

# Contaminated Sites Management Series

## Community Consultation Guideline

Prepared by

Land and Water Quality Branch

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

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## Preface

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)<sup>1</sup> has prepared the *Community Consultation* guideline to provide guidance to consultants, local government authorities, industry and other interested parties on the requirements for community consultation when managing contaminated sites in Western Australia (WA). The guideline refers to the different stages of contaminated sites management and provides guidance on the community consultation requirements for each stage.

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## Acknowledgements

DEC acknowledges the former Water and Rivers Commission (WRC) and the Department of Health (DoH) for help with the guideline.

## Limitations

The guideline is intended for use only by people who are assessing and managing contaminated sites. The contents provide guidance only and do not purport to provide a methodology for community consultation or for the assessment of sites. Competent people should be engaged to provide specific advice in relation to community consultation and the assessment of contaminated sites.

The guideline should be used in conjunction with the texts referred to in the guideline and any other appropriate references.

## Disclaimer

The information provided in this document is made available in good faith and is believed accurate at the time of publication (or at the time of release on the internet). However, the document is intended to be a guide only and should not be seen as a substitute for obtaining appropriate advice or making prudent inquiries. The information is provided solely on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessment of the matters discussed and that they should verify all relevant representations, statements and information.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously Department of Environment (DoE), and before that, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Changes in legislation, or other circumstances, after the document has been published may impact on the accuracy of any information or advice contained in the document and readers should not rely on the accuracy of information presented in this document.

Information presented in this document does not constitute, and is not intended to be used as legal advice or used as an interpretive instrument. In the event of any inconsistency between this document and relevant legislation, provisions of the relevant legislation will prevail.

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## **Contaminated Sites Management Series**

The guideline is part of a management series developed by DEC to provide guidance on the assessment and management of contaminated sites in Western Australia.

The Contaminated Sites Management Series contains the following guidelines:

- Assessment Levels for Soil, Sediment and Water;
- Bioremediation of Hydrocarbon Contaminated Soils in Western Australia;
- Certificate of Contamination Audit Scheme;
- Community Consultation;
- Contaminated Sites and the Landuse Planning Process;
- Contaminated Sites Auditors: Guidelines for Accreditation, Conduct and Reporting;
- Development of Sampling and Analysis Programs;
- Disclosure Statements;
- Potentially Contaminating Activities, Industries, and Landuses;
- Reporting of Known or Suspected Contaminated Sites;
- Reporting on Site Assessments;
- Site Classification Scheme;
- The Use of Risk Assessment in Contaminated Site Assessment and Management: Guidance on the Overall Approach; and
- Use of Monitored Natural Attenuation for Groundwater Remediation.

Using these guidelines will help you meet the minimum requirements for contaminated sites assessment and management.

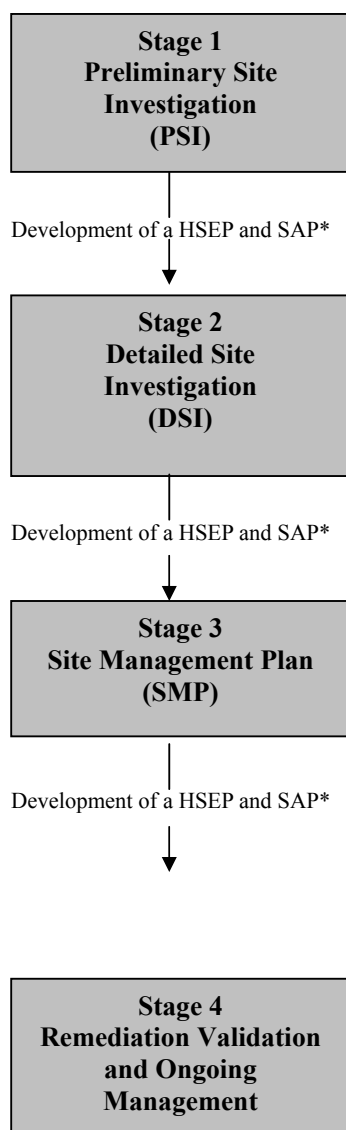
Copies of the guidelines are available from DEC's library at The Atrium, 4th Floor, 168 St Georges Terrace, Perth or from [www.dec.wa.gov.au/contaminatedsites](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/contaminatedsites).

