

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Evaluation of the process

The open inquiry phase of the evaluation revealed CCG expectations regarding the community consultation process (see process evaluation criteria in Figure 3-2). These expectations were further grouped into themes pertaining to the performance and accountability of the study team, the collective CCG and the individual participants (Figure 4-1).

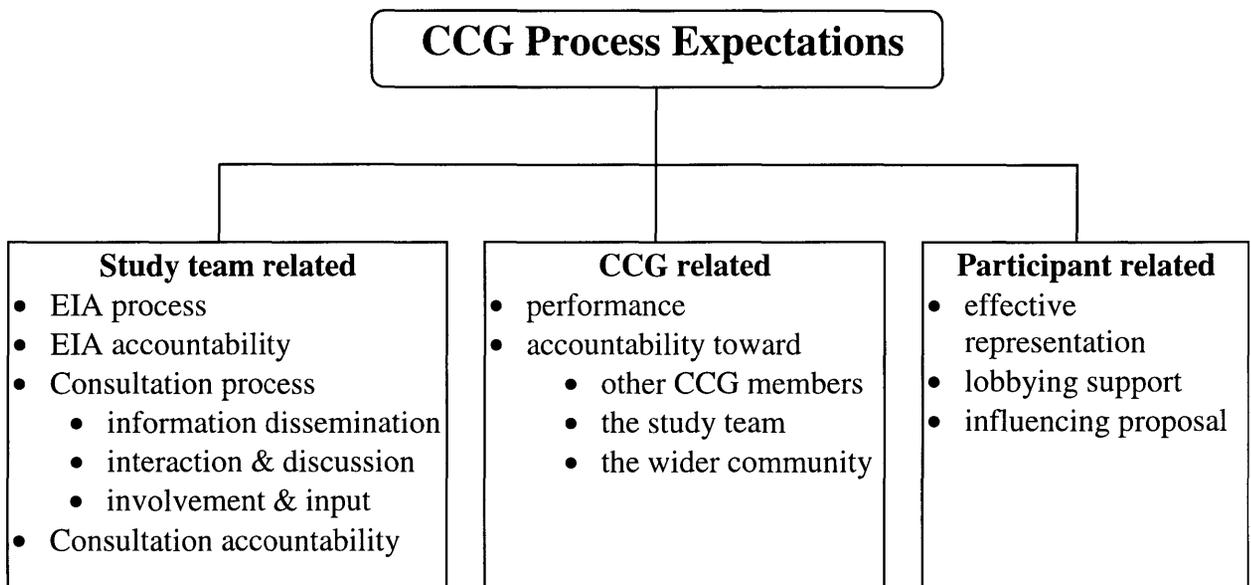


Figure 4-1 Process evaluation themes.

Each of these themes are explored in detail in the following discussion. Where possible, each finding was supported by both qualitative and quantitative data. Audit review results to affirmative statements are expressed as percentages of respondents who agree (A), disagree (D) or are undecided (U) on an issue (source: final CCG closed questionnaire only).

Participant quotations are identified by interest group (eg. Sci/Ed), participant number (eg. P12) and source of quote (eg. survey 2).

4.1.1 Expectations relating to the study team

CCG process expectations regarding the study team fell into two broad categories: those issues associated with the EIA study and those related to the CCP. Although not the original focus of this evaluation, the open inquiry revealed that the EIA study was so inextricably linked with CCP expectations that to ignore the CCG's views on the EIA process would limit the evaluation of the CCP. Both the EIA process and the CCP are interdependent in terms of satisfying participant expectations and even a well designed and implemented CCP will not meet participants' expectations if the EIA process is substandard.

Environmental impact assessment process

The CCG's expectations regarding the EIA process centred on the quality of procedures, survey methodologies, data analysis, impact assessment and prediction, and impact mitigation prescriptions. Qualitative records revealed clues to personal dissatisfaction with specific issues involving the EIA process. For example, several conservation and community well-being representatives vigorously maintained that the methodology was '*.. gravely imperfect.*' (Conservation 19 Independent survey) and that '*EIS surveys to date have been inadequate*' (Conservation P8 Newsletter). Despite this, however, the audit review data revealed, with the exception of addressing likely impacts, that more members than not were satisfied with the following EIA performance standards.

- The EIA procedures were of a high quality (30%D, 22%U, 48%A)
- Survey and analysis methodologies were technically correct (22%D, 30%U, 48%A).
- Baseline environmental data was sound (17%D, 39%U, 44%A).
- All likely impacts were addressed sufficiently (48%D, 22%U, 30%A).

The open inquiry revealed participant anxiety with the issue of the EIA time-frame and many members believed that the EIS was being pushed far too quickly. '*... the time frame is ridiculous*' (Community P21 survey 1) and '*The time frame is virtually impossible*' (Tour/Rec P3 survey 1). Although out of the control of the study team, the limited EIA time frame was a major destabilising factor on the CCP. The lack of available time created distrust among participants and undermined the technical and scientific credibility of the environmental study from the CCG's perspective. This is supported by audit review data

indicating that most members disagreed with the statement that enough time was allocated to complete the EIS correctly (52%D, 26%U, 22%A).

Another major concern regarding the EIA process involved the CCG's expectation that the EIA would complement government policy. For many of the CCG members the relevance of the Morisset EIA was questioned when a new State Government was elected in March 1995. Members were concerned that the new government forestry reforms would make the Morisset EIA '*.. a waste of time*' (Graz/Ap P6 Independent survey), and a '*.. redundant process.*' (Conservation P4 letter). '*What is the significance of the EIS now?*' (Tour/Rec P3 phone call). Cortner and Shannon (1993) maintain that public participation programs are political in nature and will always be influenced by external factors beyond the control of program providers and participants. This is clearly evident in the case of the Morisset EIS where a change in government forest policy undermined the CCP, ultimately reducing the significance of the Morisset EIA in the eyes of the participants. This political uncertainty had a significant effect on the way the CCG members viewed the Morisset EIA. Overall the CCG was undecided on whether the EIA complemented current government policy (26%D, 48%U, 26%A).

Environmental impact assessment accountability

CCG members were also concerned with the accountability of the EIA, and in particular, the professionalism of the study team and the fairness of the planning process. Members expected the EIA to be '*...undertaken in a logical, balanced, process oriented manner - so that both the lay community and technical experts are satisfied with the outcomes*' (Sci/Ed P1 survey 1). Audit review data indicate that although most members considered agency representatives to be professional, competent and qualified, they were divided on the issue of planning transparency.

- The study team was competent and professional in undertaking the EIA (0%D, 17%U, 83%A).
- Consultants were adequately qualified (0%D, 30%U, 70%A).
- The EIA planning process was transparent, unbiased, objective and process oriented (35%D, 26%U, 39%A).

While some members were highly suspicious of the agency '*EISs have been biased*' (Conservation P8 Newsletter), others were supportive '*I am relatively confident its EIS and FIS will be honest and unbiased due to the very nature of that part of the process.*' (Tour/Rec P2 survey 1).

Community consultation process

Information dissemination

The CCG's concerns regarding information dissemination included the issues of public awareness of the EIA project, briefing of participants, access to information, as well as data format, adequacy and timeliness.

Some members considered the media coverage associated with the EIA to be inadequate:

'There has been little if any publicity in the local press advising of the CCG committee's existence' (Conservation P19 survey 2)

Others maintained that the extent of media coverage had resulted in a disproportionate mix of interest group participants.

'Pre-meeting advertising not appropriate to representativeness. Front-page advert in Maitland Mercury would appear to have been primarily responsible for unfortunate predominance on the committee of gung-ho recreationists.' (Conservation P8 survey 1).

Record keeping data reveals that media coverage over the life of the EIA project included 8 separate media releases, 14 newspaper advertisements, 26 newspaper articles, 18 radio interviews, 1 television interview and 11 community newsletter articles (Appendix 25), the timing of which is indicated in Figure 4-2. In addition to this, the study team sent over 600 letters to recognised stakeholders and distributed over 1500 brochures to tourist information centres within the study area. Unfortunately these media events were spread over a large area which may have resulted in poor coverage in some parts of the region.

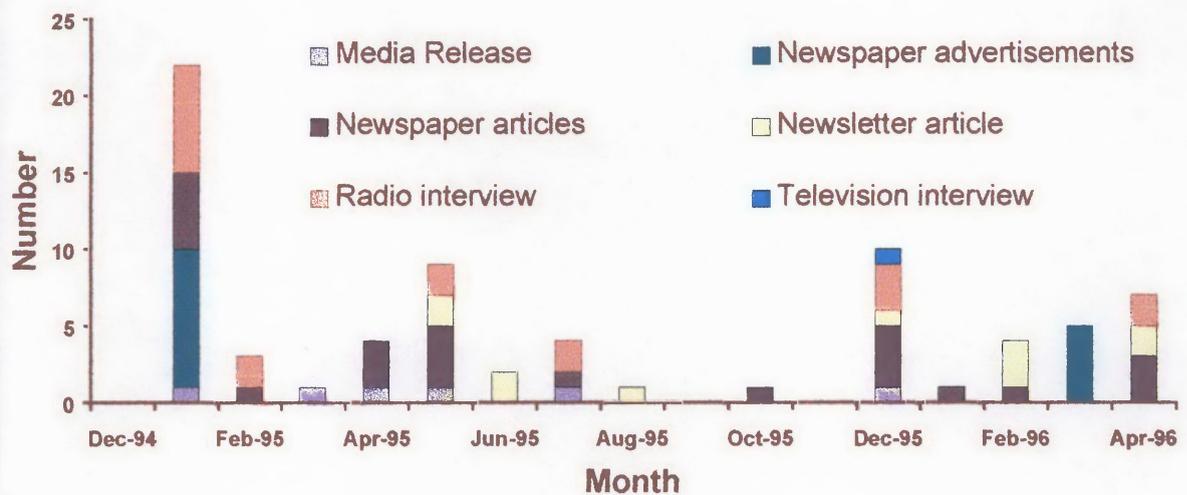


Figure 4-2 Media coverage per month from Dec 1994 to April 1996.

Market research data from telephone polls (Appendix 26 and Appendix 27) and recreational visitor surveys (Appendix 28) indicated the extent of public awareness regarding the Morisset EIA. The telephone polls indicated that public awareness increased from 12% to 21% during the EIA project (Appendix 29). The recreational visitor survey result of 12% awareness among forest visitors supports this finding. By comparison, a telephone survey of 268 people conducted for the Grafton Forestry EIS indicated a public awareness level of 35% (Margules Groome Poyry Pty Ltd 1994). However, the difference in the two results may be due more to socio-demographic variations between the two areas than differences in media coverage. Audit review data revealed that more CCG members believed that the public had sufficient notice of the EIA project's existence (35%D, 22%U, 43%A).

