

Hera Resources Pty Ltd

Federation Project

Environmental Impact Statement

Chapter 7

Engagement

7. Engagement

7.1 Introduction

Engagement for the Project was informed by the Community and Stakeholder Participation Strategy (CSPS) (**Appendix F**), which identified key community and agency stakeholders, and the tools that would best be utilised to ensure effective communication outcomes. The primary objective of the CSPS was to detail the approach to communication and consultation throughout the preparation of the EIS and supporting investigations. The CSPS provides outcomes of the consultation undertaken and identification of key issues.

7.2 Consultation Requirements

The relevant consultation requirement of the SEARs and cross references to where these matters are addressed within the EIS are provided in **Table 7-1** below.

Table 7-1 Consultation SEARS Requirements

SEARs Item	Relevant Section of the EIS
<p>During the preparation of the EIS, you should consult with relevant local, State and Commonwealth Government authorities including infrastructure and service providers, the Hera Mine Community Consultative Committee, community groups, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), affected landowners, and holders of existing mining and exploration authorities.</p> <p>The EIS must describe the consultation process and the issues raised and identify where the design of the infrastructure has been amended in response to these issues. Where amendments have not been made to address an issue, a short explanation should be provided.</p>	Chapter 7

Stakeholder Engagement for the Project was undertaken with reference to the following guidelines:

- Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects, DPIE 2021; and
- Social Impact Assessment Guideline, July 2021.

7.3 Stakeholder Scoping

To inform this CSPS an early scoping exercise was undertaken to obtain a baseline understanding of who the stakeholders for the Project were and to identify potential impacts on these stakeholders from the Project. The scoping exercise focused on three particular groups – community, government agencies and Aboriginal parties.

As part of the Social Impact and Stakeholder Scoping Report prepared by Element Environment (**Appendix G**), a scoping exercise was undertaken as a desktop study and utilised a modified version of the scoping tool provided within the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State significant mining, petroleum production and extractive industry development* (DPIE, 2017). The scoping tool identified where these matters would be addressed in full through specialist studies and where these matters should be included within the impacts identified and addressed within the CSPS.

From this tool a list of potentially impacted stakeholders was developed, including:

- Ancillary and adjacent land occupiers; and
- The broader community (for example nearby residents beyond those immediately adjacent to the site and users of the surrounding road network).

The social locality for the Project was selected by considering the Project features and their potential impact for people in Nymagee, points of interest near to Nymagee (including residences), and Cobar Shire more broadly. It recognises the Project haulage routes (including to Peak Gold Mine near Cobar), and supply of concentrate to Hermidale.

Relevant local and State government agencies with an interest in the Project were identified by SLR, through the scoping phase for the Project and reinforced and confirmed through the DPIE issued SEARs. As part of the preparation of the EIS, these agencies were consulted by Hera Resources and SLR to obtain their early feedback on the Project. Identified and consulted agencies include:

- Crown Lands;
- Environment Protection Authority;
- Heritage NSW – Aboriginal Culture;
- Cobar Shire Council;
- Bogan Shire Council;
- Transport for NSW;
- DPIE Water;
- DPIE Resource Regulator (RR) - Mining Exploration and Geoscience;
- DPIE RR – Rehabilitation and Security Panel (RASP);
- Biodiversity Conservation & Science ; and
- Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment

Local Aboriginal groups were identified as stakeholders for the Project given their cultural knowledge and connection to the land on which the Project is proposed. As part of Stage 1 in the consultation process, AREA Environmental Consultants (AREA) (on behalf of Hera Resources) contacted a number of organisations to request potential RAPs for consultation regarding the Project. Consultation with relevant local Aboriginal groups was undertaken by AREA, with a summary of outcomes included within this report and more detailed description available within the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA).

7.4 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The engagement strategy for the Project has been tailored utilising tools appropriate to the stage of the Project's development and appropriate to the audience of the engagement, including community and agency stakeholders. Communications and engagement has and will be undertaken by Hera Resources and/or their representatives.

To allow for clear and transparent record keeping, a communications and engagement register has been developed for the Project which is included as Appendix B of the CSPS. This details engagement

activities with the community, government agencies and Aboriginal parties including any specific issues raised and actions undertaken.

An engagement tool kit (refer **Table 7-2**) was developed to outline the methods of engagement that have been used to communicate and engage during the life of the Project and may be adopted for future engagement activities. The communication tools also provided for flexibility through enabling online engagement due to impacts of COVID 19.

