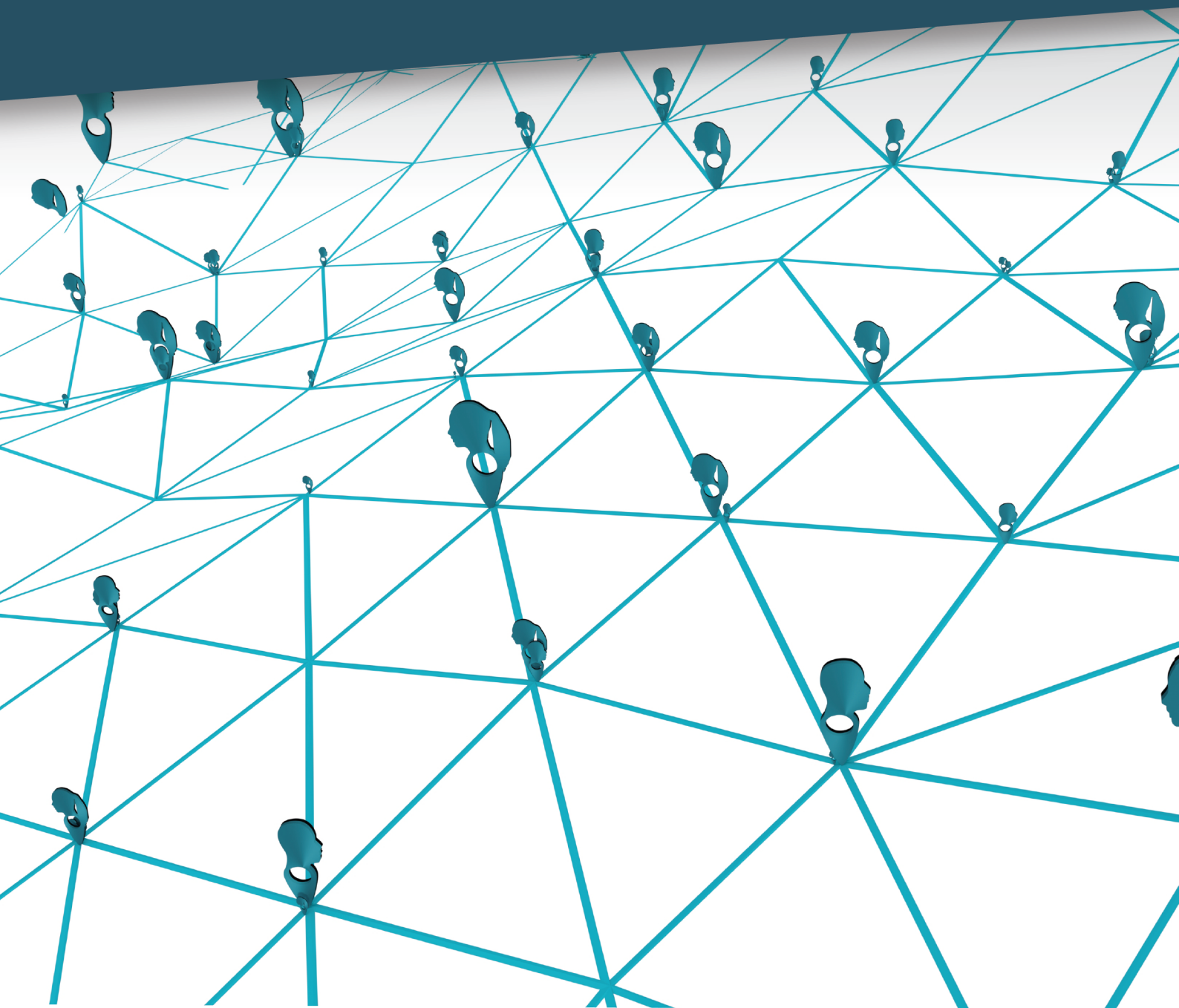


ANT Stakeholder Action Mapping Tool and User Guide



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Disclaimer: This tool is based on empirical research which sought to understand the multiple stakeholder perspectives shaping the social and political environment of contemporary and future mining. This research (Project P4-010) was funded by the Cooperative Research Centre for Optimising Research Extraction (CRE ORE).

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As a Queensland University of Technology (QUT) based research team, we acknowledge the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge that these lands have always been places of research.