In addition to information dissemination with respect to the media, the CCG wanted information regarding the EIA process and how the group would function within this process. In particular, some confusion arose regarding the role of the CCG. Some members claimed that *'participants (were) 'in the dark' about their role because there was no prior notice of how the group would be structured.'* (Community P18 survey 1), and suggested clarification of the participation process was poorly conveyed (Conservation P8 survey 1). Others countered that the reasons for the formation of the CCG were in fact adequately explained during the introduction meeting (Graz/Ap P6 survey 1). The audit review data suggests that the majority of CCG members believed they were sufficiently aware of their role and how to participate most effectively (17%D, 13%U, 70%A).

Some members theorised that participants had misinterpreted, or were unsure of, the CCG's role and level of empowerment, ultimately resulting in unrealistic expectations and frustration for some members (Tour/Rec P10 survey 2). CCG members and the study team did not share a common understanding of the role and purpose of the CCG, although most believed they were aware of their role and how to participate most effectively. In some cases, members were well aware of their function, but maintained an expectation that they could alter this role, and continued to lobby for change. Confusion over the level of decision-making power, in particular, caused considerable frustration and disappointment among participants. King and Ingles (1993) maintain that empowerment is not appropriate to EIS community consultations and that great care should be taken by planners to ensure that there is a shared understanding of what participant power is being offered to avoid frustration and disappointment. However, Homenuck *et al.* (1977), Sandercock (1975) and Parenteau (1988) argue that, although not intentional, delegation of decision-making power is implicit in public participation programs, particularly community advisory groups, and that participants will expect it.

Along with the desire to understand their role in the EIA process, the CCG also expected to be informed of their likely influence on the EIS.

'Will we have any bearing on the finished document ? We need to know !.' (Community P18 survey 2)

'At no stage was it explained just what influence we would have' (Community P21 survey 1).

In order for the CCG to understand their role and likely influence, they had to have some grasp of the EIA process and procedures. Regular progress reports were provided at each CCG meeting along with written summaries in handouts and meeting minutes. The changes in government policy were of particular concern to the CCG and the study team responded with a full discussion of the implications to the Morisset EIA during the fourth CCG meeting. The audit review indicated that the study team fulfilled these obligations.

- The EIA process and procedures were adequately explained (17%D, 9%U, 74%A).

- CCG members were kept informed of EIA progress and any changes in circumstances affecting the EIA (26%D, 4%U, 70%A).
- Participants were well informed of their likely influence on the EIS (26%D, 22%U, 52%A).

Separate from the above house keeping information, members expected to be provided with sufficient information to develop an informed opinion. O’Riordan and O’Riordan (1979) maintain that freedom of information is a necessity for effective public participation. While the majority of CCG members considered they had sufficient access to information (39%D, 9%U, 52%A), a significant proportion experienced frustration with data supply.

‘The truly concerned members are not getting information they require to make decisions on.’ (Community P18 survey 4)

‘The vested interest groups have been here before, some of us are wallowing with a lack of information.’ (Tour/Rec P11 survey 2)

The sharing of information was by far the most time consuming activity of the consultation process, with requests for information almost continuous. Most of the study team’s contact time outside of the formal meetings was spent fielding questions and chasing data requests for the CCG. This time appears well spent as the majority of members considered that all relevant CCG questions and data requests were adequately answered (30%D, 9%U, 61%A).

With regards to the preparation of written submissions, the agency did not provide participants with guidance on how to prepare an effective submission, although a general offer of assistance was made. Syme, Bennett and Kantola (1982) and Wilkinson and Barr (1993) argue that participants should know how their submissions will be processed before they prepare and submit them. Moreover, Kinhill Engineers Pty Ltd (1994) maintain that the public should be supplied with technical and financial support to assist them in preparing submissions on EISs, while Munro-Clark (1992) suggest that an advocate, directly answerable to participants, should be provided. Unfortunately none of these supports were made available to participants.

The CCG expected to be thoroughly informed about the study area, the forest environment, its past management and the future management proposal. Audit review data suggests that CCG members were dissatisfied.

- CCG members were given sufficient information describing the environment (43%D, 22%U, 35%A).
- Participants had sufficient information to participate with informed opinion (52%D, 4%U, 44%A)
- Members were given enough data to develop informed opinion (52%D, 4%U, 44%A).

Hamill (1977) and Sadler (1979) suggest that the unavailability of data is a common critical failing of most public participation programs. In the case of the MFDEIS, the formation of the CCG did not coincide with the completion of the subconsultant final reports or the GIS data capture (Figure 2-3). Delays in providing data were exacerbated by a general staff freeze, problems in collating historical records back to 1920 and the demands made on the agency's GIS capability by the 13 separate EIA projects.

'The CCG has no community credibility because of the lack of adequate information provided and real community input into the process.' (Conservation P7a letter).

'The information hasn't been there when the CCG started up..... As far as what is happening, we still don't know because information is still dribbling out, instead of having it there.' (Conservation P4a Focus group interview)

This poor timing was confirmed by the audit review data which revealed that more members than not disagreed with the statement that they were provided with timely information (48%D, 13%U, 39%A). Delays in providing data created distrust between the study team and many members of the CCG, with participants feeling they were deliberately being *'kept in the dark'* (Community P18 Independent survey).

At several times during the early stages of the CCP, members suggested delaying the meetings until the reports and maps were finished. *'The meetings and formation of the group should have been delayed until information was available for the group to consider.'* (Conservation P4 M1). In response to these concerns, the study team extended the time

between meetings for finalisation of subconsultant reports and GIS maps. With reference to the data provided, several members considered some information to be lacking in detail:

'Financial report was very general.' (For. Ind P14 survey 3)

'Fauna and Flora presentation useful but inadequate in its thoroughness.' (Tour/Rec P3 survey 2)

Others considered some information was too detailed. Hampton and Beale (1976) argue that too much data is a common problem for participants.

'Too many figures to digest' (Conservation P19 survey 3)

'Too much information supplied on (the) table. It would help if we had it mailed to us a day or so before.' (Community P18 survey 4).

In general, participants responded well to information in the form of *'user friendly maps'* (Community P21 survey 2), slide presentations, overhead projections, visual displays and data sheets. Audit review data suggests satisfaction with the quality and format of information provided by the study team.

- CCG members believed they were provided with information in an understandable form (13%D, 9%U, 78%A)
- Participants had enough time to digest and comprehend the information provided (35%D, 9%U, 56%A).

Interaction and discussion

In addition to the information dissemination theme, the CCG expected to have free interaction with the study team and discuss issues of concern. Some members regarded interaction with the study team as '*generally uneasy*' (Sci/Edu P13 survey 3) and '*strained in many cases*' (Community P18 survey 3), however, the majority of participants believed the study team interacted well with the CCG (13%D, 17%U, 70%A).

'.. the people running the show(were) very helpful to supply or talk about anything that you might not be clear on.' (Tour/Rec P16 survey 4).

Vindasius (1974) maintains that two-way communication between planners and the public is a key factor for effective public involvement. Although some CCG members '*...perceived resistance to open dialogue*' (Conservation P4 letter) on issues such as assessment methodology, audit review data suggests the majority of members believed there was adequate two-way communication and open dialogue between participants and planners (26%D, 17%U, 57%A), and that the CCG had adequate, easy and informal access to the Study Team (13%D, 22%U, 65%A). Record keeping data supports the audit review findings indicating that CCG members had at least 32 informal visits to the district office and made over 225 telephone contacts during the CCP.

Exposure to and sharing of different stakeholder perspectives was a clear CCG expectation. The audit review results show that, for the majority, this expectation was realised. One member remarked that they had gained '*more of an understanding to how sawmillers and foresters see things.*' (Tour/Rec P16 survey 3).

- The study team and CCG were exposed to the full range of stakeholder viewpoints (30%D, 18%U, 52%A).
- CCG members shared and acknowledged each others viewpoints (4%D, 31%U, 65%A).
- Viewpoints were sufficiently understood, acknowledged and appreciated by others (26%D, 22%U, 52%A).

CCG members were also concerned about the ability to identify and fully discuss EIA issues, the range of alternative management options available and the criteria for selecting the preferred proposal. Although the majority of members believed that the key issues and

concerns (13%D, 17%U, 70%A) and the range of possible alternative management options (22%D, 26%U, 52%A) were clearly identified by the CCG, many felt the opportunity to discuss these matters was inadequate.

'The time factor allowed for the preparation of this EIS has been far too short resulting in insufficient time for group discussions.' (Conservation P19 letter)

'No issues of concern are really discussed. As soon as concern is voiced the issue is deferred.' (Sci/Edu. P13 survey 2)

'..little chance to discuss or expand on many vital points.' (Sci/Edu. P12 survey 2).

In particular, many members complained that not enough time was available to question presenters.

'Question time inadequate to really quiz speakers.' (Conservation P19 survey 2)

'There doesn't seem to be enough time to ask questions.' (Tour/Rec P16 survey 2)

The qualitative data is supported by audit review findings which indicate that most members disagreed with the suggestion that there was sufficient discussion of “ *issues*” (61%D, 17%U, 22%A) or “ *alternative proposals available*” (61%D, 17%U, 22%A). Alternative management options considered by the Study Team included no logging, current management, increased prescription/conservation measures or further conservation.

There was a strong split in opinion as to whether there was adequate discussion of the criteria for selecting the preferred proposal (43%D, 9%U, 48%A). The study team wanted to evaluate the feasible management alternatives using Cost-benefit Analysis (CBA) and Multi-criteria Analysis (MCA). CBA involves assigning a dollar value to all costs and benefits of each alternative and comparing the total, while MCA compares the degree to which each alternative satisfies a set of criteria. CBA was conducted exclusively by economic consultants while MCA required input from the community. The study team intended to use MCA as a tool for selecting the best alternative, that is, the one which met the greatest proportion of CCG criteria. The MCA process was explained in detail at two

CCG meetings, and approximately one week after the third meeting, each CCG member was asked to prioritise 13 EIA assessment criteria.

Although all 21 CCG members had been involved in the identification of the 13 selection criteria, only 9 elected to rank and weight these criteria for the MCA process. The qualitative data indicates two reasons for this lack of participation.

Firstly, many members were confused with the selection criteria process and struggled with the concept of MCA.

'We discussed the criteria at length and made alterations that made it easier to understand but I don't think I'm the only one not grasping it all.' (Community P18 survey 4)

'Criteria ranking and weighting cover sheet says total 45 points when it should total 39 points (13 criteria). It was confusing and I bet there are invalid responses.' (Sci/Edu P15 survey 4)

Secondly, some CCG members felt uncomfortable with preparing the selection criteria until they had first reviewed the alternative proposals. The Institute for Participatory Planning (1981) maintains that it is difficult to get people to comment in public participation without first reviewing a proposal.

'I could not assign weightings to alternatives' assessment criteria because the possible alternatives are not clear' (Sci/Edu P15 letter)

'Too much time spent on ranking and weighting before deciding upon ' alternatives for management' (Conservation P19 survey 4)

Most CCG members considered the meetings, the main vehicles for interacting with the community, to be well run (17%D, 26%U, 57%A).

