

6. Stakeholder Engagement

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the Stakeholder engagement that has been carried out during project development. It describes the potential social, environmental and economic issues, impacts and benefits of the Project identified by stakeholders and the community.

A detailed Public Consultation report is provided in Appendix E. The potential impacts and / or benefits and associated mitigation measures identified in this chapter contribute to the Community component of the project risk assessment undertaken in Chapter 5. The project risk assessment includes consequence, likelihood and residual risk ratings for community impact after management measures are implemented.

6.1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of consultation was to inform stakeholders and the broader community of the Project, actively seek their involvement in the environmental impact assessment, and report back on how this input was considered in the Project's outcomes. This aim was supported by the following objectives:

- ▶ establish a two-way flow of information, designed to meet community, government and the Vista Gold's requirements in achieving a transparent, meaningful and appropriate consultation process;
- ▶ communicate detailed project information in an easy to interpret format;
- ▶ provide opportunities for local and regional communities, and other stakeholders to identify potential issues, impacts and mitigation measures to be considered as part of the Draft EIS; and
- ▶ build community understanding of the environmental impact assessment process.

6.1.2 Consultation Planning

A Consultation Plan was developed to guide effective and timely delivery of Draft EIS related consultation activities. The Plan identified:

- ▶ the types and timing of activities to be undertaken;
- ▶ identification of key stakeholder and community representatives;
- ▶ integration with other Draft EIS activities and the project development process;
- ▶ consultation responsibilities;
- ▶ communication protocols; and
- ▶ reporting and feedback arrangements.

Consultation commenced in early 2011 and was undertaken in stages to coincide with key Draft EIS milestones (Figure 6-1). Stages 1 and 2 below have been completed. Stages 3 and 4 will be undertaken following the release of the Draft EIS for public comment.

	Q1 2011	Q1 2011 – Q2 2013	Q2 2013 – Q3 2013	Q3 2013 – Q4 2013
STAGE	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
	Commencement of Draft EIS process	Draft EIS Development	Public Exhibition of Draft EIS	Evaluation and EIS Conclusion
Consultation Activities	Stakeholder identification Conduct preliminary issue / risk assessment Document review Prepare Stakeholder Consultation Plan Conduct Government agency consultations Conduct preliminary community and key stakeholder consultations	Conduct community information sessions Distribute project information materials (fact sheets) Conduct project briefings and focus group meetings Manage project telephone hotline, email address and stakeholder database Respond to stakeholder comments in a timely manner Analyse stakeholder comments to inform Draft EIS investigations Social Impact Assessment consultation activities	Promote public exhibition period including public displays and community information sessions Analyse public submissions and draft responses	Close out activities Consultation evaluation
Ongoing stakeholder consultation and monitoring of feedback				
Deliverables the Regulator requires		Prepare Stakeholder Consultation Report and Social Impact Management Plan for Draft EIS	Prepare Supplement Report to the Draft EIS addressing community feedback from the Draft EIS public exhibition period	

Figure 6-1 Draft EIS Consultation Stages and Timeframes

6.1.3 Consultation Methodology

Consultation with stakeholders and the community occurred through a variety of methods during development of the Project. Consultation enabled stakeholders and the public to be informed of the Project and to communicate their opinions, concerns and ambitions for the Project and the environment. The approach included meetings with the Traditional Owners, Northern Land Council, the Northern Territory Government, presentations to the Northern Territory Industry Capability Network and at local Mining Industry Conferences, and public meetings and exhibitions in Katherine and Pine Creek.

Consultation and engagement strategies were developed in accordance with the core values and principles of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) (IAP2 2007), the Australian Minerals Council’s Enduring Value: The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development (2005) and the International Finance Corporation’s Stakeholder Engagement: A good practice handbook for companies doing business in emerging markets (IFCSE 2007).

Consultation will continue during the remaining project planning, construction, operation and closure phases in accordance with a stakeholder consultation plan and Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP). The process of consultation planning identified categories of stakeholders including Federal Government Departments, Northern Territory Government Departments, Local Government, potentially affected landowners, local business and residents, Indigenous groups, Traditional Owners, community interest groups, industry representatives, environmental groups, media and surrounding communities.

