Technical Supplement

Social Impact Assessment Guideline
for State Significant Projects

February 2023

NSW
GOVERNMENT

Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

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1. Introduction

This Technical Supplement provides additional guidance for proponents and practitioners using the Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects (the SIA Guideline)[1].

It contains information to help:

- **Section 2:** identify, evaluate and assess the significance of negative and positive social impacts
- **Section 3:** develop appropriate responses to predicted social impacts, with two worked examples of social impact evaluation and response
- **Section 4:** develop a social impact monitoring and management framework, with a worked example of a monitoring mechanism
- **Section 5:** consider the requirements for data validation.

The Technical Supplement contains three appendices:

- **Appendix A:** a recommended structure for a SIA report
- **Appendix B:** examples of typical social impacts for various development types
- **Appendix C:** explanations of levels of assessments.

The methods and examples are not exhaustive; rather, they are designed to illustrate typical SIA activities and support a rigorous, impartial and transparent SIA process. The level of assessment and adoption of different methods should match the project's likely social impact, as indicated in the SIA scoping process. For complex SIAs, detailed analysis and assessment may be required at each stage, whereas basic SIAs may only require desktop assessment of impacts.

The Department of Planning and Environment has developed this document for proponents developing or modifying a State-significant project. When we refer to 'you' or 'your', we are referring to those proponents.

It is not mandatory to use the Technical Supplement, but it sets out the methodology recommended by the Department. This includes a rich source of examples and resources to help proponents prepare a robust SIA report for the environmental impact statement (EIS).

The Department will review the Technical Supplement from time to time so that it remains consistent with new research, evolutions in practice and changes in NSW Government policy – please check www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sia for the most up to date version.

1.1 Guideline language

This Technical Supplement intentionally uses guiding language – for example, words such as 'should' rather than 'must' – given that SIA reports are proportionate to the project and nuanced responses may be required given the range of development types that this Technical Supplement may address.

The SIA Guideline emphasises the need for proponents to ensure a high-quality process that achieves a high-quality output – this supplement demonstrates how to achieve that.

SIA practice uses terms that may have a different meaning in everyday language – see **Section 6** (also included in the SIA Guideline) to understand these terms in the context of this document.

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1   State significant projects are development that is declared to be State Significant Development (SSD), State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) and Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) under the EP&A Act. Categories of development, and specific projects which may be declared SSD and SSI are listed in Schedules 1–5 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011 (SRD SEPP). The Minister may also exercise 'call in powers' as described in the EP&A Act.

2. How to identify and evaluate social impacts

2.1 Understanding characteristics

The SIA Guideline contains definitions and categories you should consider during SIA scoping and initial assessment, and when preparing an SIA report.

Social impacts can have different characteristics, such as positive or negative – see **Table 1** for examples. Consider these characteristics for each of the categories to understand the full range of possible impacts and how they might be experienced.

Not all characteristics in **Table 1** will apply to all projects. This list allows you to understand the characteristics of social impacts in different contexts, to then tailor the scope of the SIA report to the scale and nature of your project.

For example, a project may not present obvious physical, tangible or direct social impacts, but with deliberate investigation of different possible characteristics, less obvious indirect and/or intangible impacts may be identified.

You should always consider intangible impacts from an Aboriginal perspective. Aboriginal people hold a deep sense of connection to Country, which is spiritually connected to identity and culture, meaning changes to Country have social impacts.

Some impacts are directly quantifiable, while others are best assessed through qualitative methods or by considering the potentially different experiences of different groups.

Table 1 Characteristics of social impacts

Characteristics	Examples
A social impact may be physically observable or it may manifest as rational or justified fears (of negative impacts in the future) or aspirations (of positive impacts in the future).	**Physically observable impacts** More paths and cycleways Acquisition of residential properties
	Rational or justified fears Psychological stress regarding the future personal and community impacts of compulsory property acquisition
A social impact may be experienced positively by some people, and negatively by others.	**Positive** Improved livelihoods owing to more work opportunities
	Negative Increased prevalence of adverse health conditions
A social impact may be tangible or intangible.	**Tangible** Availability of affordable housing
	Intangible Community cohesion

Table 1 Characteristics of social impacts

Characteristics	Examples
Social impacts may be direct or indirect. They may also combine with other impacts from a single project or be cumulative with impacts from other projects.	**Direct** Sleep disturbance caused by construction noise
	Indirect Strain on family relations and health from sleep disturbance caused by construction noise
	Combined incremental Sleep disturbance due to increased noise and restricted access because of significantly reduced street parking caused by a single project
	Cumulative Sleep disturbance due to increased noise and restricted access because of significantly reduced street parking from one project. In addition, poor air quality creating health conditions and strained family relations from another project
A social impact may be best assessed using quantitative methods or qualitative methods.	**Directly quantitative** Changes in population demographics
	Partially/indirectly quantitative Incidence of voluntary work among a community as a proxy indicator of community cohesion
	Qualitative (measurable through perception surveys or oral story telling, for example) Cultural values Sense of place Connection to Country
A social impact may be experienced differently within a community, by different communities, and at different times/stages of the project.	**Different experiences within a community** An increase in the value/cost of housing may be positive for homeowners wanting to rent out or sell their properties, but negative for individuals and families wanting to buy or rent
	Different experiences for different communities People living near a project may experience most of the noise and dust impacts, while people in the region's nearest town may benefit from most of the job opportunities
	Different experiences over time People's experiences of impacts during project construction may be quite negative, whereas experiences during operation may be more positive

2.2 Identifying and scoping social impacts

SIA is scalable and proportionate to a project's likely impacts. This section explains how to methodically identify and assess the likely social impacts of a project. This approach identifies likely impacts during SIA scoping and initial assessment and can be repeated to evaluate impacts when preparing the SIA report for the EIS.

The level of detail will differ at each phase; but provides for a simple, consistent approach.

This approach aims to:

• capture and characterise the likely social impacts to inform project planning before social impacts start occurring

• enable a consistent but scalable approach to SIA where the level of assessment is proportionate to the scale and nature of the likely social impacts

• consider the information to be to be assessed during SIA scoping and initial assessment and the approach to community engagement

• identify potential project refinements and possible mitigation and enhancement measures

• identify the impacts that may require further assessment in the EIS and the possible level of assessment for each impact.

How to scope social impacts

Begin with the SIA scoping worksheet. The SIA scoping worksheet is a decision support tool to assist in identifying and considering the likely social impacts of your project. This tool can be used to demonstrate how scoping has informed the level of assessment undertaken.

The process of scoping social impacts, outlined below, aligns with the SIA scoping worksheet so that you can work through and record the process. This section takes you through these steps. The scoping will determine the level of assessment and effort required to address impacts for the SIA report, ranging from not relevant to detailed.

Project activities

Identify specific project activities that could have social impacts. For example, an activity might be 'drilling during construction', or 'transport of materials and goods to/from site'.

Categories of social impacts

Think about each category of social impact, and whether the project activities might cause some form of impact (positive or negative, tangible or intangible etc.) within that category. If there is any ambiguity about which category to choose for a predicted impact, either select the most relevant category or consider separating out different aspects of the impact into their relevant categories.

Likely impacts on people

If early stakeholder consultation has occurred during this SIA scoping and initial assessment stage, use the findings from this work, or from similar recent projects, to inform the analysis of likely impacts. Using consultation from similar recent projects may be appropriate if it is not possible to conduct earlier stakeholder consultation.

Summarise how each stakeholder group may experience impacts, whether positively and/or negatively, how impacts may be distributed (i.e. evenly or unevenly), or how people within each stakeholder group including individuals, groups or subset of a group may experience social impacts differently.