'.. reasonably well run in view of diverse views and interests in CCG.' (Conservation P19 survey 2)

'Orderly meeting, opportunity to make comment' (For. Ind. P20 survey 1)

However, there were criticisms over chairperson performance, the short time per meeting, the small number of meetings and the format of discussions.

Because the CCG requested more information on the forests and current management practices, a forest field trip was organised. The purpose of the field trip was not to describe the preferred proposal but to educate the CCG on the current forest management practices and the key environmental issues from SFNSW's perspective. During the field trip CCG members informally discussed current forestry practices with local foresters, marketing foremen and logging contractors. Most members found this field trip to be worthwhile.

'The tour was very informative, especially for someone who has not been on anything similar.... overall well organised and definitely well planned.' (Sci/Edu P13a Newsletter)

'The overall presentation of forest activities, done in a very informative and professional manner.' (For.Ind P5 survey 2)



Plate 2 CCG forest field trip.

CCG members were asked to rate the value of the meetings and field trip on a scale of one to ten. Figure 4-3 supports the qualitative data by indicating that the majority of participants found the gatherings to be of value, particularly the forest field trip and the 4th CCG meeting.

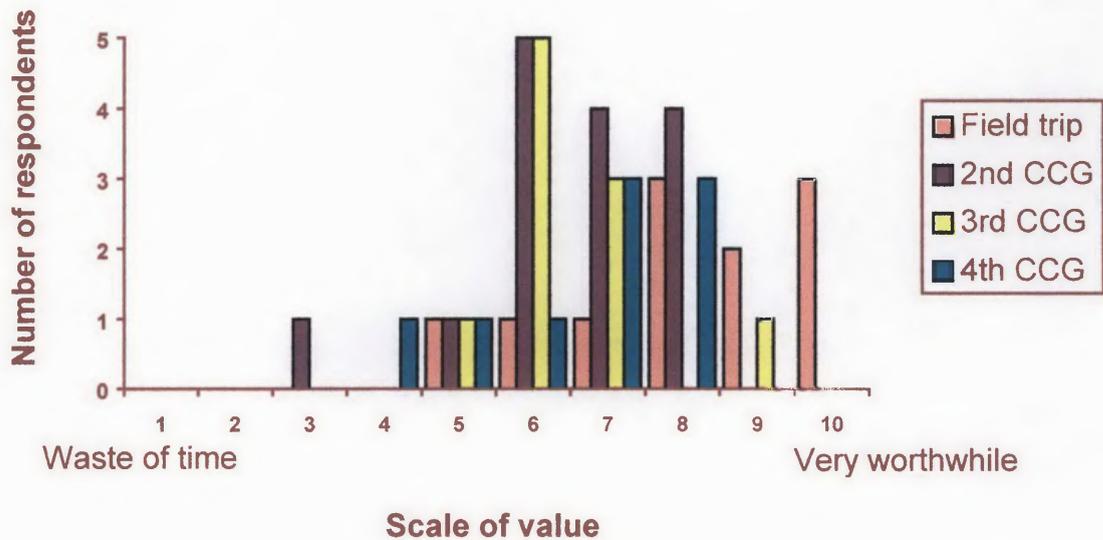


Figure 4-3 Value ratings for CCG gatherings.

Most members agreed that the discussion workshop was effective and rewarding.

'...the smaller workshop opportunity worked well and mitigated against grandstanding in front of the full committee.' (Sci/Edu P1 survey 3)

'The first opportunity for group discussions which permitted other interests/viewpoints to be expressed on a common subject' (Conservation P19 survey 3)

'The only half hour of direct input we had into the process was when we were in the workshop situation' (Graz/Ap P6a Phone call 3/3/96).



Plate 3 Third CCG meeting workshop session.

However, one member described the activity as *'...lacking direction and confused'* (For. Ind P20 survey 3). Many members were anxious to have additional workshops to enable further discussion on key issues.

'Have a more workshop (discussion in small groups) type session -working with maps.'
(Sci/Edu. P15 survey 2)

Interestingly, however, although most CCG members expressed great satisfaction with the workshop, their overall value rating of the 3rd CCG meeting was lower than the 4th (Figure 4-3).

Several participants requested that another meeting be scheduled to enable further discussion on issues such as feasible alternative proposals. Some suggested holding a workshop style CCG meeting independent of the study team, while others considered such an additional meeting unnecessary. *'....it's pointless to have a meeting separate to (consultant's) framework. Four meetings are probably enough'* (For. Ind P5 phone call).

Involvement and input

Hampton and Walker (1975) and Sadler (1977) argue that the way input is handled, processed and analysed is a critical part of public participation programs which is often overlooked. The USDA Forest Service's *Codinvolve* system (Clark and Stankey 1976), and Parks Canada's *Infotheque* (Stewart 1977) are examples of content analysis systems designed to process qualitative submissions. Public input should be traceable so participants can see where their input ended up in the decision-making process (Hoole 1977, Knopp and Caldbeck 1990, and Munro-Clark 1992). The audit review indicated that most members believed they had sufficient feedback and acknowledgement of their input (35%D, 9%U, 56%A).

Several participants, who were not CCG members, felt frustrated with the way the CCG meetings were run. The public were welcome to attend the meetings but all comments had to be raised through the appropriate CCG representative. Although this enabled the chairperson to effectively control the proceedings, many observers were frustrated by this barrier and felt excluded. *'I'm not allowed to say anything.'* (general observer, pers. comm., 3rd CCG meeting). By ensuring that CCG members were given the right to speak without heckling from observers, the study team alienated other participants. This was reflected in a dramatic decline in observers over time.

While most members were content with the opportunity for input (35%D, 4%U, 61%A), the majority did not feel they had adequate involvement in the EIA process (52%D, 4%U, 44%A). *'The CCG has had little input into the E.I.S.'* (Conservation P19 survey 4).

Community consultation accountability

Montgomery (1986) maintains that group processes can greatly affect a group's ability to function and interact. Most groups develop '*group norms*' (Montgomery 1986) which are unwritten rules governing group behaviour. The open inquiry revealed that the CCG expected the study team to be fair and impartial, truthful, professional, genuinely committed to consultation, and open and balanced in their approach.

Apparent dissatisfaction with the issue of participant equality emerged in the very first CCG meeting with many members criticising the CCG selection process, claiming it resulted in a biased representation of interest groups.

'Evidence of 'stacking' of committee by Greens.' (For. Ind P14 survey 3)

'Disproportionate selection in group representative No's' (Graz/Ap P6 survey 1)

'...unfortunate predominance on the committee of gung-ho recreationists.' (Conservation P8 survey 1).

Some felt that there was too much overlap of the defined interest categories causing confusion in selecting their interest group. Others argued that they were not given sufficient time to put forward their case during the peer selection process. Several members alleged that others used this confusion to their advantage. *'... people simply coursed the pillars seeing which (interest) group had the least to increase (the) possibility of getting onto the (CCG) group.'* (Community P21 survey 1). Although the qualitative data clearly reveals dissatisfaction with the selection process, audit review findings indicate the majority believed it was fair and reasonable (26%D, 0%U, 74%A).

CCG members expected that the study team would treat every member equally and without favouritism. Many members were dissatisfied with the chairperson's control over the right of the floor during the CCG meetings.

'Chairman allowed one group to dominate and run overtime.' (Graz/Ap P6 survey 1)

'An independent chairman required ?' (Tour/Rec P3 survey 1)

'I didn't feel I had an equal opportunity to have my say due to the chairperson. At times he was down right rude' (Grazing and Ap P6a Phone call 3/3/96).

Despite the negativity of the qualitative data, the majority of CCG members believed they were treated fairly and equally by the Study Team (9%D, 0%U, 91%A) and that members had the same opportunity to have input into the EIS (9%D, 17%U, 74%A).

Although the qualitative data suggests that the CCG were suspicious of the study team, *'Not convinced that the Forestry have told all'* (Sci/Edu P13 Independent survey), audit review data reveals that the majority of members believed:

- information provided by the Study Team was not deliberately misleading (13%D, 17%U, 70%A).
- the study team addressed all relevant issues and comments raised by participants (26%D, 35%U, 39%A)
- the study team was professional in conducting the community consultation process (13%D, 17%U, 70%A).

In contrast however, most members did not believe the consultation process was open and balanced (44%D, 17%U, 39%A). Many CCG members felt that the study team was not seriously seeking community input. In fact, the CCP was described as a *'public relations exercise'* (Tour/Rec P3 survey 2), a *'frustrating diversion'* (Community P18 survey 4), a *'token gesture'* (Conservation P19 letter), and *'more community chat than consultation.'* (Sci/Edu P15 Focus group interview). Some argued that the problem lay in the fact that the CCP was not community driven.

'They are telling us what's happening rather than us informing them.' (Tour/Rec P11 Independent survey)

'The Consultants ... are following a pre determined path in an attempt to arrive at a deadline before full discussions (have taken place)' (Conservation P19 survey 4)

'I felt that the process was attempting to get the community representatives to fill out 'exercises' which would neatly fit into a pre set agenda.' (Conservation P4 letter)

Some members believed that agenda control should have been handed over to the CCG.

'Committee should have its own meeting.' (Conservation P8 Independent survey)

'State Forests should be out of the picture altogether. They should have nothing to do with it. They should be told what to do by a community setup. They should be just another stakeholder.' (Conservation P4a Focus group interview).

Others reasoned that the CCP was not genuine as the CCG had no real power from the start and was never able to effect any change.

'In fact, as a legal obligation, the role is token, not real public participation' (Conservation P4 survey 1)

'..... State Forests can override any input' (Sci/Edu P13 survey 3)

They argued that the CCP could never be genuine while the EIS had to reflect the proponent's preferred proposal.

'All consultants and EIS compilers are paid by the developer and what they present is designed to suit their employer's purposes.... Public response is gauged and cleverly sidelined.' (Community P18 survey 1)

'(the consultants) have a vested interest to bring down a satisfactory E.I.S to meet the needs of State Forests' (Conservation P19 survey 1)

One member suggested that the agency did not understand the meaning of consultation.

'The concept 'consultation' is not understood by State Forests. Being 'nice' and being 'real' are two distinct positions to take.' (Sci/Edu P15 survey 2)

'.... consulting means that you consult and it is taken into account.' (Sci/Edu P15 Focus group interview)

'It does not appear to be a genuine process truly encouraging community involvement.' (Sci/Edu P13 survey 2)

Despite this negativity, audit review data indicates that more members than not believed the Study Team was genuine in seeking community input (30%D, 22%U, 48%A). *'A genuine effort has been made to provide data and/or attend to problems raised. (After all, we are all determined to get the best out of this Committee).'* (Conservation P19 survey 3).

Several CCG members believed that the study team would be obligated to adopt the recommendations of the community group, despite the study team's repeated insistence that the CCG was purely an advisory group with no mandate for decision making.

