

Stakeholder involvement for Uranium Legacy Sites, Northern Territory, Australia

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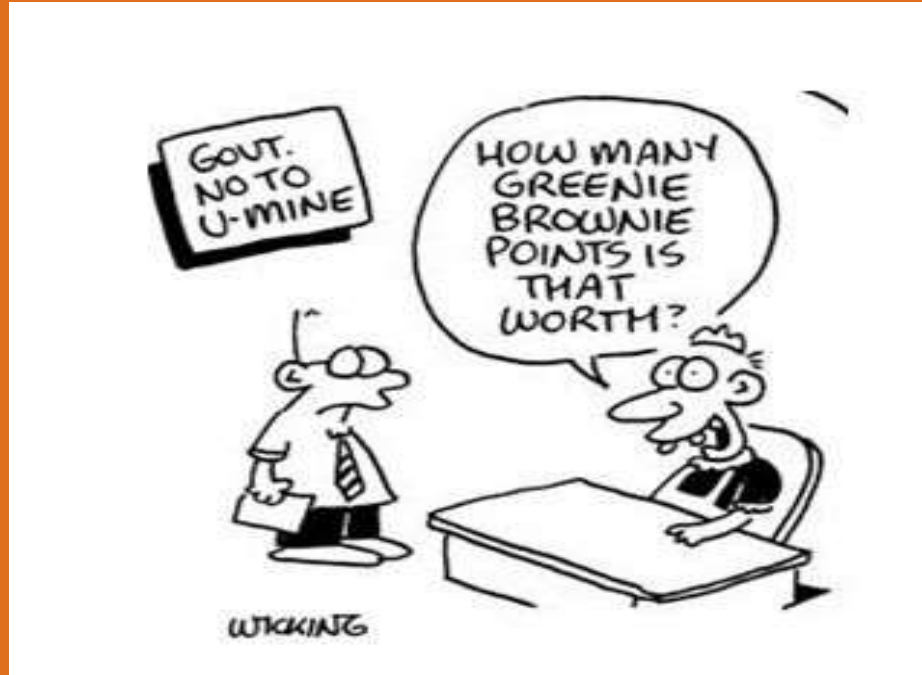
DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES

In the beginning.....



The basic situation in many communities when mining is mentioned

...and Uranium is more sensitive than most!



Public opinion can sway political judgement too!

Stakeholders and uranium mining

- Uranium mining is one of the most emotional issues in the industry
- Opposition is a global matter
- All we have learned and developed can (and should) be applied throughout mining
- NT has a long uranium mining history – 1949 onwards
- Not always the best record in consultation and stakeholder engagement
- In the very early days no consideration at all was given to Aboriginal Traditional Owners
- Steady improvement since 1970s – *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA)*



Early arrangements

- With the advent of *ALRA* the land Councils were established to act on behalf of Traditional Aboriginal Owners (ATO)
- Pattern would be for Land Councils to act as an intermediary in the discussion
- Often Proponents would present, then be asked to leave whilst Land Council staff would facilitate the debate amongst ATO
- Then sometimes a discussion or sometimes a decision
- Concerns from both sides that the true story was maybe not getting through
- Gradually more direct debate was introduced and encouraged
- More effort to meet and debate with ATO , sometimes on country



South Alligator Valley case study

- Mined in the 1960's then abandoned
- Land grant made 1980s
- Incorporation into Kakadu National Park 1986; World Heritage Area
- Remediation assured in lease-back agreement for KNP
- Initial clean up & hazard reduction in 1991-2 with no real consultation; but some employment for ATO
- 1997 - the new way begins



1997 – initial meeting – on country



Consultative Committee

- An advisory body and information exchange
- Frequency of meetings 6-8 weeks (too much we found out)
- Majority of ATOs, representatives from many families
- Suitable venues and format for meetings
- How to develop appropriate record keeping
- Tried use of a facilitator- not always vital/useful
- Opening up of discussions as trust developed
- Cultural issues more easily revealed, such as
 - machinery sizes
 - drilling & blasting
 - gender issues