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INTRODUCTION

The ANT Stakeholder Action Mapping Tool offers a valuable alternative to existing stakeholder and social licence mapping techniques which tend to understand stakeholders as static entities. In contrast, the ANT tool presents a dynamic approach to identifying and responding to stakeholders. It is based on extensive research into stakeholder views, drivers, and corresponding actions and interactions.

Most stakeholder engagement frameworks aim to navigate around stakeholder views and often exclude those which might impact the approvals timeline. The authors' research demonstrates that this approach does not work in the long term, as stakeholders assert themselves in various ways throughout the approvals process, disrupting the timeline and blowing out project costs.

This methodology and the terms used draw on the work of Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law, who collectively developed Actor-Network Theory (ANT)¹. ANT is a powerful method for mapping stakeholder interactions because it decentres the organisation, recognises the dynamic nature of stakeholder views, and highlights the actions that stakeholders can - and do - take to make their views heard.

This User Guide outlines two ways to use this ANT method, depending on whether it is being used to look back over an approvals process to understand what happened (the Retrospective method), or to map possible stakeholders at the beginning of the approvals process (the Predictive method). Each method is very different to the other, so it is important to select the method most appropriate to your situation.

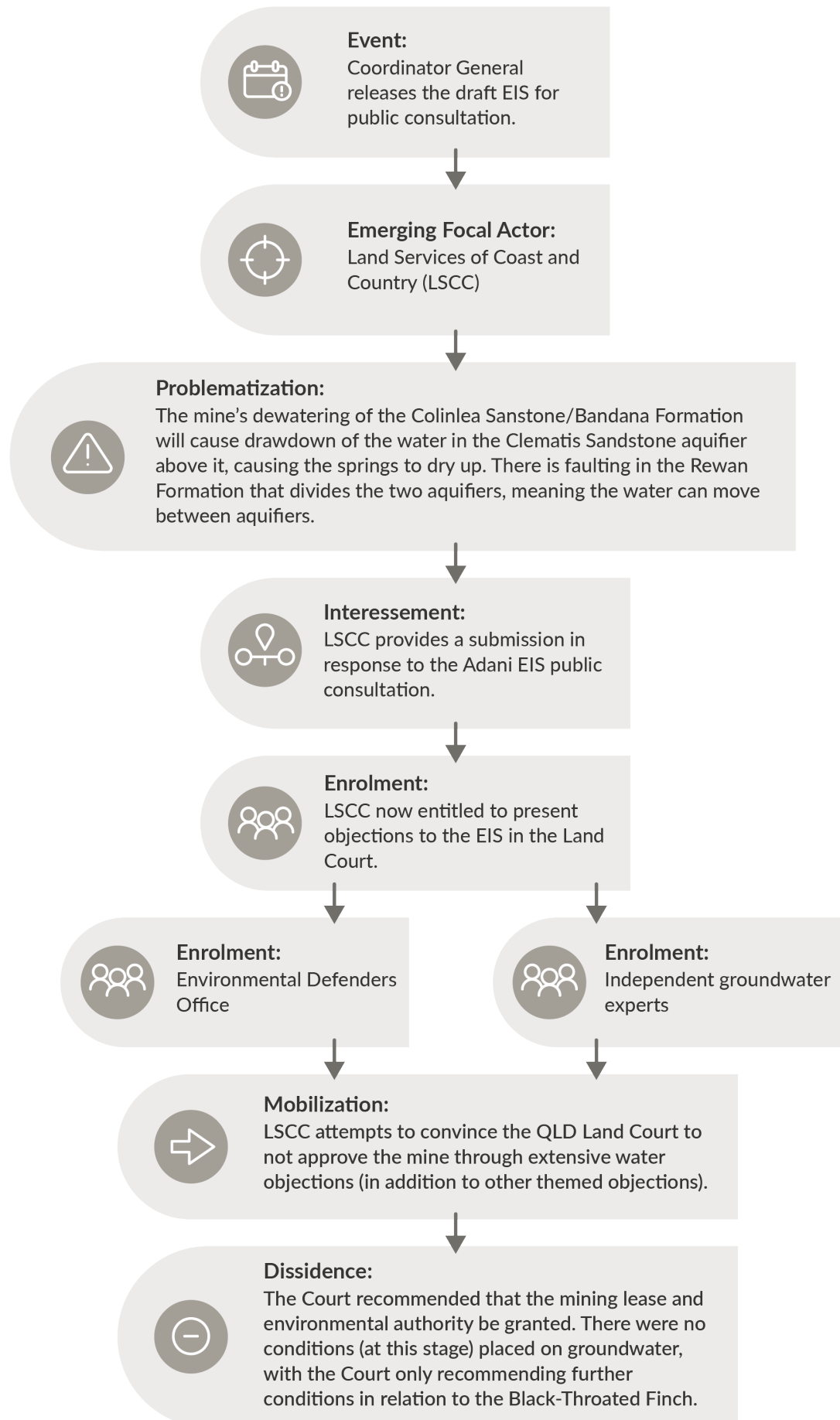
¹ The authors are inspired by and indebted to ANT but do not claim here to offer a rigorous application of this methodology; rather the tool is the authors' interpretation in light of the goals of understanding stakeholder drivers and actions.