'To ensure that the government of the time listens to the people and to implement the options put forward.' (Graz/Ap P6 survey 1)

'A consensus is an impossibility - so the majority representation should be not only heard, but action taken on their suggestions.' (Community P18 survey 1)

This conflict of expectation between the study team and some members of the CCG caused considerable frustration and resentment between key players. More CCG members than not disagreed with the statement that the study team adopted the Community Consultation Group's recommendations (44%D, 43%U, 13%A).

Moreover, CCG members expected the agency to refrain from activities which might undermine the credibility of the CCP. Qualitative data indicates that three external factors threatened to undermine the CCP: the district's hazard reduction burning program, the harvesting schedule, and the new state government's forest policy reforms. Several members expected that potentially environmentally threatening activities such as logging and broad

area hazard reduction burning would be postponed until the EIS was completed. The agency's policy, however, was that the district would continue to operate under the existing management plan until such times as the EIS was determined. Two members were particularly concerned about hazard reduction burning within MacPherson State Forest and actively lobbied the District Forester to alter the burning program. After several letters, telephone calls and a joint field inspection, the issue was finally resolved and the burn was completed in August 1995. The other issue which was to threaten the stability of the CCP involved the scheduled logging of four compartments in Pokolbin State Forest. For several CCG members this became a central issue.

'I am writing to request an immediate halt to any Harvesting Plans for coups 380,382,383 and 384 of Pokolbin State Forest.' (Graz/Ap P6a Minutes letter)

'Sections of the community have already identified which bits will be contentious if logged and which bits are felt to be worthy of protection.' (Sci/Edu P15 letter)

Several CCG members had indicated that they were not prepared to negotiate while the areas they considered most sensitive continued to be logged. These members were active in lobbying both state and local governments to prevent any logging within these contentious areas. Participant frustration could have been minimised if the agency had given a commitment not to log the areas until the completion of the EIS. Unfortunately this reassurance was not forthcoming and several members continued to worry unnecessarily given that the agency had not even begun planning to harvest these areas.

Lastly, as mentioned earlier in this discussion, by far the most damaging external factor which undermined the CCP was the change in forest policy introduced by the newly elected state government. For many of the CCG members, the relevance of the Morisset EIA was significantly reduced and irreparably undermined when the State Government altered its forest policies. Despite these threats, however, the majority of members believed that State Forests did not undertake other activities that could have undermined the consultation process (17%D, 22%U, 61%A).

4.1.2 Expectations relating to the Community Consultation Group

For many participants, the performance and accountability of the CCG was just as important as that of the study team. Members expected the CCG to be fair to both the study team and its own members, as well as be accountable to the wider community.

Community Consultation Group performance

There were as many different understandings of the CCG's role as there were members. Some saw their role as a community watchdog bringing pressure to bear on the agency, some saw it as a judging panel reviewing documents, providing expert knowledge and making recommendations, while others considered it a voice through which the wider community could be heard. These differences lead to a varied range of expectations regarding the CCG's performance.

The CCG, which many believed had '*... a great deal of expertise a great deal of local knowledge as well as an understanding of global environmental problems.*' (Sci/Edu P13 survey 3), expected to review and comment on surveys, reports and other data. However, the majority of members did not believe they had fulfilled this role.

- The CCG had sufficiently commented on the adequacy of EIA surveys, reports, mitigation prescriptions and other data (57%D, 13%U, 30%A)

Although the evaluation data provides no conclusive reason for this result, it may have been due to delays in receiving data or a reflection of members' abilities to review technical papers. Part of the 'expert panel' role involved imparting their knowledge and experience onto the study team. Some members considered this an important function, maintaining that '*...an EIS is inadequate without local input of knowledge.*' (Sci/Edu P13 survey 2). The majority of members felt the CCG had fulfilled this advisory role, supplying sufficient local knowledge, expertise and scientific/technical data not already available to the Study Team (13%D, 26%U, 61%A).

The ability to alter the course of the CCP to suit the needs of the CCG was an expectation held by several members. The CCG did, in fact, alter the course of the CCP on several occasions. For example, after the initial meeting, all agendas for subsequent meetings were

finalised through CCG consensus and negotiation. The suggestion of running a forest field trip and of presenting a slide show summary of current management practices arose from participants during the first CCG meeting. Likewise, the study team's decision to hold a 4th CCG meeting was a direct result of pressure applied by CCG members. However, despite these modifications, the quantitative data reveals that most members did not believe that the CCG had adequately modified the consultation process to suit members (48%D, 17%U, 35%A). For some members 'adequate' modification involved giving the CCG complete control of the agenda, having an independent chairperson, and relegating the study team to an equal position on the CCG.

One of the roles which the CCG took very seriously was that of community watchdog and whistle blower (Manzer 1979). Many members considered this to be one of their prime motivations for joining the CCG. Several members indicated that they were there to ensure that the study team, the CCG and individual members were fair and accountable, and that part of this role was to bring any concerns to the attention of the group and the public. '*.... I and other members of the CCG reserve the right to draw attention to failings in the consultative processes*' (Conservation P19 letter). This role provided members with one of the few direct powers available to the CCG, that of applying political pressure on the study team by using their right to withdraw from the CCP, or threatening to involve the media or the Minister. The threat of 'going public' was raised several times during the CCP.

'...the use of the national media outlets and other means will be utilised to ensure that the community are fully informed of the minimal input, that their representatives have been afforded, to ensure a sound and worthy EIS fully representing the community' (Conservation P19 letter)

'Obviously this could have serious repercussions in the media.' (Tour/Rec P3 Independent survey)

At least six CCG members took the opportunity to criticise both the EIA and the CCP, writing a total of eight ministerial letters, making one ministerial phone call, appearing on two talk back radio shows and instigating a front page article in one of the local newspapers ('Concern at forest planning' Morisset Post 17/5/1995, Appendix 25). Although these actions undoubtedly influenced the study team, the CCG was largely divided on whether the

CCG significantly pressured the Study Team (39%D, 26%U, 35%A), and whether the CCG adequately performed the role of community watchdog (26%D, 44%U, 30%A).

Blahna and Yonts-Shepard (1989) argue that agencies often limit the interaction between participants and planners in an attempt to avoid public controversy, which ironically forces the public to adopt extreme stands in order to achieve more interactive involvement.

Community Consultation Group accountability

Several CCG expectations derived from the open inquiry were related to the CCG's own accountability. Many members saw the CCG as an equal partner with the study team in achieving a successful CCP and expected the CCG to be just as accountable. Members expected each other to be fair and honest in their dealings with other participants, the study team and the wider community.

Accountability toward other CCG members

Most members believed that they treated each other fairly and equally (17%D, 9%U, 74%A). Participants described their interactions with other members as;

'Very good with those I have spoken to. It is natural to expect conflict of opinions as our interests are so different.' (Conservation P19 survey 3)

'Personally cordial ; once again strained where opposing groups are concerned.' (Sci/Edu P12 survey 3)

The observational data indicates that behaviour of CCG members during the formal meetings varied from *'even and well reasoned'* and *'informative and participatory'* to *'aggressive'*, *'negative'*, *'condescending'* and even *'rude'*. Some were even *'nervous and emotional'* and cried at times. These observations were not confined to the CCG members; some study team members were also aggressive, emotional and defensive.

The majority of participants did not believe that members had interacted and participated equally (52%D, 13%U, 35%A). *'Many members said nothing while others dominated.'* (Community P18 survey 2). Observational data indicates that several members said nothing

throughout an entire meeting, including the workshop exercise, while others spoke repeatedly (Figure 4-4). Several members expected certain individuals or interest groups to dominate the CCG.

‘ To in some way temper the strong single focus of groups I was sure would be represented on the CCG. i.e. to stop the whole process being hijacked by extreme protagonists.’
(Tour/Rec P2 survey 1)

These concerns may have been justifiable.

‘at least two CCG members had too much to say (and were repetitious).’ (Community P21 survey 2)

‘the vocal are dominating’ (Community P18 survey 1)

‘Each interest group was, I believe, attempting to influence the focus of the meetings and the EIS.’ (Conservation P4 letter)

In fact, observational data (Figure 4-4), as well as record keeping data on monthly contact time per CCG member (Appendix 30), suggests that CCG member input was unequal. Speaking or contact time provide an indication of whether any participants or interest groups are dominating the interactive opportunities with the study team. Observational time studies indicate that there was considerable variation in the proportion of talking time consumed by each CCG member, with individual consumption varying from as low as 0% to as high as 21%.

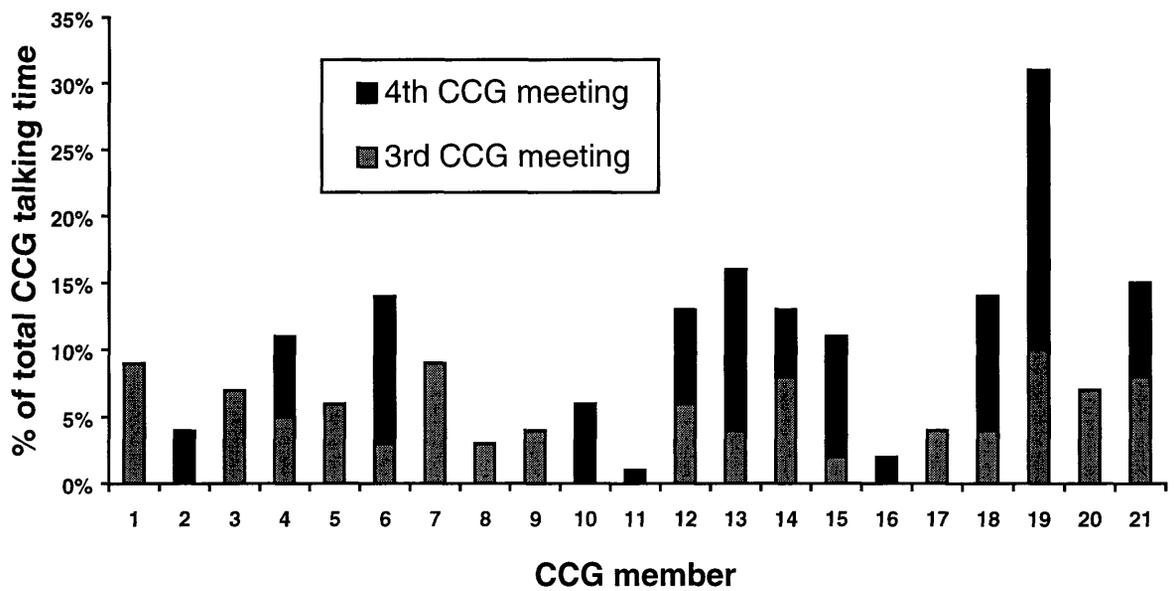


Figure 4-4 Participant talking time consumed during the 3rd and 4th CCG meetings.