Consultative Committee meeting, Gunlom Camp



1999 On site meeting



Communication options



Use of posters to show water treatment options



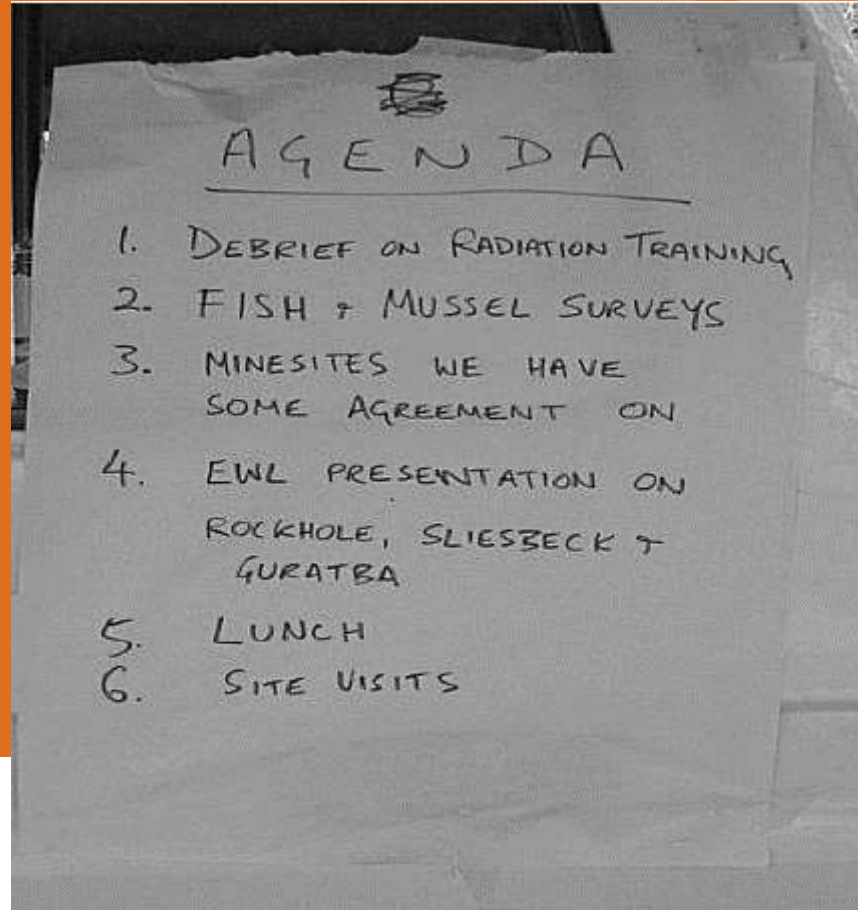
Models to demonstrate methods

Site Visits



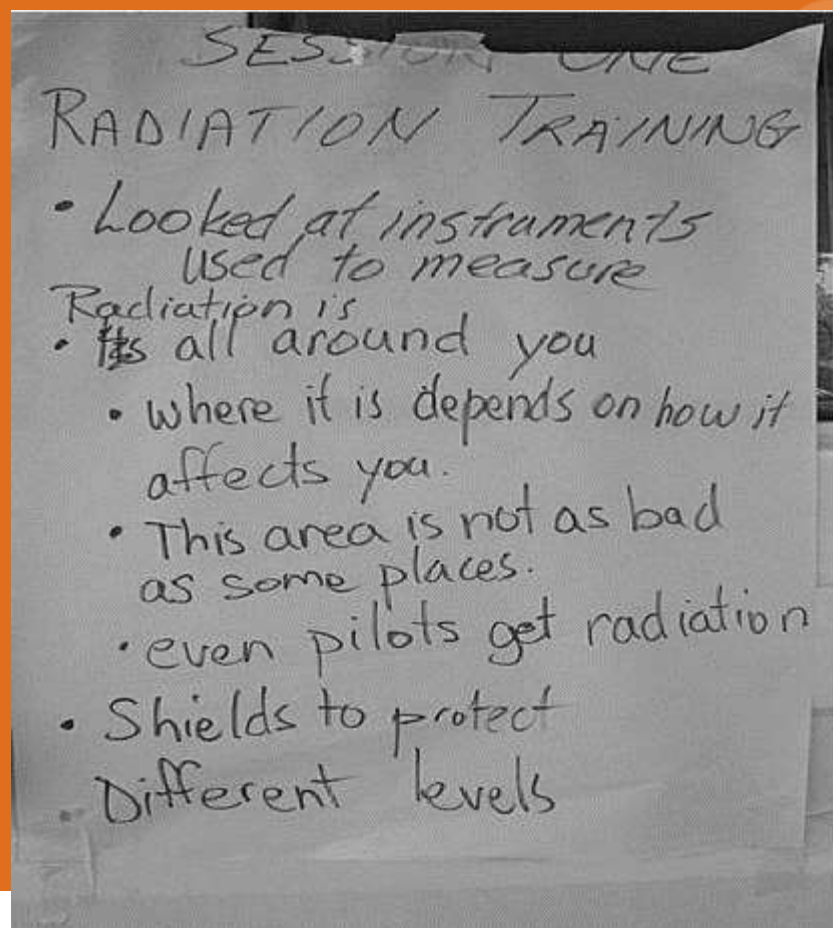
AGENDA

- Drawn up by consensus on the day
- Stakeholders go first
- Try to include all requests on the day
- Maintain order and balance “sides” carefully
- Keep a record appropriately



“MINUTES”

- A simple summary record
- Written up as we go
- Agreed as we go
- Photographed for report



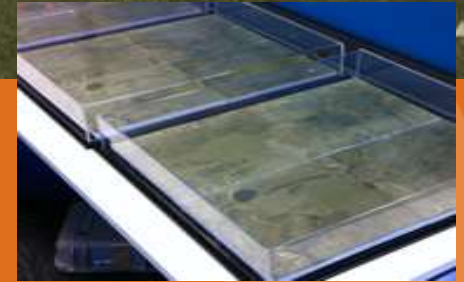
Developments

- Greater care taken to ensure correct parties were involved
- Increasing involvement of ATO:
 - contributors to planning end use
 - sacred site clearance & cultural advice
 - site supervision of works
 - stewardship & monitoring
 - small scale contracting & training
- All implemented during SAV remediation and other projects
- Procedures further developed for the Rum Jungle Remediation Project



Today

- “Social Licence” seen as an integral part of the day-to-day business procedures
- Establish committees and/or advisory groups and project boards
- Ensure integrity of process always
- Value the respect of stakeholders
- Stakeholder meetings are seen as a normal part of process when doing business
- We have learned to avoid “burn-out” or meeting fatigue in communities
- Include a variety of materials and site visits to maintain interest
- Get operators to communicate better and more often
- Innovation and better use of media



3D models of Rum Jungle showing present & options

Current Activity

- Make use of media and websites to vary approach and maintain interest
- The identification of stakeholders has become the key starting point for success
