

Section 14
Social Impact Assessment



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14. Social Impact Assessment

14.1 Introduction

In order to gain a better understanding of the potential social consequences associated with the development of the Blacktip Project and consistent with WEL's approach to working with the communities in which it operates, a holistic approach is being taken to their identification and management.

14.2 The Approach to Managing Social Impacts

In essence, Woodside is taking a 3 phase approach to potential social impact issues associated with the development of the Blacktip Project.

The first phase of the process involved an independent consultant compiling a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Report to assist Woodside in identifying potential social impacts in addition to providing valuable information to the statutory regulators responsible for overseeing the approvals processes. The overall purpose of the Blacktip Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Report is to:

- Identify the nature and magnitude of any potential social impacts, both positive and negative.
- Contribute to a better understanding of the Blacktip Project by those potentially affected and those with responsibilities toward potentially affected groups and individuals.
- Facilitate the expression of views, concerns and aspirations about the Blacktip Projects by those potentially affected.
- Assist Woodside and potentially affected people, communities and organisations, to plan activities associated with the Blacktip Project in such a way as to optimise the potential positive impacts and mitigate any potential adverse impacts on affected communities.
- Provide the basis for compiling a Social Impact Management Plan for the Blacktip Project.

The second phase of the process involves Woodside developing a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) in consultation with the affected community and other key stakeholder organisations (government and non-government).

The third phase of the process involves implementing the SIMP as well as instituting appropriate monitoring and review mechanisms.

14.3 Methodology Adopted in Phase 1

The SIA Report was compiled by ImpaxSIA Consulting. The SIA Team was comprised of Dr Annie Holden, economic anthropologist and team leader, and anthropologists Gay English and Justin Beal. Sensitivity to gender was reflected in the use of male and female consultants with anthropological training on the SIA Team. The NLC advised on the identity of affected Aboriginal people and provided field support in the form of field officers who assisted the SIA anthropologists with setting up meetings, introductions and arranging translation services.

The Social Impact Assessment Team completed two one-week visits to the Wadeye community in the weeks commencing 29 March and 10 May, 2004. In addition interviews were conducted in Darwin with Wadeye Indigenous organisation employees, and other researchers who had conducted field work or spent time in Wadeye who could provide some contextual background or assist us with our project planning. Consultations in relation to the Blacktip Project and the TTP were conducted at Wadeye simultaneously. The results for the consultations in relation to the TTP are presented in a separate report.

The SIA Consultants were accompanied at all times in Wadeye by Aboriginal field officers from the NLC and, where possible, a local Aboriginal interpreter.

The methodology included:

- Conducting formal interviews and informal discussions with each of the five clan groups resident in Wadeye whose Country is directly affected by the proposed Blacktip and TTP Projects. The team ensured that senior representatives from each of the clan groups were present at each meeting. In total 55 people Traditional Owners attended SIA consultations.
- House to house visits were conducted primarily to disseminate information to Aboriginal community members about the proposed Blacktip and TTP projects.
- Conducting interviews with Aboriginal staff and senior representatives and/or employees of the following local service and enterprise organisations:
 - Thamarrurr Regional Council;
 - Thamarrurr Rangers;
 - Thamarrurr Housing Authority;
 - Mi Patha Takeaway/Bakery;
 - Murrinhpatha Nimmipa Store;
 - Palumpa Station/Butcher;
 - Murin Association (Murin Air & Murin Outstation Resource Centre);
 - Northern Territory Health, Wadeye Health Clinic;
 - Northern Territory Police, Wadeye;
 - Northern Territory Correctional Services, Wadeye;
 - Our Lady of Sacred Heart School, Wadeye;
 - Kanamkek-Yile-Ngala Museum;
 - Wadeye Aboriginal Language Centre;
 - Library/Knowledge Centre;
 - Kardu Dari Kardu Family Centre;
 - Dirrmu Ngakumarl Art Gallery;
 - Top End Women's Legal Service;
 - Northern Territory Power and Water Corporation.

A number of recent and current studies and reports provided to the SIA Team contained comprehensive and current descriptive information and socio-economic data for the region. The SIA Team, therefore, did not duplicate this research, but instead has relied on secondary sources for the compilation of historical and base line data for this Report. The SIA team focused its research on qualitative consultations with Traditional Owners and other affected Aboriginal people, and service and enterprise organisation employees resident at Wadeye.