Remember that some stakeholder views might be based on misconceptions about the project. These views remain valid; they will inform communication and relationship-building initiatives rather than, or in addition to, project refinement. To manage expectations, let stakeholders know that while issues are recorded, not all matters result in an action or change to the project.

Previous investigations

Some impacts may have been considered before the planning process commenced or for comparable projects. Where relevant, you may use existing data if similar projects have considered similar impacts or the projects are comparable. Be sure to refer to the previous investigation or the other project.

Cumulative and combined incremental impacts

Impacts that occur as a result of the project in combination with other relevant future projects are considered cumulative.

Combined incremental impacts refer to the combined effect of the different impacts of the one project.

Refer to the Department's Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects for further information on cumulative and combined impacts.

Consider combined incremental and cumulative impacts during scoping and initial assessment. Address identified likely combined impacts in the SIA report, and any likely cumulative impacts in the EIS cumulative assessment.

Consider both combined incremental and cumulative impacts and whether these change the nature or intensity of any identified social impacts. Combined incremental and cumulative impacts can take three forms:

- Spatial impacts occur over the same area (e.g. trucks from multiple operations may produce a cumulative noise impact along a common haulage route)
- Temporal impacts vary over time (e.g. the construction of multiple large projects over the same timeframe may require temporary workers in an area, creating a cumulative shortage of accommodation)
- Linked impacts involve more complex interactions – one impact may trigger another, or a single activity may have multiple impacts (e.g. a mining project may generate noise and dust, consume local water resources or increase traffic on local roads).

Assess the effect of combined incremental and cumulative impacts on people by considering them from the points of view of the people experiencing them. Possible responses include:

- **Yes** – there are combined or cumulative impacts which affect people in these ways
- **No** – this particular social impact is isolated from cumulative impacts
- **Unknown** – it is unclear whether there will be cumulative impacts that affect people
- **N/A** – the impact is not applicable to the project.

If the answer is 'Yes' or 'Unknown', specify what impacts may produce cumulative impacts; where relevant, identify relevant future projects.

Consider the approach to assessing cumulative impacts when planning your detailed social assessment and SIA report. If you are required to submit a scoping report, the scoping report should outline your proposed approach.

Assess all publicly available information (including proposed and determined approvals) when considering nearby projects.

Dimensions

Consider whether social impacts (without mitigation/enhancement) are likely to be material having regard to the extent of people affected, duration of impacts, intensity/scale of impacts, sensitivity of the people affected, and their level of concern or interest (See **Table 5**). Possible responses include:

- **Yes** – the social impact is likely to be material
- **No** – the social impact is unlikely to be material
- **Unknown** – it is unknown whether the social impact is likely to be material.

You can undertake this evaluation at a preliminary level during SIA scoping and initial assessment and refine it as you develop the SIA report.

Assessment levels

A thorough SIA scoping exercise determines the level of assessment in the SIA report for each social impact based on the dimensions noted above. Throughout this assessment, use your professional judgement, based on evidence, of how people might experience the project. If there is any doubt, apply caution and assign a higher level of assessment for the impact.

The level of assessment determines the extent of effort and data required for the SIA report (See **Table 2**). The SIA scoping worksheet will assist in determining the level of assessment based on the steps described above. However, consider each project impact on its merits. In some cases, a higher or lower level of assessment may be justified.

The definition of the level of impact assessment is common to other EIS disciplines, as reproduced in Appendix C of this supplement. The levels of assessment are as follows:

- **Detailed** – The project may result in significant social impacts, including cumulative impacts
- **Standard** – The project is unlikely to result in significant social impacts, including cumulative impacts
- **Minor** – The project may result in minor social impacts
- **Not relevant** – The project will have no social impact, or the social impacts of the project will be so small that they do not warrant consideration.

If you are required to submit a scoping report, outline the proposed level of assessment for each social impact with an explanation and justification. Note that the Department may reach a different view when setting SEARs. If you are not required to submit a scoping report, this exercise is still useful in planning for the SIA report and for demonstrating the relevance of the level of assessment.

SIA methods

Consider and plan any research methods (e.g. surveys/interviews with residents; comparative studies; review of recent regional/local plans) you will use to investigate each social impact in preparing the SIA report.

The nature of the information you will need is informed by and proportionate to the level of assessment required. **Table 2** indicates general data requirements for each assessment level.

Table 2 Indicative data requirements for different levels of assessment

| | Secondary data | Primary data | |
		Consultation	Research
Minor assessment	Required	Limited – if required (e.g. local council)	Not required
Standard assessment	Required	Targeted consultation	Potentially targeted research
Detailed assessment	Required	Broad consultation	Targeted research

Project refinement

Note whether you have identified and adopted opportunities for project refinement in response to stakeholder feedback or preliminary impact evaluation. Possible responses are:

- **Yes** – opportunities have been identified, considered and adopted
- **No** – opportunities have not been identified, considered nor adopted.

Use the scoping report (if required) and SIA report to discuss the options or design refinements that have been considered or progressed to respond to negative social impacts or enhance positive social impacts.

Revisit project refinement throughout development of the SIA report. If opportunities have been identified, but not adopted, this should be justified.

Mitigation/enhancement measures

Identify preliminary mitigation/enhancement measures during SIA scoping and initial assessment. Revisit mitigation and enhancement measures throughout the development of the SIA report.

2.3 Evaluating social impacts

This section provides guidance on evaluating how significant each potential social impact will be without mitigation or enhancement. You can use the same process during SIA scoping and initial assessment and in preparing the SIA report to assess the impact after mitigation or enhancement.

This process must be rigorous, cautious, evidence-based and impartial.

Negative social impacts

Evaluate the significance of each potential negative social impact by considering both the likelihood of it occurring and its potential magnitude (also known in impact assessment as 'consequence'). **Table 3** provides definitions for the five levels of likelihood; **Table 4** provides definitions for the dimensions of magnitude; and **Table 5** provides definitions for its five levels. **Table 6** shows how to integrate likelihood and magnitude levels into an overall social impact significance rating.

The significance of a negative social impact is sometimes known as social risk. In this context, social risk means risk to people. Social risk is therefore assessed from the perspective of those expected to be affected, as opposed to risk to the project. Where possible, use established measures and standards when establishing the magnitude scale.[2]

The SIA report should explain and justify the logic, evidence and assumptions used to complete the evaluation for each negative social impact.

Positive social impacts

A robust assessment of potential positive social impacts will contribute to the overall impact and merits of the project. Evaluate how potential positive social impacts benefit affected communities, not just in terms of individual benefits, but in terms of overall community wellbeing. Always provide evidence for predictions, such as comparative studies and/or primary research. Use **Tables 3 to 6** to evaluate the significance of positive, as well as negative, impacts.

Note that all impacts, including positive impacts, must be assessed in social terms. It is not enough to assume that a certain number of jobs, for example, automatically represents a positive social impact. The SIA report should evaluate the likely social consequences of those jobs. For example, comparable projects may have shown that such jobs in a similar community indirectly improved people's health and wellbeing, and improved community cohesion and social equity because they were directly targeted at economically marginalised groups.

In evaluating characteristics of positive social impacts, use relevant methodologies or frameworks such as sustainable livelihoods,[3] community capital,[4] asset-based community development[5] or the social framework for projects.[6] Explain and justify the logic, evidence and assumptions used to complete the evaluation of each positive social impact.

Following evaluation, compare and contrast the negative social impacts and positive social impacts to indicate the expected overall social impact of the project.