- Ensure that the group you are talking to contains the right people
- Check all legislative obligations have been met
- Be open, honest and transparent at all stages



Stakeholder “Buy-in”

Rum Jungle – ATO participation



Ranger Uranium Mine

Not a legacy site but using lessons learned to get best outcome

- Longest operating Uranium mine in Australia
- Surrounded by Kakadu National Park
- Two Governments involved
- Interaction with ATO at many levels
- Committees and working groups
- Fixed dates for closure make for a tight timetable



Stakeholders: What have we learned?

- Identification of correct stakeholders is the key starting point for success
- Meeting leaders of community groups early on to plan a programme is important and get their help to set up early community meetings
- Suitable timing and locations; Facilitation? Can be useful but not always needed
- Ensure that the community you are talking to is the correct one
- Check all legislative obligations have been met
- Build and maintain TRUST
- Always be open, honest and transparent
- Ensure that operators AND regulators communicate at appropriate frequency and level; keep each other in the loop
- Maintain interest through innovation in communication – but avoid gimmicks

Conclusions

- The advent of the concept of the social licence has made community and stakeholder communications vital to the success of every mining activity
- Developing and maintaining trust is the basis of establishing successful community relations and retaining approval for any mining operation, not just uranium mining
- Once you have started communicating do not stop – or even slow down!
- Maintain a balance of communication-don't overdo it!
- Trust gained is hard to maintain but very easy to lose

Not rocket science but a matter of common sense and polite respect

Thank you