Key stakeholders for the Project are summarised in Table 6-1 below.

Table 6-1 Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder Category	Representatives
Federal Government	
Federal Government Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ SEWPaC
Elected Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Member for Goyder ▶ Member for Katherine
Northern Territory Government	
Government Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ DME (formerly DoR) ▶ Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services ▶ Department of Lands and Planning ▶ Department of Health ▶ Department of Lands Planning and the Environment (DLPE) and NT EPA (formerly NRETAS) ▶ Department of Chief Minister ▶ Department of Business ▶ Department of Treasury and Finance ▶ Department of Business Employment ▶ AAPA
Local Government	
Katherine Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Mayor ▶ CEO ▶ Aldermen ▶ Key Council Officers ▶ Economic Development Manager
Roper-Gulf Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Mayor ▶ CEO ▶ Aldermen ▶ Key Council Officers
Victoria-Daly Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Mayor

Stakeholder Category	Representatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CEO ▶ Aldermen ▶ Key Council Officers
Local Communities	
Directly Affected Landholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Landholders directly affected by the Project
Local Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Katherine ▶ Pine Creek ▶ Indigenous communities (Werenbun, Rockhole, Binjari, Gorge Camp, Kalano, Eva Valley etc.)
Other Key Stakeholders	
Emergency and Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Police Service ▶ Ambulance and Emergency Services ▶ Fire and Rescue Service ▶ Katherine Hospital & Health Service ▶ Private Health Providers
Utility Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Power and Water Corporation
Indigenous Groups and Traditional Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Jawoyn Association ▶ Northern Land Council ▶ Nitmiluk National Park Board of Management
Community, Business and Industry Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Katherine Chamber of Commerce ▶ Minerals Council of Australia – Northern Territory Division ▶ Amateur Fisherman's Association of the Northern Territory ▶ Mt Todd Mine Site Rehabilitation Reference Group ▶ Katherine Land Care Group
Environmental Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Environment Council Northern Territory
Media	
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Katherine Times
TV / Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ABC Radio, Katherine Community Radio

6.1.4 Consultation Tools

Consultation tools used throughout the Draft EIS process were:

- ▶ factsheets;
- ▶ email;
- ▶ telephone;

- ▶ printed media;
- ▶ community updates;
- ▶ internet;
- ▶ Facebook;
- ▶ community information sessions; and
- ▶ face to face meetings.

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets were prepared to provide regular information on the Project and to report on progress. These were made available at public events and as downloads from the Mt Todd website. Fact sheets to date have provided information on Vista Gold, Mt Todd mine site, environment, employment and the Draft EIS. Fact sheets provided information on the Draft EIS process at two Draft EIS milestones as follows:

- ▶ EIS fact sheet 1 – Project commencement and Katherine Show Stand (July 2011); and
- ▶ EIS fact sheet 2 – Release of Draft EIS Guidelines and update on preliminary Draft EIS studies (September 2011).

Fact sheets were distributed through the Katherine Town Council offices, made available at key events and advertised through the Mt Todd website.

Email and Telephone

A project-specific email address and freecall telephone information line was established and will be maintained for the duration of the Draft EIS consultation process. The fact sheets and contact channels provided access to project information, a means to raise issues and discuss concerns about the Project and enabled all questions, concerns and issues to be captured, reviewed and responded to.

Printed Media

Editorial coverage in local newspapers was undertaken to inform the community about the Project and upcoming Draft EIS consultation activities. This was undertaken as a component of the Stage 2 consultation from September 2011.

Community Updates

Since October 2012, regular half page community update advertisements have been published in the NT News and Katherine Times fortnightly. The community updates aim to provide the general community with key information on the Project, particularly on issues being raised by stakeholders in the public domain. Community updates are also available on the Mt Todd website.

Website

The Mt Todd website (www.mttodd.com.au) provided a portal for stakeholders to access information about the proponent, the Project, Draft EIS process and consultation opportunities. The website was periodically updated as Draft EIS preparation progressed.

Records of all consultation enquiries were maintained. Details included name of person, contact details, nature of query and follow-up actions. Over 60 enquiries were received up until December 2012.