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2   The social risk matrix is one approach and is recommended as a useful starting point. Other risk management tools that could be adapted to support a relative assessment of social risk include critical incident response procedures, bow-tie analyses, and trigger actions response plans. See Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2016, pp. 36-39, for an example of the application of bow-tie analysis to community distress caused by reduced visual amenity. If such an alternative is used, the reasons should be explained and justified.

3   e.g. Coakes, S. and Sadler, A. 2011. Utilising a sustainable livelihoods approach to inform social impact assessment practice. In: Vanclay F. and Esteves A.M., eds. New directions in social impact assessment: Conceptual and methodological advances. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar; 323–340.

4   e.g. Emery, M. and Flora, C. B. 2006. Spiraling-up: Mapping community transformation with community capitals framework, Community Development, 37(1): 19-35 https://www.uvm.edu/rsenr/rm230/costarica/Emery-Flora-2006.pdf.

5   e.g. Mathie, A. and Cunningham, G. 2003. From clients to citizens: Asset-based community development as a strategy for community-driven development. Development in Practice, 13:5, 474-486.

6   Smyth, E. and Vanclay, F. 2017. The social framework for projects: a conceptual but practical model to assist in assessing, planning and managing the social impacts of projects, Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal, 35:1, 65-80.

Social impact tables

Use **Tables 3 to 6** to evaluate the likely significance of both positive and negative social impacts during SIA scoping and initial assessment and SIA report preparation (noting that SIA scoping evaluations are preliminary). The ratings of likelihood and magnitude – and therefore overall significance – typically have both subjective and objective components, as this will depend on people's individual experiences and/or perceptions as well as technical evaluations.

During SIA scoping and initial assessment, these tables can help you to scope social impacts and determine the proposed level of assessment for the SIA report. When undertaking the social assessment for the SIA report, these tables will continue to inform the likely significance of each impact before mitigation or enhancement. You may use them again to assess residual social impacts (those occurring after mitigation/enhancement), thereby demonstrating the expected effectiveness of proposed mitigation/enhancement measures.

Table 3 Defining likelihood levels of social impacts

Likelihood level	Meaning
Almost certain	Definite or almost definitely expected (e.g. has happened on similar projects)
Likely	High probability
Possible	Medium probability
Unlikely	Low probability
Very unlikely	Improbable or remote probability

Table 4 Dimensions of social impact magnitude

Dimensions		Details needed to enable assessment
Magnitude	**Extent**	Who specifically is expected to be affected (directly, indirectly, and/or cumulatively), including any vulnerable people? Which location(s) and people are affected? (e.g. near neighbours, local, regional, future generations).
	Duration	When is the social impact expected to occur? Will it be time-limited (e.g. over particular project phases) or permanent?
	Intensity or scale	What is the likely scale or degree of change? (e.g. mild, moderate, severe)
	Sensitivity or importance	How sensitive/vulnerable (or how adaptable/resilient) are affected people to the impact, or (for positive impacts) how important is it to them? This might depend on the value they attach to the matter; whether it is rare/unique or replaceable; the extent to which it is tied to their identity; and their capacity to cope with or adapt to change.
	Level of concern/ interest	How concerned/interested are people? Sometimes, concerns may be disproportionate to findings from technical assessments of likelihood, duration and/or intensity.

Table 5 Defining magnitude levels for social impacts

Magnitude level	Meaning
Transformational	Substantial change experienced in community wellbeing, livelihood, infrastructure, services, health, and/or heritage values; permanent displacement or addition of at least 20% of a community.
Major	Substantial deterioration/improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an indefinite time, or affecting many people in a widespread area.
Moderate	Noticeable deterioration/improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an extensive time, or affecting a group of people.
Minor	Mild deterioration/improvement, for a reasonably short time, for a small number of people who are generally adaptable and not vulnerable.
Minimal	Little noticeable change experienced by people in the locality.

Table 6 Social impact significance matrix

		Magnitude level				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Likelihood level		**Minimal**	**Minor**	**Moderate**	**Major**	**Transformational**
A	**Almost certain**	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
B	**Likely**	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
C	**Possible**	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
D	**Unlikely**	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
E	**Very unlikely**	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Table 6 refers to the levels of magnitude set out in **Tables 4** and **5** and likelihood as defined in **Table 3.**

3. Responses to social impacts

Social impact responses can take many forms. They should be both effective and easy to implement to increase the likelihood of beneficial community outcomes.

Responses to negative social impacts might include adapting some aspects of project design and/or changing elements of the project work program. Considerations might include designing for gender equity among the project workforce or ensuring it represents local cultural or ethnic groups. Other responses might include adaptively managing traffic, or protecting valued view lines, public spaces, cultural assets or local character.

Explain and justify why you expect each proposed measure to be effective and discuss how acceptable any residual negative social impacts are likely to be for affected people.

If positive impacts are predicted, consider how these can be secured or enhanced. For example, an urban development might require a temporary pedestrian access route that could be retained if it benefits the community.

Develop responses to both positive and negative social impacts and summarise these responses in a table format such as that in **Table 7**.

Table 7 Example social impact evaluation and mitigation response table

	Evaluated	Standard measures	Project-specific mitigation measures	Residual impact significance
Construction noise causes a decline in social amenity, health or way of life for neighbouring residents	Likely + Moderate = **High**	• Workforce education • Discussion of noise at Community Consultative Committee meetings • 24-hour complaint hotline and follow-up	• Noise-attenuated plant and equipment • Real-time noise monitoring, reporting and response protocol • Relocated noise monitors in discussion with the community • Temporary accommodation for those with health conditions that make them acutely sensitive to noise	**Moderate (negative)**
Improvements for Aboriginal people's livelihoods and wellbeing through meaningful participation in local economy	Almost certain + Moderate = **High**	• Ambitious and culturally sensitive Aboriginal employment goals • Give Aboriginal businesses full and fair opportunities to supply goods and services	• Aboriginal employment participation program that aims for employment levels at least double the local percentage of population, preferencing local employment • Protocols and systems to ensure Aboriginal employment does not conflict with cultural obligations	**High (positive)**

3.1 Responding to negative social impacts

If your project has negative social impacts, consider measures to avoid then minimise negative impacts by amending the project design. If neither avoidance nor minimisation are possible, consider performance-based, prescriptive or management-based measures to mitigate the impact. Mitigation measures should be tangible, deliverable by the proponent and enduring.

When developing mitigation measures, consider the factors in **Table 8**.

Table 8 Factors to consider when developing mitigation measures

Factors	Notes
Ensuring a clear connection between the mitigation measure and the negative social impact being mitigated.	Trade-offs are not mitigation and should be considered as distinct impacts.
Whether there is an applicable standard that defines what is acceptable.	Applying standards should not preclude additional measures to address residual social impacts, especially if this may help to maximise social acceptance.
Whether the project is the sole or primary cause of the negative social impact, and the scale of its relative contribution to the overall or cumulative impact.	In some cases, it is not appropriate or possible for an individual proponent to bear full responsibility for mitigation, and collaborative, multi-stakeholder measures may be required.
Whether the mitigation measure requires action by another party that you do not fund or manage.	For instance, a response to likely increased demand for government services could be to notify the relevant agency and collaborate to manage it.
Whether the mitigation measure itself is likely to cause secondary social impacts.	For instance, if acquired properties are not properly maintained, pest and weed problems may arise for neighbouring properties. Similarly, the loss of the people who lived in those properties may affect community cohesion and viability.
Whether the mitigation measure is reasonable or practicable.	If it is considered not reasonable or practicable, document a clear justification and supporting evidence in the SIA report.
Whether, and in what ways, the mitigation measure is acceptable to affected people.	For example, a partnership approach to mitigation that includes affected people can better connect measures to their actual experiences.
Whether the mitigation measure will address all reasonably foreseeable scenarios.	Uncertainties are inevitable in any project; the SIA report should consider all reasonably foreseeable scenarios, including those relating to cumulative impacts.
Whether the mitigation approach is prescribed in a government policy, or if alternative formalised arrangements are required.	Examples of alternative arrangements include benefit-sharing agreements, training strategies and employment strategies.