The SIA consultations and feedback from respondents were limited by the following circumstances:

- Traditional Owners and Aboriginal community members have no previous experience of, and therefore no point of reference for, a major infrastructure project.
- During the second visit to Wadeye, a follow up consultation was not held, as planned, with a group of senior women who were unavailable due to their cultural and ceremonial commitments for the preparation of a senior woman's funeral.
- People who are not members of Thamarrurr Council or part of the Traditional Owner groups, with few exceptions, told us that they had received no previous information about the Project. Some told us that they were not even aware that a project was being proposed.
- Traditional Owners and community members do not appear to be accustomed to being consulted and engaging in abstract debate.
- Traditional Owners of affected estate groups stated that they did not really want to discuss possible impacts of the proposed Blacktip and TTP Projects until they have been presented with a financial offer by the Proponent and have had time to assess their position and make a decision, and until they have had more information about what other Traditional Owners along the proposed pipeline route are thinking.
- It appeared that some Traditional Owners felt that if they were to enter into discussion about the possible impacts of the Projects, were they to proceed, that this might be construed as agreement in principle to the Projects. Thus some were reluctant to discuss the Projects at all until Traditional Owners had made their decision.
- Aboriginal community members were reluctant to engage in discussions about the proposed Projects unless they were members of directly affected estate groups.
- A number of people told us that the issues were too complex to discuss and needed a lot of thought and consideration before they could provide comment.
- There were a limited number of local interpreters available to support the SIA team.

14.4 Issues/Impacts Identified in Phase 1

The Blacktip SIA Report identified the following potential issues/impacts:

- Lack of understanding of the Blacktip Project by traditional owners, the wider affected Aboriginal community and community organisations.

- Language barriers in communicating with the traditional owners/wider affected Aboriginal community.
- The importance of utilising an appropriate methodology in conducting face-to-face consultations/community education sessions – ie it may be best to conduct intense, small (possibly clan-based) group and/or one-on-one sessions.
- Unrealistic expectation of benefits to be delivered by the project, for example, free gas, quantum of “royalty” money to be enough to buy vehicles and build-up homelands, infrastructure being left behind such as housing/better roads.
- Methodology and timing to communicate more specific information re: potential opportunities and project milestone/timeline issues to affected community organisations/Aboriginal community in general to allow planning/development of a considered response, for example local Police, Thamarrurr Council, Thamarrurr Rangers etc.
- Expectations, capacity and take-up of potential employment and training opportunities.
- Expectations, capacity and take-up of potential business development/contracting opportunities.
- List of concerns expressed by interviewees during the course of the Blacktip SIA consultations – largely HSE related (documented in Indigenous Community Consultation section of EIS).
- In the interests of maintaining ongoing goodwill, there may be the need to develop comprehensive safeguard policies to minimise/avoid negative social impacts (and maximise positives) during the life of the project.
- Community interaction with non-Indigenous workforce(s):
 - Due to lack of exposure to large-scale development, community do not have an appropriate reference point to assist in anticipating/responding to potential impacts.
 - Potential for community to react violently/vandalise property due to its volatile nature to a negative social impact (in particular road accident that results in fatality/serious injury or potential sexual jealousy issues).
 - Alcohol and drug issues.
 - Culturally appropriate security services and communication/interaction with local police.
 - Level of female employment in construction workforce.
 - Access of construction workforce to recreational areas and town.
 - Granting of favours.
 - Communication in general.
- The need for the affected traditional owner groups to be sure that the wider affected Aboriginal community also support the proposed project before giving their consent.
- Issues arising from distribution of compensation payments to traditional owners, for example money being spent on alcohol resulting in further anti-social disruptions, the desire of the traditional owners to be educated in how to manage/invest compensation money so it is done in a clear and transparent manner to avoid arguments/fights.
- Potential negative impacts of possible upgrades to roads and increased traffic.

- Capacity of the community to respond to change and associated negative/positive social impacts resulting from the proposed development, especially given the traditional Thamarrurr governance structure is still in the process of re-emerging/consolidating.
- Ongoing monitoring of social impacts – fit in with ANU study (initiative of Indigenous Communities Co-ordination Pilot project).

14.5 Management Strategies/Way Forward (Phase 2)

In response to the issues identified in the SIA Report, a comprehensive Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) will be developed by WEL in close consultation with the affected community and key stakeholders including (but not limited to) Thamarrurr Council, relevant Territory and Commonwealth agencies and the NLC. Accordingly, it is WEL's intention to conduct an intensive, two-day workshop, in Wadeye, to collaboratively develop potential responses to the issues identified in the Report and so form a possible basis for the SIMP. Issues in relation to Phase 3, i.e. implementation of the SIMP and monitoring will also be discussed at the workshop. At this point in time (ie 9 Sept 2004), the proposed Social Impact Workshop will be tentatively scheduled for November 2004.

In outline terms, it is anticipated that the SIMP will consist of the following information:

- Introduction/Scope of SIMP
- Specific Strategies:
 - project communications;
 - cross-cultural exchange/awareness;
 - cultural heritage management;
 - Indigenous training and employment;
 - Indigenous business development;
 - community/project protection;
 - traffic management;
 - community partnerships.

Once developed, measures/resources will be put in place to implement, monitor and if necessary review/amend the SIMP. It is expected that this will be an ongoing and intensive process during the construction phase of the Blacktip Project. During the operations phase of the project it is expected that monitoring activity will reduce to the level manageable within normal day to day relationships between the community, the Thamarrurr Community Government Council and the project.

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