Australian Government
Geoscience Australia

Landholder Relationship Management Guidelines

Contents

Purpose

Most of Geoscience Australia's field work takes place on land owned or occupied by third parties, such as pastoralists, indigenous groups, mining or exploration tenement holders and state governments. These guidelines support the Land Access and Cultural Heritage Policy[1] and Procedures[2] by providing helpful information about how to respectfully, effectively and efficiently manage relationships with landholders to obtain land access and/or approvals.

Preparation and planning

Obtaining free, prior and informed consent for land access from landholders (e.g. pastoralists, indigenous groups, mining or exploration tenement holders or state governments) can be a very involved and protracted process. As such, it is important to start on this process early.

Environmental scan of community

The purpose of an environmental scan is to gain a good understanding of the local community that you intend to work in. This information can be invaluable in establishing and maintaining effective communications with landholders, by demonstrating a genuine empathy for the concerns and issues of the community, and being aware of any seasonal activities or public holidays.

Sources of information can include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and organisations
- local newspapers, bulletins and newsletters
- local television and radio
- state, territory and local government
- any relevant industry bodies (e.g. cattleman's associations and farmers' federations)
- known leaders and/or influencers in the community.

Communications toolkit

There is a range of different communications materials (see below) that can be developed to support landholder/stakeholder/public communications. In some instances, these items may be ready to go, while in other instances they may need to be developed. It is important that information about the program is accessible by the general public and landholders. It's best to contact your Division Communications Account Manager in the first instance when thinking about what communications activities you would like to arrange and the materials you'd like to develop for your project. All external communication materials will require relevant senior management approval.

The communications materials can support land access engagement via introductory letters/emails; landholder meetings (one-on-one); thank you gift (e.g. Shaping the Nation book) with personal thank you note from GA's CEO; updates on field activities and data availability to land access stakeholders (landholders and government partners) to maintain connection.

[1] D2018-32673

[2] D2018-96607

Note, if you are emailing land holders in remote areas, be aware that their Internet access may be limited or expensive, so minimise file size where possible.

- **Fieldwork Information for Stakeholders: Land Access and Cultural Heritage Considerations**[3] – This one page summary of the Policy, Procedures and guidelines is available for you to provide to stakeholders, so they can understand what they should expect when interacting with us.
- **Branding guidelines –** Branding is one of the most valuable elements in our communication. Geoscience Australia and program logos must be applied consistently in all communication activities. The branding guidelines or style guide are a set of tools and rules on how to use our branding elements. Partner organisations may use logos and the branding guidelines should be provided to third-party partners to ensure our branding is used correctly. Our branding guidelines and the print-ready logos are available to download from the intranet[4]. Other Program-specific guidelines may also be available. Contact your Division's Communications Account Manager (CAM) for more information or any additional requests.
- **FAQs** – A series of common questions and answers can be developed for key stakeholders including landholders. The FAQs document provides an overview and explanation of the project activities. Project specific FAQs can be developed in consultation with your Division Communications Account Manager.
- **Letter templates** – Geoscience Australia or program branded letter templates are available. Some programs have developed templates with pre-populated information to notify landholders and stakeholders about upcoming projects in their area. To access our letter templates in Word, open a new Word document, click New > My templates. For more information visit the Communication intranet page[5] or contact your Division Communications Account Manager.
- **Email templates** – You can use email templates to send one message to multiple recipients or to individual stakeholders quickly and easily. Templates can be developed to ensure emails are consistent and reflect our brand. Consult your Division Communications Account Manager in the first instance.
- **Brochures and Factsheets** – A number of brochures and factsheets are available to support communication or engagement activities. Brochures are a great way to inform our audience or stakeholders about us and what we do. Some program specific brochures or fact sheets are also available. If you would like to develop a new brochure/factsheet/flyer, consult with your CAM in the first instance. Please note there is a six week lead time to develop new publications. Some examples are: EFTF brochure[6], AEM Survey Factsheet[7], Digital Earth Australia brochure, Digital Earth Australia Factsheet[8].
- **Activity notices** – This type of flyer is used to highlight upcoming survey activities in the area. The notice should include key dates, location, maps and a description of the survey activities taking place including key contact details. See the AusAEM example[9].
- **Social media platforms available** – Social media is a great way to promote our activities and highlight what we've been up to in the field. Our channels available include Twitter and LinkedIn. If you would like to publish content on our social media channels, consult your CAM. They will work with you to develop content, help source relevant images, and schedule it in the

