

Engaging stakeholders in post-mining transition

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This paper responds to increasing requirements for consultation and engagement with mine planning, including for end-of-mine planning. It identifies characteristics and factors to consider in designing a consultation exercise and outlines different types of consultation processes that can be used to assess post-mining land use change. The paper compares the features of five models of stakeholder panels that may provide opportunities to engage stakeholders in assessing and managing the impacts of mine rehabilitation and in planning post-mining futures. These models are analysed using examples of existing consultation processes relevant to the resources sector in central Queensland (Table 1).

Table 1: Characteristics of select models of stakeholder panels

Model	Community Consultative Committee	Special Issue Group	Stakeholder Reference Committee	Expert advisory panel	Taskforce
Example	Rolleston Coal Community Reference Group (CRG)	Glencore Groundwater and Environment Reference Group (Clermont)	Gladstone Region LNG Community Consultative Committee	Fitzroy River Partnership Science Panel	Fitzroy River Water Quality Technical Working Group
WHO? Membership; appointment process. Number and type of people to include	Invited stakeholder representatives, mainly landholders and neighbours. Fluid numbers of invitees and appointees of the mining company	Representatives of those influenced by or able to influence actions and decisions about the issue (10-11 reps), mostly mining sector, agriculture and community. Appointment is by the mining company.	Representatives of a cross-section of sectors, for example: Companies (2 reps each), community, and government (12). Various relevant sectors appoint their representatives for two-year terms.	Independent specialists in 7-9 key fields or knowledge areas. Appointment is on annual rolling basis, and made by the Partnership, which is a mix of industry, community and government representatives.	Senior government officers as steering committee, co-opting advice from government officers and other key actors with specific expertise or interests (10-20). Appointment is by state government.
WHY? The 'purpose' or brief of the panel. Scope of the panel: Issue specific or general? Site-specific or regional?	Regular information exchange and discussion of issues. General issues, site-specific.	Managing issues of specific concern, providing a forum to raise questions and provide technical information for dissemination. Specific issue and site-specific.	Focused on identifying and managing the social impacts of major LNG developments. Two-way information sharing; voicing of the community's region-specific concerns and aspirations.	Guidance and review of reports and activities. Science advice and quality assurance. Issue specific – whole of harbour or catchment-level focus.	Specific problem solution. Collate advice and make recommendations about cumulative impacts of mining activities on water quality in a specific river Basin. Issue-specific; catchment focus.
HOW? Resourcing; meeting structure; and governance of panel.	Convened, resourced and run by mining company.	Independent Chair, formal meetings with agenda and minutes (publicly available). Expert advisors	Independent Chair, Minutes publicly available. Guest speakers attend for advice.	Independent Chair. Resourced by tri-sector partnership for technical and expert advice.	Chair from government, funded by government. Department staff provide technical support.

WHEN? At what stage, how often and for how long does the group operate?	Initiated during pre-construction planning. Several meetings per year over expected life of mine (~ 15 years).	Initiated in response to key issues. Standing committee with quarterly meetings	Standing Committee throughout 6 years of construction phase. Five-six meetings held per year	Initiated when parent group identifies need for additional specialist advice. Standing committee – usually meets 3-5 times per year.	Initiated in response to identified issue. Time limited – about 9 months. Usually with intensive period of meetings at short intervals
WHAT? Process the panel follows to work through options	Identifies relevant issues and information needs.	Identifies issues, expresses community perspectives, requests expert information and manages issues	Identifies issues, expresses range of community views.	Identifies issues, provides expert advice and technical consolidation.	Identifies issues, solicits expert information and recommends decisions to government.

Many of the tasks and competencies essential to impact assessment such as stakeholder analysis, risk assessment and monitoring and management measures are integral to collaborative planning for closure and post-mining land uses. However, no single process is likely to be suitable for holistically assessing and managing closure impacts in all situations. The type and conduct of the consultation and engagement process can follow a general sequence of steps and decisions while being situation-specific. An effective process seeks to incorporate the perceptions of potential future land users about the impacts that mining has had, the utility of ex-mining leases, potential socio-economic value and associated opportunities and risks. The formation and functioning of the various stakeholder panels involves five key considerations, which should be handled in ways sensitive to the specific context.

