

Social License in Horticulture



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understanding social license

➤ where science, industry and communities intersect

➤ Engaging communities in research priorities and design

➤ Understanding the people and context of rural communities

Social license in horticulture

- What is social license?
- Why does it matter?
- What we can do about it



Tensions between...





Social license

“A social license can be considered to exist when a project is seen as having the ongoing approval and broad acceptance of society to conduct its activities” (Joyce and Thomson, 2000)



Good local employers!

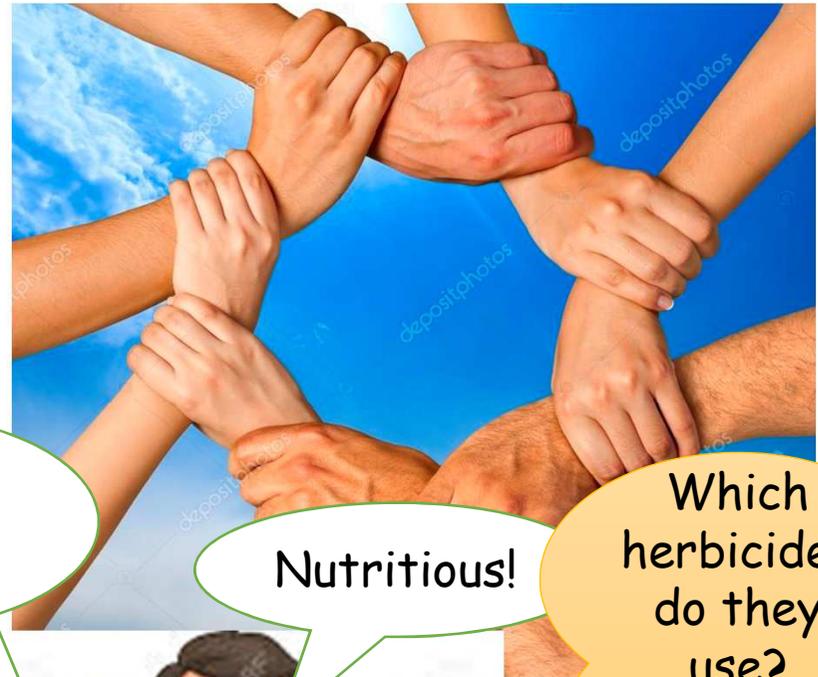
Nutritious!

Good neighbours!

Tasty!

Clean and green!





Good local employers!

Nutritious!

Which herbicides do they use?

Good neighbours!

Tasty!

Clean and green!



Social license can also be seen as:

- A *privilege* of operating with minimal government regulation based on maintaining public trust by doing what's right
- Granted when your operations are consistent with the ethics, values and expectations of your stakeholders
- Can be lost through a single event, or a series of events

- Social license is flexible and low-cost
but
- Can be replaced with 'social control'
(or bureaucratic regulation) when social license fails

Maintaining social license to operate

- Losing a social license to operate *may start* with a few grumbles from a small number of people
- A failure to address concerns and issues, however small, can rapidly lead to social license withdrawal on a much larger scale
- Social license loss can create local, state or national regulatory instability
- Impede industry progress or growth
- Potential for major impacts on profitability
(Luke, 2017)



Common social license rhetoric

Industry thought

- We dealt with all the technical issues
- We fulfilled our required consultation obligations
- We have government support anyway
- It's better to say the risk is 'negligible'
- We were ambushed by emotional and poorly informed opponents

What we understand

- Concerns weren't adequately addressed
- Engagement strategies were minimal/poor
- Social license 'risks' were not well-considered
- The more transparent industry is about worst-case scenarios, the more people focus on how unlikely this is
- Community members insulted – negative emotions increased

Our experience of social license:

As long as social license is ignored and left as unknown and intangible, it has a far greater chance of bringing seemingly small negative impacts swinging back to impact your business, much like a boomerang.



