

Fingerboards Critical Minerals Project Study Briefs - Social Assessment

Overview

The social assessment for the Project will examine the potential effects of the project on the wellbeing, lifestyle, and cohesion of local and regional communities. It identifies both positive and negative social impacts that may arise during construction and operation of the Project, including topics such as changes to population dynamics, local employment opportunities, and access to services and community infrastructure.

The assessment will be informed by attending local community meetings, telephone interviews, and multiple site visits to capture community sentiment and priorities. This will be combined with demographic analysis, and review of existing social and economic conditions to understand the baseline conditions.

The assessment will then evaluate the significance of anticipated changes and propose mitigation and enhancement measures to inform active engagement and practical strategies to manage both risks and opportunities as the development progresses.

Assessment Objectives

- Identify and assess direct and cumulative social impacts on local residents, businesses, industries, and community infrastructure arising from the Project, including any relevant regional projects and development trends.
- Guide informed decision-making and social risk management by providing recommendations to avoid, minimise and manage adverse social consequences while maximising local benefits.
- Ensure the assessment is closely linked with ongoing stakeholder and community consultation, and integrated with parallel technical studies (e.g. economic, land-use, environmental).

Preliminary Focus Areas

- **Baseline Social Profiling** - Social and demographic baseline data collection to ensure fair representation of community sentiment and to analyse social trends, opportunities, and vulnerabilities.
- **Impact Assessment** - Assessment of the potential social impacts, including those to local businesses, industries, and the broader social environment related to Project construction and operation.
- **Mitigation measures** - Identification of appropriate mitigation measures in response to the impact assessment to avoid, minimise and manage potential social impacts.

- **Stakeholder engagement** - Support the preparation of a comprehensive stakeholder plan to guide community meetings and transparent reporting, allowing the local community to provide feedback and understand the findings, including planned mitigation measures.

Specialist Consultant

Public Place Melbourne has been engaged to undertake the social assessment. They are a specialised consultancy offering social impact assessment, planning, community engagement, and social research to support major infrastructure, resource, and urban development projects throughout Australia. The firm provides evidence-based analysis of community impacts, practical recommendations, and robust stakeholder consultation processes. Public Place is regularly engaged for projects involving complex regional change, and its senior team is experienced in presenting social impact findings and expert evidence for planning approvals and regulatory review. More information can be found here <http://www.public-place.com.au>

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