The proportion of time each CCG member spoke appears to be more evenly spread among members during the 3rd meeting than the 4th meeting. This is most likely due to the more informal interactions resulting from the workshop exercise held during the 3rd meeting. The disproportionate difference in overall speaking time also resulted in marked variation between interest groups (Figure 4-5 and Appendix 31).

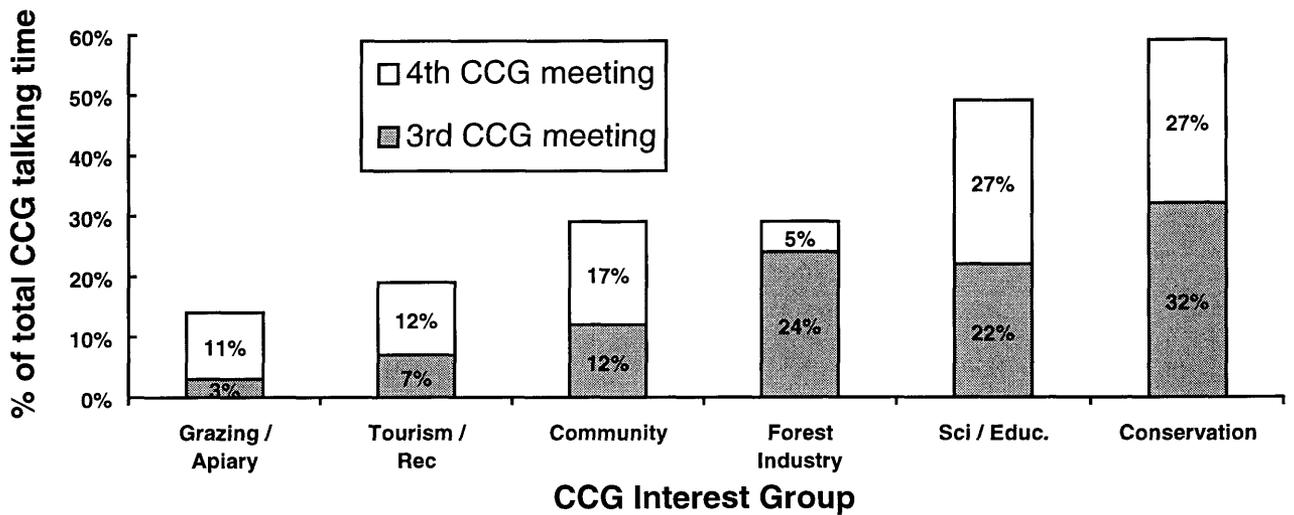
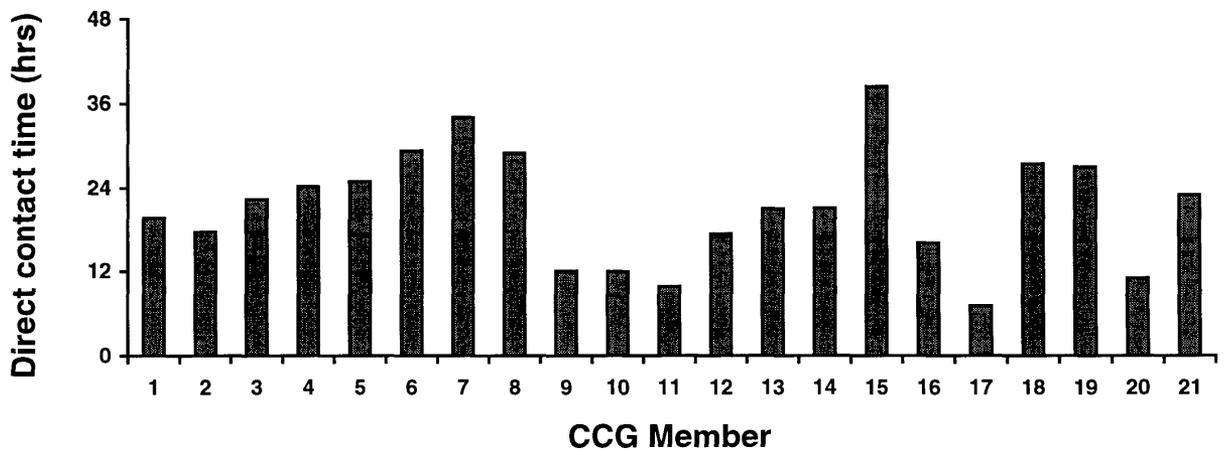


Figure 4-5 Percentage of talking time consumed by each interest group.

The CCG's available talking time during the 3rd and 4th meetings was dominated by Conservation and Science/Education interest groups. One member described the less vocal tourism/recreation members as '*.....carnival clowns turning their open mouths between industry and greens*' (Tour/Rec P3 phone call). The record keeping data also supports this hypothesis by revealing a disproportion in both individual and interest group contact hours with the study team (Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7).



Note: Each replacement member's time has been added to the original member's time

Figure 4-6 CCG direct contact time consumed by each member.

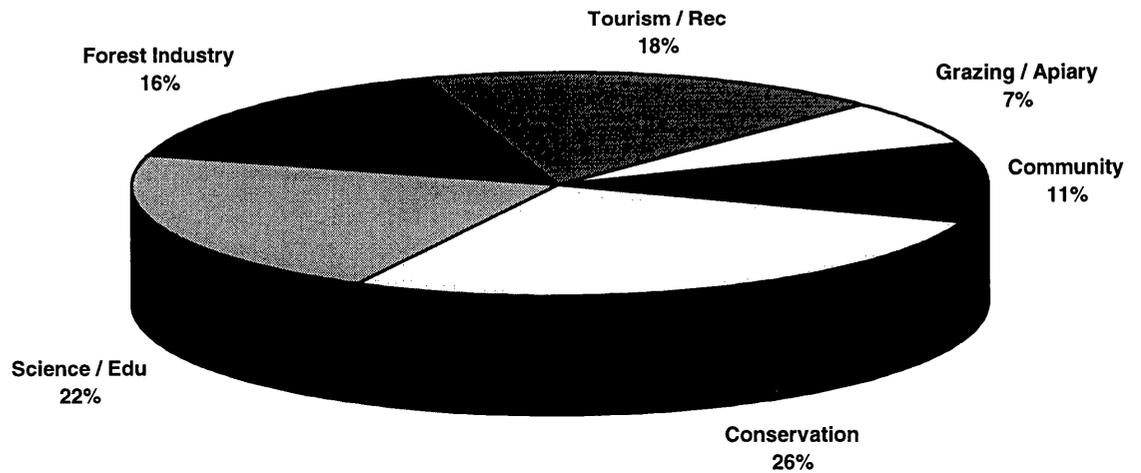


Figure 4-7 Proportion of CCG direct contact time consumed by each interest group.

Record keeping data indicates that at least 1155 person hours were spent in direct contact (combined agency and participant hours). In addition, it is estimated that at least 520 community contact hours were spent researching subconsultant reports throughout the preparation of the MFDEIS. In contrast, Gericke *et al.* (1992) estimate that the USDA Forest Service averages 16 person years of formal contact time per forest management plan.

The record keeping data indicates that the Conservation and Science/Education interest groups consumed almost half of the total CCG direct contact time throughout the course of the CCP. This disproportionate input is likely to be conservative as the boundaries between interest groups often overlapped. For example, one of the Grazing/Apiary representatives was also an active member of a local conservation group, while two of the Science/Education representatives were also active members in conservation groups including the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA). These 'hidden' alliances further exaggerated domination of the CCG by conservation interests. Praxis (1988) maintain that public affiliations, interests and alliances are constantly shifting. The CCG peer selection process, although theoretically appealing, was open to abuse by participants. Participants failed to fully disclose their allegiances during the selection process and may have strategically selected an interest group with the least nominees to increase the chance of selection onto the CCG. The audit review data supports the suggestion of interest group

imbalance with the majority of members disagreeing with the statement that CCG input was not dominated by any interest group (56%D, 22%U, 22%A).

Accountability toward the study team

Some members were deeply concerned that other CCG members were not being fair to the study team. Fairness issues included providing misleading information, being confrontational, not giving the EIA a reasonable chance to succeed, not being willing to compromise or maintain objectivity, and not raising realistic proposals. Many members did not believe that the CCG could function cooperatively.

'It will be almost impossible to get any true discussion or consultation in the forum established. Unfortunately it is confrontationalist.' (Sci/Edu P12 survey 2)

'Too many ego's in the CCG. My working group refused to cooperate... It was just a subgroup of egotists. They claimed no objectivity and they weren't going to cooperate.' (For Ind. P5 phone call 4/5/95).

Although the CCG was largely divided on whether the CCG was cooperative and non adversarial (35%D, 22%U, 43%A), most members did not believe the CCG maintained an objective and balanced approach throughout the CCP (57%D, 13%U, 30%A).

'...some people are very narrow minded as shown at the first meeting.' (For. Ind P14 survey 1)

'... some of the members can only see their views no one else's.' (Tour/Rec P16 survey 2)

Although several members threatened a group walk out, only one conservation representative officially resigned, while a Science/Education member withdrew temporarily halfway through the 4th CCG meeting. Sewell and Phillips (1979) and O'Riordan (1977) argue that protest and non co-operative actions are a legitimate and effective form of public participation. No doubt the CCG members involved in these threats and walk outs saw these actions as an effective means of protest to place pressure on the study team and other CCG members. Many members considered protesting to be a legitimate alternative to participation should their influence within the CCP decrease.

CCG members believed they adequately assisted the study team with questions and data requests (26%D, 35%U, 39%A), and that the information provided by the CCG was not deliberately misleading (4%D, 26%U, 70%A). Some actions, however, were deliberate. For example, despite several follow-up attempts, the study team was unsuccessful in gaining the CCG's support in completing the multi-criteria analysis (MCA) surveys.

'The consultants have a preconceived idea, I've battled with them now and I have refused to give them my opinion on alternatives as they don't reflect my needs.' (Conservation P19 Focus group interview)

A few even argued that some CCG members were deliberately sabotaging the CCP.

'...progress has been hindered somewhat by new policies of both state and federal governments (also I feel by some members of the CCG). (Tour/Rec P2 survey 4)

'The bulk of the people do not wish to interact with the Forestry, they obviously had no intention of interaction from the start, which I believe very strongly has made the CCG input into this EIS totally null and void.' (For. Ind P5 survey 3)

'I was most unimpressed with greens not being fair. (Conservation) argued that the proposal was already set and community participation was a waste of time. They wanted to buck the system.' (For Ind. P5 phone call 4/5/95).

Coakes (1991) maintains that participant perceptions of how fair and genuine a participation process appears is very important in achieving a successful program and when participants are not convinced of planner sincerity the whole participation process loses its credibility. Coakes (1991) and Syme (1992) argue that if participants suspect they are being co-opted or manipulated they may refuse to participate or do so only to disrupt or sabotage proceedings. Dixon (1992) and Painter (1992) also attest that interest groups may weaken their own positions by cooperating with an agency and so often choose not to support public participation opportunities. However, despite the above qualitative data, the majority of respondents believed that CCG members gave the EIA a fair chance and reasonable opportunity to succeed (13%D, 30%U, 57%A).