## Staged approach to site investigations

DEC has developed the Contaminated Sites Management Series of guidelines to encourage a consistent approach to contaminated site assessment and management. A key focus of the series is the staged approach to site investigations.

The flowchart below highlights the guidelines you should refer to during each stage of a site investigation.

### Stages of Site Investigation



### Contaminated Sites Management Series guidelines

**Potentially Contaminating Activities, Industries and Landuses**  
**Reporting of Known or Suspected Contaminated Sites**  
**Community Consultation**  
**Development of Sampling and Analysis Programs**  
**Reporting on Site Assessments**

**Community Consultation**  
**Development of Sampling and Analysis Programs**  
**Assessment Levels for Soil, Sediment and Water**  
**Reporting on Site Assessments**  
**The Use of Risk Assessment in Contaminated Site Assessment:  
Guidance on the Overall Approach**

**Community Consultation**  
**Development of Sampling and Analysis Programs**  
**Reporting on Site Assessments**  
**The Use of Risk Assessment in Contaminated Site Assessment:  
Guidance on the Overall Approach**

**Use of Monitored Natural Attenuation for Groundwater  
Remediation**

**Community Consultation**  
**Assessment Levels for Soil, Sediment and Water**  
**Reporting on Site Assessments**  
**Use of Monitored Natural Attenuation for Groundwater  
Remediation**

**Bioremediation of Hydrocarbon Contaminated Soils in Western  
Australia**

\*Where samples are to be collected, a health, safety and environment plan (HSEP) and a sampling and analysis program (SAP) should be prepared.

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# 1. Introduction

The investigation, remediation and management of contaminated sites may cause a range of community concerns. The concerns may relate to real or perceived environmental and human health impacts associated with contamination and/or the environmental effects and nuisance conditions arising from contaminated site remediation and management.

DEC regards effective community consultation as a necessary part of the investigation, remediation and management of each contaminated site. However, the level of community consultation required varies with each site.

**An appropriate level of community consultation is required when investigating, remediating and managing all contaminated sites in Western Australia. Proponents should note that the development and implementation of an appropriate community consultation plan may be enforced through the issuing of an investigation or clean-up notice under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* (Section 49(4)(e) and 50(4)(d) respectively.**

This guideline provides the minimum requirements for community consultation and applies to all contaminated site investigations in WA. More extensive community consultation may need to be undertaken for contentious or complex sites.

Proponents managing contaminated sites are encouraged to conduct the most effective community consultation process (rather than the minimum approach), to achieve the best outcome for industry and community. A key objective of the guideline is to not only assist industry to plan and conduct effective community consultation processes to fulfil DEC and legislative expectations, but also to increase the opportunities for benefits from industry and community working together. Benefits can include:

- less resistance to appropriate proposals
- better decision-making and sustainable outcomes – the community can offer new perspectives and solutions on issues, which may even result in financial savings
- relationship/partnership development
- increased openness and trust
- demonstrated commitment to accountability, democracy and transparency
- shared understanding of problems and dilemmas
- community pride in organisations that work collaboratively with the community.

Risks of not conducting effective community consultation include:

- delays for a project, requiring additional investigations or consultation to be undertaken and adding to the project cost
- community outrage
- media scrutiny
- damage to a company's reputation and ability to conduct business
- potential litigation.

The guideline is not prescriptive, but sets out the factors that proponents should consider when determining the extent and timing of community consultation and the stakeholders who should be involved. Detailed information about the community consultation undertaken

should be included in all contaminated site assessment reports submitted to DEC. DEC's guideline, *Reporting on Site Assessments* (2001) should also be used in conjunction with this guideline.

The guideline does not purport to provide a methodology for undertaking community consultation and provides only limited information on consultation techniques. Advice should be sought from qualified and experienced community consultation professionals in this regard. Reference should be made to DEC's *Interim Industry Guide to Community Involvement, 2003* and the *Community Involvement Framework, 2003*. Reference should also be made to the *National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure – Schedule B(8) Guideline on Community Consultation and Risk Communication* (NEPC, 1999) for general guidance on community consultation and risk communication in the assessment and management of contaminated sites.