Community Information Sessions

Three rounds of Community Information Sessions were held to coincide with Draft EIS milestones:

- ▶ Stage 1 – Draft EIS commencement, Project Introduction and Community Views Survey in Katherine during July 2011;
- ▶ Stage 2 – Draft EIS development, including an update on preliminary technical findings in Katherine and Pine Creek in September 2011; and more recently, meetings with the Mt Todd Rehabilitation Group and two additional community meetings in Katherine
- ▶ Stage 3 – Draft EIS finalisation and project update.

During Stage 1 and over the course of the consultation program government agency briefings were conducted and a briefing on the Project was provided to the Katherine Town Council and Roper-Gulf Shire Council.

The following consultation was undertaken with Indigenous stakeholders:

- ▶ Vista Gold is directly negotiating with the Jawoyn Association on matters relating to the Jawoyn shareholding interests in the Project;
- ▶ indigenous groups and communities were invited to participate in the community information sessions undertaken for the Draft EIS through public notices and community board notices and also through the Jawoyn Association and Northern Land Council;
- ▶ specific consultation was undertaken with Traditional Owners as part of the Cultural Heritage investigations and Social Impact Assessment; and
- ▶ distribution of project information through key organisations including the Jawoyn Association and Northern Land Council.

DLPE and NT EPA (formerly NRETAS) Meetings

Representatives of the Project met with representatives from DLPE and NT EPA (formerly NRETAS) on a number of occasions to outline proposed consultation processes and identify any relevant matters for consideration through the EIS.

6.2 Results – the Major Themes of the Consultation Process

During the consultation program, participants identified a range of potential social, environmental and economic impacts of the Project. Almost all stakeholders strongly supported the Project on the basis of economic and employment benefits for Katherine.

Although feedback differed between localities and stakeholder groups, a number of consistent themes emerged. The identification of issues, impacts and benefits have informed the Social Impact Assessment and have been incorporated into other technical studies as part of the Draft EIS process.

6.2.1 Housing and Accommodation

Almost all stakeholders consulted identified the current shortage in housing and accommodation in Katherine and Pine Creek and the potential for the Project to exacerbate this unless additional housing is provided for the project workforce and projected population increase. Stakeholders cited how difficult and expensive it is to find housing currently and that this issue already impacts on key services provision. Katherine Town Council representatives highlighted the availability of land in east Katherine as providing

future opportunities for new residential development but indicated that this land still needs to be planned and released by DLPE. On 5 June 2013 DLPE released 100 lots totalling 19ha in Katherine East. This is the first stage release of a 52ha site identified for development, and further releases are anticipated as the Project progresses.

Residents of Pine Creek encouraged the proponent to consider additional housing in the Pine Creek area but identified that the majority of land is currently unavailable for development.

Community views on whether the construction workforce should be accommodated at or near the project site, or close to Katherine were also sought. There was more support for locating the accommodation at the mine site. Stakeholders who supported accommodation within Katherine were mostly focussed on maximising the economic benefits to Katherine.

6.2.2 Employment and Training

Key benefits from employment and training opportunities included:

- ▶ additional employment opportunities for both young people and people currently wanting to work within the mining industry in the Region; and
- ▶ potential for long-term career opportunities, particularly for younger people.

Stakeholders also expressed a desire for the Project to focus on local employment and training opportunities and link with local providers in establishing appropriate programs.

6.2.3 Business and Economic Development

Stakeholders identified that the Project would:

- ▶ potentially bring more people, particularly families, to live in Katherine and surrounding areas;
- ▶ benefit local businesses through securing local contracts to supply goods and services; and
- ▶ increase spending within the local and regional economy.

Some concerns were also expressed that the Project would increase skill shortages in the region and draw workers away from other businesses. Businesses consulted as part of the Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Workshop indicated a strong desire to work with Vista Gold in developing an Industry Participation Plan to maximise local and regional economic development.

6.2.4 Workforce

The region's workforce and skills shortage were seen as a critical consideration for the Project given the timing of the Project in relation to other major projects in the Northern Territory. Other issues included:

- ▶ potential for anti-social behaviour of the workforce, particularly FIFO or temporary workers;
- ▶ desire for more families to locate to the area as part of the long-term operational workforce and for workers to be part of the community;
- ▶ difficulties stemming from mining rosters in terms of workers being able to participate in community events; and
- ▶ measures to limit 'drain' from other local industries to supply the Project's workforce.