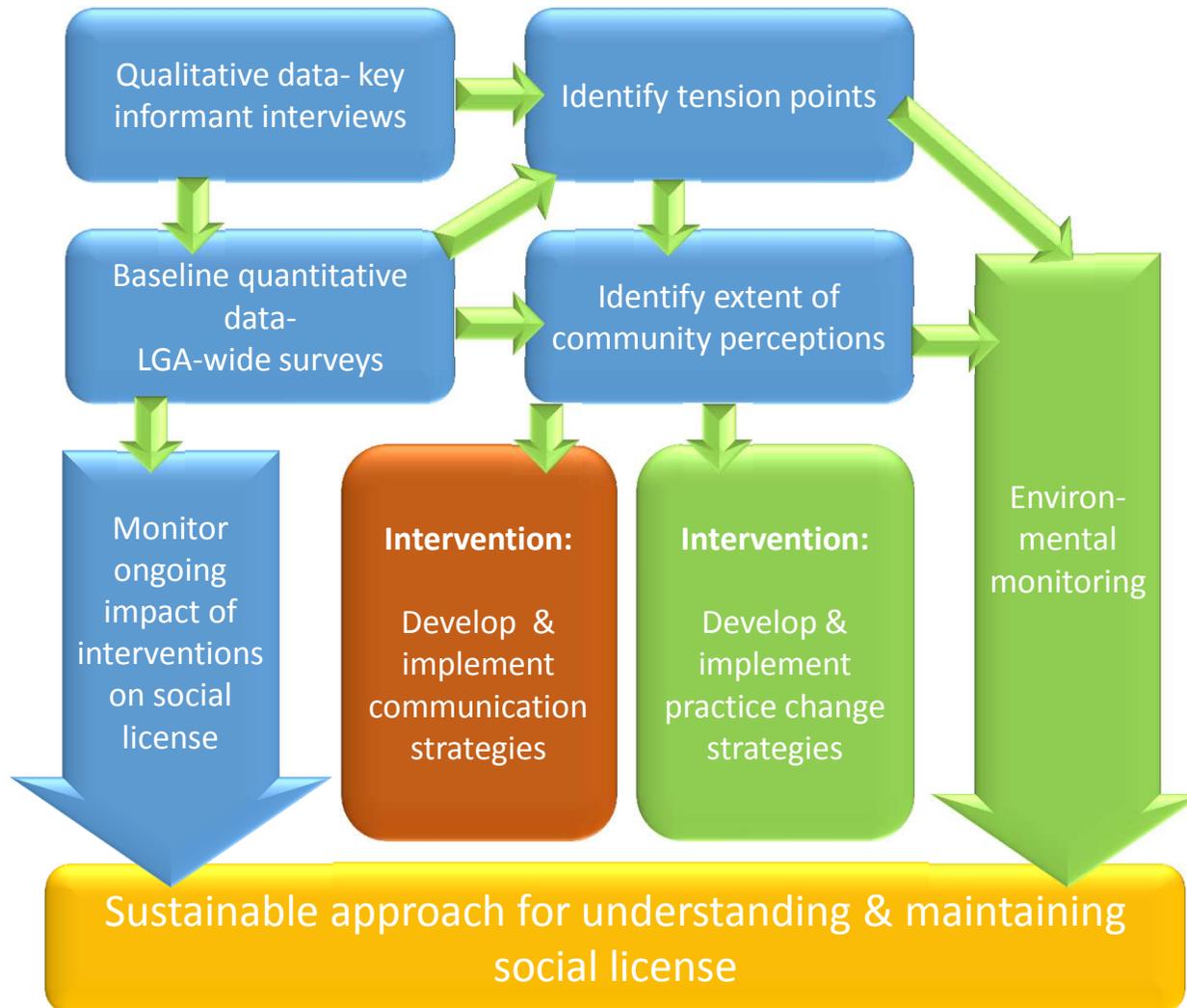
Improving social license

Research on social license shows that:

- A good understanding of the issues and local context is essential
- Early stakeholder engagement and transparency of process are paramount
- Genuinely addressing concerns boosts credibility