Once you identify the proposed mitigation measures, re-evaluate the significance of the negative social impacts after mitigation, and describe the expected residual impact. In this context, residual impact means the impact to people after mitigation.

Also assess the likelihood of mitigation. Mitigation may require more funding, specific approval, changes to project design or other actions that may not be easy to achieve or that may require the cooperation of third parties.

Always engage and discuss the proposed measures with affected people. This is particularly important for Aboriginal communities in the context of addressing culturally sensitive impacts.

Planning agreements

A planning agreement can provide mitigation and enhancement measures, such as dedicating land or paying a monetary contribution or providing some other material public benefit. You can offer to enter into a planning agreement during the development application process.

The EP&A Act requires any material public benefit under a planning agreement be used for a public purpose, such as:

• providing, or recouping the cost of, public amenities or public services

• providing, or recouping the cost of, affordable housing

• providing transport or other infrastructure relating to land

• recurrent funding for the provision of public amenities or public services

• providing affordable housing or transport or other infrastructure

• monitoring planning impacts.

More information is available in the Department's Planning Agreements – Practice Note.

3.2 Responding to positive social impacts

Some initiatives can specifically target delivering social benefits.

Planning agreements

Planning agreements can also be used to ensure the provision of infrastructure or public benefits not wholly unrelated to the development. As one example, a local council and proponent may negotiate a more innovative outcome than can be achieved through direct or indirect monetary contributions.

Community investments

Effective community investments can build trusting and mutually beneficial relationships.

The SIA report should distinguish between funding that will directly mitigate identified negative impacts on specific communities from those that will benefit communities not experiencing negative impacts. Community funding initiatives often aim to benefit a community at a general level without necessarily addressing social impacts as experienced by groups or individuals. General community funding can provide enduring value at a broader level, but this differs from community investments and mitigation measures that directly target people experiencing negative impacts.

Temporary project opportunities

Some State significant projects may create temporary opportunities for the community to engage with the site or the project.

Temporary activation is particularly useful for large-scale transformative projects, such as the events undertaken as a part of the Newcastle Revitalisation associated with the truncation of the existing railway and construction of the Newcastle light rail.

Smaller-scale examples include temporary view corridors when old buildings are demolished or displaying artwork on construction hoarding.

Temporary activity may require development approval and is subject to feasibility.

Other formal mechanisms

Other arrangements for achieving positive social impacts and sharing the benefits of development may include:

- procurement processes that require high social sustainability outcomes
- procurement processes that support 'buy local' initiatives
- agreements and corporate undertakings to promote employment diversity
- agreements and tender requirements for successful parties to have agreements with minority groups or vulnerable people to foster training, cadetship or employment opportunities
- partnership agreements to share financial or other benefits, achieve greater equity in distribution of outcomes, provide community services or maximise community cohesion.

4. Monitoring and management plan

The SIA report may include a preliminary plan for monitoring and adaptively managing social impacts (e.g. how post approval may be undertaken). If a project is approved, conditions of consent may require a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) for approval by the Planning Secretary. Conditions of consent might also require actions to prevent, minimise, mitigate and/or enhance social impacts; or set standards and performance measures for monitoring components of the project within the limits of project approval.

You can integrate the practical arrangements for monitoring and managing social impacts into the overarching environmental management systems. Use the SIA report to specify preliminary arrangements for:

- **a program to monitor** predicted social impacts against actual impacts (see **Table 9** for an example) which describes, for each impact area:

  - the desired outcomes in social terms

  - the indicator(s) that will be used to monitor change

  - the targets against which performance will be assessed

  - the methods that will be used to monitor the social impact

  - the frequency of monitoring

  - the people responsible for monitoring

  - the methods that will be used to respond to monitoring results.

- **any relevant social incident notification and reporting process**, including mechanisms to respond to complaints, breaches and grievances or to inform the community. If the conditions of consent require incident notification processes, note this in the SIMP and only describe any additional processes or mechanisms specifically relating to social impacts

- **a program for the ongoing analysis of social risks and opportunities** arising from the project, including timing and frequency of reviews

- **research to reduce uncertainties**, if needed, setting out why further research is needed; when and how it will be carried out (and by whom); and how the results will be used
- **a process for reviewing** these elements to assess if they are still appropriate, and whether any new issues should be included in ongoing monitoring
- **a process to release monitoring results** and associated information for periodic audit of monitoring activities and for reviewing the plan itself
- **encourage potential data-sharing** mechanisms across projects where cumulative impacts are identified.

A monitoring and management plan may include overarching commitments for construction and operational phases, such as principles that guide project decision-making with community involvement for unforeseen matters that may arise. You may wish to include a charter to this effect.

Monitoring and adaptive management should include practical mechanisms for the community to collaborate wherever possible and to easily access monitoring information. This will build transparency and trust in the monitoring process and outcomes.

The community can collaborate in monitoring processes through 'participatory' or 'community-based' monitoring programs that enable people to record their observations and experiences of social impacts. These processes should be supported by adequate training and resources.[7]

Table 9 Example of monitoring arrangements (community cohesion example)

Desired outcomes	Indicators	Target	Methodology	Frequency	Monitoring responsibility
The permanent resident population has stabilised and grown	Change in population size over time	Increase of 10% per annum, averaged over 3 years	Source data from ABS, Council and local service providers	Annually	Community engagement team
Improvements for Aboriginal people's livelihoods and wellbeing through meaningful participation in the local economy	Workforce participation in community events and initiatives	40% of locally residing workers involved in an event or initiative after 1 year, 50% after 2 years, 60% after 3 years	Workforce survey		
	Perceived sense of community	Increase in aggregate measure of 5% per annum for the first 3 years of the project (to be reviewed thereafter)	Independent survey of community perceptions		

Report findings on the project website and to the Department to support compliance with conditions. Findings may also be presented at Community Consultative Committee and annual community meetings, which can be used to review and seek feedback on the monitoring program and whether actions, strategies or targets should be revised.

7   For guidance on community-based monitoring, see, for example, Gibson, G. and O'Faircheallaigh, C. (2010). IBA Community Toolkit – Negotiation and Implementation of Impact and Benefit Agreements. Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation. http://www.ibacommunitytoolkit.ca/index.html International Finance Corporation. 2010. International lessons of experience and best practice in participatory monitoring in extractive industry projects. http://commdev.org/international-lessons-experience-and-best-practice-participatorymonitoring-extractive-industry Lennie J, Tacchi J, Koirala B, Wilmore M, Skuse A. 2011. Equal access participatory monitoring and evaluation toolkit. BetterEvaluation. http://betterevaluation.org/toolkits/equal_access_participatory_monitoring United Cities and Local Governments. 2013. Basic principles of community based monitoring. https://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/community-based_monitoring

5. Data validation

5.1 Considerations

Data and data collection are integral to the SIA process. However, the qualitative, intangible and perception-based nature of some SIAs makes data validation a challenge. The nature and extent of data collection will depend on the level of assessment needed for each impact. For example, an impact requiring only a minor assessment may not require primary data collection, whereas an impact that requires a detailed impact assessment will need some primary data collection and targeted consultation.

