

# Local community perceptions of Terramin's proposed underground gold project

Phase 1: Community workshops to inform survey design

Kieren Moffat and Naomi Boughen

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# Acknowledgments

The researchers would like to sincerely thank the 45 local community members who contributed their time to attend, and provide input to the workshops on which this report is based. These contributions will enable the development of a locally relevant and context specific survey instrument for the second phase of this research.

The researchers would also like to acknowledge the following funding contributions:

- Terramin Exploration Pty Ltd is funding 40% of operating costs associated with the project, plus labour costs of its staff to support the project.
- The Innovations Connections Scheme, an initiative of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, which is funding a further 40% of the operating costs associated with this project.
- CSIRO has contributed 20% of the associated costs as elements of this project represent strong alignment with CSIRO strategic research priorities.

This study has been approved by CSIRO's Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (088/16) in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

# Executive summary

The purpose of this project is to understand current attitudes regarding concerns about and benefits of a proposed underground gold mine development in the Adelaide Hills, to support an engagement strategy by Terramin Exploration Pty Ltd (Terramin) that speaks to these concerns and aspirations. Community members and other stakeholders who live locally to the proposed 'Bird-in-Hand Project' will be the focus for participation in this project. The project will be undertaken in two phases:

**Phase 1: Community workshops.** Representatives of relevant community groups, near neighbours and the wider community, will be invited to participate in a 2-hour workshop to explore community functioning and wellbeing, and to delve into specific issues and aspirations associated with the proposed underground gold mine development.

**Phase 2: Community Surveys.** A representative sample of community members will be invited to:

1. Complete a 20-30 minute 'anchor survey' answering questions about the local community and how the positive and negative aspects of living with the proposed underground gold mine might affect the local community.
2. Complete up to five brief (5 minute) 'pulse surveys'. This short survey will ask about similar issues to the first survey to monitor if community opinions change over time.

This report summarises the key themes and messages resulting from Phase 1 to support the development of a contextualised survey instrument to be used in Phase 2. The key themes and messages resulting from the workshops can be summarised as follows:

## **There is a lot to defend; there is a lot to lose**

- Workshop participants provided rich accounts of the quality of their lives in the Adelaide Hills.
- The region offers many positive attributes and experiences for community members at all stages of their lives.
- Many residents remain or intend to remain in the area for many years.
- A (re)introduction of mining to the area was perceived as a potential threat to some of these attributes, including its 'clean and green' reputation, aesthetic, and general lifestyle, which they value.

## **The impacts are not all in the future, and they are not all bad**

- When prompted, participants generated long lists of potential impacts and benefits that the proposed mine may have on the area and its residents.
- The impacts included water resource impacts, community safety, increased road traffic, and impacts on other industries such as viticulture and tourism.
- Some of the potential benefits included increased local employment, opportunities for local businesses, and additional state revenues.
- Some impacts were being experienced now as a result of the work already being conducted by Terramin, including stress and increased time/resources devoted to actively assessing information about the project. However, utilisation of water resource mapping data provided by Terramin was viewed positively by local land owners.

### **There is uncertainty regarding the process of development**

A key theme that emerged in all workshops was the extent to which there was uncertainty regarding a range of topics related to the proposed mine, including the following:

- Lack of clarity about the mine development process should a licence be granted
- The role of government and its regulator in protecting the interests of community and holding the company to account
- The conditions placed on a mine to mitigate risks.

While some of these areas of uncertainty may be effectively addressed by the company, some may also be effectively addressed by the regulator through provision of relevant information.

### **The relationship needs work**

Although there was a broad range of experiences within workshop participant groups regarding level of contact with Terramin personnel, two main themes emerged:

- For those that had contact experiences, it appeared that public forums were challenging and these experiences were more negative than when meeting Terramin personnel face-to-face.
- Many workshop participants had had no contact with Terramin, and some had very little information about the proposed mine beyond that supplied by the CSIRO team in the participant information and consent form.



# 1 Introduction

Terramin Exploration Pty Ltd (Terramin), is proposing to develop their tenement in the Adelaide Hills, and are seeking to implement an evidence-based approach to engagement with the local community. The 'Bird-in-Hand Gold Project' is situated on the site of the historic Bird-in-Hand gold mine, located 2.7km from Woodside in the Adelaide Hills, 30km east of South Australia's capital city, Adelaide and 35km north of Terramin's existing Angas Zinc Mine (Angas) at Strathalbyn. In developing an evidence based community engagement platform, CSIRO is assisting Terramin through the provision of a community attitude survey and the development of a structured community engagement process.