Our approach



Continuum of community engagement



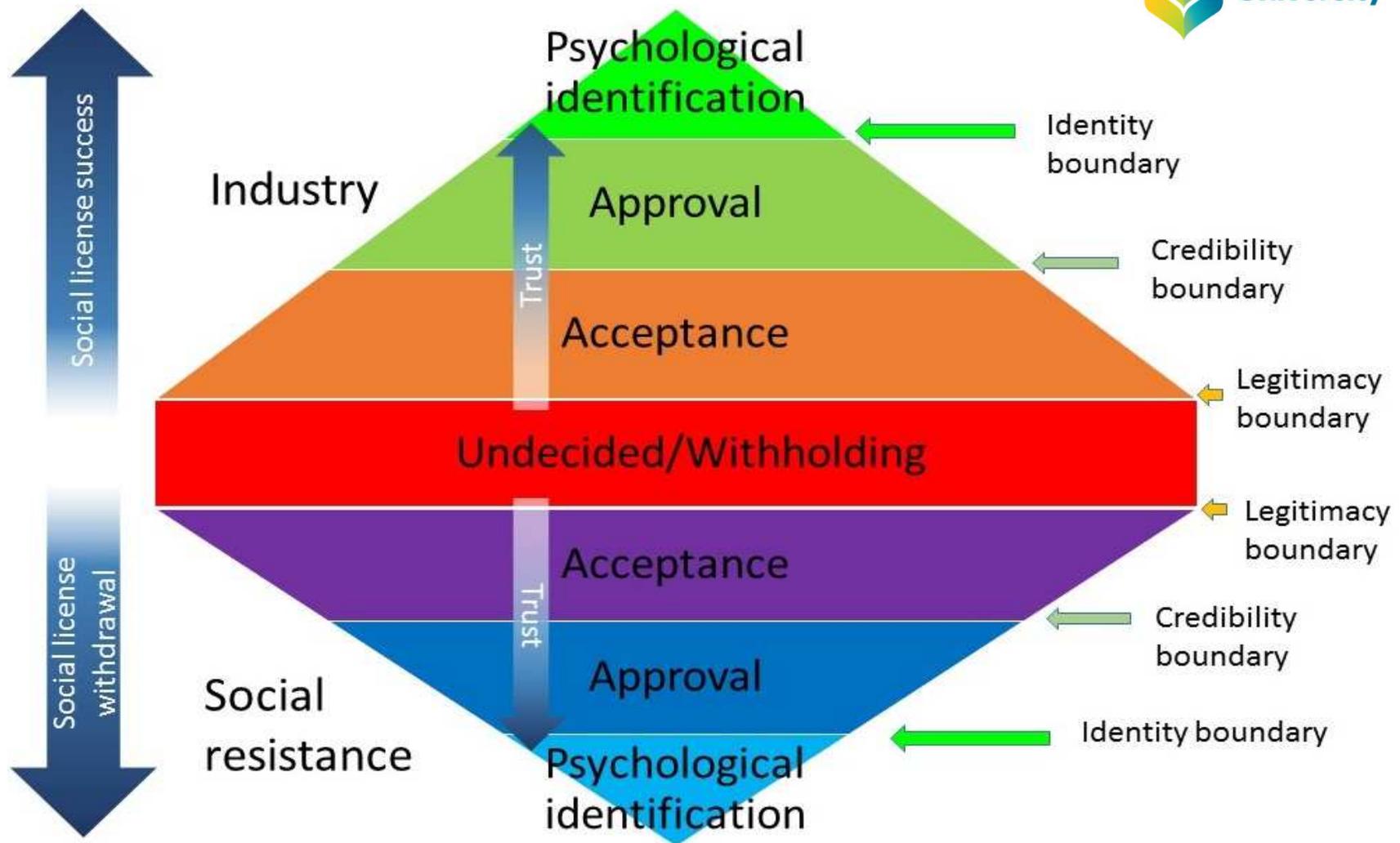
Adapted from: Bowen *et al.* (2010)

Understanding stakeholders



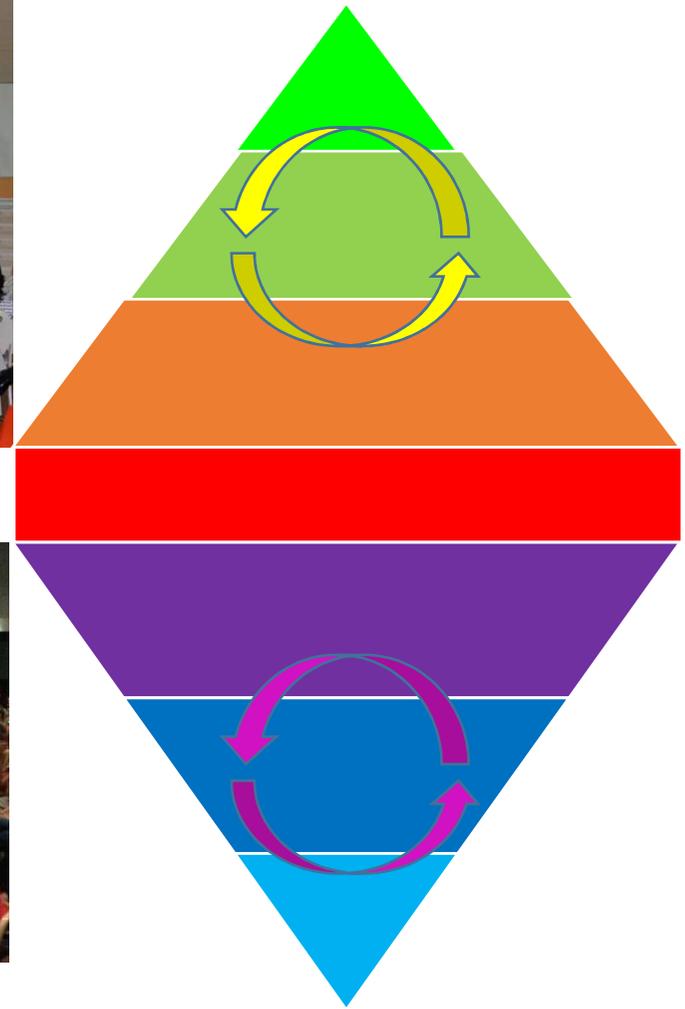
- Who cares about these issues and to what extent?
- What are important stakeholder groups and networks?
- Are patterns of concern occurring in communities of place, and/or communities of interest?
- How broadly, and to what extent are concerns felt?
- What are the best approaches for addressing concerns?