In the guideline, the term “community” has been used in its broadest sense, and refers to all individuals and groups who may be affected, physically or non-physically, by contamination at a site, and/or management of a contaminated site, or have an interest in the site and/or its management.

## **2. Planning for community consultation**

Planning for community consultation should be included in the initial stages of planning a contaminated site investigation to ensure that an appropriate level of consultation takes place within a suitable timeframe. Inadequate community consultation, or consultation which commences late in the contaminated site management process, may result in community distrust and delays in the project.

When planning for community consultation, the factors considered in determining the extent and timing of consultation and in identifying relevant stakeholders, should be documented. For large or controversial projects, it may be appropriate to prepare a formal 'community consultation plan', which would form one of a set of reports relating to the site. For smaller sites, this information could be contained within a section of the preliminary and/or detailed site investigation report.

All community consultation plans should provide a degree of flexibility and be responsive to changing circumstances and community input. It is important that the community consultation plan be reassessed as site investigations and consultation proceed and as more information becomes available to ensure that it remains appropriate. For example, if intrusive site investigations show a greater extent of contamination than anticipated, more stakeholders (e.g. landowners) may be affected and would need to be included in the consultation process.

### **2.1 Underlying principles**

The underlying principles listed below are based on the International Association for Public Participation's *Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation* (IAP2, 2000). They should be considered when planning and undertaking community consultation:

- The community should have an opportunity to provide input into decisions about matters which may affect their lives.
- The community consultation process should actively seek out and facilitate the involvement of those individuals and groups potentially affected by the decision(s).
- All participants should have fair and equitable access to the community consultation process.
- The planned community consultation process should be clearly communicated to all participants at the outset, and participants should be involved in defining how they participate. In particular, the decision-making process, the purpose of consultation and the level of influence the community's input will have on the decision-making process (such as advice, comment or right of veto) should be clearly communicated to all participants at the outset.
- The community should be provided with the information they need to participate effectively, in an accessible and understandable format.
- The community consultation process should communicate the interests and concerns of all participants.



- The community's contribution and concerns must be taken into account when making decisions (in this case regarding contaminated site investigation, remediation and/or management).
- The community consultation process should provide feedback to the participants on how their input was incorporated and how it affected the decision.
- All commitments made as part of the community consultation process should be made in good faith.

## 2.2 Extent of community consultation required

The extent of community consultation required will vary according to site-specific conditions, including the nature and degree of contamination, whether site assessment and/or remediation is likely to affect the amenity of the locality or give rise to nuisance conditions (such as noise, or odour) and whether the site, locality or contaminant has a history of controversy.

**For all contaminated site investigations and management, the community consultation process should include stakeholders in the vicinity who may be directly affected by the site assessment and/or remediation physically (e.g. through risks to health or the environment, the presence of contaminated groundwater plumes, loss of amenity, or nuisance conditions) or non-physically (e.g. through concerns about possible contamination or those that have an interest or stake in the process).**

Factors which should be considered when determining the extent of community consultation include:

- whether contamination is likely to pose a significant risk to the environment
- whether contamination is likely to pose a health risk to the local community
- whether contamination is (or is likely to be) perceived to pose a significant environmental or human health risk
- whether contamination is expected to be contained within the site boundaries or has moved off site (e.g. a contaminated groundwater plume)
- the number of stakeholders potentially affected
- the proximity of the site to sensitive receptors (e.g. wetlands, rivers, ocean, residences, kindergartens, schools or hospitals)
- whether the site assessment and/or remediation may affect the amenity of the locality or give rise to nuisance conditions (e.g. due to ground disturbance, generation of dust, noise or increased traffic)
- whether the site assessment and/or remediation may result in increased environmental or public health risks (e.g. release of particulate matter or transportation of contaminated media)
- the contentious nature of the type of contaminant or industry
- how visible the site is to the public
- the size of the site

- whether the site forms part of a high profile or controversial development
- whether the site or company has a controversial history
- the degree of involvement desired by the community
- how aware the local community is of contaminated sites issues.
- the degree of trust which the local community has in the process, proponent and regulatory authorities
- whether the contamination is likely to have a negative impact (real or perceived) on property values in the area.

DEC requires more extensive community consultation to be undertaken for sites which pose an environmental or human health risk and where the contamination has the potential to migrate off-site or affect off-site receptors, than for sites distant from sensitive receptors where the risk to the environment and human health is minimal.