As part of this project community members from the local surrounds will be invited to:

1. Complete a 20-30 minute 'anchor survey' answering questions about the local community and how the positive and negative aspects of living with the proposed underground gold mine might affect the local community.
2. Complete up to five brief (5 minute) 'pulse surveys'. This short survey will ask about similar issues to the first survey to monitor if community opinions change over time.

To support the development of a contextualised survey instrument, representatives of relevant community groups, near neighbours and the wider community, were invited to participate in a 2-hour workshop to explore community functioning and wellbeing, before delving into specific issues and aspirations associated with the proposed underground gold mine development.

A series of five community workshops were run over three days in late October 2016. The five workshops were facilitated by CSIRO and attended by 45 participants. Participants came from three broad groups: near neighbours to the proposed project; local community leaders, and the general public. Terramin will receive a copy of this report only after workshop attendees have had an opportunity to comment on its content and will play no role in the development of the content in the final report.

The workshop process, including the use of a gift voucher as incentive for participation and appreciation of the time committed by participants, had been approved by the CSIRO Human Research Ethics Committee, as described in the participant information sheet (Appendix A).

## 1.1 The history of CSIRO's social research in mining

The work that CSIRO is conducting with Terramin is part of a larger CSIRO program of social science research in the CSIRO Mineral Resources Business Unit. This program focuses on understanding and informing the relationship between extractive industry companies and the communities in which they operate. This work aims to reflect the voice, concerns, aspirations and experiences of community members both locally and nationally. The research findings inform companies, government bodies responsible for managing and regulating the extractive industries, and other important stakeholders in understanding issues important to communities. CSIRO has conducted this work utilising robust social science methodologies for many years in Australia and internationally at proposed and existing mine sites. These are challenging and contested places to live and work, but is the reason CSIRO works with companies like Terramin to ensure that the voice of community is heard consistently and faithfully by those that make decisions about how project proposals are assessed. In this way, projects like this one align closely with the Science and Industry Research Act 1949 that defines CSIRO's purpose and the functions it undertakes for the benefit of Australia:

- To carry out scientific research for any of the following purposes:

- Assisting Australian industry;
- Furthering the interests of the Australian community;
- Contributing to the achievement of Australian national objectives or the performance of the national and international responsibilities of the Commonwealth; and
- Any other purpose determined by the Minister;
- To encourage or facilitate the application or utilisation of the results of such research.

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Participants

Three key groups of stakeholders attended one of five workshops over a three-day period in October 2016.

**Table 1. Attendance at community workshops**

Stakeholder group	Number of Participants	Description
Near neighbours	9	Local land owners
Community leaders	6	Representatives from local council, local business etc.
General public	30	Members of the general public who live in Woodside, Nairne and Strathalbyn.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	

### 2.2 Recruitment

A stakeholder mapping process was undertaken to identify and invite representatives of various local community groups, while local networks were used to promote the workshops to near neighbours, using both email and post. An online CSIRO events page was used to manage registrations for these two stakeholder groups, however a recruitment agency was contracted to randomly recruit two groups of 15 members of the general public. Members of the general public were contacted by telephone.

Terramin staff assisted in making initial contact with community members, business owners, and local government, and an external agency was employed for recruitment of participants. CSIRO managed the invitation process, workshop organisation and development of the workshop agenda.

All participants were offered a gift voucher to the value of \$50 as a token of appreciation for the time and input to the research project. Some participants selected to nominate their voucher to a local charity, or not to receive a voucher at all. In these instances, the vouchers were forwarded to the Treasurer of the local branch of Meals on Wheels.

## 2.3 Session plan

The following table captures the outline for all five workshops.