Regardless of the source or scope, use a systematic approach to all data collection. Exercise care and professional judgement when interpreting and deciding the value of data, including:

• whether data was collected in a credible and rigorous way

• any potential limitations and the degree of uncertainty in the data

• differences in definitions and/or collection conditions and methods between sources

• the qualifications and expertise of the author and any potential biases

• what other sources say on the matter, especially if the verifiability of the data is unclear

• quoting and interpreting data at the correct geographical scale to avoid projecting data onto broader or narrower populations

• avoiding averages and medians when more specific or nuanced data will better profile the issue and give more meaning to the SIA report and ongoing monitoring

• data privacy considerations

• capturing the different ways in which a social impact may be distributed or experienced, rather than only reporting an average or dominant view.

Be sure to consider cultural protocols regarding the use of knowledge, especially traditional Aboriginal knowledge.[8]

When working with Aboriginal communities to understand cultural values consider how the data is collected and shared. Many Aboriginal people are apprehensive to share highly sensitive details of their cultural knowledge. Clarify how the data will be used and ensure that the stakeholders are comfortable with the methodology. Some knowledge will not be shared in detail and it is important not to probe or question why a place or matter is important but trust that what is being shared is highly valued.

If any shortcomings with the data present uncertainties, identify these and discuss the data and its limitations in the SIA report.

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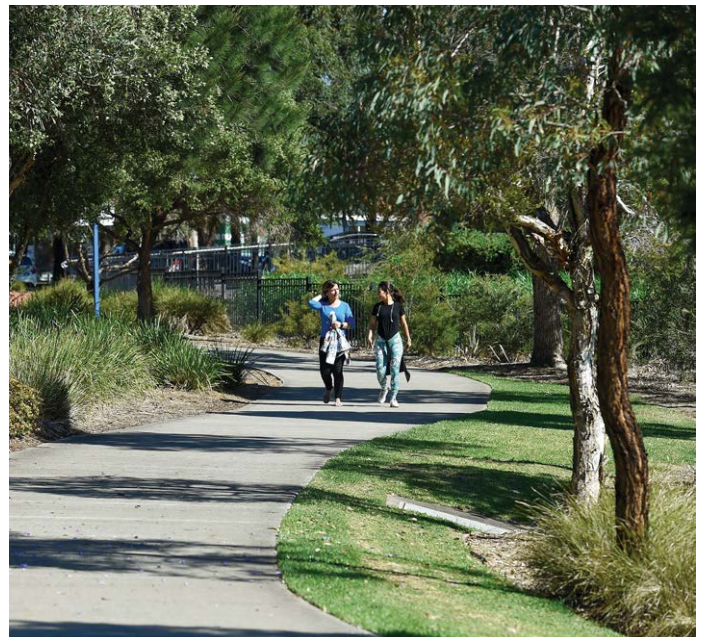
8   For more guidance on using Aboriginal knowledge in environmental management and social research, see for example: Ross A, Sherman KP, Snodgrass JG, Delcore HD, Sherman R. 2016. Indigenous peoples and the collaborative stewardship of nature. Abingdon: Routledge. Smith LT. 2012. Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples. 2nd ed., London: Zed Books.

6.Glossary

This table clarifies what the following terms mean when used in this Technical Supplement.

Term	Meaning for the purposes of Technical Supplement
Application	An application seeking development consent/approval for a State significant project or an application to modify an approved State significant project consent/approval (including concept plan) under the EP&A Act.
Community	Anyone affected by or interested in State significant projects in NSW, including individuals, community groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and stakeholder groups (defined below).
Engagement	Actions to engage the community in the assessment of State significant projects and actions to encourage engagement.
Mitigation	Actions or measures to reduce adverse social impacts of a State significant project. Mitigations may be performance based (achieve an appropriate social outcome without specifying how the outcome will be achieved) or prescriptive (actions or measures that must be taken, such as a known best-practice technology, design or management approach)
People	Individuals, households, groups, communities, organisations and the general public.
Proponents	Those seeking approval for a State significant project, including applicants.
Scoping report	A report that may be required to be submitted by the proponent to the Department accompanied by a request for SEARs.
Secretary	The Secretary of the Department, or their delegate.
SIA scoping worksheet	A tool to identify likely impacts and the level of assessment required to evaluate the significance of social impacts.
Stakeholder group	A group or organisation that represents several people with an interest in a State significant project.

Appendices

Appendix A – Recommended structure of a SIA report

Sections	
Executive summary	
1	Introduction, project description and context
2	The Project's social locality (alternatively this may be included in item 5 – Social baseline)
3	Methodology
4	Stakeholder engagement for SIA
5	Social baseline
6	Impact assessment and prediction
7	Social impact enhancement, mitigation, and residual impacts
8	Monitoring and management framework (if appropriate)
References	

Appendices	
A	Community profiles
B	Supporting information, e.g. outcomes of primary research, engagement or other studies
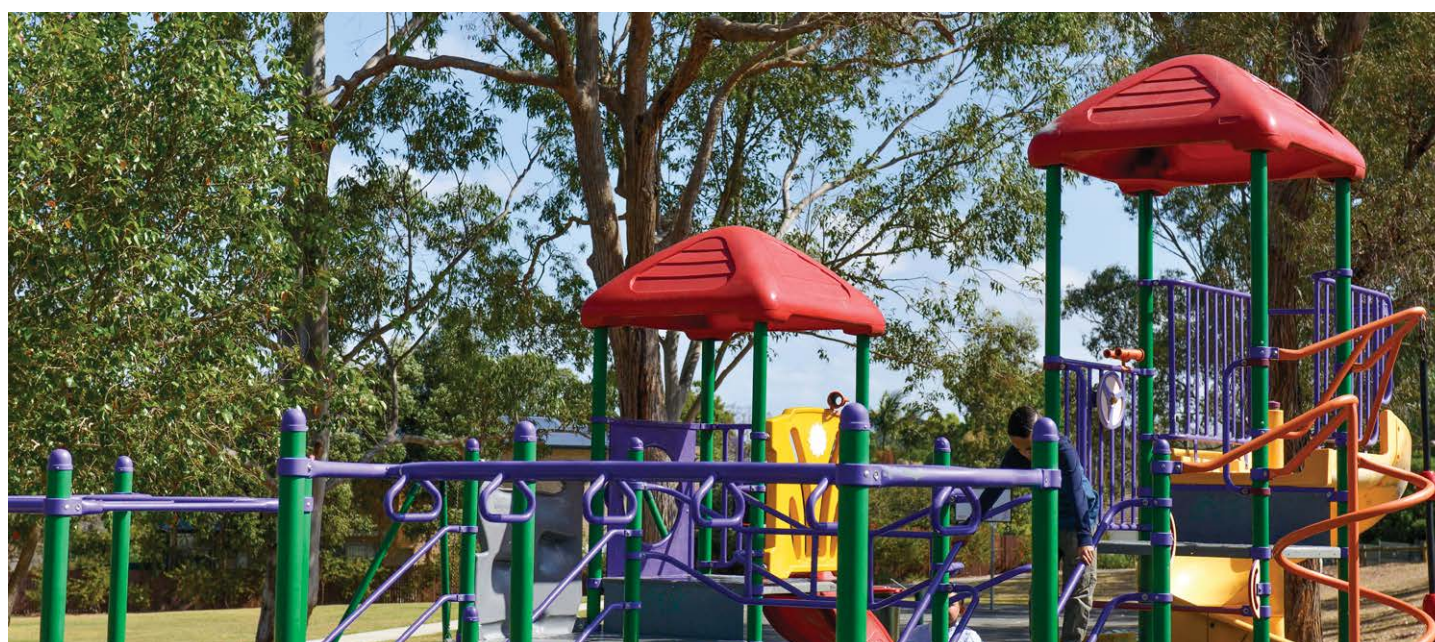
Appendix B – Examples of social impacts for different development types

Appendix B considers various State significant developments in terms of industries or sectors and identifies the social impacts that may require assessment. You can use this during the SIA scoping and initial assessment stage to identify likely social impacts.