### **2.3 Identification of stakeholders**

The stakeholders who should be involved and the level of community interest will vary according to site-specific conditions. In general, the following broad categories should be considered when identifying potential stakeholders and inviting them to participate in the community consultation process:

- landowners who are (or may be) directly affected by the migration of contamination off-site
- adjacent landowners
- residents (or other occupiers) in the locality of the contaminated site (i.e. the local community)
- Indigenous custodians of the area
- local government agencies
- local politicians
- local businesses (including local chambers of commerce and industry)
- State government agencies and departments (e.g. Department of Environment and Conservation, Department of Water, Department of Health)
- non-government organisations and community-based organisations (including rate payers associations and catchment management groups)
- environmental interest and action groups
- industry and professional associations
- employee associations and unions
- public utilities and service providers (e.g. Western Power, Water Corporation.)
- media representatives; and
- any other individuals or organisations who may have an interest in the site.

The process of identifying potential stakeholders and inviting them to participate in the community consultation process should be as inclusive as possible. DEC requires proponents take reasonable measures to invite potentially interested parties to participate in the process. **Procedural fairness should be adhered to in providing stakeholders with a genuine opportunity to engage in the consultation process. Interaction with a representative range of stakeholders, including minority groups (e.g. seniors, people with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse groups) is recommended.**

## 2.4 Timing of community consultation

Proponents should ensure community consultation commences as early as possible in the contaminated site assessment process. The temptation to delay community consultation until the extent and nature of contamination has been fully delineated should be avoided. Early community consultation, which continues throughout the site investigation and management stages, is most likely to build credibility with the organisations involved and result in an outcome which receives broad community acceptance. However, it is acknowledged that commencing community consultation late in the site investigation process (e.g. during site management/remediation) may be required once an understanding of site conditions and remedial actions has been obtained.

Based on the staged approach to site investigations recommended in the DEC guideline, *Reporting on Site Assessments* (2001) and the flow diagram on page III, it is recommended the community consultation process should follow the stages:

- *During the preliminary site investigation (PSI)* - once the detailed site inspection has been undertaken, or after the PSI, while the sampling and analysis program (SAP) for the detailed site investigation (DSI) is being developed.

There should be an initial indication of the presence and type of contamination at the site, and the community should be advised that further investigations will be completed. The type of investigations to be undertaken and any possible disturbances should also be detailed e.g. drilling, test pitting, traffic management, noise or disturbance. If weekend work is required, the hours of operation should also be communicated. Consultation prior to finalisation of the SAP for the DSI will provide the community with an opportunity to comment on the design of the sampling program, proposed sample locations and other aspects and will help to ensure that the DSI addresses all of the community's concerns.

- *After completion of the DSI*  
The main findings of the DSI should be communicated to the community in plain language (rather than technical jargon) and in an accessible format. Information should be provided on the future stages of the process e.g. any further phases of investigation and opportunities for the community to become involved and provide comment.
- *After identification of the preferred remedial or management option for the site*

Once the preferred remedial/management option has been identified, the options evaluated and the reasons for recommending the preferred option should be discussed with the community. The community's comment and input should be considered when the final decision is made regarding the remedial/management strategy for the site. (This round of community consultation may be combined with communicating the findings of the DSI).

- *After remediation validation and/or during ongoing monitoring*

The results of remediation validation and/or the findings of ongoing monitoring should be communicated to the community. In the case of ongoing monitoring over a number of years, periodic updates are required. This round of consultation is important to confirm that commitments made earlier in the process are met, and to provide 'closure' to participants. A review of the community consultation process should be undertaken at this stage, incorporating feedback from the community members who participated.

Community consultation is an ongoing process that should be undertaken throughout the contaminated site assessment process. It is important to maintain open communication at all times, and ensure that the community is able to access information throughout the process.

## **2.5 Techniques for community consultation**

There are many community consultation techniques. Some of the more common techniques and their advantages and disadvantages, are in Appendix A.

Detailed information on community consultation methods and tools and choosing the appropriate level of consultation, can be sourced from DEC's *Community Involvement Framework*, 2003 and the *Interim Industry Guide to Community Involvement*, 2003. Further information is also provided in the *National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure – Schedule B(8) Guideline on Community Consultation and Risk Communication* (NEPC, 1999) and the International Association for Public Participation's *Public Participation Toolbox* (IAP2, 2000).