DIAGRAM EXPLANATION

The diagram opposite has been created using the ANT Retrospective Mapping Tool. It is designed as a visual accompaniment to the examples given throughout the tool, as well as demonstrating what an ANT map can look like. It is important to keep in mind that the diagram shows only a very small segment of the overall map of the key issue of groundwater that was created by the researchers. The terminology is explained in the ensuing step by step process.

If you would like further examples of what the retrospective mapping might look like, you can access the ANT maps produced as part of this research project: www.extractivestakeholder.com







RETROSPECTIVE



Step 1: Start by identifying a **key issue** in relation to a **controversy** that you want to investigate.

A controversy is a situation, matter or event that has been opened up to intense public interrogation and is no longer exclusively in the hands of 'experts'².

A key issue is therefore one of the reasons it has become a controversy, or one of the threads of the public debate.

Within the 'Carmichael coal mine approvals controversy', an example of a key issue is groundwater. Specifically, the issue is the possible impact that the mine will have on the existing aquifers and the ripple effects for surface springs and landowners who rely on groundwater. We identified groundwater as a key issue by reading the public submissions in response to the environmental impact statement (EIS), where it was frequently communicated as a topic of concern. We also encountered groundwater as a key issue raised through the objections process within the Land Court of Queensland.



Step 2: Consider who is pushing this particular key issue within the public debate.

This might be an individual person or an organisation that has been particularly vocal on the issue or is pursuing a course of action that is keeping the controversy unresolved. This is a **focal actor** (an individual or a group). Focal actors aim to guide the conversation according to their particular viewpoints. You can identify focal actors by reading widely in media and documents addressing the key issue and seeing which names occur frequently, are prominent within the conversation, and/or are clearly taking action to assert their viewpoints.

There may be more than one focal actor.

In identifying the focal actors in relation to the key issue of groundwater, we noted the names of people and groups who submitted responses to the EIS during the consultation period. We also surveyed news media and social media material over a period of three years and noted the names of people or organisations that occurred frequently and that had a significant impact on the public conversation or the approvals process in relation to the key issue. From this we noted a small number of influential actors who had a particularly strong influence on the approvals process in relation to the key issue groundwater, including: Land Services of Coast and Country, Adani Mining, Lock the Gate Alliance, QLD Department of Environment and Science, and Queensland (QLD) Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk.

² Whatmore, S. (2009). Mapping knowledge controversies: science, democracy and the redistribution of expertise. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(5), 587–598.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509339841>



Step 3: Focal actors will have a 'problematization'. That is, focal actors will seek to define the problem in relation to the key issue, which rationalises the action undertaken.

The problematization can be summarised based on the focal actors' statements, often captured within documents or media, or by looking closely at actions and surmising the rationale behind them.

An example of this is focal actor, Land Services of Coast and Country (LSCC), which established the problematization that:

The mine's dewatering of the Colinlea Sandstone/Bandana Formation will cause drawdown of the water in the Clematis Aquifer above it, causing the Doongmabulla Springs System to dry up. There is faulting in the Rewan Formation that divides the two aquifers, meaning the water can move between the aquifers.

This problematization was identified by reading through the legal case in which LSCC was involved and its submission in response to the EIS. The articulation of its problematization around the accuracy of the scientific data on groundwater is strategic, because it opened opportunities to assert its viewpoint throughout the approvals process. A problematization on purely ethical grounds would not have been as effective at influencing others. **Problematizations can therefore restrict or open possible actions.**



Step 4: From this point it is possible to work backwards to identify a particular event that triggered the emergence of a focal actor and caused the actor to establish the problematization.