This helps to illustrate the principle that the scope of a SIA should be proportionate to the scale of the likely social impacts. This means that the work – and cost – involved in preparing a SIA for a remotely-located solar farm, for example, or a small commercial development, will be less than that for a hospital or school development, which in turn will be less than that for a motorway or a new open-cut coal mine.

These examples are based on real projects and adapted for general application. Each includes a list of impact categories likely to require assessment, using the categories in the SIA Guideline. Impacts are then listed within each category, with notes, examples and questions to consider.

In practice, all projects are different in terms of their social, cultural, environmental and economic contexts. No two communities are the same, and no two projects are the same. You should consider the unique characteristics of the project's social context; some projects may have more impacts than indicated here, and some may have less. Remember that all projects occur on Country that is of deep importance to Aboriginal people. This must be considered regardless of the size or scale of the project.

The inclusion of a certain impact category simply means that this category, and the associated notes, examples and questions may be relevant; they do not necessarily require comprehensive assessment.

This is an indicative guide only, not a universal checklist.

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
RESOURCE PROJECTS		
Mining (coal or minerals)		
New mine in greenfield location *This type of project is likely to involve impacts on several matters for multiple groups. Detailed assessment across all categories is likely, including careful consideration of how impacts may be experienced cumulatively.*	Way of life	• How will the project (construction and operation) affect how residents get around daily or how they use the land for work and play? Will there be benefits or changes to how people work? • What are the combined effects of the multiple impacts on people's way of life?
	Community	• Will there be changes to the character or sense of place including places for quiet enjoyment? • What is the impact on the local community compared to the broader or regional community? • How will community cohesion be impacted during planning, construction and operation? • Could the distribution of impacts and benefits affect community cohesion? • Will there be changes to community composition and character if the composition of the workforce is substantially different to that of the existing community?
	Accessibility	• What are the impacts on roads and how people use them (including pedestrians and public transport)? • Will construction and/or operation affect people's access to the things they need and value? • Will the project impact accessibility of or demand for community facilities, services or public space (e.g. sports fields)?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land)?
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be health impacts or are there rational or justified concerns/fears about health impacts, associated with noise, dust, vibration or lighting? • Will the project generate stress and uncertainty about changes to adjacent uses, and cumulative change? • Is there evidence of psychological stress due to rational or justified fears/hopes for the future?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Surroundings	• Will the project materially change how people experience landscape and nature values including post-mining? • What are the visual impacts of mine equipment and infrastructure? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project affect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions and do they feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design, community needs, funding agreements and investments? • Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints?
Quarry		
New quarry in locality with two other quarries, including processing facilities and road haulage	Way of life	• Will the quarry affect how adjacent residents get around daily, or how they use the land? • Will there be benefits or changes to how people work? • What will be combined impacts of multiple operations on people's general way of life?
	Community	• Will the character of the area, including quiet enjoyment, or the sense of place, change? • How will community cohesion be impacted during planning, construction and operation? • Could the distribution of impacts and benefits affect community cohesion?
	Accessibility	• What are the impacts on roads and how people use them (including pedestrians and public transport)? • Will construction and/or operation affect people's access to the things they need and value? • Will the project impact accessibility of or demand for community facilities, services or public space (e.g. sports fields)?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land)?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be health impacts? • Will the project generate stress and uncertainty about changes to adjacent uses, and cumulative change?
	Surroundings	• Will the project materially change how people experience landscape and nature values? • What are the visual impacts of quarry equipment and infrastructure? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project affect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions and do they feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design, community needs, funding agreements and investments? • Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints?
Modification to existing quarry to expand operations, increase extraction per annum threefold, and upgrade roads and bridges for haulage *(additional considerations)*	Way of life	• Will the modification affect how adjacent residents get around daily, or how they use the land?
	Community	• What are the impacts on community cohesion if the modification conflicts with some people's expectations of the project's scale?
	Surroundings	• What do further changes to landforms mean for people? • What do further changes to the visual landscape mean for people?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
Wind farm		
New wind farm in rural area 10km from town, including overhead transmission lines to the grid	Community	• Could the distribution of impacts and benefits affect community cohesion? • Will the character of the area, including quiet enjoyment, or the sense of place, change? • What are the benefits to the local community during construction and operations?
	Accessibility	• What are the impacts on roads and how people use them (including pedestrians and public transport), especially during construction?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways?
	Surroundings	• Will the project materially change how people experience the landscape and nature values through perceived industrialisation? • Will there be cumulative impacts if the project is near an existing wind farm?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project affect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions and feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?
Modification to raise turbine height and extend vegetation clearing	Surroundings	• Will the modification materially change how some people experience their surroundings, particularly in terms of noise, visual amenity, or aesthetic values?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
Solar farm		
Large-scale solar farm with battery storage, transmission infrastructure and substation, 5km from town	Community	• How might the project affect the values/character that people associate with their community?
	Surroundings	• Will the project materially change how people experience the landscape and nature values through perceived industrialisation?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project affect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?
Modification to solar farm to install battery storage and alter road access	No common material social impacts likely, unless anyone is disadvantaged by changes to road access.	
INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT PROJECTS		
Education infrastructure		
School (new or expansion of existing)	Way of life	• Will privacy, peace and or quiet enjoyment significantly change for neighbours and the local area, particularly changes to people's daily lives and activities (during both construction and operation)? • How will people be affected if traffic/parking demands or noise levels change?
	Community	• Will the school result in marked changes to community composition and character? • How will demand for support services, (e.g. childcare or social infrastructure) change? • Will there be an impact on community cohesion, identity or sense of place?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Accessibility	• What are the likely social impacts of traffic changes in the area, including any provision of public or active transport options? • Will the project impact accessibility of or demand for community facilities, services or public space (e.g. sports fields)? • Will there be a social impact if traffic levels or parking demands change, especially during construction?
	Culture	• Are there opportunities for cultural expression, e.g. through design?
	Health and wellbeing	• Will community health be improved by better public access to school facilities (e.g. the school itself, sports facilities)? • Will there be benefits from better active transport and the ability for local children to live near school?
	Surroundings	• Will there be impacts to public open space, public facilities or streets? • Will there be changes to environmental values, visual landscape, or aesthetic values? • How will nearby residents experience changes in their surroundings during construction? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?
School in a light industrial neighbourhood *(additional considerations)*	Way of life	• Are there expected changes to aesthetic values and privacy during construction or operation? • Will the school displace or support people and/or businesses?
	Health and wellbeing	• Are there health impacts/benefits related to the use of former industrial land and/or displacing industrial uses? • Will community health be improved by improved public access to school facilities (e.g. the school itself, sports facilities)?
	Livelihoods	• Will the expansion create any benefits for people's employment or businesses, or any displacement impacts?
	Surroundings	• Are there operational improvements to noise, dust, light or visual impacts, compared to light industry? • Will there be changes to available public open space, public facilities or streets? • Will there be changes to environmental values, visual landscape, or aesthetic values? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
New or expansion to an existing university campus	Way of life	• What improvements will there be to way of life, especially for young people, from local educational opportunities? • Will privacy, peace and or quiet enjoyment significantly change for neighbours and the local area, particularly changes to people's daily lives and activities (during both construction and operation)?
	Community	• What changes will occur to community composition and character with an influx of students and staff?
	Accessibility	• What are the likely social impacts of traffic changes in the area, including any provision of public or active transport options? • Will there be a social impact if traffic levels or parking demands change, especially during construction? • Will the project impact accessibility of or demand for community facilities, services or public space (e.g. sports fields)?
	Culture	• Are there opportunities for cultural expression, e.g. through design?
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be health impacts?
	Surroundings	• Will there be changes to environmental values, visual landscape or aesthetic values? • Are there opportunities to enhance people's experience and use of their surroundings through sensitive landscaping? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists? • Will there be impacts to public open space, public facilities or streets? • How will nearby residents experience changes in their surroundings during construction?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project effect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions and feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
Health infrastructure		
Hospital (new or expansion of existing)	Way of life	• Will privacy, peace and or quiet enjoyment significantly change for neighbours and the local area, particularly changes to people's daily lives and activities (during both construction and operation)? • How might the changed distribution of employment/business opportunities impact those employed and their communities?
	Community	• Will there be changes to community composition and character induced by changed demand for supporting goods and services? • Will there be impacts on community networks and relationships if people or services move? • How will demand for support services, (e.g. childcare or social infrastructure) change?
	Accessibility	• Will there be a change in access to facilities or services for residents and employees (e.g. improved/new services and facilities, changes in accessibility due to new location) during construction and operation? • Will the development impact equity of access to hospital services, especially for vulnerable groups? • Will there be a social impact if traffic levels or parking demands change, especially during construction?
	Culture	• How will the new hospital's design and services align with community values, ensure cultural safety and Aboriginal connections to Country • Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways?
	Health and wellbeing	• What improvements will there be to community health resulting from changed facilities, services and programs • Will there be stress and uncertainty relating to relocation of any facilities?
	Surroundings	• Will there be uncertainties over any land acquisition? • Will there be environmental change that impacts on community values? • Will there be changes to public space (including public open space, public facilities and streets)? • Will there be changes to environmental values, visual landscape or aesthetic values? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists? • How will nearby residents experience changes in their surroundings during construction?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Livelihoods	• Will the project effect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land? • Will any demolition of existing buildings result in anyone losing their jobs/livelihoods?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions and feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?
Water Infrastructure		
Raising of dam height	Way of life	• Will there be material changes to people's daily lives and how they get around, particularly during construction? • Will there be impacts such as access to affordable housing if construction induces a large influx of workers? • Is anyone vulnerable to relocation and resettlement?
	Community	• Will there be substantial changes to people's sense of place? • How will community cohesion be impacted during planning, construction and operation? • Will community composition and character change during construction as a result of the nature of the workforce?
	Accessibility	• What are the impacts on roads and how people use them (including pedestrians and public transport)? • Is there capacity in local services (e.g. health, education, community services, and local businesses) to respond to demand from the construction workforce? • Will construction and/or operation affect people's access to the things they need and value?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms, waterways and the built environment? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land including using water for cultural practices)?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be any psychological loss associated with changes to surroundings?
	Surroundings	• Could there be improved access to water for everyday needs? • Will there be changes to environmental values, visual landscape or aesthetic values? • How will nearby residents experience changes in their surroundings during construction? • Will there be changes to public space (including public open space, public facilities and streets)?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project affect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Can affected people make informed decisions and feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design? • Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints?