TIME	SESSION
20 minutes	<p><b>Welcome, background and purpose of research, overview of the workshop and Q&amp;A.</b></p> <p>An introductory session to provide participants with detailed information about the research project to ensure informed consent was obtained prior to participation. A hardcopy of the Project Information Sheet was also provide and participants were able to ask the research team questions about the research project.</p>
30 minutes	<p><b>Introductions, incorporating insights into community functioning and wellbeing</b></p> <p>The following questions guided the conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long how long have you lived here?</li> <li>• What changes have you seen overtime?</li> <li>• What is it that you like about living here?</li> <li>• What do you dislike about living here?</li> <li>• What improvements would you like to see?</li> <li>• What are your future aspirations for the local area?</li> </ul>
40 minutes	<p><b>Attitudes and feelings towards the proposed development</b></p> <p>The following questions guided the conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your key concerns about the proposed development?</li> <li>• What potential opportunities &amp; benefits</li> <li>• How does the proposed development make you feel?</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b>Trust and relationships</b></p> <p>The following questions guided the conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there opportunities for your voice to be heard on issues that are important to you?</li> <li>• Overall, how satisfied are you with how decisions are made that affect your local area?</li> <li>• How satisfied are you with the level of access to relevant information?</li> <li>• How would you rate your trust in local, state and federal leadership?</li> <li>• How would you rate your trust in Terramin?</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b>Summary &amp; next steps</b></p> <p>In this final session, participants were provided with a summary of what the researchers had heard over the course of the workshop, and were reminded about how this input would be used and the next steps involved with Phase 2 of the research project.</p>

## 2.4 Participant confidentiality

To ensure participant confidentiality, the subsequent sections of this report summarise the outcomes of the five workshops and reports the opinions of participants as a collective; thus protecting the identity of any individual or their affiliation. Additionally, before this report was made available to Terramin, participants were given the opportunity to review its contents to ensure accuracy and correct interpretation of the data.

## 3 Workshop output: Key themes and topics

The findings from the workshops have been grouped into three sections, each section corresponding to the three main topics explored in the workshop.

### 3.1 Community functioning and well-being

All participants lived locally in the communities of Woodside, Nairne, Strathalbyn and surrounds. Most participants had lived in the local area for a long time (10+ years), some for their whole lives. Most intended to live there for a long time to come. There were a few participants who had recently moved to the area, but they too planned to stay long-term.

Participants reflected on why they had chosen to live locally and the following reasons were described:

- Quiet, calm, less stress than living in Adelaide
- Clean air, natural environment (rolling hills), aesthetics
- Country town but short commute to city
- Minimal heavy vehicle traffic (farm traffic goes largely unnoticed or is seasonal)
- Long-term family connections
- Sense of community spirit, welcoming & caring, old fashioned, safe
- Good mix of business, diversity of options
- Everything is close i.e. medical, vets, good schools, sport/recreation, work/jobs
- Weekend sports and family friendly events (always something on)

Some participants also talked with pride about the local area being a food bowl, where the climate and water supply provides everything they need for productive agriculture. Others talked fondly about the lifestyle that living in and around Woodside provides, including: distance to neighbours, the joy of walking their dog whilst seeing cows not cars, ability to bird watch and visit nearby bushland, and for others it was about nice days out at the wineries.

Some undesirable attributes about the local area referenced by participants included:

- High council rates
- Increasing levels of traffic congestion
- Deteriorating quality of roads i.e. potholes
- Increasing urban developments, re-zoning, small blocks changing the character of the community
- The ever present risk of bushfire
- Desire to see more local produce via 'go to' farms
- Lack of car parking at the supermarket
- Lack of public transport i.e. bus routes

- Lack of appropriate pathways for bicycles (outside of the Amy Gillet Bikeway) and walking paths that connect public spaces.

### 3.2 Attitudes and feelings towards the proposed development

Discussions regarding attitudes and feelings towards the proposed development were wide ranging and covered both negative and positive aspects of the development. Participants expressed concerns related to environmental, technical, economic, social, governance, and other industry and infrastructure issues and impacts. They also described possible opportunities and benefits associated with the development and these included economic, environmental, social, and infrastructure advantages. Table 2 lists these findings.

In discussing concerns and benefits, some participants maintained that agriculture and viticulture were more suited to the local environment than mining. Around-the-clock mining activities, dust, noise, light and blasting were described as not being aligned with the landscape or lifestyle. However, other participants indicated that it was too early to make up their minds about the proposed project and that it was about weighing up the pros and cons once these were better understood.