[3] D2018-96607

[4] https://intranet.ga.gov.au/everyday-tasks/communication-and-design/logos-branding

[5] https://intranet.ga.gov.au/everyday-tasks/communication-and-design/templates

[6] D2018-47118

[7] D2017-75397

[8] http://www.ga.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/54458/DEA-Industry-Factsheet.pdf

[9] D2018-542

social media calendar. All social media content requires senior management approval. Our Twitter handle is @GeoscienceAus.

- **Media protocols** – Before agreeing to any interview requests whilst in the field, please notify the Media team (24 hour hotline 1800 882 035.) They can provide support with interview preparation and ensure you are well equipped with key talking points. If you are notified of a media activity or campaign arranged by a project partner, inform the Media team about the details. This will ensure the team is across all media arrangements and are prepared to address any questions from the media if they are contacted directly. The Media team can also arrange media training for staff.
- **Newspaper ads/articles** – Advertising activities in local newspapers is a good way to notify the public of our upcoming activities in the area. All newspaper ads and articles will need to be developed in consultation with your CAM and require senior management approval.
- **Capture of field photos/movie** – Field activity photos and videos are a great promotional asset, used in many of the above communication tools. As such, field teams are encouraged to collect photos and videos while in the field. The types of images we're looking for include images that show people engaged in an activity or event (e.g. drilling, geophysical marine, land or air surveying) or landscape images that capture a sense and beauty of the place. Photos and video should be shot in both portrait and landscape formats to provide flexibility when used in print or online communications. Provide a description of the image including the name of the place, particular landmarks and activities taking place. Ensure people displayed in the media are using appropriate personal protective equipment and behaviours. The photos and video files should be saved in a relevant local network folder where it is easily accessible for future use. For more information contact your CAM.

Handling queries when in the field

- Before heading out to the field, decide who will be responsible for leading conversations with landholders, stakeholders and the public. Prior to departure, ensure field party leaders have up-to-date contact list including our Media hotline.
- Media and science communications training is made available to staff. Enquiries about internal training should be directed to hr@ga.gov.au.
- All field personnel should understand what it is they're doing in the field and why. This helps field unexpected questions from the general public and/or landholders.
- Having approved communications material (see *Communications toolkit*) can be extremely helpful when discussing field activities with the general public and/or landholders.
- Do not speak to any media unless you have been given prior approval to do so. All media enquiries should be referred to the Media team at media@ga.gov.au or 1800 882 035.
- It is important that all communications with the general public and/or landholders are recorded and reported back to the relevant Project Leader. In some instances, it may also be necessary to report back interactions to project partners and/or key stakeholders.

How to get landholder contact information

Obtaining landholder contact information is a two-step process: (1) find out who owns a property, and (2) obtain contact details. The Identifying Land Tenure Guidelines[10] provides information about where to look for cadastral, environmental, native title, sacred/heritage/sensitive and resource lease land type locations and extents. Most state and territory departments have an integrated land information system where you can search maps to find land parcel references. The references can then be used

[10] D2018-96607

to obtain Certificate of Title information at a cost. The Certificate of Title will give you the name of the title holder, and in most cases also an address. Telephone details can be obtained using the White/Yellow Pages or Google searches for property name, or graziers and pastoralists in the particular area.

If you are having difficulty getting landholder details and/or contact details then try the following:

- Contact the local council. They may give you details directly or get back to you after they have contacted the landholder and sought their permission to divulge their details.
- Contact the local pub, roadhouse, or Landcare group, or talk to neighbours.
- If feasible, visit the property you wish to access and hopefully get someone you can talk to about access. (This is not recommended as a means of first contact but can be used as a last resort.)
- If you have no success at all you may need to reassess your target area and try to get a contact on an adjoining property.

