



Community Engagement – Exploration to Development

Community engagement by mineral explorers and miners is vital to protecting the mining industry's social licence to operate. Alkane Resources Ltd has gained social acceptance of its operations through engaging, communicating with and supporting local communities.



Background

Alkane Resources Ltd (Alkane) has been actively exploring and mining in Central West NSW since the 1980s. The Peak Hill Gold Mine began as an exploration project in 1993, progressing through development to its closure in 2005. Alkane's strong record and experience of community engagement helped in the next mine development at Tomingley and is continuing to facilitate acceptance of the much larger development proposed for the Dubbo Zirconia Project.

Community Engagement Protocol

Alkane developed a number of specific strategies for community engagement and acceptance of the company at the local level. Clear and honest communication is a foundation for these strategies.

Alkane developed a community engagement protocol to ensure they were engaging with the appropriate community representatives, and communicated this protocol to all staff and contractors.

Alkane identified key stakeholders early on, and met with these stakeholders regularly to ensure they were able to freely raise their concerns and have confidence that Alkane would address them. Stakeholders received regular project updates through direct email communication, ASX announcements and media releases.





The local Aboriginal community operates tours of the tourist mine and rehabilitated surrounds at Peak Hill. This provides the public with an insight into mining and its impacts and benefits. The tourist mine is a positive legacy left by the mine operator to boost visitor numbers to the town and provide ongoing training and employment for the Aboriginal community



Supporting a Red Cross street stall – Alkane personnel were part of the local community while the mine was operating from 1996–2005

As the Peak Hill project moved towards development, a group of key community members was identified. Regular, formal consultation was undertaken with this group. Alkane has a policy of listening to the community's expectations, of being responsive and maintaining careful documentation of all complaints. Prompt follow-up, including personal meetings and remedial actions where necessary, ensured that complaints were dealt with early and effectively.

During operations, the community consultation included six-monthly public meetings and mine tours, which was an excellent opportunity for the community to see and understand the operations first hand. The wider community was also updated with information in local newspapers.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Mining companies have the capacity to generate significant economic activity in the communities in which they operate. Alkane worked closely with the community to build trust and social acceptance, supported by its environmental performance record.

Alkane is a strong advocate for corporate social responsibility. Its corporate social responsibility policies include:

- Employ and purchase locally where possible
- Provide equal opportunity in employment
- Encourage staff and contractors to maintain involvement in community organisations and projects.

Sponsoring projects that provide immediate and/or long term benefits is an important and practical way for Alkane to demonstrate sound corporate social responsibility.

Alkane supported the local community in an extensive program including:

- Individual sponsorships for local athletes
- Team sport uniforms for school and sporting groups
- Sporting clubs including the junior ruby league team, Peak Hill Harness Racing Club, Tomingley Picnic Races, Peak Hill Golf Club and Tennis Club
- School equipment including computers, shade for playground and school excursions
- Infrastructure improvements (doctor's residence, mining museum, community radio station and helipad)
- Restoring community assets (complete refurbishment of hall, which was purchased then donated back to the community)
- Events (local shows, sporting events and street carnivals)
- Work experience at the mine for school students.

Through strong community engagement and support, Alkane earned community trust and acceptance for its next mines to be developed at Tomingley and Toongi.



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