The audit review data suggest that most respondents did not feel CCG members were flexible to compromise and negotiation (44%D, 26%U, 30%A). From the very first meeting CCG members were advised by the Chairperson that major group decisions would be reached through consensus and that the group's ability to compromise was critical. Several members were clearly frustrated by the inflexibility and intolerance shown by other members.

'... if it didn't go with their views they were not interested.' (Tour/Rec P16 survey 3)

'The interaction between previously associated parties is like a well oiled machine, but their willingness to engage in an objective conversation with someone of a differing viewpoint, leaves allot (sic) to be desired.' (For . Ind P5 survey 3)

'Most members and ERM get it together. The Greens are off this planet and totally one eyed. They want no logging and no access.' (Tour/Rec P11 survey 4)

'This is a complicated matter, not easily resolved. Each side believes they are informed and assumes the other is not. Even if they were well informed they operate on different value systems.' (Sci/Edu P12 survey 4)

In addition, some members complained that the CCG's time was being wasted by certain members consistently raising unrealistic development proposals or not accepting answers to questions.

'....some members continually ask for more info (sic) when it doesn't appear to be available.' (For. Ind P14 survey 3)

'Some of the members there just went on about the same things for too long even though they were given an answer.' (Tour/Rec P16 survey 1)

'They should first remind all the members that we are talking about state forests NOT national parks. Then to put forward realistic ideas.' (Tour/Rec P16 survey 2)

Some of the more controversial suggestions raised included the construction of a major dam or lake in the middle of the Watagan range, a moratorium on all logging for ten years, and the establishment of hemp plantations to replace wood fibre demand. However, most participants believed that CCG members put forward realistic recommendations for alternative proposals (13%D, 30%U, 57%A).

Accountability toward the wider community

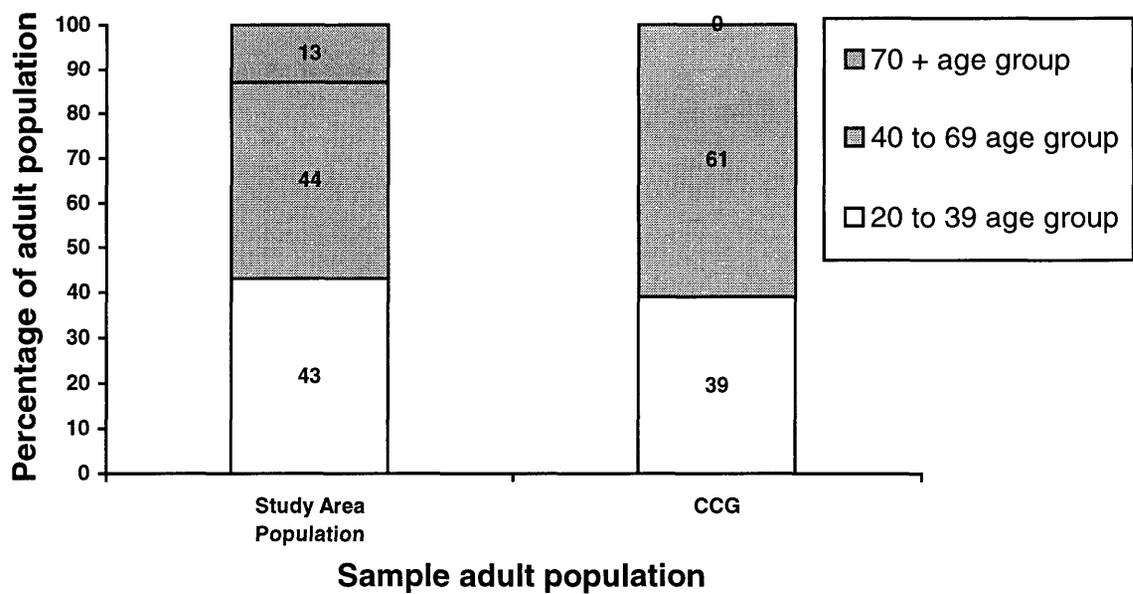
The CCG expected to represent the wider community, reflecting the broad range of community interests, views and concerns, and providing adequate feedback to both the community and the study team. Many took the role of representing the wider community very seriously.

According to Priscoli and Homenuck (1986) and Westman (1985) a community is comprised of multiple publics, distinct groups that make up ‘the public’. The study team identified six key interest groups (multiple publics) based on the initial CCG nominations. The proportional mix of applicants and the final make-up of the CCG is tabled below.

Table 4 CCG nominees and selectees per interest group

Interest Group	CCG Nominees	CCG Selectees	% of CCG
Conservation or other environmental issues	16	5	24
Timber supply and forest related industries	12	4	19
Well-being of local town and community	5	2	9
Grazing or other agricultural interests	2	1	5
Tourism and recreation	19	5	24
Scientific and educational values	10	4	19
Total	64	21	100

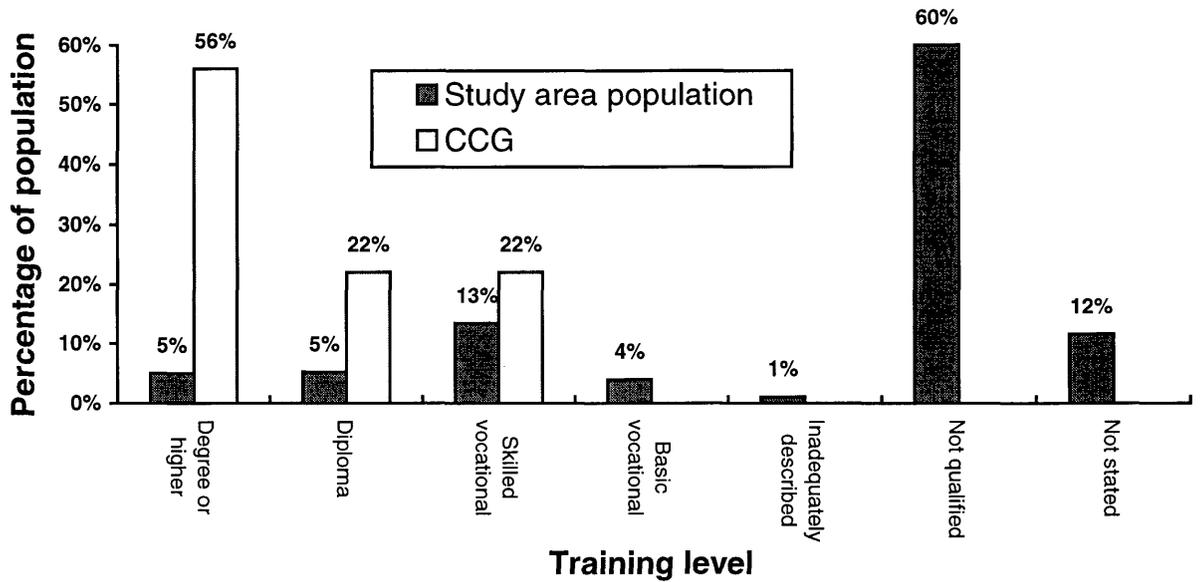
On purely socio-demographics factors alone, the CCG was only marginally representative of the wider community. The following figures illustrate how the CCG compares with the wider community in terms of three basic socio-demographic variables: age (Figure 4-8), education (Figure 4-9) and place of residence (Figure 4-10).



Source: ABS(1993) Table B16 of Basic Community Profile

Figure 4-8 CCG and study area population age structure comparison.

The proportions illustrated in the above figure suggest that the 20 to 39 age group was slightly under-represented while the 40 to 69 age group was significantly over-represented. However, apart from the elderly (70yrs +) who were not represented at all despite comprising 13% of the study area adult population, the CCG age group composition is a reasonable reflection of the wider study area age structure. However, it is worth mentioning that these figures do not include the youth (0 to 19yrs) population of the study area which comprises 30.2% of the total population. Although most of these young children would not be eligible to join the CCG they may still have legitimate rights as both current and future stakeholders. Neither the study team nor the CCG made any attempts to solicit comments and concerns from this significant age group.



Source: ABS (1993) Table B16 of Basic Community Profile

Figure 4-9 CCG and study area population education level comparison.

A striking difference between the CCG and the study area population is evident when comparing education levels. While the majority of CCG members had attained the level of degree or higher (56%), 1993 ABS data indicates that at least 60% of the adult population in the study area have no qualifications.

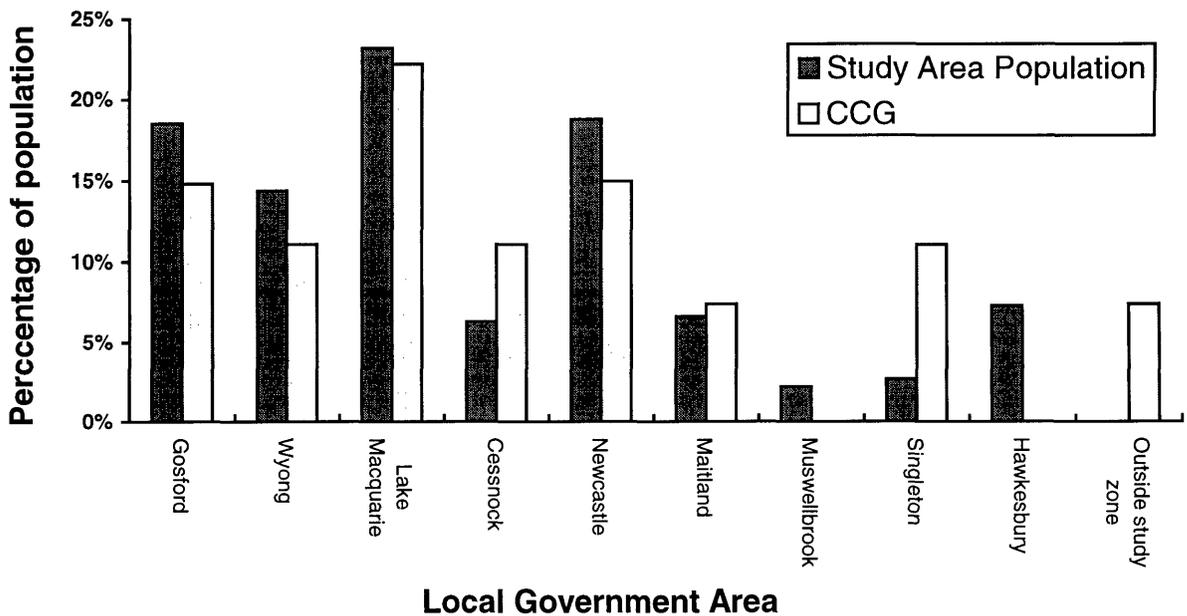


Figure 4-10 CCG and study area population residence comparison.