State and Territory land information details

Queensland

Queensland Globe[11]

- Use Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox rather than Internet Explorer.
- To identify land parcels click on Layers tab left of screen; click on Add layers; expand Planning cadastre; expand Land parcels and select Land parcel label and Land parcel.
- Zoom to area of interest; click on spanner in top right corner and select “identify “; select a land parcel; another set of layers will appear; select land parcel tab; select parcel number tab; scroll down to information and products tab and select; select lot and plan number; select title search link which will take you to Qld Government property and title search website where you can purchases title information.

Northern Territory

NT Atlas and Spatial Data Directory[12]

- Select a land parcel via the link to the NT Integrated Land Information System (ILIS).
- You will need a certificate installed on your PC before accessing ILIS. Contact Service Now for certificate.
- Go to the ILIS (Integrated Land Information System) Support[13] page for support.

Western Australia

Landgate[14]

- Create a login and click on New Map Viewer Plus to search for land details.
- Links to purchasing Certificates of Title are through Landgate.

South Australia

[11] https://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au/

[12] http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/imf.jsp?site=nt_atlas

[13] http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/forum/ntlis_documents/ILIS

[14] https://sso.es.landgate.wa.gov.au/idp/startSSO.ping?PartnerSpId=migrator

South Australia Integrated Land Information System[15] (SAILIS)

- Use the South Australian Property Location Browser[16] (PLB) to obtain land parcel information. Once land parcels of interest are selected in PLB, click on the SAILIS Link button to order Certificates of Title.
- There is also helpful information about SAILIS on the home page[17].

New South Wales

- The NSW Spatial Services Portal[18] has a couple of options to view land data. Use either SIX Maps or download the NSW Globe kml to obtain land parcel information.

- NSW Land Registry Services[19] has a link to Information Brokers who sell the land title information.

Victoria

- Land and Survey Spatial Information[20] (LASSI) provides land parcel information. This information can then be used in Landata[21] to obtain titles and property certificates.

Tasmania

- The Land Information System Tasmania[22] (LIST) is where you can search spatial information and obtain land title certificates. You will need to set up an account which is pretty straight forward.

Indigenous Land Councils

Information about native title representative bodies and service providers can be found on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Native Title Representative Bodies and Service Providers page[23], along with a link to the National Native Title Tribunal and maps and spatial data on all native title claims and determinations. This will assist in determining the traditional owner groups you may be dealing with.

If you are working with state governments check to see if they have a land access officer or someone who has had a lot to do with indigenous groups that can provide advice or assistance with contacting representatives.

Some Land Councils will have guidance available for researchers working on country or with indigenous people. For instance see *Collaborative Science on Kimberley Saltwater Country - A Guide for Researchers*[24] from the Kimberley Land Council.

[15] https://www.sailis.sa.gov.au/home/auth/login

[16] http://maps.sa.gov.au/plb/

[17] https://www.sailis.sa.gov.au/home/public

[18] https://six.nsw.gov.au/

[19] http://www.nswlrs.com.au/

[20] https://maps.land.vic.gov.au/lassi/

[21] https://www.landata.vic.gov.au/

[22] https://www.thelist.tas.gov.au/app/content/home

[23] https://www.pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/land/native-title-representative-bodies-and-service-providers

[24] http://www.wunambalgaambera.org.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=212069, also D2018-66647

Tailoring communications with landholders

Given the diversity of stakeholders and types of fieldwork activities we undertake, it is not possible to provide a 'one size fits all' approach to communicating with stakeholders. However, the following general principles apply in most situations.