1. WHO to engage with

The first step is inviting participation by a diverse group of stakeholders based on a stakeholder analysis. As per Reed et al. (2009)'s definition, all of the sample models recognise stakeholders as a cross-section of predominantly local people who are potentially affected by closure and/or by decisions about future land use. Stakeholders are deemed to be those who have an interest in the issues (because of their legitimacy or stake in the outcome); who wield influence (because of their power or ability to affect the outcome) and/or have an imperative (in terms of needing timely attention to the matter) (Reed et al., 2009). From this group, a panel can be formed based on an appropriate number of those who: have deep knowledge about various aspects of local land uses and the socio-economic context; are connected to identifiable stakeholder groups; and are willing and available to participate in a potentially extended consultation process.

2. WHY the group will operate – purpose, scope, brief, objectives, issues, scale and focus.

The second step involves identifying the purpose of the panel and its reason for existence, following a classification such as that represented in the IAP2 spectrum (2006): inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. Identifying the purpose helps to clarify the relevant functions, the appropriate style of engagement, and the actions that can be taken. Such classification shows that there is little value in a stakeholder panel if the only functions are to inform or consult; collaborative processes are appropriate where the aim is to actively involve or empower. The purpose should also consider the general or specific scope and brief of the consultation. A sequence of questions to guide this consideration in the context of post-mining land use planning is provided in Table 2.

3. HOW to resource, structure and operate the group; reach decisions and action them

The third step is aligning the panel's purpose with the context in which a stakeholder panel might operate: this suggests not only the style of engagement but also the model of operation. There are a plethora of forms of stakeholder engagement that involve various combinations of objectives, functions, structures, problem definition and stakeholder empowerment. The form determines matters

such as the panel’s resourcing, meeting format, governance and decision-making processes, which are often captured in a Charter or Terms of Reference. Comparison with well documented and readily available models helps to select the most effective model for a stakeholder panel in given situations to achieve the desired benefits and purpose. Table 1 shows five samples, each one combining in an idiosyncratic fashion: local and regional input, expert information, the regulatory stages/ system and prevailing business practices. Most stakeholders participate in a voluntary capacity, though for some it may be part of their employment role and in a number of models, the independent chair position is remunerated.

4. WHEN in the expected life of the mine it is appropriate to involve stakeholders and what the timing of interactions should be.

As a fourth step, it is important for the panel to agree about timing – in multiple respects. The frequency of ‘meetings’, length of panel members’ ‘terms in office’; duration of the panel’s operation and alignment with various phases of mine life and regulatory processes should all be openly discussed by panel members. This will raise questions of panel renewal, capacity-building of panel members and continuity. Without attention to such details, panels risk losing impetus.

Table 2: Identifying the context in which a post-mining stakeholder panel might operate.