The local government area (LGA) residents appear to be reasonably represented on the CCG, with the exception of Singleton which is over represented, and Hawkesbury which is under represented. An additional 7.4% of CCG members did not reside within the study area at all.

Most public participation practitioners theorise a strong positive correlation between income, education and occupational status and participation levels in society (Crain & Rosenthal 1968, Sandercock 1975, Goldsmith & Saunders 1976, Heberlein 1976, Fagence 1977, Ertel 1979, Priscoli 1979, Dennis 1988, Syme 1991 and Hooper 1994). Goldsmith and Saunders (1975) describe the average participant as representing the '*articulate middleclass*'. These individuals are usually middle aged, well-educated, more interested in politics, better informed, more confident in their ability to influence issues, and have the time, money and skills to commit to the participation process (Dixon 1992, Force and William 1989, Burch 1976 and Redburn, Buss, Foster and Binning 1980). As a result, higher status individuals tend to participate out of proportion to their numbers (Checkoway & Van Til 1978). The evaluation data supports these claims. Sadler (1979) and Sewell and O'Riordan (1976) even suggest that public participation paradoxically increases the inequality it is designed to eliminate.

Sinclair (1986) and Syme *et al.* (1982) maintain that a representative community committee is unattainable as participants are inevitably unrepresentative of the population, while Thorne and Purcell (1992) argue that even if participants were truly representative of the population, to simply abide by the majority vote would be to ignore substantial minorities with valid viewpoints. Collins (1977), however, argues that the crucial variable is not whether the participants are representative of the population, but that they are tuned to the range of community concerns. The CCG did not necessarily have to include all stakeholder interest groups to be aware of their priorities and preferences.

Members expected the CCG to reflect the value, interests and concerns of the wider community. Although a full and comprehensive attitude survey of the study area population was not feasible in this evaluation, one variable, the level of confidence in SFNSW as environmentally responsible and competent forest managers, was assessed and used as an indication of attitude affinity between the CCG and the community. By comparing the responses of the CCG members (open inquiry questionnaire, February 1995, Appendix 8) to

those of the study area population (telephone poll, January 1995, Appendix 26) the data revealed a marked attitude difference between the general public and the CCG (Figure 4-11).

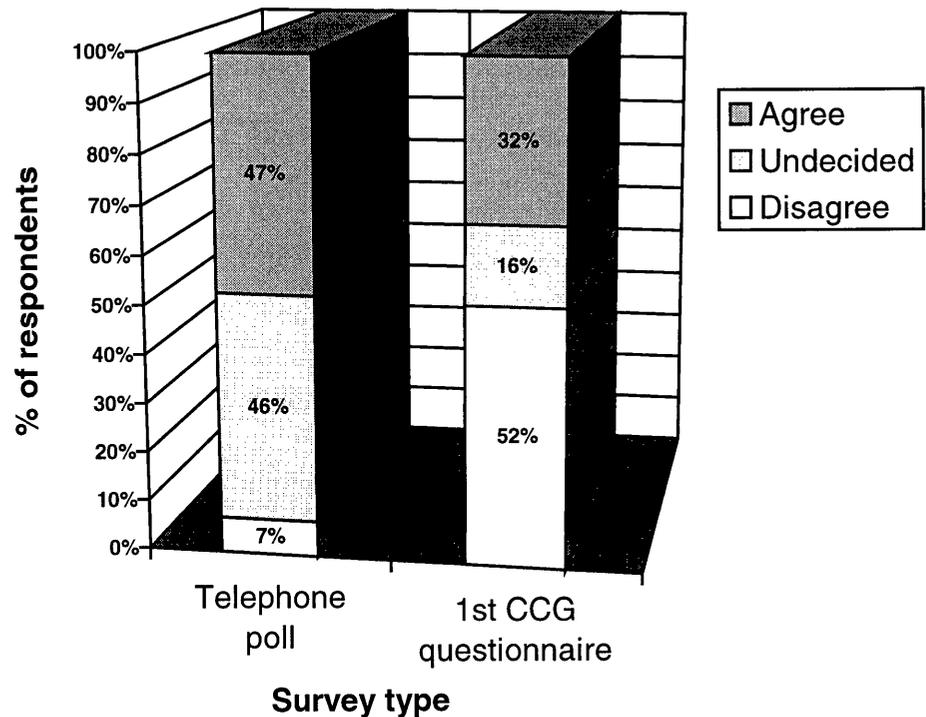


Figure 4-11 Comparison of public and CCG perceptions of SFNSW.

Although these two surveys were taken approximately one month apart, they indicate that the CCG's attitude towards SFNSW did not necessarily reflect the general attitude of the wider community. Most CCG members believed the CCG was truly representative of the wider community (22%D, 30%U, 48%A), and that the CCG was representative of a broad cross section of community interests, views and concerns (9%D, 0%U, 91%A). Some members, however, were unconvinced.

'... if the CCG is supposed to be a representative cross section of the human population of the region and have a purported role of being able to speak in the name of the community, then it's poorly performing' (Sci/Edu P15 survey 4)

'I believe the CCG role is being fulfilled to probably no more than 60% of its potential. The major reason being that the group itself is, to my thinking, not truly representative (proportionately) of community (real) interests.' (Tour/Rec P2 survey 4)

A truly representative consultation group would contain people from all sectors of society reflecting a proportional mix of education level, sex, race, income, occupation, age and place of residence. However, achieving a statistically representative sample of the study area population of 698,745 would require an unmanageable sample size. In addition, Fagence (1977), Sewell (1977), Westman (1985) and Syme, Macpherson and Fry (1987) argue that not everyone wants to be involved in consultation programs.

'The wider community doesn't give a f _ _ _ . That's the problem' (Conservation P7a Phone call 3/2/96)

Estimates of the eligible population likely to be actively involved in a public participation program range from 7 to 31 percent (Milbrath 1965, Fagence 1977 and McKenzie 1981). Boaden and Collins (1975) and Praxis (1988) suggest that a reluctance to participate may result from a wide range of reasons including a reluctance to speak on behalf of others without fully consulting them, a lack of understanding of the process and their expected roles, a feeling that their effect on the process does not justify the effort, and a belief that their views are already well known and represented. McKenzie (1981) adds that many are either too busy, lack the necessary skills, have experienced past frustration with bureaucrats, or are apathetic.

The CCG's role, according to both members and the study team, was to act as a catalyst or a *'conduit'* (Sci/Edu P15 survey 4) for conveying information and opinions between the study team and the wider community.

'The average Joe Blow, I think, has a right of reply once he has been informed and been informed accurately. If we had the information we could filter it through the community.' (Conservation P4a Focus group interview).

The CCG was expected to link into existing community networks to spread the news about the EIA, pass on information and contacts, and provide feedback to the study team. During the open inquiry phase, the level of interaction occurring between the CCG and the community was assessed. Estimates of the amount of time each CCG member spent

discussing the EIA with other non CCG people (Figure 4-12) indicates that many members were active in wider community consultation.

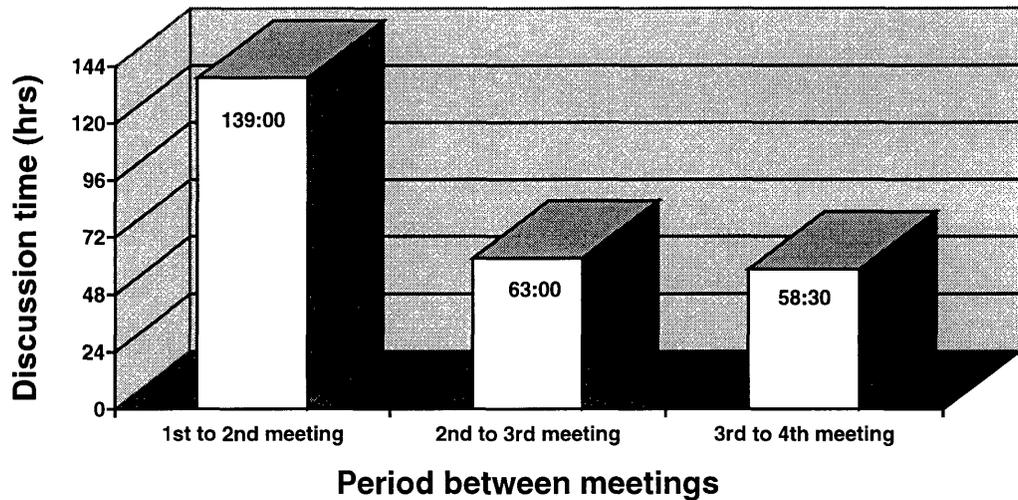


Figure 4-12 CCG member discussion time spent with non CCG members.

These figures are likely to be conservative, however, given not all CCG members returned their questionnaires. CCG members varied considerably in their efforts to foster and maintain community contacts, with some recording up to 40 hours of discussion time and others making no attempt at all. One member commented, *'We wanted to know the proposal before consulting. We were unsure of what to consult the community about.'* (Conservation P7a Phone call 3/2/96). Another lamented that *'... time outside meetings to interact have been few. We're all busy people.'* (Community P18 survey 3). The majority of participants were undecided as to whether CCG members had adequately consulted the wider community and provided feedback to the study team (17%D, 52%U, 31%A), or if the CCG had been active in the local community (22%D, 48%U, 30%A). Further, most members did not believe the CCG gave a clear direction of which alternative the community wanted (39%D, 39%U, 22%A). In terms of overall accountability, the majority of members were uncertain if the wider community would be satisfied with the performance of the CCG (22%D, 52%U, 26%A).

4.1.3 Expectations relating to individual participant performance

Effective representative

Many individual CCG members expected to adequately represent their interest group.

'To be a voice for those who nominated and elected us' (Community P18 survey 1)

'To represent the 'constituents' of my 'group'' (Community P21 survey 1)

The audit review revealed that the majority of members felt they adequately identified (22%D, 26%U, 52%A) and represented their interest group's expectations, preferences and priorities (13%D, 26%U, 61%A).

Lobbying CCG support

Many CCG members attempted to lobby support for their viewpoints from other CCG members. In lobbying CCG support, participants indicated two target groups: those individuals already sympathetic to their cause and who would provide internal interest group support, and those who were uncommitted or unsympathetic to their interests, whose opinions they wished to change. The open inquiry questionnaire results indicate that members spent at least 120 contact hours discussing the EIS with other CCG members between the 1st and 4th CCG meetings.

The majority of CCG nominees did not know each other prior to being brought together for the CCG. Initial lobby efforts involved convincing fellow interest group nominees that they were worthy of selection for the CCG. Once selected, members then went through a process of lobbying fellow members in their interest group in order to build a supportive base. Some members found this opportunity to foster support very rewarding.

'Found someone who could interpret my idea of what would be best for our forest.'
(Community P18 survey 3)

'The social contacts were personally inspiring' (Community P18 survey 1)

The vast majority of CCG members believed they gained mutual support from other CCG members with similar interests (0%D, 13%U, 87%A).