- Effectively addressing concerns is essential for industry credibility



Source: Luke, H. (2017). Social resistance to coal seam gas development in the Northern Rivers region of Eastern Australia: proposing a diamond model of social license to operate. *Land Use Policy*, 69, 266-280.

Trust and shared information



Social scales

International

National

Local councils

Groups

Individuals

Regional

State Level

(Prno & Slocombe, 2014)

Opportunities for quantifying social license

International

National

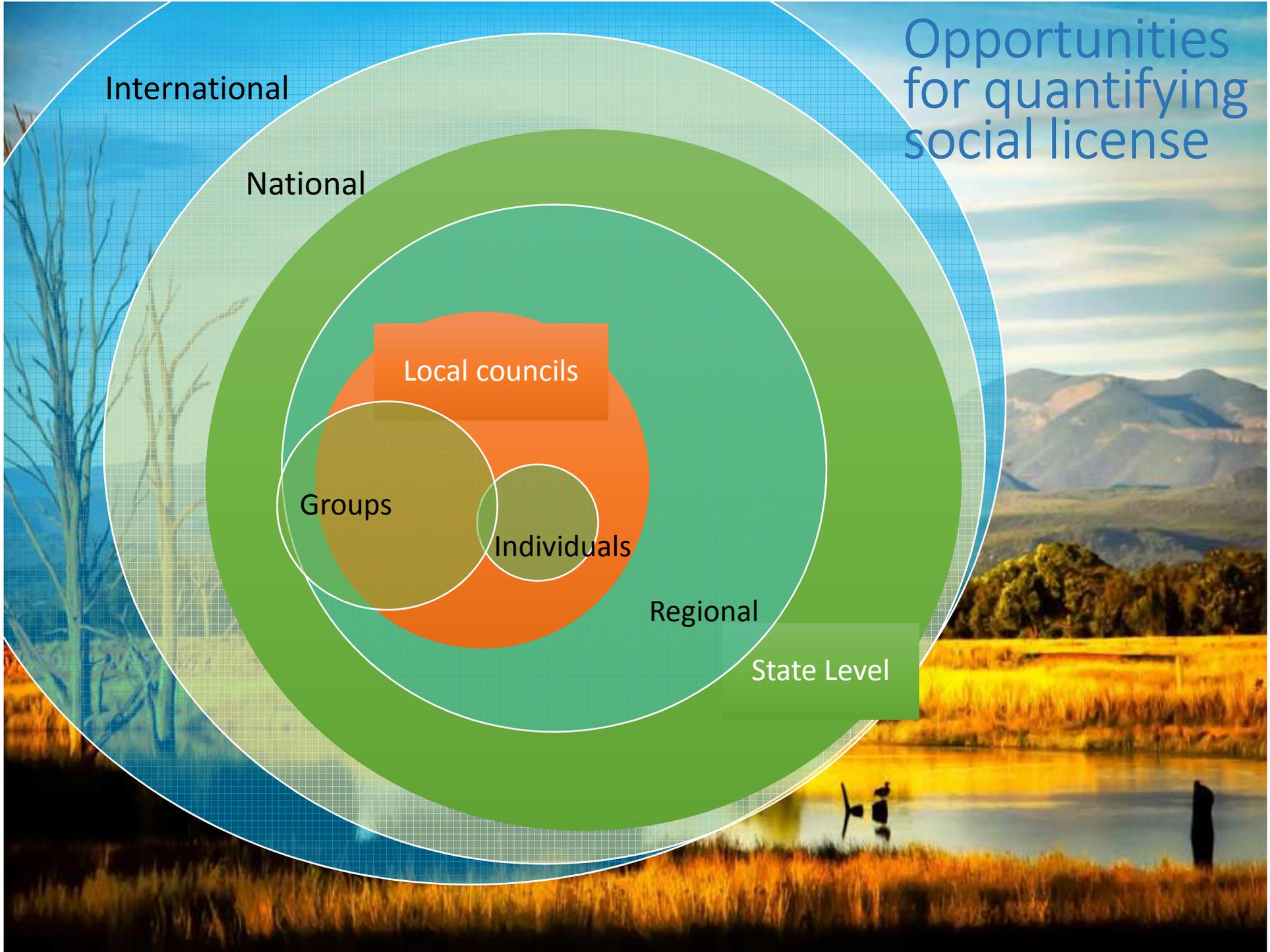
Local councils

Groups

Individuals

Regional

State Level



Opportunities for quantifying social license

International

National

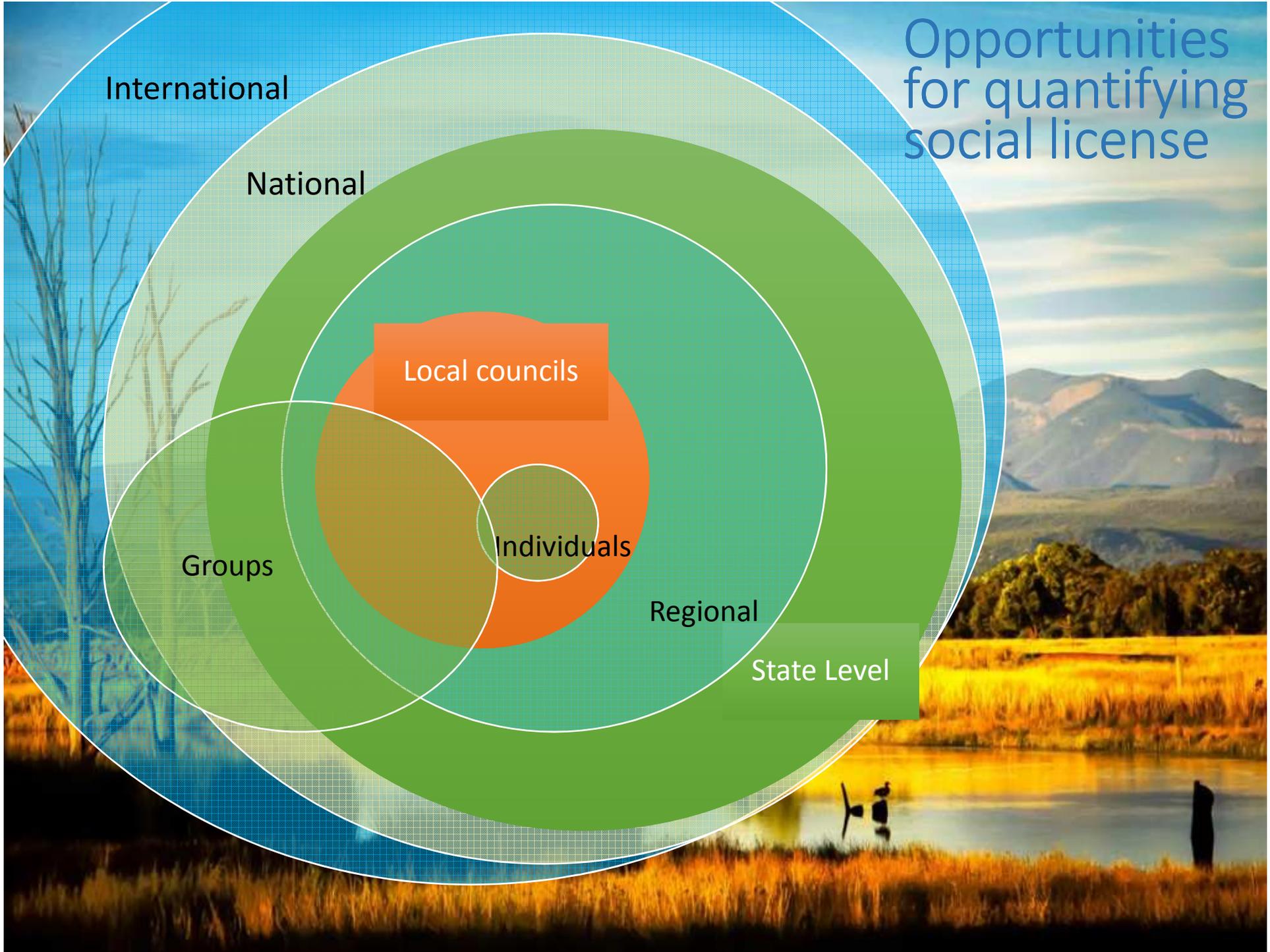
Local councils

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Individuals