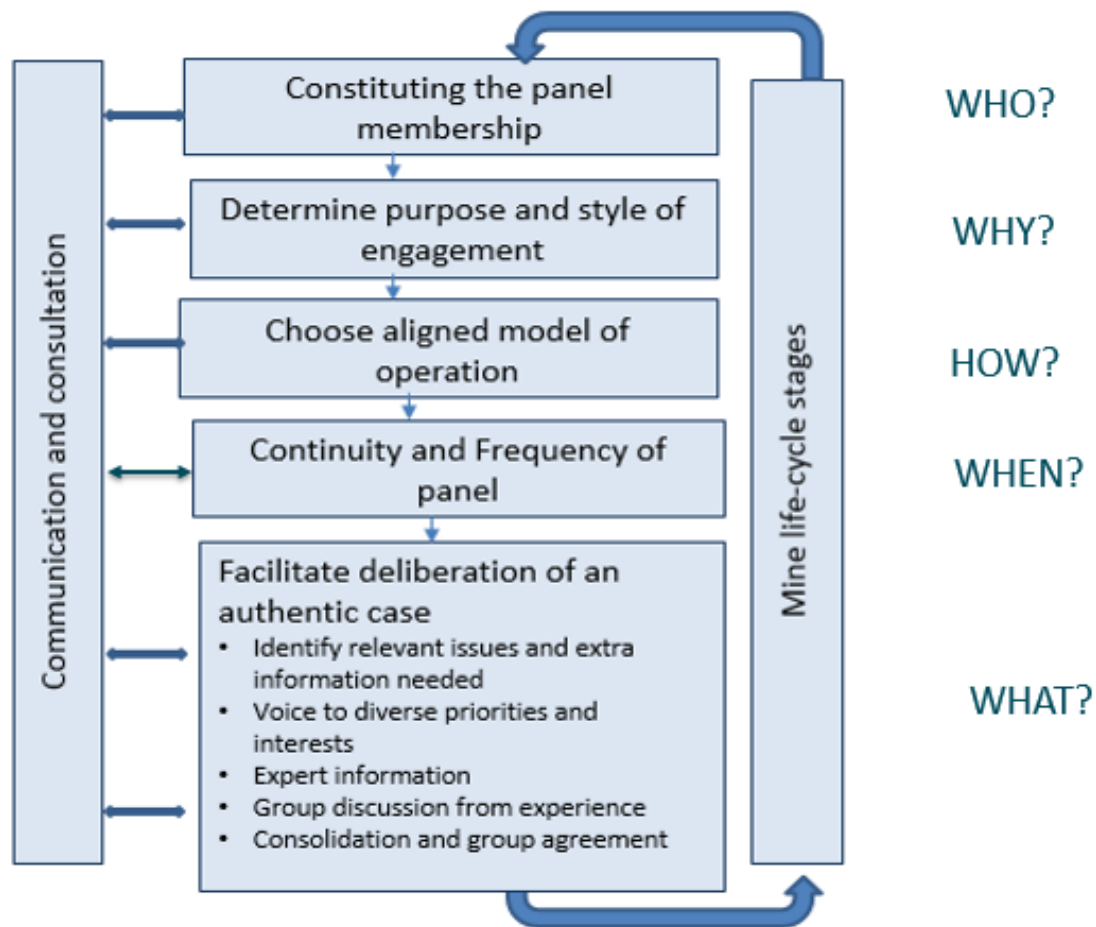
Question	Rationale/ principles (linked to theories of risk governance, SLTO and IAP2)
1. Do you have all the information needed to plan and work towards final land use?	Complex or uncertain issues will benefit from an exchange and pooling of extensive information and perspectives.
2. Are the potential options for future land use limited and the range of issues already defined?	When there is uncertainty or ambiguity it is beneficial to consider multiple options.
3. Is acceptance by local people critical for effective implementation of any plans for rehabilitation and post-closure land use?	In situations of public resistance or criticism it is valuable to provide opportunities to influence.
4. Is it reasonably certain that stakeholders and the government will accept unilateral decisions/ actions of the company?	Where the company has low trust, credibility and/or legitimacy it is important that others participate.
5. Are relevant stakeholders willing to engage in dialogue about future options and associated opportunities and risks?	When people/groups have divergent (or apparently incompatible) interests, values and goals, a stakeholder group and social learning can facilitate the development of mutual goals and acceptable trade-offs.
6. Would the quality of stakeholder and company input or future relations be improved if members learned more about the issues related to options after closure?	Giving stakeholders an opportunity to be heard and learn together helps to develop ‘relational capital’ which has value beyond the short-term.
7. Are relevant stakeholders in the company and community willing to take collective actions to implement any decisions?	Where conflict with or between stakeholder groups is minimal and there is a will to integrate knowledge and values, a collaborative approach is likely to be effective.
8. Are the company and stakeholders prepared to share power and responsibility for decisions and actions that may be taken to avoid or mitigate risks or enhance opportunities?	The risk-holder retains greater authority – to the extent that risks are shared and mutual trust and respect prevails, authority is equalised.

Sources: adapted from IAP2 (2006), IRGC (2012), and Lawrence and Deagan (2001).

Engaging stakeholders in adaptive management in collaboration with regulators and mining companies, via a process of long-term engagement among a cross-section of predominantly local people can contribute to sound management of the impacts of closure and a smooth transition to

alternative future uses. The selection and tailoring of a model of engagement will accord with different industry and closure planning needs.

Figure 1: Steps for forming and operating a workshop-based stakeholder panel to assess closure impacts and post-mining land use



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