Most community consultation processes will require the use of different techniques at various stages in the process. The choice of techniques will depend on the main purpose of each round of consultation i.e. whether it is to provide information (e.g. the findings of the DSI) or solicit input and comment (e.g. on the preferred management or remedial option). The range of techniques used for dissemination of information and to obtain community input should be chosen with care to ensure that the process is accessible to all members of the target community. Special consideration should be given to ensuring the involvement of community members who are easily marginalised (e.g. youth, the elderly or non-English speakers).

In recent years the use of public meetings and public hearings in community consultation processes has declined, however Ashford and Rest (1999) note that public meetings remain an important technique for involving both the local community and the wider community in consultation on contaminated site issues.

## 2.6 Practical considerations

There are a number of practical considerations which need to be taken into account when planning for community consultation, in addition to the factors outlined above. These include:

- *Choice of venue.* The venue(s) chosen for contact with the community (e.g. small group meetings, public meetings, information displays) should be easily accessible to members of the target community.
- *Time of contact sessions.* Contact sessions should be scheduled for a time of day and day of the week likely to suit most members of the target community.
- *Advertisement/notification of contact sessions.* Adequate notice of contact sessions (date, time and venue) should be given to the community, together with information on the purpose and agenda for the session.
- *Provision of information.* The community should be provided with the information they need to give informed input to the process at all stages. Information should be provided in clear, non-technical language in a summarised form. The community should be given adequate time to assimilate the information and form an opinion on the matter before being expected to provide comment. Should community members request access to detailed, technical reports, it is suggested that these be made readily available to ensure transparency of the process.
- *Community demographics.* Consideration should be given to the demographics of the target community when planning for community consultation and selecting consultation techniques. Factors such as socio-economic status, literacy levels and English language proficiency of the target community should be considered and accommodated. For example, where a significant number of community members are not sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively, provision should be made for translation of information and/or an interpreter.
- *Facilitation of contact sessions.* For most contaminated site investigations, it is likely that community consultation will be undertaken by the professional(s) responsible for undertaking the investigations. Where a site is likely to be particularly contentious, however, it may be appropriate to retain the services of a professional with specialist expertise in facilitation and communication.
- *Working with Indigenous communities.* There are a number of practical, helpful guides to assist with working with Indigenous communities. These guides are referred to in 5.2 - Other Useful References. There is often more than one group with traditional links to, or interests in an area. Rarely does one person or group speak for all the groups affected, so it is important to take all potential stakeholder views into account as one would in any type of community. If more than one group is affected, meetings will need to be organised with representatives from each group. Otherwise, discuss compatible arrangements separately. Different groups may be in conflict and this needs to be factored into a consultation strategy. The earlier the consultation process begins, the better.

Heritage and Native Title are other issues to consider and guidance can be sought from the Department of Indigenous Affairs. Under Section 18 of the *Aboriginal Heritage*

*Act, 1972*, the consent of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs is required before proceeding with a development that will disturb a heritage site.

### 3. Reporting on community consultation

Reporting on contaminated site investigations and management to DEC should include information on the community consultation undertaken. The scope and extent of community consultation undertaken should be documented and justified. It is recommended that the report include the following details of the community consultation process (where relevant):

- Names of potential stakeholders (individuals and groups) who were identified and invited to participate (may be included as an appendix).
- How potential stakeholders were invited to participate (e.g. notices, advertisements).
- Names of community members who participated and had their names recorded (may be included as an appendix).
- How, when and where consultation took place (should be summarised in the main report, with further information such as the minutes of meetings. included in an appendix).
- Information provided to the community (should be summarised in the main report, with further details provided in an appendix).
- Input and comment received from the community.
- How the community's input was considered and incorporated in the decision-making process.

More information on reporting on contaminated site assessments and remediation is provided in the DEC guideline, *Reporting on Site Assessments* (2001). In common with other documents submitted to DEC, members of the public will be provided with all documentation relating to community consultation if a site-specific detailed summary of records search is requested.