Regional

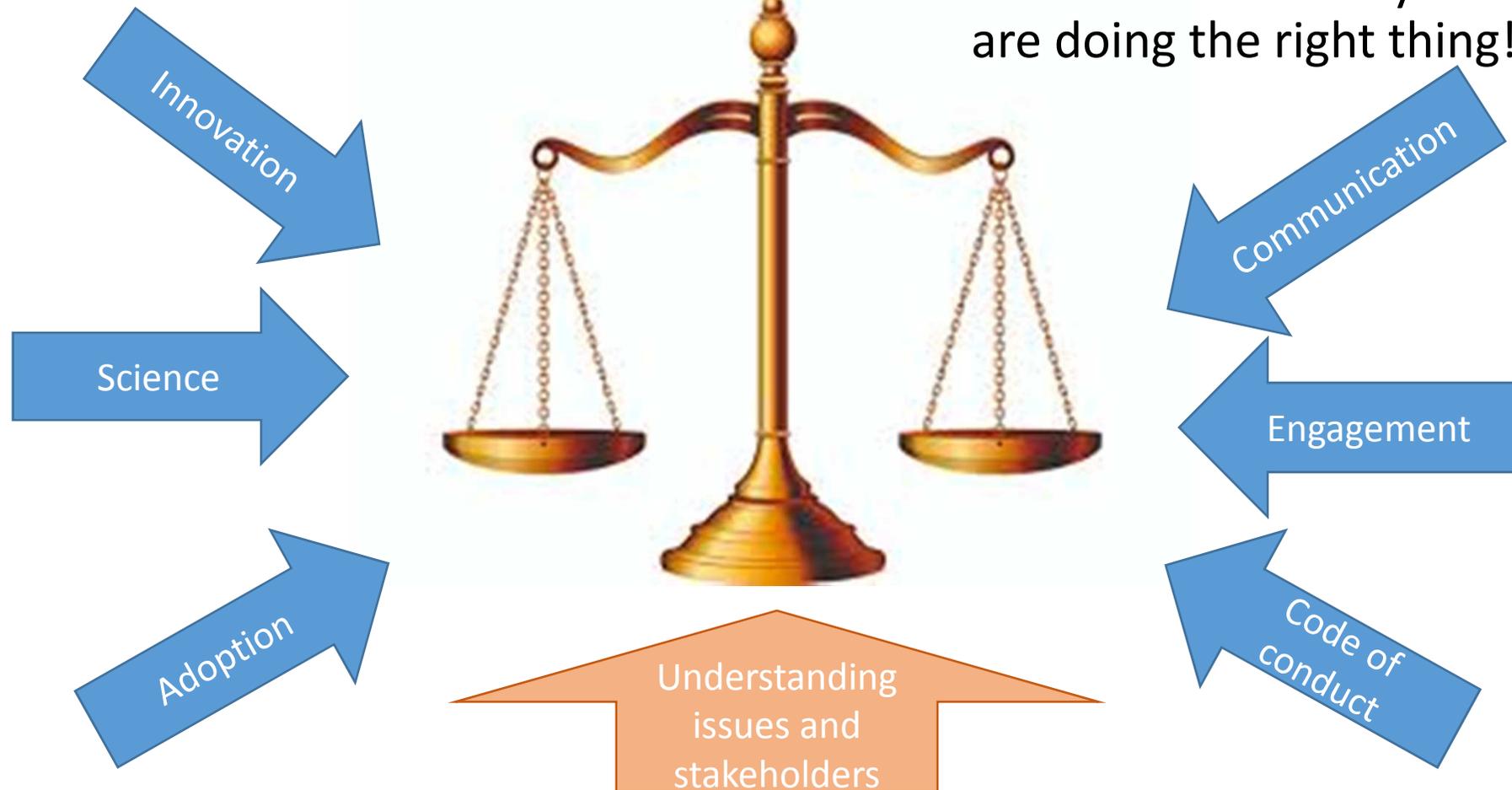
State Level



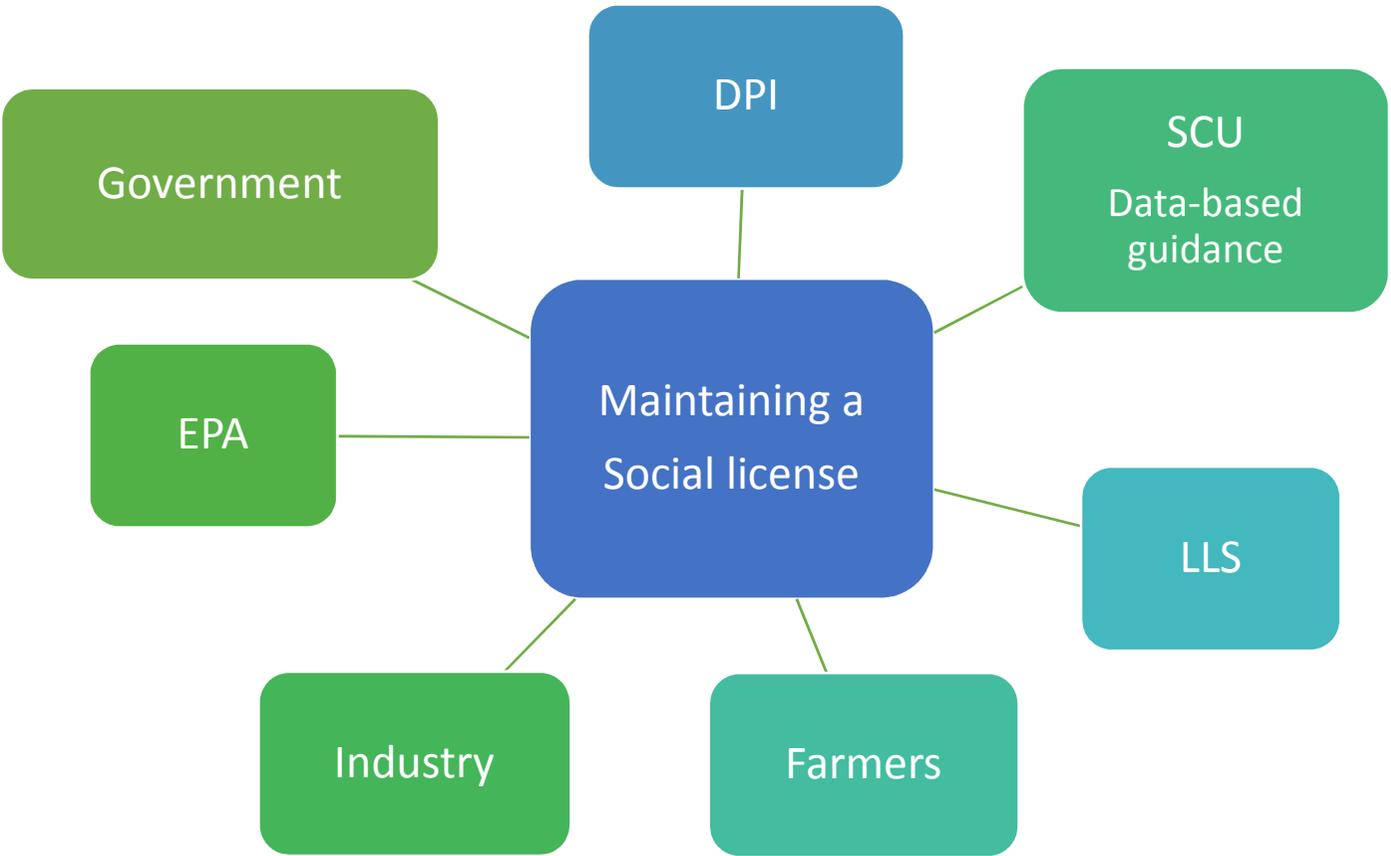
Maintaining a social license

Doing the right thing

Making sure that stakeholders know you are doing the right thing!