In the case of LSCC, the event that triggered its emergence as a focal actor was the public release of the draft EIS, which prompted it to establish its particular problematization. We can assume that this stakeholder was dissatisfied with the way that groundwater was addressed within the EIS, and its dissatisfaction was such that it was prompted to act.

Identifying the origin of problematizations can lead to organizational learnings for future projects. For example, this step can highlight points in the project timeline when additional consultation may be required and/or assist in understanding the root cause of ongoing stakeholder conflict.



Step 5: It is also possible to work forward from the problematization to understand how focal actors convince other actors to align with their viewpoints and take collective action to assert their interpretations of the key issue.

Actors, rather than focal actors, are people or organisations (anyone or anything) that become visible while tracing focal actors' activities. Actors are called as such because they take action, and the role of focal actors is to convince others to take action **in line with their specific problematizations**.

This process is divided into three steps: **interessement**, **enrolment**, and **mobilization** (with a sub-step of re-problematization).



Step 5.1: Interessement is the process of focal actors communicating with other actors and attempting to convince others to agree with their problematization of the key issue and to align their viewpoints, or change their perspective, to match.

This is often difficult to pinpoint within a mapping process because it is generally a subtle and private process such as a conversation or a meeting and is not publicly documented.

The LSCC attempt interessement by submitting a response to the EIS that outlines its problematization of groundwater. Through this LSCC is attempting to convince the mining company and the government to align their viewpoints with LSCC's problematization.

Part of the process of interessement can include a **re-problematization**. This is a strategic re-articulation of the problem into a more persuasive or tailored argument that the focal actor believes is more likely to convince other actors to align with them and embark on a course of action. While this articulation of the problem may be different to the original problematization, it is usually intended to inspire the same or similar actions, allowing the focal actor to still achieve its aims. Here too it is difficult to find conclusive documentation; however it is possible to assume a re-problematization has occurred when the focal actor's public statements shift and no longer align as neatly with the original problematization, or when the focal actor is in conversation with an actor who would not be persuaded by the original problematization.



Step 5.2: Following interessement is enrolment.

This is a natural next step, where focal actors' attempts to convince other actors to agree with their problematizations is successful, and these actors align their viewpoints relating to the key issue with that of the focal actors. This is the start of a 'network' of actors who all share a problematization. In order to identify who has been enrolled in a network you generally need to work back from the next step of mobilization.

LSCC conducted a process of interessement privately, but it is possible to see the outcome of that process through the enrolment of the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) as well as independent groundwater experts, John Webb and Adrian Werner, into the LSCC's problematization as they agree to represent LSCC and act as experts within the objections process in the Queensland Land Court.



Step 5.3: From enrolment, the next step is **mobilization**.

This is where actors with viewpoints aligned with the focal actor *mobilize* or undertake a course of action in order to: change the course of events; challenge other focal actors and their network/s; or to convince a wider range of people to align with the focal actor.

Through identifying the actors who are mobilizing it can be assumed that those same actors were enrolled within the focal actor's network beforehand. Mobilizations can be identified as actions taken by the focal actor in collaboration with other supporting actors, and you can identify these actions through news articles as well as considering the steps in the approvals process and identifying which actors were directly involved..

After agreeing with the LSCC's problematization (enrolment), the EDO and the independent experts mobilize. This involved undertaking the action of representing the LSCC and presenting an argument in court in an attempt to persuade the Members of the Land Court that the LSCC problematization is the correct interpretation of the key issue of groundwater.

At the points of interessement, enrolment, and mobilization there is also the option of **dissidence**. **Dissidence is when an actor is not persuaded** by a focal actor or its network to share their problematization, and either maintains their original viewpoint or actively attempts to disrupt the focal actor's efforts to convince and mobilize others.

The Members of the Land Court of Queensland displayed dissidence, as they were not persuaded to align their viewpoints with the LSCC and instead rule in favour of recommending the mining lease and environmental authority be granted.



Step 6: Somewhat disconnected from the concepts covered above are **obligatory passage points (OPP)**.

An OPP is a situation or condition that must be achieved in order for the focal actor and network to achieve their desired outcomes³. These are important to map out because they are crucial opportunities for focal actors and their networks to exert power or to gain wider recognition. They can also be points of failure where focal actors and networks lose their ability to further influence other actors.