## 4. Glossary

<b>Assessment</b>	Study of a site to determine possible and actual contaminants. May involve a desktop review of the site and may also include the collection and analysis of soil, groundwater or sediment samples.
<b>Assessment levels</b>	Guideline concentrations of contaminants adopted by DEC to use as a comparison against which to assess the presence and severity of contamination at a site.
<b>Beneficial Use</b>	<p>The use of the environment, or of any portion thereof, which is –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) conducive to public benefit, public amenity, public safety, public health or aesthetic enjoyment; or</li><li>(b) identified and declared under Section 35(2) of the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (as amended) to be a beneficial use to be protected under an approved policy.</li></ul>
<b>Community consultation</b>	Consultation with those individuals or groups who have an interest in a (potentially) contaminated site, its assessment and/or remediation, or may be affected by it, including all stakeholders in the local community and the wider community.
<b>Competent professional</b>	Possessing the skills, knowledge, experience, and judgement to perform the assigned tasks or activities satisfactorily.
<b>Contaminant</b>	A substance which has the potential to present a risk of harm to human health or any environmental value.
<b>Contaminated</b>	In relation to land or underground water, means that a substance is present in, on or under that land or in that underground water, at a concentration that presents, or has the potential to present, a risk of harm to human health or any environmental value.
<b>DEC</b>	Department of Environment and Conservation
<b>DEP</b>	Department of Environmental Protection.
<b>Detailed site investigation (DSI)</b>	An investigation which confirms and delineates potential or actual contamination through a comprehensive sampling program.
<b>Ecosystem</b>	Unit including a community of organisms, the physical and chemical environment of that community, and all the interactions among those organisms and between the organisms and their environment.



<b>Environmental value</b>	(a) beneficial use; or (b) an ecosystem health condition which requires protection from activities which may degrade, impair or destroy it.
<b>Groundwater (also underground water)</b>	All waters occurring below the land surface.
<b>Interested persons</b>	Individuals or organisations who have any type of interest in a contaminated site. This 'interest' is not restricted in any way, and does not require proof of legal standing or a verifiable interest.
<b>Investigation levels</b>	The concentration of a contaminant above which further investigation, evaluation and possibly remediation will be required.
<b>Local community</b>	Those individuals and/or groups residing in the locality where a contaminated site assessment and/or remediation is to be conducted and who may be affected by the activities and/or possible site contamination physically (e.g. through risks to health or the environment, loss of amenity) or non-physically (e.g. due to concern about possible contamination).
<b>NEPC</b>	National Environment Protection Council.
<b>NEPM</b>	National Environment Protection Measure.
<b>Practitioners</b>	Suitably qualified professionals with experience in environmental investigations and management.
<b>Preliminary site investigation (PSI)</b>	An investigation consisting of a desktop study, a detailed site inspection and, where appropriate, limited sampling. The preliminary site investigation should be of such scope as to be sufficient to indicate whether contamination is present or likely to be present and to determine whether a detailed site investigation should be conducted. Also to provide information for designing a DSI.
<b>Receptor</b>	The entity that may be adversely affected by contact with or exposure to a contaminant of concern.
<b>Remediation</b>	Action taken to eliminate, limit, correct, counteract, mitigate or remove any contaminant or the negative effects on the environment or human health of any contaminant.

<b>Risk assessment</b>	Process of estimating the potential impact of a chemical, biological or physical agent on humans, plants, animals and the ecology.
<b>SAP</b>	Sampling and analysis program.
<b>Site</b>	An area of land or underground water.
<b>Stakeholder</b>	One who has an interest in a project or who may be affected by it.
<b>Validation</b>	The process of demonstrating that a site has been remediated successfully. Involves the collection and analysis of samples to demonstrate that contaminant concentrations are below acceptable limits and do not pose a risk to human health or the environment.
<b>Verifiable interest</b>	<p>Parties having a verifiable interest are those parties involved in the land transfer process such as owners, potential purchasers, potential developers and lending institutions.</p> <p>A verifiable interest could also be ownership of an adjacent site or a local or state government agency making a planning decision.</p> <p>Potential purchasers and developers must provide documentation, which proves that they have a genuine financial interest in a site.</p>
<b>Wider community</b>	Individuals and/or groups, not necessarily residing in the locality of a site assessment/remediation, who may have an interest in the assessment/remediation.
<b>WRC</b>	Water and Rivers Commission.

