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10.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter summarises the community consultation process undertaken by Waratah Coal during the preparation of the EIS, and includes recommendations for consultation and community engagement during the life of the project. A full report on the community consultation process and outcomes is in **Volume 5, Appendix 25**.

A draft SIMP has been prepared as part of the draft EIS material to demonstrate the mitigation and management strategies for the project proposal. (See **Volume 1, Chapter 9** Social Impact Management Plan). This chapter has been updated to reflect the amended program for the SIA process and SIMP.

Waratah Coal is committed to effective community engagement throughout the project's development and operational phases. This is seen as an important and necessary process to build and maintain relationships with impacted communities and other stakeholders; to contribute as appropriate to the sustainable development of local communities; and to therefore earn and maintain a social license to operate.

The initial public consultation program – prepared specifically for the implementation of the EIS – aimed to:

- identify project stakeholders (i.e. those individuals and organisations with an interest in the project);
- ensure stakeholders are aware of the project, what it entails, and the potential impacts;
- ensure stakeholders are aware of the project approval process;
- understand community attitudes towards the project (and attitudes towards the cumulative impact of multiple resource projects), including both concerns and opportunities for mutual benefit;
- ensure information on community attitudes (including concerns, and opportunities for mutual benefit) is made available to the relevant technical studies included in the EIS;
- facilitate public input to the EIS process; and
- build and strengthen relationships with stakeholders to facilitate effective community engagement in the longer term.

10.2 CONSULTATION APPROACH

A consultation plan was prepared during the initial phase of the EIS process, and included the following key steps:

- identify stakeholders;
- develop project materials:
 - an initial brochure outlining the project, the proponent and the EIS process;
 - an initial power point presentation describing the project, the proponent and the EIS process;
 - a series of maps showing the proposed mine layout, the proposed railway alignment and the proposed coal terminal layout;
 - a second brochure containing more detailed information on the project, the proponent and EIS process; and
 - a second (updated) PowerPoint presentation describing the project, the proponent, the EIS process and recent progress;
- develop a consultation program, which included:
 - a series of meetings with a range of Federal and State Government agencies;
 - formal meetings with the Barcaldine, Central Highlands, Isaac, Whitsunday and Mackay Regional Councils (and subsequently the Blackall-Tambo Regional Council);
 - public meetings in Barcaldine, Jericho, Alpha, Emerald, Clermont, Mt Coolon, Collinsville and Bowen;
 - follow-up meetings with organisations and individuals as part of the various technical studies included in the EIS;
 - one-on-one meetings with property owners (scheduled for early 2011); and
 - meetings with Indigenous groups as part of the cultural heritage studies being conducted;
- develop alternative communication channels:
 - a project website;
 - an email address;
 - a 1800 free call number; and
 - a free post comment form;
- ensure input from the public consultation process to each of the relevant technical studies;

- report back to key stakeholders on the results of the public consultation process and EIS; and
- assign responsibilities within Waratah Coal for all stages of the public consultation process.

Waratah Coal has also had a representative based at Alpha since August 2008. The site representative has facilitated the exchange of information and promoted the various mechanisms to access information or provide comment.

10.3 CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

A large number of stakeholders were engaged during the EIS, including elected representatives, federal and state government agencies, local councils, Indigenous representatives, the private sector, other public and private organisations, and local residents. Around 240 people attended 15 public meetings held in either June or September 2010. In addition:

- Waratah Coal has received more than 500 emails during the EIS period;
- Waratah Coal has received, on average, 20 phone calls per day (generally seeking information on the project or registering interest as a supplier or prospective employee);
- approximately 600 suppliers expressed interest in the provision of goods or services;
- more than 1,000 job seekers expressed interest in employment; and
- over the past year, a newspaper article has been published in either a major or regional newspaper, or radio program aired on Waratah Coal and / or the project within Queensland, on average, every second day.

The public consultation process has not only supported a range of technical studies included in the EIS, but has directly contributed to the development of the project. The clearest example of this has been the suggestions by the BRC for shared infrastructure, which is being considered by Waratah Coal in the project design.

10.3.1 FINDINGS OF CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Results from the public consultation process focus on the general community and target four key aspects:

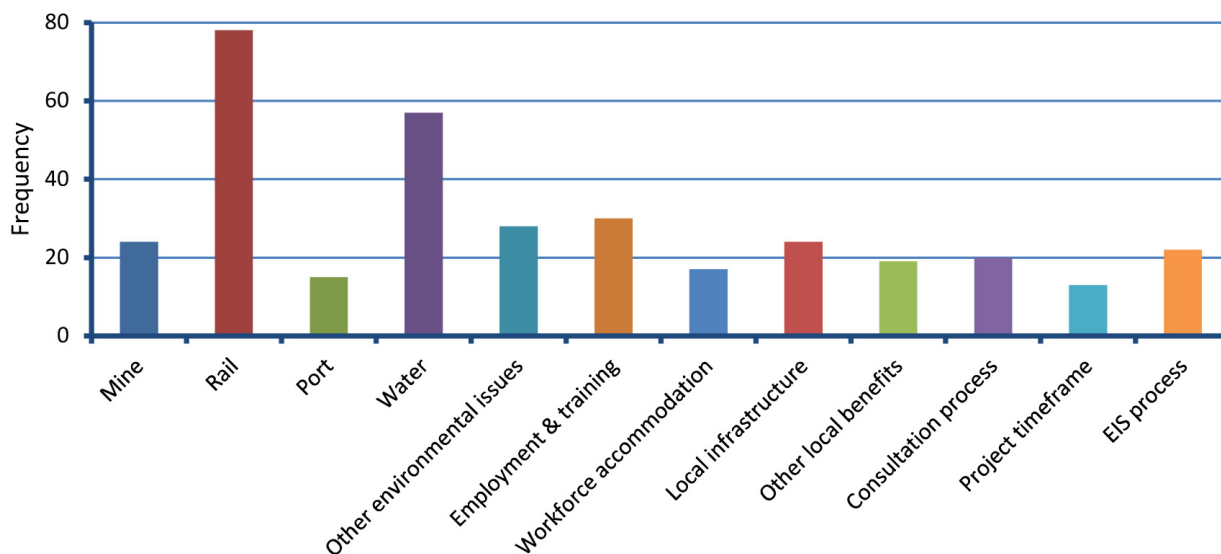
10.3.1.1 The level of awareness and understanding of the project

The level of awareness of the project varied significantly within the project area. Residents in the vicinity of the mine (particularly Alpha and Jericho) had a much higher level of awareness of the project than residents in other locations, but having limited mine experience, had relatively less knowledge of mine operations or potential impacts. Residents of Alpha and Jericho had a much better appreciation of the different mining operations being developed in the Galilee Basin, whereas residents of those communities in the vicinity of the proposed railway and port appeared to have some awareness of the proposed development in the Galilee Basin, along with a relatively high level of understanding of the impacts of coal mining, but less understanding of the individual projects. It is likely that some people living in the vicinity of the proposed railway, and in the Bowen area, still confuse the project with projects proposed by Hancock Coal or other proponents.

10.3.1.2 The main issues and concerns with the project

A wide range of issues were raised during the public meetings. As shown in **Figure 1**, the main issues raised during the public meetings related to the railway (approximately 20% of all queries) and the impact of the mine on ground and surface water (approximately 15% of all queries). For the railway, the queries focused on the proposed alignment, rail and train details, and whether one or two railway lines would be constructed.

Figure 1. Main issues raised during 15 public meetings held in June and September 2010



The main concerns with the project in the vicinity of the mine, rail and port, can be summarised as follows:

Mine:

- potential impacts on groundwater;
- infrastructure and other benefits for Alpha; and
- the risk of Alpha becoming a ‘mining town’.

Rail:

- the actual rail alignment;
- whether there will be one or two railway lines; and
- the impact of the railway on property management and cattle operations.

Coal Terminal:

- the potential benefits of the project for residents of Bowen; and
- environmental impacts on the Abbot Point wetlands and nearby marine areas.

Waratah Coal has responded to all major concerns and the response has been incorporated in the SIA and other technical studies that comprise the EIS.

10.3.1.3 Attitudes towards the project

Generally speaking, the majority of people support the development of the project, based on expectations for increased local employment and business opportunities and the development of local infrastructure and improvements to public services. However, this support is conditional on:

- adequate environmental practices, particularly in relation to groundwater, (in the vicinity of the mine), surface water (downstream, from the mine) and impacts on wetlands and the marine environment (Abbot Point and surrounds);
- the provision of improved infrastructure and services, particularly in the Alpha and Bowen areas; and
- adequate measures to avoid the negative aspects of mine development, particularly in Alpha, that are typically associated with a mining town (eg. a high proportion of FIFO or Drive-in / Dive-out (DIDO) workers, many of whom are male and who do not contribute to the community but inflate accommodation costs and contribute to alcohol and other social problems, and which in turn increases the workload of local service providers).

To ensure that infrastructure and services are improved as a result of mine development, the majority of people in the project area believe that a proportion of mine royalties, or some other financial benefits, should be allocated specifically to the area impacted by mining.

Many people from Collinsville are less supportive of the project and of FIFO operations in particular, although this largely stems from issues relating to the existing coal mines on the outskirts of the town, and the existing railway line, which passes through the town.

While the general public contains both people who are for and against mine development, the majority of property owners who will potentially be impacted by the railway are not supportive:

- a railway will disrupt grazing practices;
- a railway will disrupt the natural serenity of the grazing properties; and
- the two proposed railways are causing substantial uncertainty and are preventing both property development and the sale of properties. Thus, property owners are to a substantial degree, forced into a period of stagnation, in which they can do very little until decisions are made in relation to both the Waratah Coal and Hancock railways.

10.3.1.4 Suggestions to enhance the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts resulting from the project

Suggestions from local councils included:

- a plan to improve infrastructure in Alpha;
- the use of mining royalties to finance Alpha's development;
- maximising the number of local apprentices engaged by Waratah Coal;
- incentives to attract mine staff to reside in the local area (including regional centres such as Emerald); and
- the preparation of a regional business development strategy (focusing on the mine area and nearby regional centres).