An example of an obligatory passage point is the objections process within the Land Court of Queensland. This is a legislated process that must be included within the QLD approvals process, and in order for the LSCC to maintain its status as a focal actor and enact change it needed the Members of the Land Court to rule in its favour. The President of the Land Court's ruling against the LSCC represents the dismissal of the LSCC's viewpoint and the end of the network. If desired, the LSCC could have begun mobilizing its network in a different direction to undertake a different action or could have relinquished its power as a focal actor and joined another network with a similar problematization in relation to the key issue.

³ Simon, G. L. (2014) 'If you can't stand the heat, get into the kitchen: obligatory passage points and mutually supported impediments at the climate-development interface', *Area*, 46(3), pp. 268-277.



PREDICTIVE



Step 1: Start by identifying the **Obligatory Passage Points (OPP)**.

An OPP is a situation or condition that must be achieved in order for the focal actors to achieve their desired outcomes⁴. Focal actors are individuals or organisations that have the potential to be particularly vocal on a key issue or to pursue a course of action to keep the controversy unresolved. A controversy is a situation, matter or event that has been opened up to intense public interrogation and is no longer exclusively in the hands of 'experts'⁵. A key issue is therefore one of the reasons it has become a controversy, or one of the threads of the public debate.

OPPs are important to map out because they are crucial opportunities for focal actors and their networks to exert power or to gain wider recognition. They can also be points of failure where focal actors and networks lose their ability to further influence other actors.

In the context of mining approvals, OPPs are points that legally must happen within the approvals process in order for a mine to be approved. Transparency International has developed maps describing the mining lease and EIS processes within the Queensland context (as well as many others), which can be used to identify OPPS^{6&7}.



Step 2: Identify potential focal actors in relation to each OPP.

Focal actors aim to guide the conversation according to their particular viewpoint. You can identify potential focal actors by considering which individuals or organisations must be involved at each OPP, such as government departments, the mining company, Ministers etc. Then consider additional actors who might have a strong interest in the approvals process or that particular OPP, such as environmental groups, local landowners etc. A failure to consider actors who might disagree with your goals can lead to slowed project approvals and have serious cost implications. It also makes it less likely that your project will have a genuine social licence.

⁴ Simon, G. L. (2014) 'If you can't stand the heat, get into the kitchen: obligatory passage points and mutually supported impediments at the climate-development interface', *Area*, 46(3), pp. 268-277.

⁵ Whatmore, S. (2009). Mapping knowledge controversies: science, democracy and the redistribution of expertise. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(5), 587-598. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509339841>

⁶ Transparency International Australia. (2021). Mining Licence Process Map Australia (Queensland). https://transparency.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Australia_QLD_Feb-2021.pdf

⁷ Transparency International Australia. (2021). Environmental Impact Statement Process Map QLD. https://transparency.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/QLD-EIS_Process_V2.6_4-Feb-2021.pdf



Step 3: Put yourself into the shoes of each focal actor to understand their problematization.

Central to effectively anticipating stakeholders' actions is understanding their perspectives. This involves considering not only their capacities to influence the approvals process, but what their underlying drivers are for doing so. In thinking through the problematization of all the actors identified in relation to an OPP, it is possible to gain a better understanding of competing concerns that can then be incorporated into formal approvals documentation. Addressing the range of concerns increases the likelihood of a project gaining a social licence from a wide range of stakeholders. By going through the process of envisioning alternative perspectives, companies can also develop empathy toward stakeholders and reduce the level of polarisation within public discussions.



Step 4: Plan out avenues of engagement with the potential focal actors in order to come to a shared re-problematization.

Following on from the process of understanding different problematizations is the work of re-problematizing in collaboration with the identified actors. This process involves engaging in dialogue with individual actors, whether single stakeholders or organisations, to exchange problematizations and to work toward a singular shared re-problematization that equally addresses the concerns of both stakeholders (eg the company and environment group).

A re-problematization is not just a reframing of an issue, however, but has an action associated with it. That action, such as altering the EIS or undertaking further research in an area, should be mutually agreed. Its completion will signal to the actor that the company is authentically engaging and responding to concerns, and that it welcomes input.



Step 5: Remember that networks are dynamic, and that engaging in dialogue with an actor to reach a shared problematization is an iterative process.

New focal actors can emerge at any time throughout the project, and the views and drivers of established focal actors can change over time. It is important to invest in long-term relationships with actors, and also to be aware of shifting norms around social, environmental, and cultural considerations. The process of sharing problematizations should not end with the achievement of project approvals, but should continue throughout the life of mine – even when interest in the project begins to lessen.