**Table 2. List of key discussion points**

CONCERNS	
• ENVIRONMENTAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Water, particularly underground water but also water supply to Adelaide and a sense of uncertainty of the potential impact given the importance of water to the region</li> <li>○ Noise (24/7)</li> <li>○ Lights</li> <li>○ Vibration</li> <li>○ Dust</li> <li>○ Disturbance to native flora (i.e. native orchards) and fauna</li> <li>○ Weeds and pests (i.e. kangaroos and birds)</li> <li>○ Visual amenity of overburden</li> <li>○ Mine site rehabilitation</li> <li>○ Tailings dam</li> </ul>
• TECHNICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How will they grout/line the mine?</li> <li>○ How many trucks?</li> <li>○ Who pays to repair the roads?</li> <li>○ What chemicals are used in processing?</li> <li>○ How will they...? (some participants had not heard about the proposed development, so had quite a few questions about the proposal)</li> </ul>
• ECONOMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delayed investment due to uncertainty/concern around the mine</li> <li>○ Loss of jobs in agriculture</li> <li>○ Impact on tourism</li> <li>○ Loss of 'clean and green' image</li> </ul>
• SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health impacts (mental and physical)</li> <li>○ Consultation with indigenous custodians</li> <li>○ Protection of European history</li> </ul>

- **INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS**
  - Increased truck traffic (all year; not seasonal)
  - Road quality i.e. pot holes
  - Reduced property values
- **GOVERNANCE**
  - Equity of legislations/regulations for different sectors/activities i.e. no piggeries or dairies are permitted in the region and you need a permit to bury deceased animals in case it impacts on the water table
  - Uncertainty regarding how the regulation process works regarding mining
  - Sufficiency of environmental bond – what happens when the company is gone?
  - Financial stability of the company
  - Short-term/quick grab nature of the proposed operation

## OPPORTUNITIES & BENEFITS

- **ENVIRONMENTAL**
  - Better geological understanding of the region
  - Better understanding of water resources in the region
- **ECONOMIC**
  - Local jobs (direct and indirect)
  - Financial injection into local community through local suppliers and businesses
  - New local businesses
  - Economic benefit for the state (via royalties, taxes and other mechanisms)
  - Synergies with other industries such as geo-tourism e.g. tourists interested in the mine and or mine products
- **SOCIAL**
  - Improved education facilities – universities and technical training
  - Share of profits with the community
  - Sponsorships e.g. for local sporting clubs
  - Community input to be part of solutions e.g. local expertise (i.e. not just procurement)
- **INFRASTRUCTURE**
  - Better roads through investment by Terramin and government
  - Different traffic networks to manage additional trucks
  - Lower rates (due to reduced property values)
  - Better power, NBN, communication networks etc.

### 3.3 Relationships and trust

Several key themes emerged during discussions about the relationship between Terramin and the community, and other important stakeholders in the mining development process (e.g., regulators). As depicted in Table 3, these themes revolved around trust in the company, trust in government, and government’s role in providing oversight to the development. In addition, the effects of Terramin’s activities on trust and cohesion within the community, and the importance of fair and transparent processes to protect the community’s interests were all identified as underpinning participants’ trust. Moreover, the quality of engagement through community meetings was also described as contributing to perceptions of trust between the company and the community.

