Introduction

The community engagement plan template has been developed in consultation with the mining and extractives industry to assist in developing a community engagement plan as required by the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* and associated regulations. The template has been written to apply to both minerals and extractives industries.

This guidance note aims to assist you in completing the community engagement plan template. This guidance is intended as a starting point and should be adapted and expanded upon to suit site specific conditions and circumstances.

Note that any variation to a community engagement plan that forms part of an approved work plan will require an approval of a variation to the work plan. It is therefore recommended that the community engagement plan be written carefully to limit the likelihood of minor changes needing to be made to it in the future.

Using the Template

Cover Page

Insert the licence/authority number, PLN number, your company name, logo, the name of the project or site, the date of the plan, and, if desired, a relevant photo or image.

Part 1: CEO or Company Representative Statement

Earth Resources Regulation encourages you to provide an opening statement by a senior management representative demonstrating the company’s commitment to effective community engagement.

Parts 2-4: Introduction, site description, background

The plan should be written as a stand-alone document and provide:

* a brief description of the operation/proposal
* details of what is being mined/extracted
* location and site maps – including nearest receptors such as residential areas, schools etc.
* a summary of any prior engagement that has taken place with stakeholders

Part 5: Legislative framework

The legislative framework governing stakeholder engagement should be referenced in the plan so that its readers understand the legislative context of the community engagement plan.

The template includes a list of the relevant sections of legislation including the regulations for both mineral and extractive industries. Users should review the list and delete section/s that do not apply to their plan.

Part 6: Aim and objectives

Identify the purpose of the plan including aims and objectives of the engagement.

* An aim is a statement outlining the purpose of the community engagement plan. An example is ‘we want to be known as a good corporate citizen within the greater Bendigo area’. An ideal community engagement plan has multiple aims.
* An objective outlines the steps that you will take to achieve the aim. An example can be ‘we will respond to all complaints within 48 hours of receiving them’.

Aims and objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

Part 7: Stakeholder and Issues Analysis

***Identification***

A community engagement plan focuses on your engagement with stakeholders, individuals or groups who will be or are likely to be impacted by your operations or proposal. It must identify any community likely to be affected by the operations, their attitudes and expectations, and an analysis of community concerns or expectations.

Mineral licence community engagement plans must identify how you will register, document, manage and respond to complaints and other communications from members of the community in relation to the operations.

Work authority community engagement plans must outline how you will register, document and analyse community feedback, consider community concerns or expectations and respond to complaints and other communications from members of the community in relation to operations.

The *Community Engagement Guidelines for Mining and Mineral Exploration in Victoria* found at <http://earthresources.vic.gov.au/earth-resources-regulation/licensing-and-approvals/minerals/guidelines-and-codes-of-practice/community-engagement-guidelines-for-mining-and-mineral-exploration> outline the level of stakeholder analysis that is expected in a community engagement plan. The principles referred to in those guidelines are relevant to community engagement plans for both mining licences and extractive industry work authorities.

Stakeholders are not limited to those who are geographically located nearby (i.e. within 5km radius of the site). When identifying stakeholders and their potential issues of concern, proponents need to think about possible flow on effects, or issues, from the operation. For example, ‘haulage trucks using the same roads as a school bus’ or ‘the impact on a nearby public nature reserve that is used by the wider community’.

***Issues analysis***

Stakeholder issues in this context relate to the activities or impacts that will be of interest to the identified stakeholders. Issues may be positive or negative. As an example, updating roads may result

in a positive outcome for council and road users. Be cognisant of the difference between actual and perceived impacts. This should be factored in to the issues analysis.

Stakeholders should be assigned a rating which outlines the ‘impact of operations on the stakeholder’. For each issue or concern identified, where possible, the plan should identify controls to lower the potential impact.

Table 1 in the template provides an example of a stakeholder issues analysis using the guidance outlined in Step 3 of the Community Engagement Guidelines for Mining and Mineral Exploration in Victoria. This is an example only and can be modified as appropriate.

The level of detail required and the number of stakeholder and issues will depend on the location and nature of the operation. An isolated operation with few neighbours may not have a lot of stakeholders compared to one closer to a township.

Part 8: Communication

The community engagement plan must provide an overview of the types of engagement activities you propose to conduct as part of your engagement plan, how complaints will be managed and detail how you will provide information to the community. You should include all types of activities that you may undertake to give yourself flexibility as issues arise.

You must also include a proposal for receiving feedback from the community in relation to your activities authorised under your licence or work authority.

The part should also demonstrate you have considered how stakeholders / stakeholder groups prefer to be communicated with, such as methods including emails, meetings or phone calls.

Part 9: Stakeholder engagement plan

This part forms an action plan for community engagement, bringing together all the previous parts of this plan in a consolidated approach.

Table 3 in the template provides an example of how this can be clearly set out to identify stakeholders, their areas of interest, activities, the controls to be communicated to impacted stakeholders, and the timing of when these will take place.

Proponents are also encouraged to refer to the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for further information about levels of engagement and how these apply to your planned activities <https://www.iap2.org.au/About-Us/About-IAP2-Australasia-/Spectrum>

**A note on risk-based work plans**

If you alter a community engagement plan that forms part of an approved work plan, then a work plan variation is required. The requirements for a community engagement plan within a work plan or a work plan variation are as per the relevant regulations:

*New work plan:*

* Section 40(3) of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* and regulation 46 of the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) (Mineral Industries) Regulations 2019 (for a licensee).
* Section 77G(3)(e) of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* and regulation 12 of the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) (Extractive Industries) Regulations 2019 (for an extractive industry work authority holder).

*Work plan variation:*

* Section 41(2) of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* and regulation 48(1) of the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) (Mineral Industries) Regulations 2019 (for a licensee).
* Section 77H(2) of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* and regulation 12 of the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) (Extractive Industries) Regulations 2019 (for an extractive industry work authority holder).

Part 10: Complaints management process

The community engagement plan must outline how you will register, document and respond to complaints and other communications from members of the community in relation to the operations.

Information on best practice complaints management can be found on the Victorian Ombudsman website at:

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/35615/Better-practice-guide-to-complaint-handling.pdf>

<https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/About/Policies/Policies/Unreasonable-Complainant-Conduct>

If you find you are not making progress with some stakeholders, you should consider independent mediation or engaging a third-party community engagement specialist.

Part 11: Evaluation

Evaluation of the plan is dependent on the scale of the operation and should reflect the level of activity you have undertaken. For example, for a small site in a remote location, activity would likely be very low so an annual review might be appropriate.

An evaluation of your community engagement plan should examine whether the objectives outlined in Part 6 of the plan have been met.

There is no set timeframe for evaluation but good practice would see you undertake an annual evaluation of your plan against your objectives.

Part 12: Contact Details

Provide the relevant contact name and details.

Further information

Further information about consultation and engagement can be found at: https://earthresources.vic.gov.au/community-and-land-use/consultation-engagement

If you have specific questions about your operations or proposal, please contact Earth Resources Regulation via the following details:

Stakeholder Relations Team, Earth Resources Regulation

Telephone: 1800 366 356 or Email: ERRFeedback@ecodev.vic.gov.au