- Be respectful, honest and transparent.
- Your safety is more important than the fieldwork. If your safety is in question in relation to engaging with landholders or members of the public, leave the situation, record the details and report it to Entity Security Advisor (Director, Governance and Risk).
- Consider what the key issues are likely to be for a specific group or person and address the aspects that are of interest/concern to the audience.
- Try and put the work (aim, outcomes, products, etc.) into a context that can be understood and appreciated by the landholder. It doesn't necessarily have to have a direct benefit for them but if they can understand how it will benefit the region/state/country any inconveniences may be more readily accepted. It can be great to have a direct, local benefit but be genuine about this and don't grasp at straws to try and find this – any benefit or outcome needs to be real and genuine. Contrived benefits will sound exactly that, contrived. .
- Be aware of the level of detail communicated at different times of the developing relationship. Remain flexible in your delivery of the level of detail. In most cases, it will be best to start with the broad overview and only provide finer details closer to the time when they are relevant.
- The landholder is the person with the knowledge of their land. Wherever possible ask for their advice into aspects such as the exact location of work, access routes and hazards.
- As government representatives, in many instances we have the right to access land without permission. However, it is seldom worth playing this card as it severely damages landholder relationships, and presents a high reputational risk to the organisation and our social licence to operate.
- It is best to tailor communications to each stakeholder. However, generic communications may be appropriate when:
    - addressing a large or diffuse group, such as a town or group of stakeholders with a common interest; and/or
    - the activity will not impact anyone directly and/or does not need consent to be undertaken, such as an AEM survey.

Further, you may have more success engaging with different groups by taking into account the following considerations and approaches.

Town/community

- At this scale, generic communications are more effective. They should be used for providing general, non-specific 'for information' messages.
- Methods of engaging with the general public at this scale include through newspaper articles, town meetings, local council media, federal/state/territory department newsletters and media, trade associations (e.g. cattleman's associations and farmers' federations), recreational groups (e.g. 4WD, hunting or shooting clubs).

Pastoralists and farmers

- It is preferable to first contact pastoralists and other farmers in a personal manner via phone or in writing. Once a positive relationship has been established, more generic communications may be sufficient. If contact details are not available or can't be found, you can try visiting the homestead. This should be a last resort and is not really practical as you cannot reasonably expect to be granted access with such little warning. At the very least plan a visit a few days prior to the planned work. You may not be well received though.

- It can be difficult to contact landholders during business hours by phone. It is better to try during the early morning or late afternoon. Also try email, if available.
- Individual landholders will have individual communication preferences and part of the role in contacting landholders is to find the best way to establish and maintain that contact. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but phone calls and email are two critical channels for communication that can be used to complement each other:
  - If communicating key information or making arrangements/agreements over the phone, it's important to follow up with an email (wherever possible) to summarise/recap the discussion and provide any additional information. This also provides a formal record of the verbal discussion.
  - If communicating via email, following up with a phone call can provide confirmation that the landholder has read the email and gives the landholder an opportunity to discuss any issues/questions. Landholders may not check emails regularly so don't assume a lack of an email response is consent or agreement.
- The landholder may actually be an entity/corporation with the property being managed by someone. Managers may change during the life of the project. The manager may or may not be able to provide permission; if not, they should be able to refer you to the owner or owner's representative.
- The landholder may want an indemnity agreement (particularly companies/corporations). This has happened before. (See D2017-73455 for example). An indemnity agreement can take some time to be reviewed and approved.

Indigenous groups

- There are a number of resources and online training material to improve your cultural awareness. Examples include:
  - Engage Early guidelines[25]
  - Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values[26]
  - Indigenous Awareness Training listed on the intranet[27].
- Don't just drop in.
- Be aware of who represents indigenous peoples in particular areas and the land tenure/rights based on the jurisdiction in which the fieldwork is being undertaken.
- Local indigenous representatives (e.g. land council, lawyers representing land trust, native title services, NT Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA)) might be able to assist with:
  - building trust and communicating objectives with traditional owners (TOs)
  - providing knowledge of cultural/social norms, customs and decision-making processes within specific groups
  - gaining permission for access
  - identifying terms and conditions of access
  - arranging site visits and cultural heritage clearances
  - arranging town-hall/community style meetings/briefings. There is considerable benefit to this style of meeting at the start of project to provide an overview of the project and expected outcomes/benefits and to get community support.

[25] http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/3201a986-88e8-40f3-8c15-6e659ed04006/files/engage-early-indigenous-engagement-guidelines.pdf

[26] http://www.nrm.wa.gov.au/media/86488/ask-first.pdf

[27] https://intranet.ga.gov.au/everyday-tasks/fieldwork/training

- Cultural/social norms, customs, decision-making processes within indigenous groups can be highly variable.
- This process can take a considerable amount of time thus should be factor into the project plan. It's important to proceed cautiously and not to rush indigenous groups into decisions. Discussions may not go to plan so it may be helpful to have a plan B (and C-Z) in the event of unexpected situations.