**Table 3. List of key discussion points**

## RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST

- TRUST IN TERRAMIN
  - Can't believe what they say; suspicion and distrust of them as a company
  - Delay giving information on what is important, not open with community (e.g. promised documents didn't go online) or only release information they want to release
  - What they tell the ASX (Australian Stock Exchange) is different to what they tell the community
  - Company need to take an inclusive approach with community
  - Terramin "need to prove themselves to us now"; the relationship needs to be more respectful – both ways
- TRUST IN GOVERNMENT
  - Low trust in government, with some participants admitting they don't trust anyone involved in the mine in particularly
  - Questions raised about the role of CSIRO, and speculation that CSIRO were doing Terramin's PR (Public Relations) for them
  - Local government (Councils) seen to have limited capacity and lack of knowledge about "what is going on" with proposed mine
  - State Governments will listen but will go ahead anyway; not showing an interest in community concerns
- ROLE OF GOVERNMENT
  - Need for more formal process/agreement around protection of individuals/groups around the mine (e.g. with respect to water resource management and protection) and assurances regarding ongoing availability/use and contamination of water
  - Lack of knowledge regarding approvals and regulatory processes run by state government (e.g. operation licence vs. exploration licence)
  - Holding mining company accountable is very important against promises made and to ensure power is more balanced
  - State Government overrides local council decisions. State Government is disorganised
  - Timeline for decision making needs to be clearer (both government and Terramin); need to show logic of their thinking and decision making
- TERRAMIN'S EFFECT ON COMMUNITY
  - Existing activities have been destructive to the community
  - Belief some community members have been 'bought' to accept the mine, leading to within-community tensions
  - Preparing submissions and reading/responding to company materials take considerable resources that impacts on livelihood/personal time
- PROTECTING COMMUNITY INTERESTS
  - Call for greater transparency about development process (all parties)
  - Suggestion of an independent/impartial or neutral advisor to the community to look after the people that live there
  - transparency is a critical component of trust; 'Don't hold back – just be honest with us – tell it the way it is – all we hear is spin, spin, spin'
  - Feeling that there are deep local community resources for organising and responding to proposal to mine; strong independent community associations to represent their interests
  - Feeling that individuals don't have a great deal of power but that people do look after each other
  - Strong social networks that allows information to be transmitted quickly; flipside is that the 'rumour mill' is alive and active
- ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY VIA COMMUNITY MEETINGS
  - (Terramin personnel) "clammed up", not telling the whole story
  - Haven't answered questions directly – moved away from the question being asked
  - Sometimes antagonistic, feel bullied, treated as if stupid (e.g. patronising in comments with statements such as "you wouldn't understand")
  - Some perceptions that Terramin are acting aggressively at times and being manipulative, deceptive

## 4 Discussion

There are a number of key discussion points to emerge from these rich and engaging conversations with community members regarding the proposed 'Bird-in-Hand' mine. These are summarised below.

### 4.1 There is a lot to defend; there is a lot to lose

The CSIRO team deliberately began the workshop with a wide ranging discussion about what is important to and positive about the community surrounding the proposed mine; the team wanted to understand what it was that may need to be defended and cared for through any development process (regardless of whether this led to a mine being developed or not). The resultant discussion was rich and largely positive. Woodside, Nairne, Strathalbyn and 'The Hills' more generally, is a wonderful place to live, raise a family, work, recreate and remain for a long period of time. The area has seen significant transitions over the last 50+ years, with a number of participants indicating they had seen the region transform socially and with respect to the types of industry that were operating in the Adelaide Hills, over that period. There was a sense that while such transitions were not new for the area, the potential (re)introduction of mining was a threat to a number of key attributes that define the region. The quiet, 'clean and green', aesthetically pleasing landscape was seen to be at risk if the Terramin mine went ahead. More broadly, some concern was raised that the introduction of one mine may mean more mines may be considered in the future for the area. What was clear was that the area's residents enjoy living in 'The Hills', and feel attached and motivated to ensure this lifestyle is preserved.

### 4.2 The impacts are not all in the future, and they are not all bad

Once the discussion moved more explicitly toward the proposed mine, none of the workshop groups had any trouble creating comprehensive lists of potential negative impacts it may bring. The groups also generated extensive lists of potential benefits that may flow from a future mine as well. With respect to impacts, water resource management (i.e. availability, draw down, contamination) was a prominent concern, particularly as it related to potential impacts on other established industries (e.g. grape growing/viticulture and livestock production).

However, much of the discussion about impacts centred on the unknowns associated with mining in the area. Potential impacts around roads, dust, noise, weeds and pests, engineering and landscape were all discussed with reference to a lack of information and understanding of the likely magnitude and effect of these issues. This issue of uncertainty was prevalent and is common around prospective mine development where there is limited or no previous experience with mining in those places.

Participants also spoke to the impacts that the development process was having now on community and individuals, and to a lesser extent, the environment. These included the time and resources required for community members to engage with the development process. For example, attending information sessions with Terramin and evaluating/researching the documentation provided by the company was discussed as a considerable burden by some. It was suggested that a neutral or independent party may usefully manage some of this burden by providing community with an unbiased perspective on the proposed development and representing community interests to both the company and state government. Broadly, this theme reflects a number of community concerns around representation, participation and trust in engagement and decision making processes.