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### 5.2 Other useful references

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**APPENDIX A**

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TECHNIQUES**

<b>PASSIVE / ONE-WAY COMMUNITY INFORMATION TECHNIQUES</b>			
<b>Technique / Tool</b>	<b>Points to consider</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>Printed Information Materials</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fact Sheets</li> <li>– Newsletters / Bulletins</li> <li>– Brochures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep it brief and simple.</li> <li>• Make it visually interesting, but avoid a slick sales look.</li> <li>• Include a comment form (preferably postage paid) to encourage two-way communication and expand the mailing list.</li> <li>• Explain the community's role and how community input has affected project decisions.</li> <li>• Question &amp; Answer format can work well.</li> <li>• Consider need for multi-lingual information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can reach large target audience.</li> <li>• A means of providing ongoing information on the project.</li> <li>• Facilitates written responses if comment form enclosed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good mailing list / distribution network is required, to ensure that the information reaches all interested parties.</li> <li>• Difficult to communicate complicated concepts in brief newsletters.</li> <li>• No guarantee materials will be read.</li> <li>• Literacy and English-language proficiency of target community may limit effectiveness.</li> </ul>
<b>Information Repositories</b> Project-related information housed at central locations, such as libraries, city halls, schools and other public facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel at the locations must know where materials are kept.</li> <li>• Keep a list of documents in the repository.</li> <li>• Usage should be tracked through a sign-in sheet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant information is accessible to the public without incurring the costs of distributing multiple copies of documents.</li> <li>• Visible distribution centres for project information can be set up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information repositories are generally <u>not</u> well used by the public.</li> </ul>
<b>Advertisements</b> Paid advertisements in newspapers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the best day(s) of the week and best sections to reach the target audience.</li> <li>• Avoid rarely read notice / classified sections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially reaches wider community.</li> <li>• May satisfy legal notification requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expensive, especially in urban areas.</li> <li>• Limited amount of information can be conveyed.</li> </ul>
<b>Web Sites</b> World wide web site(s) containing project information, announcements and documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site should be simple and easy to navigate.</li> <li>• Organise the site in a logical manner.</li> <li>• Make sure the site is up to date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capable of reaching large audiences.</li> <li>• Large amounts of information can be disseminated.</li> <li>• A low cost way of distributing large documents.</li> <li>• Site can be updated quickly and easily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people still do not have access to the internet.</li> <li>• Not suitable for reaching minority groups such as the elderly, the underprivileged &amp; non-English speakers.</li> <li>• Information overload and poor design of the site can prevent people from accessing the information they need.</li> </ul>

INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY INFORMATION TECHNIQUES			
Technique / Tool	Points to consider	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Hot Line</b> A separate telephone line to provide project information and record input and comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The contact person should have sufficient knowledge to answer most project-related questions.</li> <li>If possible, list a person not a position.</li> <li>If not a local call, provide a toll free number.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information is easily and directly accessible.</li> <li>Information flow is controlled and consistent.</li> <li>Easy to ensure up-to-date information is provided.</li> <li>Accessible to the wider community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated contact person must be committed to and prepared for prompt and accurate responses.</li> <li>Would not reach people with limited English language proficiency unless a translation service is provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Trips</b> Tours / site visits of the project (or similar projects) for key stakeholders, community leaders, elected officials, the media, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know how many participants can be accommodated, and make plans for the overflow.</li> <li>Practical demonstrations are more effective than presentations.</li> <li>Ensure the safety of attendees.</li> <li>Plan a discussion / question and answer session.</li> <li>Consider providing refreshments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates greater public knowledge of issues and processes.</li> <li>Provides an opportunity to develop rapport with key stakeholders.</li> <li>Demystifies the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of participants is limited by logistics.</li> <li>Potentially attractive to protesters.</li> </ul>
<b>Open Houses</b> Information on the project is provided at a number of different stations within the venue. Each station should address a separate issue. Project staff guide community members through the exhibits, with the pace determined by the participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The format should be explained to community members at the entrance.</li> <li>Stations should be set up so that several people (6 – 10) can view the exhibits at once.</li> <li>Be prepared to handle a crowd all at once.</li> <li>Ask participants to complete a comment sheet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fosters small group or one-on-one communications, creating a comfortable atmosphere for discussion.</li> <li>Useful to explain complex issues / processes.</li> <li>Can draw on other team members to answer difficult questions.</li> <li>Meets information and interaction needs of many community members who are not served by typical public meetings.</li> <li>Helps establish rapport and build credibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to document / record public input.</li> <li>Generally more staff intensive than a meeting.</li> <li>May not provide some community members with the “public” opportunity to express their opinion that they will expect.</li> <li>May be seen as a “divide and conquer” strategy if community distrust is already high.</li> <li>Protesters may try to disrupt the event.</li> </ul>