Timing/frequency of communications with landholders

It is important that all correspondence with landholders is recorded. Refer to *Landholder relationship management system* for advice about how to keep suitable records.

Prior

- It is essential that landholder communications commence early. Early, informed and targeted communications with landholders facilitates timely land access permissions.
- Communications with landholders can occur as early as during the project planning stage. This helps engage the community, bring them on-board and identify any potential issues early.
- The priority is to get land access agreement from both parties in writing prior to fieldwork commencing, preferably as soon as field sites have been identified and approximate timing of fieldwork has been determined. If written agreement cannot be obtained from the landholder, but permission has been given, such communications should be documented by staff (or representatives). Land access agreements should clearly stipulate any access conditions prior to commencement of fieldwork. An example of a land access communications plan can be found here[28].
- Land access discussions with landholders should ideally be undertaken by a single point of contact. This limits duplication and inconsistencies. These coordination roles are best filled by people with prior experience with the landholders in question.
- Communications with landholders about land access should, where possible, be accompanied by supporting information such as factsheets and activity notices (see *Communications toolkit*) that outline the details of the proposed fieldwork.
- As the date for agreed land access approaches, communications should increase to ensure landholders are well informed and comfortable with proposed activities unless the landholder has indicated they require no further correspondence. Communications with landholders about specific trips is typically done by the relevant field party leader/s with reference to the original single point of contact and land access agreement.

During

- Communication with landholders instigated by staff (or our representatives) during fieldwork should be consistent with agreed land access communication requirements. To avoid confusion, such land access communication requirements should ideally be outlined and agreed upon at the time of land access permission. Examples of land access communication requirements include homestead visits on arrival and departure, and daily check-ins.
- Landholders should be notified as soon as practicable if land access plans change (e.g. delays due to weather or availability of resources).
- Communication with landholders during fieldwork will typically be done by field party leader/s.

[28] D2018-17871

After

- Unless the landholder has specified otherwise, field party leader/s should notify the relevant landholder on departure from their land and thank them for their cooperation.
- When appropriate, offer to provide the landholder with copies of the data. If such an offer is made, make sure it is followed through on.

Maintain ongoing relationships with landholders

A lot of time and effort goes into establishing positive relationships with landholders. As such it is important that these relationships are maintained into the future.

Landholder relationship management system

A customer relationship management system (CRMS) enables us to manage our interactions with current and potential landholders.

In the absence of a corporate CRMS, information can still be collated in a centralised location at the Project, Section or Branch level. Key information that might be captured includes:

- contact details for landholders,
- why the landholder was contacted (e.g. which projects/fieldwork/activity does it relate to),
- who made contact, when, how, where (if in person) and
- a summary of what was discussed/agreed.

Land access permissions and any conditions could also be captured here.

It is important to note that we are subject to freedom of information requests and personal information requests under the Privacy Act. As such, it is important that all records about landholder interactions are kept factual and not in any way personally disparaging.

Keeping in touch

If a relationship has been established with a landholder but no work is currently underway, there may be value in occasional update correspondence to maintain the positive relationship for the future. For example, this may include:

- landholder specific communications such as provision of data and/or information or updates on upcoming field programs
- more generic communications such as festive season updates on key achievements or progress report from the past field season, or GA/Program/Project newsletters.
- a summary of final results to landholders or to key people in the broader community you worked with. This should be non-technical and outline the potential broader impacts of the work (e.g. ‘this work has increased the prospectivity of this region’). This helps reinforce initial messages that while the work may not have specific impact on a single property, but it may have implications for a whole region and community.