Not all impacts were viewed negatively. Multiple opportunities for the local community, region and state were identified if the mine were to go ahead. These included new opportunities for local businesses and

suppliers, flow-on custom to local cafes and accommodation providers, and employment. Revenues for the state were discussed multiple times, and the potential to leverage any future mine for additional, different tourism opportunities were also described. Activities conducted by Terramin to develop their application for a mining licence had also proved beneficial for some attendees as well, with data generated through a survey of water resources, for example, proving useful as this was the first comprehensive mapping conducted in the area.

### 4.3 There is uncertainty regarding the process of development

As mentioned previously, a lack of knowledge regarding the development process itself was an area of discussion and concern among workshop participants. While some of this centred on the perceived lack of information forthcoming from the company, a larger proportion of this uncertainty was related to processes managed by the state government and its regulatory bodies. How mining developments usually progress, the conditions placed on companies by government, the bonds they need to have in place to remedy any unplanned impacts, and even timeframes for development decision making were largely unknown to participants. For example, in multiple workshops, uncertainty regarding what would happen if Terramin were to cause a significant environmental impact was discussed. In this circumstance, there was deep uncertainty regarding the level of power the state government had to enforce remedial action, how this would be paid for if the company became insolvent, the conditions and protections that the regulatory body monitors through the life of the mine and whether the company could even declare bankruptcy to avoid financial and legal consequences. There was interest in better understanding the roles of government and Terramin, potential development timelines and trajectories, and the safeguards/conditions in place that regulate mining development.

### 4.4 The relationship needs work

Workshop participants had mixed experiences engaging directly with members of Terramin, ranging from no contact at all through to quite a lot of contact. Some participants had attended information sessions organised by Terramin around specific topics (e.g. water) while others had engaged with members of the Terramin operational team one-to-one on their properties as part of the company's information provision and engagement activities. Mostly these experiences were positive, particularly when meeting face to face. However, a small group of workshop participants had quite negative experiences when engaging with those representing Terramin. Specifically, these negative experiences seemed to be in public meetings and forums where information or details provided by the company were challenged by community members and stakeholders. The themes and comments listed above speak to these experiences and it would appear that open forums are challenging spaces for both community members and the company to work through areas of uncertainty or those where the company may not yet have completed its assessment work to finalise its proposed mine plan. It would appear that largely the individual interactions of workshop participants with Terramin personnel, are at least respectful, whereas public forums are more frustrating for community members.

## 5 Summary and next steps

The findings of the five workshops reported here, combined with the theoretical underpinnings of social licence to operate developed previously by CSIRO, will be used to inform the design of an 'anchor survey'. The anchor survey leads into the next phase of the research and provides the quantitative platform for the project.

Community members from the local surrounds will be invited to:

1. Complete a 20-30 minute 'anchor survey' answering questions about the local community and how the positive and negative aspects of living with the proposed underground gold mine might affect it.
2. Complete up to five brief (5 minute) 'pulse surveys' on their mobile phone. This short survey will ask about similar issues to the first survey to monitor if community opinions change over time.

Data from the community surveys will be analysed by the CSIRO research team to identify and understand the drivers of social licence for the 'Bird-in-Hand' development. All survey data collected will be combined and only aggregated results used to indicate the opinions of community members as a collective. A report presenting these aggregated survey results will be provided to Terramin summarising the findings.

Data from the anchor and pulse surveys will be fed back to community over the course of the project through a structured engagement process managed by Terramin. While the CSIRO research team will work with Terramin to co-design the engagement strategy, delivery of the engagement strategy will be the responsibility of Terramin.

# Appendix A: Participant information sheet





#### CONTACT US

**t** 1300 363 400  
+61 3 9545 2176  
**e** [csiroenquiries@csiro.au](mailto:csiroenquiries@csiro.au)  
**w** [www.csiro.au](http://www.csiro.au)

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##### **MINERAL RESOURCES**

Dr Kieren Moffat  
**t** +61 7 3327  
**e** [kieren.moffat@csiro.au](mailto:kieren.moffat@csiro.au)  
**w** [www.csiro.au/en/Research/MRF](http://www.csiro.au/en/Research/MRF)

##### **MINERAL RESOURCES**

Ms Naomi Boughen  
**t** +61 7 3327 4109  
**e** [naomi.boughen@csiro.au](mailto:naomi.boughen@csiro.au)  
**w** [www.csiro.au/en/Research/MRF](http://www.csiro.au/en/Research/MRF)