

# Navigating socio-political stakeholder environments

PROJECT P4-010

**Mining operations are undertaken in complex and dynamic social and political environments.**

Multiple stakeholder groups - e.g. financiers, environmental activists, local and Indigenous communities, regulators, peak bodies and mining companies - populate and shape this often-volatile environment. The multiple views and expectations of these diverse groups inform social licence to operate (SLO) conferrals, withdrawals and debates. Previous projects (P4-008 and P4-009) deal with internal barriers to technology uptake. To provide balance to the suite of projects in Program 4, this project focuses on the external social and political environment in which the mining industry is embedded.



## Project scope

In both 2018 and 2019, Ernst and Young identified social licence to operate (SLO) as the number one risk for mining and metals, noting an evolving stakeholder landscape along with increasing stakeholder capacities and influence.

This research aims to identify the complex drivers and interactions of multiple stakeholders operating in the Australian mining sector's social and political environment. This will foster a richer understanding and negotiation of diverse stakeholder behaviours and impacts on mining innovation and related social licence to operate.

Development of a multi-perspectival approach and stakeholder tools is linked to improving the ability of a mining firm to adapt in complex environments and achieve mining innovation along with community development objectives and shared ideas for 'good mining.'

This project has three linked primary objectives:

- identify and map the drivers, views, and patterns of engagement of multiple stakeholder groups in conferring and contesting the SLO
- gain an understanding of stakeholder perceptions and expectations around 'good mining'
- develop tools with which key stakeholders can successfully understand the complexity of drivers and navigate this environment.

Team members involved in this project are Associate Professor Robyn Mayes, Dr Bree Hurst, and Dr Amelia Hine.

**Program Coordinator:** Greg Wilkie, CRC ORE

**Project Leader:** Robyn Mayes, QUT

**Timing:** December 2019 – June 2021

**Participants:** QUT

## Outcomes & Learnings

The project will deliver a set of tools to assist the mining industry and key stakeholders to navigate the social and political environment and enable multi-perspective understandings and approaches to improving achievement of social licence.

This will be accomplished in three stages:

**Stage 1** involves substantive desktop collation and analysis of the messaging, world view, and social and political drivers of key mining stakeholder groups

**Stage 2** encompasses 40 semi-structured interviews with identified stakeholders active in the Adani Carmichael Coal Mine case. This long-running and highly publicised case provides a rare opportunity to examine the views and interrelations of a number of stakeholder groups presented over a period of time.

**Stage 3** focuses on development and pilot testing of tools identified in the research process and developed in consultation with stakeholder participants to distil research learnings and enable nuanced navigation of the social and political environment;