Table 7-2 Engagement Toolkit

Tool/ Technique	Description	Audience	Specifications
Community Consultation Meetings, Workshops and Forums	Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meetings, providing a Project update and opportunity for the community and stakeholders to discuss recent experiences and upcoming activities.	CCC members (overseen by Independent Chair) and visitors to CCC meetings.	Project updates including a review of any issues which have been raised as a concern and response to how these are being addressed by the Project. This may be followed by informal discussion with stakeholders and the community.
Community Information Sessions	Specific community information session were undertaken specifically focused on the Federation Project	The wider community and key stakeholders	Presentation on the Project with details around studies undertaken to date, planned future investigations, Project timeframes and any preliminary findings of technical studies.
Individual Meetings	Meetings with stakeholders such as land owners, as required to discuss a specific item.	Landowners and key stakeholders.	Meetings held face to face, over the phone or via an online platform. Details and format subject to the meetings context, with a record of the discussion included in the consultation register and actioned as required.
Agency Meetings	Meetings with agencies to discuss matters about the Project relevant to their agency	Relevant Agency	Meetings held face to face, over the phone or via an online platform. Meetings will continue to be held as required to address matters relevant to specific agencies including the satisfaction of SEARs requirements or of conditions of consent.

Newspaper Advertisement	Newspaper Advertisement(s) to be published in a local newspaper (Cobar Weekly) identifying Project information including notification of community meetings and commencement, and details of the contact phone number and web page address.	The wider community and key stakeholders	Advertisements have been placed in the <i>Cobar Weekly</i> to inform the community of upcoming community meetings. Advertisements have also been placed to invite interests of potential RAPs. An advertisement will be published advising of the commencement date of approved works, a brief overview of the Project and key contact details for enquires and complaints including the phone number, webpage and email address. Further advertisements will be published periodically when there are significant milestones achieved for the Project such as transition from construction to operations.
Public Project Update Notices	Project leaflets	Residents of the immediate area	Project updates in the way of A4 flyers were left in public areas of Nymagee such as the hotel and library. The flyers provide an update on the Project status and future planned works. Contact details to obtain further information to be included.
Project Information and Complaints Number	Project phone number available for 24 hours recording of Project feedback.	The wider community and key stakeholders.	Hera Resources currently have an established complaints handling protocol for current operations at Hera Mine which forms part of the Environmental Management System (EMS). Complaints can be made 24 hours per day either by phone or email. Complaints are recorded and if corrective action is required this is assigned to person responsible. Feedback is provided to the complainant if requested. This procedure will be updated as required for the Project.
Website	A Project website has been developed to provide general information on the Project and ongoing updates on Project progress	The wider community and key stakeholders	Website address and phone number located on and all Project information material.

7.5 Stakeholder Engagement

7.5.1 Community

Community stakeholders were notified of the Project and invited to participate in community information sessions via newspaper advertisements, public notices and direct contact. An online survey is also available on the Aurelia website which is designed to obtain public sentiment regarding the Project, with contact details should they wish to be provided with additional information.

To date there have been two Project-specific community information sessions and four general Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meetings held by Hera Mine which have included updates on the Project. The CCC meetings were held in December 2020, March 2021, June 2021, and October

2021. The community information sessions were held in March 2021 and an online meeting in September 2021 (held in 2 stages). A summary of matters addressed is included in **Table 7-3**.

Table 7-3 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community Stakeholder and nature of interaction	Summary of Consultation or Communication	Issues raised
Community Consultative Committee , December 2020	<p>Meeting was attended by 13 community members. A presentation was provided which provided updates for both the current Hera Mine as well as the Federation Project. Key areas covered included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hera Mine operations and proposed activities • Updates to MOD 6 of Hera Mine consent • Hera accommodation village expansion • Exploration Decline Program • Federation project SSD 	<p>The meeting provided for a question and answer session at the end of the presentation. Issues which were raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic impacts • Groundwater impacts • WAD Cyanide management • Future community contributions.
Community Consultative Committee, March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting was attended by 6 community members. A presentation was provided which provided updates for both the current Hera Mine as well as the Federation Project, inclusive of an update on the Federation project SSD EIS process and advise about upcoming community information session. 	<p>The meeting provided for a question and answer session at the end of the presentation.</p>
Community Information Session, March 2021	<p>Meeting was attended by 30 community members. Presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Project • Planning and approval process • SIA process • Key studies • Timeline. 	<p>Issues which were raised for discussions at the meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety and increase in traffic movements • Potential impacts to groundwater • Construction related impacts • Operational noise and dust emissions • Impacts to local businesses.