Suggestions made during the public meetings included:

- a single railway line to serve all Galilee coal projects;
- royalties or some other benefits from mining to be returned to the areas impacted by mining;
- a local housing scheme, in which project employees are provided subsidised housing if they chose to live in the local area (e.g. Alpha, Bowen or Collinsville);
- assistance be provided to graziers to help them effectively plan for the impacts of the railway on their property;
- an overall development plan is prepared for the Alpha-Bowen corridor; and
- a long term source of funding is provided to cater for an enhanced level of community and social infrastructure and services in the vicinity of the mine.

10.3.2 CONSULTATION EFFECTIVENESS

Public consultation is an ongoing process. The public consultation described in this report covers a period of around six months during the preparation of the EIS. The consultation process was difficult due to the large social and cultural area of influence, and in most areas, the number of other large-scale projects being developed. However, the wide range of consultation options and the project's relatively high profile, helped ensure:

- a wide range of project stakeholders were identified;
- most stakeholders are aware of the project and what it entails;
- most stakeholders are aware of the project approval process;
- Waratah Coal has a good understanding of community attitudes towards both (i) the project and (ii) the cumulative impact of multiple large-scale resource projects;
- information on community attitudes has been made available to and incorporated in the relevant technical studies included in the EIS; and
- relationships with stakeholders have been established and strengthened.

The vast majority of participants commented favourably on the extent of information provided by Waratah Coal during the public meetings, and in particular, the level of detail provided. Participants also responded favourably to the number of senior staff from Waratah Coal that attended the public meetings, and welcomed their lead in the presentations and question / answer sessions. Participants at Jericho and Mt Coolon also expressed their appreciation that Waratah Coal made the effort to hold public meetings in locations that are more often than not overlooked during public consultation processes.

Despite achieving a reasonably good level of understanding on the project, its timeframe, and the EIS process, there is no doubt some confusion remaining over the following issues:

- the proposal for two separate railway lines and who is responsible for their approval, and when this will occur;
- the different port proposals under consideration (X50, X80, X110 and MCF) and who will decide which proceeds, and when;

- the proposal, from the BRC, for the development of Alpha, and who is responsible for determining whether the proposal will proceed or not, and when this decision, if any, will occur; and
- the relationship and / or coordination, if any, between the numerous EIS' being conducted for different large-scale resource projects, and in particular, the mitigation strategies contained within each.

10.3.3 FUTURE CONSULTATION STRATEGIES

An agreed program with the Government has been agreed place to facilitate further consultation with the stakeholders and the community in parallel with the supplementary EIS process. As part of this program the following activities will be undertaken:

- Separate meetings with DoC (Housing), DETA, DCS, QLD Health and DLGP
- Presentation to the councils/Government agencies and the public in Barcaldine, Jericho, Alpha, Emerald, Clermont, Mt Coolon, Collinsville, Bowen and Blackall. There will also be presentations to Government agencies in Mackay and Rockhampton (including DIP Regional in Rockhampton).
- Meeting with the landowner consultation team for discussions on relevant mitigation strategies.
- Revision of Action Plans and the preparation of a detailed SIMP.
- Update the SIA and subsequent presentation to the SIA unit within DIP and/or the Cross-Agency Reference Group.

A third round of public meetings is scheduled for late 2011 in parallel with the supplementary EIS process. These meetings will highlight the main issues / concerns raised, the predicted impacts (both positive and negative), and how they will be addressed, and facilitate public input to the EIS process. Meetings will be held in Barcaldine, Jericho, Alpha, Emerald, Clermont, Mt Coolon, Collinsville, Bowen and Blackall.

In addition to the public meetings, Waratah Coal will commence a formal consultation process with property owners in early 2011.

Waratah Coal aims to maintain effective dialogue and strengthen relationships with a range of stakeholders throughout the construction, operational and

decommissioning phases of the project. This shall be achieved through the following initiatives:

- providing information on the project on a regular basis;
- establishing a grievance mechanism for employees, contractors and external stakeholders;
- Updating the SIMP and actively involving stakeholders in the implantation and monitoring of the plan. Additional work is required for the SIMP by the end of July 2011 which will include consultation with stakeholders in Brisbane, Barcaldine, Alpha, Bowen and Rockhampton. participating in community development planning initiatives in cooperation with local councils, local communities, government agencies and other proponents.

10.4 COMMITMENTS

Waratah Coal has made commitments to undertake a third round of public meetings in late 2011 (to run concurrently with the supplementary EIS process) and to engage with stakeholders by the end of July 2011. In addition, Waratah Coal commits to (further commitments are outlined in the Social Impact Management Plan, **Chapter 10, Volume 1**):

- continuing its existing information hotline (1800 number);
- providing information on the project on their website and updates this information periodically;
- Providing support to the BRC for the preparation of a development plan for Alpha (if requested)preparing periodic project updates and disseminates these among key stakeholders during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the project; and
- establishing a grievance mechanism for staff, contractors and other parties.