

NT EPA STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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1 Purpose

The *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act* (NT EPA Act) states that in exercising its powers and performing its functions, the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NTEPA) must:

- encourage community involvement and engagement
- ensure its processes are transparent and consistent in order to provide greater certainty for businesses and the community.

To fulfil its statutory obligations, the NT EPA engages with stakeholders to assist with making decisions that achieve good environmental outcomes and promote sustainable development.

The NT EPA works with industry, relevant government agencies and the public, including non-government organisations, to ensure stakeholder concerns and input are considered in the NT EPA's decision-making.

This document establishes the NT EPA's approach to informing, engaging and communicating with its stakeholders.

2 NT EPA stakeholder engagement

Providing opportunities for stakeholder input and consultation is fundamental to gaining trust and transparency in our decision-making. The NT EPA will engage with our stakeholders to:

- inform them of and promote the role of the NT EPA and its operations
- consult on policies, guidance material and subject reviews to seek views and feedback
- obtain insights and inputs to inform NT EPA advice and decision-making
- ensure proponents of proposals subject to environmental impact assessment understand the requirements of the assessment process
- seek feedback on complex proposals requiring NT EPA assessment and approvals
- build productive relationships with the community, industry and government to achieve better environmental outcomes

In this context, the NT EPA uses the term stakeholder to refer to any member of the community, industry or government who have an interest in particular issues or decisions, and that the NT EPA's activities and decisions might impact. The term engagement means a planned process where the NT EPA will work with identified stakeholders to help inform decisions made by the NT EPA.

3 Overview of engagement

The NT EPA and staff from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who provide services to the NT EPA will conduct stakeholder engagement by:

- publishing licences, incident investigations, audit reports and compliance actions on the NT EPA website and elsewhere as appropriate
- having a public register of NT EPA decisions and Statement of Reasons for proposals that do not require environmental impact assessment

- inviting public submissions for proposals undergoing environmental impact assessment
- inviting written submissions on strategies, policies, guidance documents and discussion papers and publishing these submissions
- developing and publishing guidance material to improve industry understanding of best practice environmental management and NT EPA expectations
- site visits by the NT EPA and Environment Division staff when required for regulatory purposes or for proposals undergoing environmental impact assessment
- publishing media releases and updates
- formal and informal meetings with proponents, consultants, non-government organisations, agency staff, community members and other interested parties
- publish monitoring data on important environmental issues as appropriate
- publishing the NT EPA annual report describing performance of the NT EPA

The NT EPA has developed separate guidance document for proponents on best practice stakeholder engagement for proposals undergoing environmental impact assessment.

3.1 Principles of engagement

The NT EPA has a strong commitment to fulfil its statutory obligations by building partnerships and trust with stakeholders through effective stakeholder engagement. In undertaking engagement activities, the NT EPA is guided by three key principles that are consistent with international and national best practice standards for stakeholder communication and engagement.

Principle 1 Communication

The NT EPA is committed to listen and talk with our stakeholders and the NT EPA does this by providing formal and informal, direct and indirect avenues for communication with our stakeholders.

Upcoming opportunities for engagement are also provided on the NT EPA website: <https://ntepa.nt.gov.au/about-ntepa/for-your-comment>

Principle 2 Transparency and Accountability

The NT EPA will be open and transparent when dealing with stakeholders and will set clear expectations. The NT EPA will:

- be transparent and accountable for decisions by publishing statutory decisions in a public register on the NT EPA website
- explain where stakeholders can provide input and inform stakeholders how their feedback was used in decision making
- report on stakeholder engagement activities and outcomes in the NT EPA annual report.

Principle 3 Respect and Inclusiveness

The NT EPA values different stakeholder perspectives, needs and approaches and will:

- ensure engagement is inclusive and key stakeholders who are affected by the NT EPA's decisions have access to the NT EPA including those from different cultural backgrounds, people in remote or rural areas, land councils, Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, proponents and non-government organisations.
- consider the needs of all stakeholders and ensure the methods of engagement are chosen to best suit the needs of the audience including providing appropriate timeframes for stakeholders to provide input and feedback and using culturally appropriate techniques
- acknowledge that engagement is a two-way process and be open to alternative views and listen to the perspectives of stakeholders.

4 Comments welcome

Comments and feedback on our approach to stakeholder engagement are welcome and should be directed to the NT EPA. These can be emailed to ntepa.epa@nt.gov.au.

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