



SOCIAL LICENCE: A CRITICAL FACTOR IN INFRASTRUCTURE ROLLOUT

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Infrastructure Partnerships Australia and L.E.K. Consulting have released a new report calling for an increased focus on social licence in the planning, procurement, and operation of infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The report, *Building Trust: Social License for Infrastructure*, outlines a series of key principles that should underpin how infrastructure organisations develop and manage their social licence.

“As we accelerate infrastructure investment and planning to speed the recovery, there is a major opportunity to innovate in the way we engage with communities and put social licence at the front of our thinking about infrastructure delivery,” said Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, Chief Executive Adrian Dwyer.

“While physical distancing measures and barriers to face-to-face consultation with communities create challenges, they also provide an opportunity to transform the way we traditionally build and maintain social licence.

“When done well social licence can build the trust of the community and help to deliver assets and services in a streamlined manner.

“Good business practices allow infrastructure organisations to attract and retain customers and provide a robust foundation to garner support from communities for future projects.

“When infrastructure developers and operators have the support of the customers they serve, they have more flexibility to innovate and experiment, which creates benefits for government, business, and the community.

“High profile inquiries, like the Banking Royal Commission have driven a greater awareness of the importance of social licence in decision-making and COVID-19 should only bring this awareness into sharper focus”, said Mr Dwyer.

The report recommends the following principles be adopted:

- Social licence should be a key consideration for every infrastructure project at every stage
- It is vital to have an effective governance structure for managing social licence
- Social licence must be embedded in all key decision-making and processes
- Active and tailored engagement will support organisations to gain the trust of communities
- The benefits of a project need to be clearly and frequently communicated to the public
- Organisations should always be working to improve the experience of infrastructure users
- Methods for monitoring and evaluating social licence should be implemented
- Organisations should work directly with consumer advocates and community groups





- The approach to managing social licence must evolve to keep up with shifting community expectations

The *Building Trust: Social Licence for Infrastructure* report can be accessed [here](#).

Infrastructure Partnerships Australia is the nation's infrastructure think tank, providing independent policy research focused on excellence in social and economic infrastructure.

CONTACT:

Infrastructure Partnerships Australia

Media Contact: Michael Player 0424 698 189

L.E.K. Consulting

Spokesperson: Simon Barrett, Senior Partner, L.E.K. Consulting

Media Contact: Dominic Eggers, L.E.K. Consulting

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