6.2.5 Indigenous Employment and Business Aspirations

Consultation with Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders identified the importance of the Project for assisting Indigenous employment and business aspirations. Stakeholders also identified:

- ▶ the Project would provide employment and training for Indigenous people to gain long-term employment;
- ▶ the Project would provide opportunities for Indigenous businesses to supply services to the Mine; and
- ▶ an Indigenous Employment Strategy should be developed based on examples of other programs that are working in the Northern Territory.

6.2.6 Community Infrastructure and Service Provision

Service providers in Katherine identified that the Project may increase existing shortfalls in community services and infrastructure particularly in health provision, childcare and access to health specialists such as dentists, mental health workers and physiotherapists. Other facilities potentially impacted included entertainment venues, restaurants and the Woolworths shopping complex.

6.2.7 Environment

The existing and future management of the Project and impacts on the environment were raised by a wide range of stakeholder groups. Many of these concerns stemmed from the mine's prior owner's poor performance in terms of the environment. Key concerns included:

- ▶ impacts on water quality, particularly on the Fergusson and Edith Rivers;
- ▶ impacts from the existing tailings facility and heap leach pad;
- ▶ loss of biodiversity;
- ▶ impacts on any sites of cultural heritage significance; and
- ▶ the risk of future spills or contamination related to transport of materials or flooding during a 'big wet'.

6.2.8 Traffic and Transport

Concerns were raised about the deteriorating condition of the Stuart Highway and the potential for the Project to exacerbate this. Other traffic concerns included:

- ▶ traffic increases along Edith Falls Road; and
- ▶ transport of materials to the Project site, particularly the management of any potential spills.

6.2.9 Community

Stakeholders identified the importance of establishing trust within the community, particularly given the previous historical issues associated with the mine. Stakeholders would like to see the continuation of an open and transparent consultation process through the Draft EIS process.

6.3 Ongoing Consultation

6.3.1 Draft EIS

The Draft EIS will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of six weeks. During the public exhibition period, the following will occur:

- ▶ public notices will be placed in local newspapers to provide details about:
 - timing of the public exhibition period;
 - locations where people can view the document; and
 - how to make submissions on the Draft EIS.
- ▶ information about the public exhibition period and submission requirements will be made available on the Mt Todd Website;
- ▶ a final Project Newsletter will be distributed to publicise release of the Draft EIS, provide information on the public exhibition process and call for submissions;
- ▶ key stakeholders will be notified about the Draft EIS and review period; and
- ▶ agency briefings and community information sessions will be held to present the findings of the Draft EIS.

Members of the public can lodge a submission in writing or by email, directly to the NT EPA.

6.3.2 Post EIS Public Exhibition Period

Following completion of the public exhibition period, all stakeholder and community feedback will be reviewed by the NT EPA. The NT EPA will issue a letter to Vista Gold summarising key issues raised and required to be addressed by Vista Gold in a Supplement Report to the Draft EIS.

A decision by the Northern Territory Government about future development of the Project will be made public by the NT EPA. A decision by the Commonwealth Government about future development of the Project will be made public by SEWPaC. Vista Gold will also provide updates about the progress and status of the Project on its website.

6.3.3 Future Consultation Activities

Plans for longer term consultation as part of the Project's construction, operational and closure phases will be included in the EMP and SIMP.

Consultation will continue throughout the life of the Project to provide for due consideration of all project-related opportunities and concerns. The ongoing program will involve:

- ▶ maintaining the current good relationships between Vista Gold, landholders, Traditional Owners and government (at all levels);
- ▶ establishing contact with other key stakeholders as new issues arise;
- ▶ disseminating information to, and having discussions with, stakeholders on key issues raised during the Draft EIS assessment;
- ▶ identifying and responding to key issues and concerns of all stakeholders;
- ▶ preparing relevant documents for review by government agencies and other stakeholders;



- ▶ addressing specific concerns of various stakeholders on an ongoing basis;
- ▶ maintaining the project website, including reporting on water quality and discharges;
- ▶ regular community meetings; and
- ▶ a proactive media program.