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Road transport infrastructure

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
New motorway through urban and light industrial area *This type of project is likely to impact several matters for multiple groups between construction and operational phases. Detailed assessment across all categories is required.*	Way of life	• What certainty do the people living near the infrastructure have in terms of timing and location of the road? • What have been the impacts of acquisitions and changes to neighbours or neighbourhoods? • What changes will people experience as a result of needing to relocate temporarily or permanently, e.g. finding new accommodation, schools and other facilities? • Will there be material changes to people's daily lives (for those living near, and those further away) and how they get around (during construction and operation)? • What impacts will be there on traffic and travel patterns, or access to essential services, facilities and support networks (during construction and operation)? • What kind of stresses might people experience, including sleep disruption?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Community	• How will community cohesion be impacted during planning, construction and operation? • Are changes to community composition and character expected if residents leave or are relocated, and/or if businesses close? • Will there be community cohesion impacts around acquisition policies and practices? • What changes could there be to sense of place and social networks if the motorway physically severs streets or communities, and/or creates an unpleasant environment?
	Accessibility	• What are the impacts on roads and paths and how people use them (including pedestrians and public transport)? • Will construction and/or operation affect people's access to the things they need and value? • What are the likely benefits to local and regional access and travel times once the motorway is operational?
	Culture	• Will there be impacts on community values if land acquisition and relocation is required? • Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land)?
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be health impacts? • Is there evidence of psychological stress around project planning, construction and operation, especially for neighbouring residences and businesses? • Will people be impacted in terms of sleep disturbance or daily activities during construction? • Are there cumulative impacts on physical health and wellbeing from dust and noise emissions combined with stress and uncertainty? • What are the health benefits of improved travel times for the health and wellbeing of the local and broader community?
	Decision-making systems	• Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints? • Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design? • Will the project impact people's capacity to determine their future?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Surroundings	• Will there be changes to environmental values, visual and acoustic landscape or aesthetic values? • What will be the experience of physical changes to neighbourhoods and public space? • Will construction or operations affect public safety, for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists? • How will the quality and characteristics of the natural and built environment be affected? • Will there be changes to public open space, public facilities or streets?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project effect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • What will the impact be on those with businesses or activities near the new motorway, including likely disruption or change to access and parking for customers and clients (during construction and operation)? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
New motorway through mostly rural land connecting regional communities *This type of project is likely to involve impacts on several matters for multiple groups. Detailed assessment across all categories is likely to be required, but possibly for fewer people than for an urban motorway.*	Way of life	• Will there be material changes to people's daily lives (for those living near, and those further away) and how they get around (during construction and operation)? • What impacts will there be on traffic and travel patterns, or access to essential services, facilities and support networks (during construction and operation). Will the location of exits/on ramps affect this? • Will there be permanent displacement of people and what will be the impact of being displaced? • What are the ongoing impacts (positive and negative) for any local communities bypassed by the motorway?
	Community	• What changes will there be to community character, rural values, and sense of place? • What will be the impact of a bypass on how communities function? • What is the potential to revitalise bypassed town centres? • Could the distribution of impacts and benefits affect community cohesion?
	Accessibility	• Will there be changes to access arrangements across the motorway to reach services and facilities? • What are the likely benefits to local and regional access and travel times once the motorway is operational? • Is there potential to reduce traffic in small towns?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land)?
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be health impacts? • Will there be changes such as exposure to emissions depending on location of motorway, and traffic volumes, relative to existing roads? • Will there be effects on overall wellbeing due to changes in the noise profile, especially for those nearest the motorway? • What are the health benefits of improved travel times for the health and wellbeing of the local and broader community?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Surroundings	• Will there be material changes to environmental values, visual and acoustic landscape or aesthetic values, including rural amenity? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists? • How will nearby residents experience changes in their surroundings during construction?
	Livelihood	• What changes could there be to farming or rural livelihoods owing to changed property configurations? • Will the project effect people's ability to sustain themselves through employment or business opportunities? • Will the economic benefits and impacts be equally distributed, e.g. between local and regional communities? • Will Aboriginal people have the ability to gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints? • Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?
Rail transport infrastructure		
Heavy rail development in rural/ regional NSW *This type of project is likely to involve impacts on several matters for multiple groups. Detailed assessment across all categories is likely to be required, but probably considering fewer people than for an urban motorway.*	Way of life	• Will there be material changes to people's daily lives (for those living near, and those further away) and how they get around (during construction and operation)? • Will people be displaced, and what will be the impact of being displaced?
	Community	• Will there be changes to community character, rural values, and sense of place • How will community cohesion be impacted during planning, construction and operation?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Accessibility	• How will the rail line and associated infrastructure (e.g. bridges) reduce or enhance people's access to things they need and value? • What are the impacts on roads and how people use them? • Will construction and/or operation affect people's access to the things they need and value?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land)?
	Health and wellbeing	• How will the project impact people's ability to sleep and their psychological wellbeing? • What are the health benefits of improved travel times for the health and wellbeing of the local and broader community?
	Surroundings	• Will there be material changes to environmental values, visual and acoustic landscape or aesthetic values, including rural amenity? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists? • How will nearby residents experience changes in their surroundings during construction?
	Livelihood	• What changes could there be to farming or rural livelihoods owing to changed property configurations? • Will the construction affect people's ability to sustain themselves (positively or negatively) through employment and business opportunities? • How will livelihood impacts and benefits be distributed? • Can Aboriginal people still or now gain sustenance (spiritual or otherwise) from the land?
	Decision-making systems	• Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints? • Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
Light rail development in urban area	Way of life	• Will there be material changes to people's daily lives (for those living near and those further away) and how they get around (during construction and operation)? • Will there be significant disruption to people's daily lives during construction? • What are the likely improvements to how people get around once the line opens?
	Community	• What are the impacts on sense of place, community cohesion, and community composition if people/businesses move in or out in response to the project?
	Accessibility	• Will there be severance within local neighbourhoods during construction? • Will construction and/or operation affect people's access to the things they need and value?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land)? • Will there be opportunities for cultural expression (e.g. through design)?
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be health impacts? • What are the benefits of improved public transport for health and wellbeing of the broader community?
	Surroundings	• What are the expected amenity changes, specifically improvements associated with upgrades to public spaces? • Will there be material changes to environmental values, visual and acoustic landscape or aesthetic values? • Will construction or operations affect public safety for pedestrians, children, drivers or cyclists? • How will nearby residents experience changes in their surroundings during construction?
	Livelihood	• Will the construction affect people's ability to sustain themselves (positively or negatively) through employment and business opportunities? • How will livelihood impacts and benefits be distributed? • How will private and business property be disrupted during construction? • Will there be impacts on people's livelihoods owing to reduced accessibility and general disruption during construction?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Decision-making systems	• Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints? • Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?