Community Consultative Committee June 2021	<p>Meeting was attended by six community members. Presentation provided to the CCC included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational health and safety updates – Hera Mine • Environmental performance – Hera Mine • Mine accommodation village expansion update • Federation exploration drilling update • Federation EIS update, including preparation of SEARs. 	<p>The meeting provided for a question and answer session at the end of the presentation. Issues which were raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on SIA progress • More consultation on Mine expansion for non-Aurelia employees • Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Council.
Community Information Session, September 2021	<p>Due to Covid restrictions this meeting was conducted as an online forum in 2 stages. This meeting was advertised in the <i>Cobar Weekly</i> and <i>Nyngan Observer</i> newspapers for 2 consecutive weeks in the lead up to the respective sessions. There were five registered attendees for the session however two attended on the night. A second stage online meeting was held with 2 attendees.</p>	<p>As there were limited attendees, the meetings were more of an update on the Project. It was noted that further Project updates would be provided at future CCC meetings.</p>
Community Consultative Committee, October 2021	<p>Meeting was attended by 7 community members. A presentation was provided which provided updates for both the current Hera Mine as well as the Federation Project, inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an update on the Federation project SSD EIS process, including issue of SEARs by DPIE and progress of EIS studies. 	<p>Issues which were raised included water requirements and water sources for the Project.</p>

In addition to the community information sessions, the following engagement activities were also undertaken:

- Establishment of a community hotline and email address where member of the public can contact the Project team to either provide feedback to seek further information;
- Email blasts to the engagement database undertaken three times during the EIS development, used to distribute communications such as the EIS community updates and details of community information sessions;
- Two Federation Project newsletters were distributed to the stakeholder database during the SIA;

- Engagement with two directly affected landowners has also been undertaken throughout the scoping and EIS development phase; and
- Regular engagement with the community through company representation at community events and through sponsorship opportunities.

7.5.2 Government Agencies

Engagement with government stakeholders has been undertaken by Hera Resources and SLR, as part of the preparation of the EIS for the Project. Agencies consulted, as well as a summary of key issued discussed are outlined in **Table 7-4**.

Table 7-4 Government Agency Consultation

Agency or Authority	Summary of Consultation
Crown Lands	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project is located on western lands lease (WLL) properties ▪ Discussion regarding land ownership and activities outside of a mining lease (if any) ▪ Consider all tenure.
Environment Protection Authority	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confirmation of EPL boundary ▪ Waste management ▪ Consideration of tailings and cyanide management.
Heritage NSW - Heritage Council	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIS to be clear about impacts (or lack thereof) to heritage ▪ Ensure that RAP comments have been addressed ▪ Continue implementation of the Hera Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (ACHMP).
Transport for NSW	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Movements of concentrate approximately doubling. Any upgrade of intersections would be a Council matter ▪ 80% of workers are DIDO ▪ TfNSW will assist Councils with advice if requested.
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Major Projects	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confirmation of planning pathway ▪ Discussion of consultation requirements.
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Social Impact Assessment Team	Meeting via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Impact Assessment process.

Biodiversity, Conservation and Science	<p>Meeting via MS Teams. Issues discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of offset credits can be staged in accordance with staged development ▪ Always undertake a precautionary approach ▪ Upgrade to roads needs to be included – no clearing proposed.
WaterNSW	Email sent to representative. Response received that agency does not have capacity to meet.
Mining Exploration and Geoscience (MEG)	<p>Meeting via MS Teams. Issues discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion on the Conceptual Project Development Plan (CPDP) process (refer below) ▪ MEG provided a letter to DPIE confirming process has been undertaken ▪ Site visit and presentation required ▪ Resource and Economic assessment required ~2 months prior to EIS submission.
MEG CPDP Meeting. Representatives included: Assessment Coordination Economics Royalties Geoscience Resource Assessments Strategy and Planning Industry Development Land Use Exploration Assessment Resource Assessments (Titles)	<p>The CPDP meeting was held both on site and on line. Issues discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicated and inferred resource ▪ Geology ▪ Mine plan and development ▪ Workforce ▪ Mine schedule ▪ Ore processing and transport ▪ Rehabilitation ▪ Key environmental considerations. ▪ The online meeting and presentation was followed by a site inspection of the Federation Site and Hera Mine.
CSC	<p>Meeting on site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broadly supportive ▪ Consider overlaps with CSC activities and regular communication.
Bogan Shire Council	<p>Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interest in intersection within Hermidale ▪ Start process of updated VPA early.
DPIE Major Projects	<p>Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of the draft scoping report and discussion around mine planning and schedule ▪ Future consultation requirements and engagement with other agencies ▪ Project timeframes.

DPIE – RR Resource and Economic Assessment	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General overview of the Project ▪ Details on the resource and general economics ▪ Employment ▪ Rehabilitation.
DPIE-RR Rehabilitation Assessment Security Panel	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehabilitation Strategy – outcome focused ▪ TSF slope stability ▪ Rehabilitation options regarding Federation box cut ▪ Material balance.
DAWE EPBC Referral Team	Meetings via MS Teams. Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General overview of the Project and the delineation between the Exploration Decline Program and the Project ▪ Confirmation no MNES identified or significantly impacted ▪ Timing of the EPBC Referral ▪ Information requirements to accompany Referral.