Consider the potential importance of your acquisition of knowledge about country to traditional owners:

When Traditional Owners give you knowledge about their Country, their Country allows you visit, work there and keeps you safe, then you assume a level of responsibility for this Country in the eyes of Traditional Owners. (p.42, *Collaborative Science on Kimberley Saltwater Country*[29])

Conflict resolution

Unfortunately, conflicts with stakeholders may occasionally arise. A perceived problem is still a problem and should be dealt with appropriately. Conflicts may be due to:

- sensitivity of landholders arising from *past* incidents (not necessarily related to our activities)
- confusion by landholders about what we want to do (uncertainty, poor/lack of explanation of work)
- failure of staff, contractors or other representatives to respect cultural sensitivities (e.g. trespassing on a sacred site or offending cultural customs)
- poor behaviour from staff, contractors or other representatives (e.g. communication, actions on property, cultural heritage or property damage)
- the landholder's desire for compensation.

Avoiding or minimising conflicts

Fortunately, many conflicts can be avoided or minimised by taking into consideration the following points:

- Remember, your safety and wellbeing and maintaining Geoscience Australia's good reputation is more important than individual data acquisitions.
- Act professionally at all times. Be courteous, considerate and polite. Respect cultural sensitivities.

Responding to conflicts (disagreements)

If there is a conflict in which the personal safety of staff (or representatives) is not threatened, try to resolve the situation by:

1. clarifying what the disagreement is about which may include acknowledging fault (where appropriate)
2. establishing a common goal for both parties
3. discussing ways to meet the common goal
4. determining any barriers to achieving the common goal
5. agreeing on the best way to resolve the conflict
6. acknowledging the agreed upon solution and determine the responsibilities of each party has in the resolution
7. documenting outcomes from the above dispute resolution process.

Responding to incidents

If an incident threatening the personal safety of staff does occur, such as an act or threat of violence:

- withdraw from the situation
- immediately report any act or threat of violence to the local police
- when safe to do so, report the incident via GA's online incident reporting tool[30]

[29] http://www.wunambalgaambera.org.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=212069, also D2018-66647

[30] https://geoscienceaus.appiancloud.com/suite/sites/whs-incident

- you may try to resolve the dispute at a later date when it has become safe to do so. Disputes can be resolved as per the steps above.

The above steps may not all occur in the one discussion. Field staff may be able to resolve minor or simple disagreements by themselves, while more serious or complex conflicts may require specialist or senior management advice and direction, such as on legal or organisational matters.

Privacy, information security and intellectual property

Personal information

All personal information we collect about an individual is subject to the *Privacy Act 1998*[31]. In the context of fieldwork, personal information may include their name, contact details, address, business interests or dealings, or any other information or opinion about them.

See the Managing Personal Information Procedures[32] for information about what you are to do when collecting, using, disclosing, maintaining and securing personal information.

In particular, you must not disclose the personal details of landholders to any third party unless they are publically available or the landholder has given consent.

Whenever email correspondence is sent to multiple landholder recipients, you must use the Bcc (blind carbon copy) function to preserve the privacy of landholder email addresses.

Scientific information

We generally make our scientific data freely and openly available to the public after quality checking and processing has been completed. You should inform landholders of the data release plan relating to the data being collected from their land (e.g. public release of all data, public release or derived data and reports only, or public release of reports only), ideally when land access is being arranged. Discussion with landholders about the progress of data release may also be helpful.

In some cases, we may need to restrict the release of information or data for a period of time for contractual or legal reasons, such as commercial-in-confidence. You should keep this in mind when communicating about data release with stakeholders.

Intellectual property

Geoscience Australia generally owns the intellectual property (IP) on all material we produce, and we generally publish information under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence. However, when we produce material in collaboration with others, such as universities, other government entities, Indigenous groups or community groups, we need to consider and address the IP rights of all contributing parties. The best way to address IP rights is through a contract, before the IP is developed.

We may also use existing intellectual property produced or owned by others. Examples include:

[31] https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy-law/

[32] D2016-83229

- data and products such as maps from other government entities
- knowledge, illustrations or artworks from Indigenous groups or individuals
- photographs from commercial entities.

If you intend to use IP belonging to others, ensure you have the right to use it, preferably in a written contract or agreement.

For more information about developing or using IP with others, see our Intellectual Property Policy and Best Practice Guidelines[33] or speak to the IP & Copyright Manager or Contracts and Procurement team.

Change history

Version	Date	Change
1.0	17 August 2018	Original version

[33] D2016-101349