INDIVIDUAL / SMALL GROUP COMMUNITY INPUT TECHNIQUES			
Technique / Tool	Points to consider	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Individual Discussion</b> Consulting with selected individuals by telephone, meetings and door-knocking within an area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used to seek input from community members on how they wish to participate.</li> <li>Where feasible, discussions in person are preferable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides an opportunity to identify and understand a range of issues and views.</li> <li>Provides an opportunity to learn how best to communicate with a particular community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited opportunity for large numbers of community members to participate in the process.</li> <li>Does not allow for broad scale exchange of ideas.</li> <li>Multiple individual discussions can be time consuming.</li> </ul>
<b>Morning/Afternoon "Tea &amp; Chat" Sessions</b> Small meetings within the local community, usually at a person's home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff should ensure that they are polite and appreciative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxed setting is conducive to effective dialogue.</li> <li>Provides for maximum two-way communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires a lot of labour to reach many people.</li> </ul>
<b>Small Format Meetings</b> Small meetings with existing groups or stakeholders with similar interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand who is likely to be in the audience, and prepare accordingly.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for one-on-one discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides an opportunity for in-depth information exchange in a non-threatening forum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be too selective.</li> <li>Can leave out important groups.</li> </ul>



LARGE GROUP COMMUNITY INPUT TECHNIQUES			
Technique / Tool	Points to consider	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Response Sheets</b> Mail-in forms often included with printed project information to gain input on the community's views and concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepaid postage is preferable.</li> <li>• Should include a section to allow respondents to request that their name be added to the mailing list.</li> <li>• Completed response sheets form part of the community consultation record.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a mechanism for expanding the project mailing list.</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for people who are unlikely to attend meetings to give input.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not generate statistically valid results.</li> <li>• Coverage achieved is only as good as the mailing/distribution list.</li> <li>• Written responses unlikely from less-articulate minorities and those with limited English-language proficiency.</li> </ul>
<b>Surveys</b> Structured questioning of community sample to gain statistically valid information about the community's views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most suitable for gaining general information about the community's characteristics and attitudes.</li> <li>• Survey/Questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias.</li> <li>• Ensure statistically valid results are required before making the investment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides input from individuals who would otherwise be unlikely to participate.</li> <li>• Provides input from a cross-section of the community, not just activists.</li> <li>• Provides data on community characteristics and attitudes.</li> <li>• Statistically valid results can satisfy a political need and are generally more persuasive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal discussion with and no interaction between members of the community.</li> <li>• Level of detail may be limited.</li> <li>• Can be labour-intensive and expensive to generate statistically valid results.</li> <li>• Respondents may be indifferent to the subject matter &amp; require persuasion.</li> <li>• May be perceived as a public relations / marketing tool.</li> <li>• For mailed surveys, the response rate is generally very low.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Meetings</b> Formal meetings aimed at presenting information to and obtaining input from a large audience (usually more than 20 people). Attendance is usually by self-selection in response to an advertised invitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting needs to be widely publicised.</li> <li>• Time and location of the meeting should be chosen to suit the majority of the target community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a forum for information dissemination and exchange with large numbers of people.</li> <li>• Brings a wide range of people together.</li> <li>• Places comment and input on record.</li> <li>• May satisfy legal requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not foster dialogue.</li> <li>• Focussed discussion on one issue is difficult.</li> <li>• Requires good, fair and unbiased facilitation.</li> <li>• More articulate and better prepared community members may dominate.</li> <li>• Less vocal sections of the community may not express their views.</li> <li>• Many people dislike public speaking.</li> </ul>