7.5.3 Aboriginal Parties

The SEARs for the Project require consultation with the Aboriginal community to be undertaken in accordance with the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010* (DECCW, 2010). This was undertaken by AREA as part of the ACHA process.

Consultation with Aboriginal Parties was undertaken over two stages. Stage one involved AREA contacting a range of organisations which was undertaken on 22 May 2020. A request was made for potential RAPs to participate in the consultation process.

The following organisations were contacted:

- Native Title Services Corporation Limited (NTS Corp);
- DPIE;
- Cobar Local Aboriginal Land Council (Cobar LALC);
- Cobar Shire Council;
- Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (ALRA);
- Local Land Services – Cobar (LLS); and
- National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT).

A total of 13 potential contacts resulted from this, and these potential RAPs were contacted with an invitation to consult regarding the Project.

No comments were received following the provision of the ACHA methodology on either 11 June or 24 September 2020.

Stage 2 involved fieldwork required for the ACHA. Fieldwork for the Project was then completed in several stages, with RAP representatives attending each stage, completed over the following dates:

- 20 June to 21 June 2020;

- 22 October 2020;
- 23 to 24 October, and Tuesday 27 October 2020;
- 13 July to 15 July 2021; and
- 20 September 2021.

7.5.3.1 Aboriginal Focus Group Meeting

All RAPs were invited to attend an Aboriginal focus group meeting (AFGM), held via video conference on 2 September 2021. The aims of the AFGM were to present a summary of the Federation Project and the archaeological assessments, gain an understanding of the cultural values of the Project, come to an agreement on the management and mitigation measures, and identify the next steps and timeframes. There were seven RAP attendees at the AFGM. The outcomes of the AFGM are provided in **Section 7.6.2**.

7.6 Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes

7.6.1 Community Members and Landowners

Generally, engagement with community stakeholders to date has been positive with issues or items for consideration following consultation provided in **Table 7-5**.

Table 7-5 Themes from Community Consultation

Theme	Issues Raised
Community	FIFO and DIDO employees do not contribute to the local community. Involvement of Hera staff in the community.
Groundwater	Potential impacts to groundwater and local access.
Air Quality	Dust generation from traffic and TSF.
Aboriginal Heritage	Potential impacts to items of Aboriginal heritage due to clearing. Concerns raised about employment of Aboriginal people.
Traffic Generation	Impacts of traffic due to truck speeds and increase in movements.
Road Safety	Concerns regarding the increase of traffic on local roads by heavy vehicles. Potential for pavement damage due to increased use.
Blasting	Impact to local residents due to blasting.
Visual Amenity	Negative impacts to the visual amenity.
Economic	Business disruption. Contract opportunities.
Noise	Noise emissions during construction and operation. This also includes road traffic noise.
Compliance	Compliance with the development consent.

7.6.2 Aboriginal Parties

The following recommendations were agreed upon during the AFGM:

- The Communications Tower area was surveyed without representation from the RAPs and will need to be re-surveyed by AREA and RAPs – this was actioned and completed in September 2021;
- The cultural heritage section of the Hera online induction be reviewed by the RAPs – this was actioned and completed in November 2021;
- The ongoing maintenance and management of the Aboriginal sites be conducted by a member of the Condobolin LALC on a casual basis, for the lifetime of the mine;
- The continuation of onsite cultural heritage inductions conducted by the archaeologists and the RAPs; and
- RAPs were pleased to hear that when Aboriginal sites were recorded to be impacted by the proposed works, the designs were changed so no sites are impacted.

Furthermore, a draft copy of the ACHA was sent the RAPs for their comment and inputs. One comment was received requesting copies of the site cards for the identified Aboriginal sites, which were subsequently provided.

7.7 Future Stakeholder Engagement

Ongoing consultation and engagement will be completed throughout all future stages of the Project.

The formal public notification process for the Project will be completed by DPIE during the public exhibition and assessment period for the SSD Project, which will invite submissions about the Project. Hera Resources will then coordinate a response to all relevant issues and queries raised during this period through DPIE's formal response to submissions process. Contact details and Project information updates will be maintained throughout the assessment process via the existing website.

During construction, consultation and engagement will be undertaken with relevant parties and will include notification of the commencement of works and consultation on works with the potential for impact on nearby receivers. Hera Resources and their contractors will continue to engage and work with all relevant agencies and authorities to meet all regulatory requirements and ensure compliance with conditions of consent. Ongoing consultation with Local Aboriginal Groups will be undertaken in accordance with the ACHA, ACHMP, and any conditions of consent imposed relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage.

As the Project progresses, the CSPS will be refined, and the tools described in the engagement strategy may be amended to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of engagement measures.