Maintaining a social license

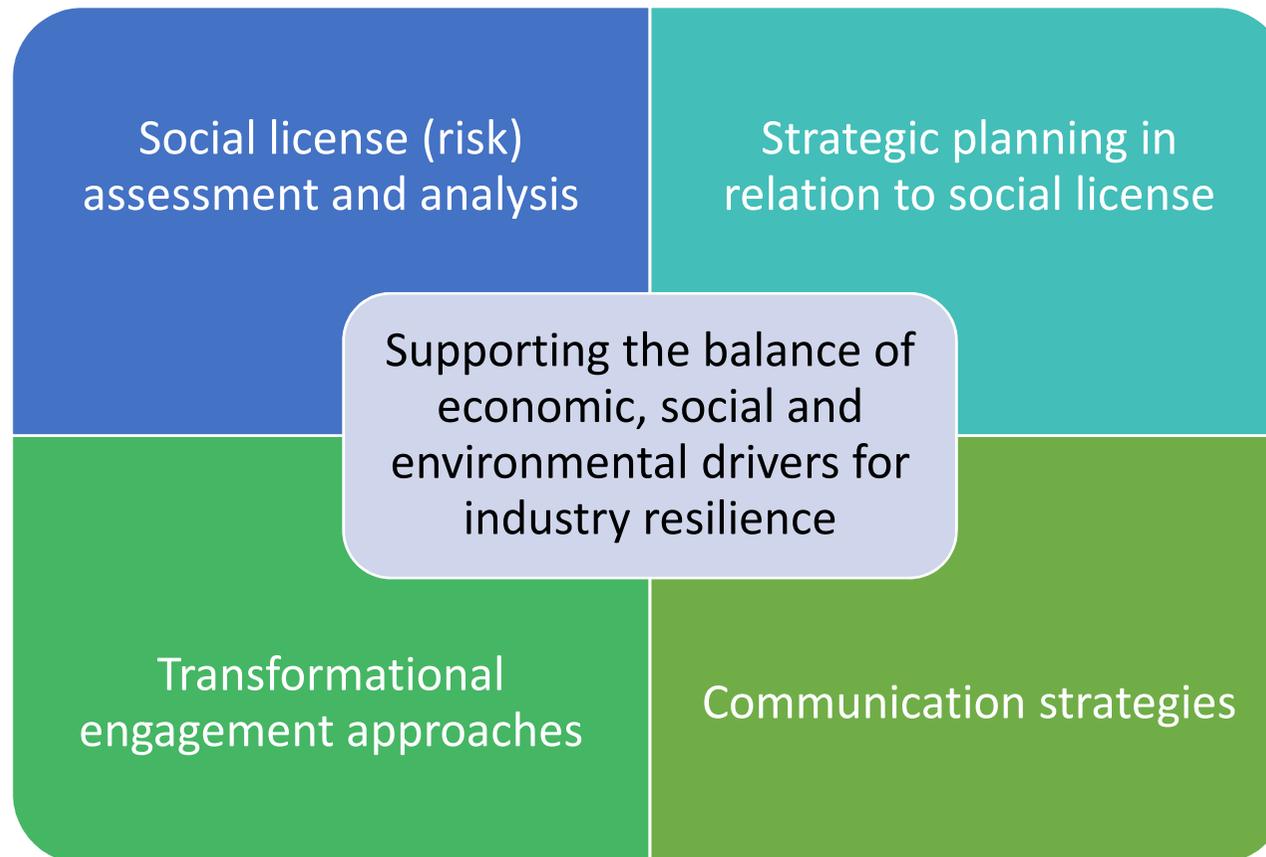


Outcomes



- Improved understanding of social license in the agricultural context
- Development of a clear approach for understanding, measuring and monitoring social license in the agricultural sector
- Substantial opportunities for interdisciplinary work
- Opportunity for input into land use policy

What we do



References

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- Prno, J. (2013). An analysis of factors leading to the establishment of a social licence to operate in the mining industry. *Resources Policy*, 38(4), 577-590.
- Stimpson, K., Luke, H., & Lloyd, D. (2018). Understanding grower demographics, motivations and management practices to improve engagement, extension and industry resilience: a case study of the macadamia industry in the Northern Rivers, Australia. *Australian Geographer*, 1-22.

Research Publications

- [A diamond model of social license to operate](#)
- [Understanding grower demographics, motivations and management practices to improve engagement, extension and industry resilience: a case study of the macadamia industry in the Northern Rivers, Australia](#)
- [Unconventional gas development: why a regional community said no](#)
- [Developing the Lismore CSG poll – A university/ local government collaboration](#)
- [Community perspectives of natural resource extraction: coal-seam gas mining and social identity in Eastern Australia](#)
- [Improving conservation community group effectiveness using mind mapping and action research](#)

Researcher pages and contact

- https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hanabeth_Luke
- <http://scu.edu.au/geoscience/index.php/102>
- Hanabeth.luke@scu.edu.au

Questions?



Social license over time

Pre-development

- **Industry legitimacy**
- Fair approval processes
- Local context: economics vs perceived sustainability

During early development

- **Industry credibility**
- Stakeholder views on operations/activities
- Living up to expectations/responding to concerns
- Regulatory fairness

Post development

- Industry credibility
- Ongoing benefits and impacts
- Regulatory fairness

Changing demographic

- New neighbours
- Perceived industry legitimacy may change as local context changes

Identifying social license trigger points

spray
drift?

'visual
pollution'?

water
quality?

Employment
issues?

