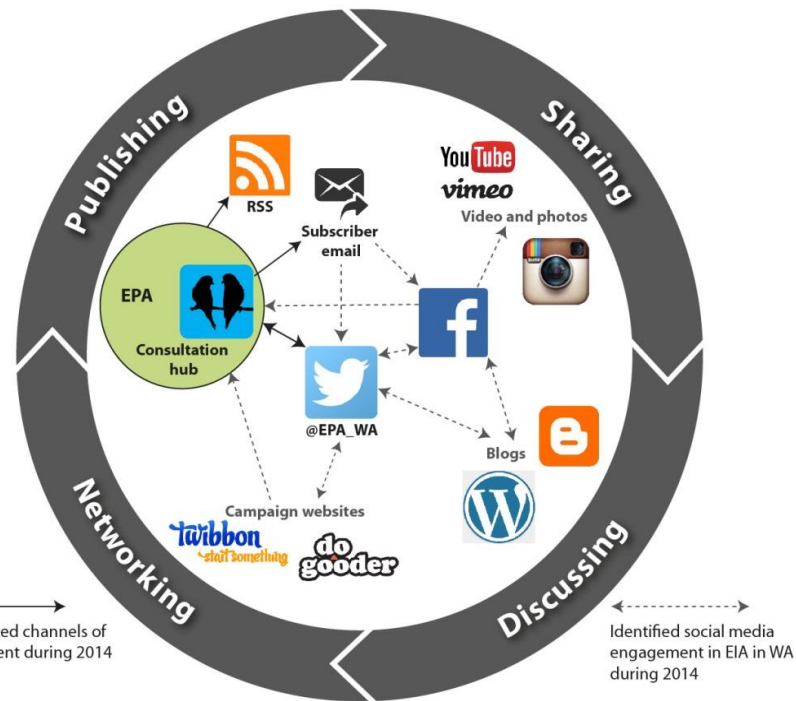
- i. communicating a clear purpose
- ii. enabling efficiency and cost-effectiveness
- iii. allowing greater adaptability
- iv. providing broader participation
- v. enhancing credibility
- vi. showing greater transparency



L'esperienza australiana occidentale ha dimostrato che i social media influenza il processo di valutazione dell'impatto ambientale attraverso:

- scopo chiaro
- efficiente e conveniente
- maggiore adattabilità
- partecipazione più ampia
- credibilità migliorare
- maggiore trasparenza

Take Home Message (or template)



Adapted from Cromity, 2012
and Nagle and Pope, 2013

Tailored for EPA in
Western Australia, 2014

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Grazie Mille !

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