INDUSTRY & URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Tourism

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
Modification to existing tourist resort to increase accommodation units and add a helipad	Way of life	• Will privacy, peace and or quiet enjoyment significantly change for neighbours and the local area, particularly changes to people's daily lives and activities (during both construction and operation)?
	Community	• Will there be changes to community character, composition and sense of place following development? • Does the modification contribute to cumulative impacts that exceed a threshold of acceptability? • Will there be changes to community cohesion if benefits and impacts of the resort are unequally distributed?
	Accessibility	• If the location is remote, could the helipad also be used for social benefit (e.g. by getting people to hospital in an emergency)?
	Surroundings	• Will there be material changes to environmental values, visual and acoustic landscape or aesthetic values? • What will be the effect of helicopter noise on people's enjoyment of the locality?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project affect people's ability to sustain themselves (positively or negatively) through employment and business opportunities? • How will livelihood impacts and benefits be distributed?

Residential and commercial

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
Redevelopment of urban estate with new residential units and a retail precinct	Way of life	• How will people's daily lives change during construction? • What are the long-term impacts (potentially positive and negative) of altered urban form on how people live, work, get around, and interact socially?
	Community	• Will community cohesion be impacted during construction? • Will there be changes to community character, composition, and sense of place following development?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
	Accessibility	• Will accessibility of services be disrupted during construction? • What are the likely improvements to accessibility of services and facilities following development? • Will the project impact accessibility of or demand for community facilities, services and public space?
	Culture	• Will there be changes to cultural composition of the community? • Will cultural heritage values be impacted? • Will there be opportunities for cultural expression (e.g. through design)?
	Health and wellbeing	• How will urban densification impact people's psychological health? • Could the development exacerbate or reduce social exclusion of marginalised groups? • How will the new development meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors for open space, active travel and access to health and community services?
	Surroundings	• Will there be material changes to environmental values, visual and acoustic landscape or aesthetic values? • What changes will there be to public open space, public facilities or streets?
	Livelihoods	• How will livelihood impacts and benefits be distributed?
	Decision-making systems	• Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints? • Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?

Project summary	Impact categories likely to require assessment	Notes, examples and questions to consider
Waste facilities		
New waste recycling and transfer facility on a greenfield site adjacent to residential and industrial neighbourhood	Way of life	• How will people's lives be disrupted by daily operations and truck movements to and from the site, especially if night-time operations are proposed?
	Community	• Will there be changes to residents' sense of place resulting from intensified industrial activity? • Will there be cumulative impacts of multiple industrial sites?
	Culture	• Will the project affect people's values and beliefs associated with the locality, including how they value landforms and waterways? • Could the project cause intangible harm through cultural or spiritual loss (loss or diminution of traditional attachment to the land or connection to Country and associated cultural obligations to care for Country, or loss of rights to gain spiritual sustenance from the land)?
	Health and wellbeing	• Will there be health impacts e.g. from processing toxic or hazardous materials; or in the event of a fire or other accident at the facility?
	Surroundings	• What will be the impact of loss of access to the natural environment? • Will there be changes to environmental values, visual and acoustic landscape or aesthetic values?
	Decision-making systems	• Are there adequate and responsive grievance and remedy mechanisms in the event of complaints? • Can affected people make informed decisions or feel they can influence project decisions, including elements of project design?
Agricultural industries		
Poultry farm and/or processing facility	Culture	• Are the methods of operation (e.g. animal welfare practices) consistent with community values?
	Health and wellbeing	• Could there be impacts on physical health from farm odours and noise, either for neighbours or those near roads where poultry is transported?
	Surroundings	• What are the impacts on local air quality and soundscape? • Is there a risk of pollution of local waterways used by residents and businesses?
	Livelihoods	• Will the project affect people's ability to sustain themselves (positively or negatively) through employment and business opportunities? • How will livelihood impacts and benefits be distributed?

Appendix C – Levels of assessment

Level of assessment	Explanation
Detailed	The project may result in significant impacts on the matter, including cumulative impacts. The assessment of the impacts of the project on the matter will require detailed studies and investigations to be carried out by technical specialists. During this assessment, these specialists may need to: • work closely with the specialists assessing the impacts of the project on other matters to determine the likely indirect impacts of the project • undertake a detailed cumulative impact assessment for the project. Also, the assessment is likely to involve several uncertainties in relation to one or more of the following: • data collection (e.g. baseline information, availability of data for cumulative impacts assessment) • identifying the specific mitigation measures or suitable offsets for the project • the methods available for predicting the impacts of the project, including the indirect and cumulative impacts • criteria for evaluating the acceptability of the impacts of the project. Consequently, specific strategies may be required to address these uncertainties (e.g. further monitoring, review, technical investigations and adaptive management).
Standard	The project is unlikely to result in significant impacts on the matter, including cumulative impacts. While the assessment of the impacts of the project on the matter will involve technical specialists, these impacts are likely to be: • well understood • relatively easy to predict using standard methods • capable of being mitigated to comply with relevant standards or performance measures Also, the assessment is unlikely to involve any significant uncertainties, or require any detailed cumulative impact assessment.
Minor	The project may result in minor impacts on the matter. These impacts can be avoided either during the design of the project or mitigated to comply with a relevant standard or performance measure using commonly used mitigation measures. Also, the assessment of these impacts is unlikely to require the use of technical specialists.
Not relevant	The project will have no impact on the matter, or the impacts of the project on the matter will be so small that they don't warrant further consideration.