In swaying the opinions of uncommitted or unsympathetic individuals in the CCG the majority of CCG members believed they educated other uninformed members and corrected misunderstandings (22%D, 26%U, 52%A). In addition, most members felt they were able to identify threats to their interest group to better focus their lobby efforts (4%D, 35%U, 61%A).

Observations revealed that some members actively lobbied other interest group members before, during and after each meeting. Some members objected to this.

'People (are) trying to convert each other and not working together' (For Ind. P5 phone call 4/5/95).

'Everyone is wheeling their own barrow and no one is getting together saying this is the best thing for the forests' (Conservation P4a Focus group interview).

While most members believed they had successfully lobbied CCG support for their interests group's case (30%D, 26%U, 44%A), most were undecided as to whether they sufficiently influenced the opinions of other CCG members regarding the preferred proposal (35%D, 61%U, 4%A).

Influencing the study team's preferred proposal

Most CCG members expected to have some influence on the development of the preferred proposal, although there were some exceptions.

'I will have no influence whatsoever on the EIS' (Conservation P8 survey 1)

'Most of the conclusions are foregone.' (Tour/Rec P11 survey 1)

These feelings prevailed throughout the CCP, with most members agreeing they did not sufficiently influence the Study Team's opinion regarding the preferred proposal (52%D,

35%U, 13%A) or the development of the preferred proposal (48%D, 39%U, 13%A). In fact, most members disagreed that without the CCP the preferred proposal would be different (44%D, 30%U, 26%A). In other words, regardless of the CCP, the proposal outcome would have been the same.

4.2 Evaluation of outcomes

Both the study team and the CCG expected to achieve certain outcomes by the end of the CCP (Figure 4-13). These themes are segregated into those unique to either the study team or the CCG and those shared in common.

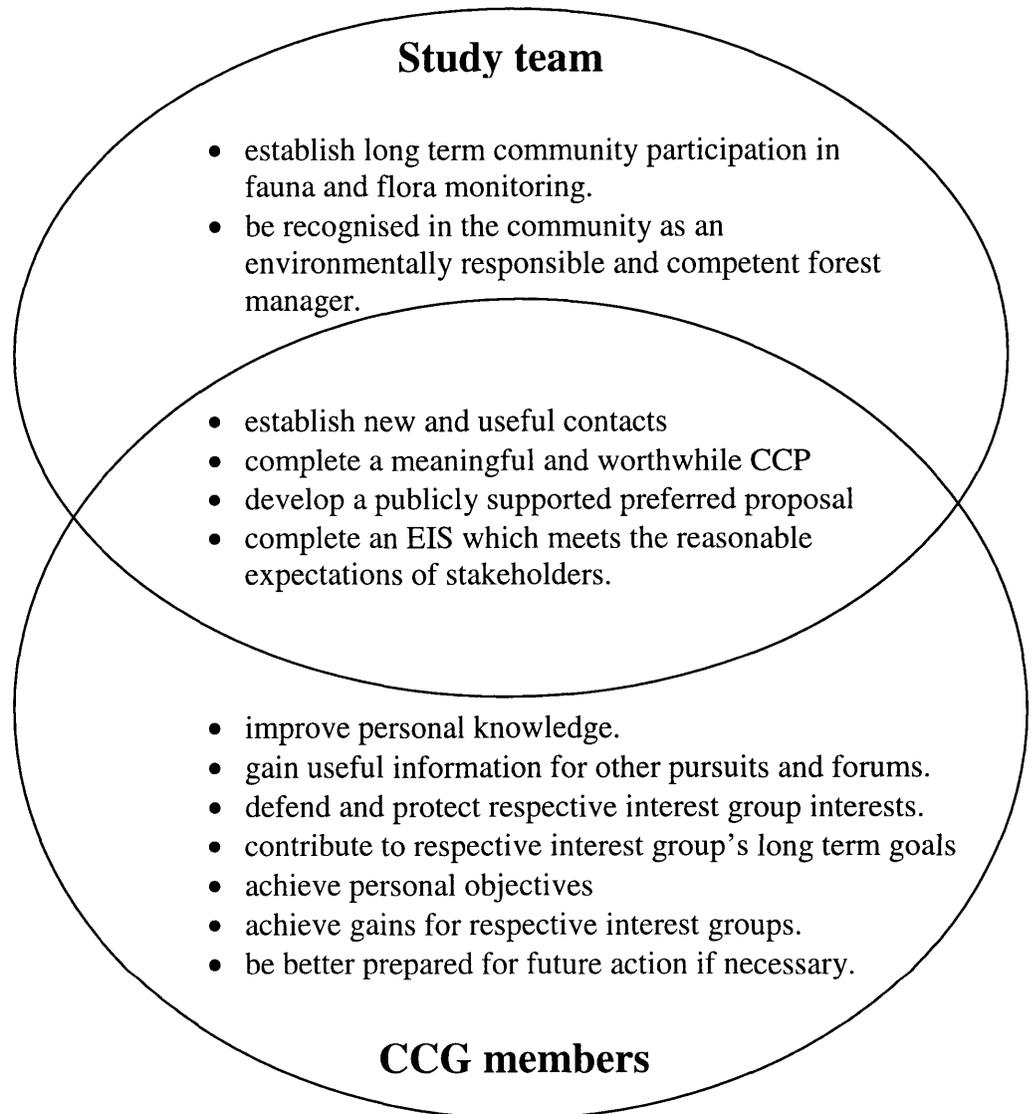


Figure 4-13 Outcome evaluation themes.

4.2.1 CCG objectives

The open inquiry phase of the evaluation revealed outcome objectives unique to the CCG. Some expectations were personal in nature, such as improving personal knowledge, gaining information useful in other pursuits and achieving personal goals. Other expectations pertained to broader interest group and community objectives such as protecting and furthering group interests, and contributing to interest group long term goals.

Improve personal knowledge

Some members indicated that one of the motivations for joining the CCG was a desire to improve their personal knowledge on forestry related issues and the local environment. This outcome was achieved as the majority of CCG members believed that their personal knowledge was improved as a result of the consultation process (4%D, 9%U, 87%A).

Gain information for other pursuits and forums

The CCG expected that the CCP would provide useful information for other situations. Some saw the CCP as ‘...a *stepping stone*’ (For. Ind P5 Independent survey) to other larger opportunities for their businesses, interests or political goals. An overwhelming majority of members believed they gained useful information for other pursuits and forums (0%D, 4%U, 96%A).

Achievement of personal goals

In the first open questionnaire, CCG members were asked if they were confident of achieving their personal objectives. Many responses were negative and pessimistic.

‘No. An EIS and CCG are existing avenues for some public involvement in management of public land but the absence of any decision making power leads many people to consider it is a waste of time.’ (Sci/Edu P15 survey 1)

‘I can see the group’s lack of confidence in achieving their personal priorities will eventually see the numbers reduced.’ (Community P18 survey 1)

Others were doubtful but optimistic.

'One lives in hope.' (Sci/Edu. P1 survey 1)

'Frankly, I should like to think that the determinations of the C.C.G will receive consideration but I have doubt that this will be the case in areas of controversy. I live in optimism that the public does deserve a voice.' (Conservation P19 survey 1)

Still others were confident and enthusiastic.

'Yes. Based on past experience with CCG's in NSW' (For Ind P20 survey 1)

'Yes ! Providing the CCG does not want to make the area a total wilderness.' (Tour/Rec P10 survey 1)

'I am relatively confident it's EIS and FIS will be honest and unbiased due to the very nature of that part of the process.' (Tour/Rec P2 survey 1)

Overall, however, audit review data revealed that most members did not believe their personal objectives were met (43%D, 35%U, 22%A).

Protect group interests

Every member on the CCG was there to protect some interest whether financial, ethical or social. Davis et al. (1988) argue that pressuring agencies on behalf of their members is an important function of any interest group. Some of these interests included:

'The on-going future of my business.' (For. Ind P5 survey 1)

'Maximum ecotourism advantages.' (Tour/Rec P3 survey 1)

'Preservation of old growth forest and biodiversity' (Sci/Edu 13 survey 1)

'Conservation of rare and/or endangered flora and fauna..' (Conservation P19 survey 1)

'Apiary husbandry, Grazing of stock' (Graz/Ap P6 survey 1)

CCG members were strongly motivated to protect their own or their group's interests, each expecting that by the end of the CCP they would have succeeded in protecting these interests. When asked whether they had in fact achieved this, CCG members were largely divided (30%D, 30%U, 39%A).

Gains for group interests

Separate from the expectation of protecting their interests was the expectation of achieving further gains and benefits. This expectation was particularly prevalent among those of the CCG who wanted to see more conservation reserves established. They considered the pre-existing reserves to be inadequate and expected these areas would be significantly increased. The majority of members were undecided as to whether they had achieved gains for their interest group (17%D, 66%U, 17%A).

Contribution to interest group long-term goals

Several of the participants were seasoned CCP veterans from other forestry EISs. These participants saw the Morisset EIA as part of the bigger picture of native forest management in NSW. Others were more locally focused on issues such as the conservation of the region's species biodiversity or the survival of local sawmills.

'The CCG is an opportunity to participate in the process of getting to environmentally sensitive land management' (Sci/Edu P15 survey 1)

Whether motivated by global, regional or local issues, most members participated in the Morisset CCP because there was potential direct or indirect interest group gains or losses. The majority of members believed that the CCG experience contributed to their interest group's long-term goals (9%D, 39%U, 52%A).

Better prepared for future action if necessary

Although several members anticipated a negative outcome, many expected that the CCP would better prepare them for additional post EIS action and opportunities. One member described this as '*Consultation before action.*' (Tour/Rec P11 survey 1). If these members did not achieve their goals through the EIA process, they would at least be better placed for additional lobbying and protesting. Some also anticipated gaining a head start in analysing the data and reviewing the proposal before the public exhibition period commenced. The clear majority of CCG members considered that, as a result of their participation in the CCP, they were better prepared for future action if necessary (0%D, 9%U, 91%A).

4.2.2 Study team objectives

Shift in public attitude

Because SFNSW has a corporate objective to be recognised by the community as environmentally responsible and competent forest managers by June 1998, the study team adopted this as one of its own outcome objectives. This objective was well publicised in the corporate literature and some CCG members had expected the agency to promote its own image.

'State Forestry will attempt to lift its poor public image (currently reflected in media publications etc.)' (Conservation P19 survey 1)

The agency's corporate plan lists the performance indicator for this objective as '*positive shifts in perception as measured by periodic community attitude surveys*' (State Forests of NSW 1994b). This indicator was also adopted for this evaluation. When the newly formed CCG was asked to rate their confidence in the agency as an environmentally responsible and competent forest manager the majority (52%) considered SFNSW's performance as poor (rating a 4 or less). When the CCG was later asked the same question at the end of the CCP the result was inconclusive with equal proportions of positive and negative responses (39%D, 22%U, 39%A). This is illustrated in Figure 4-14.

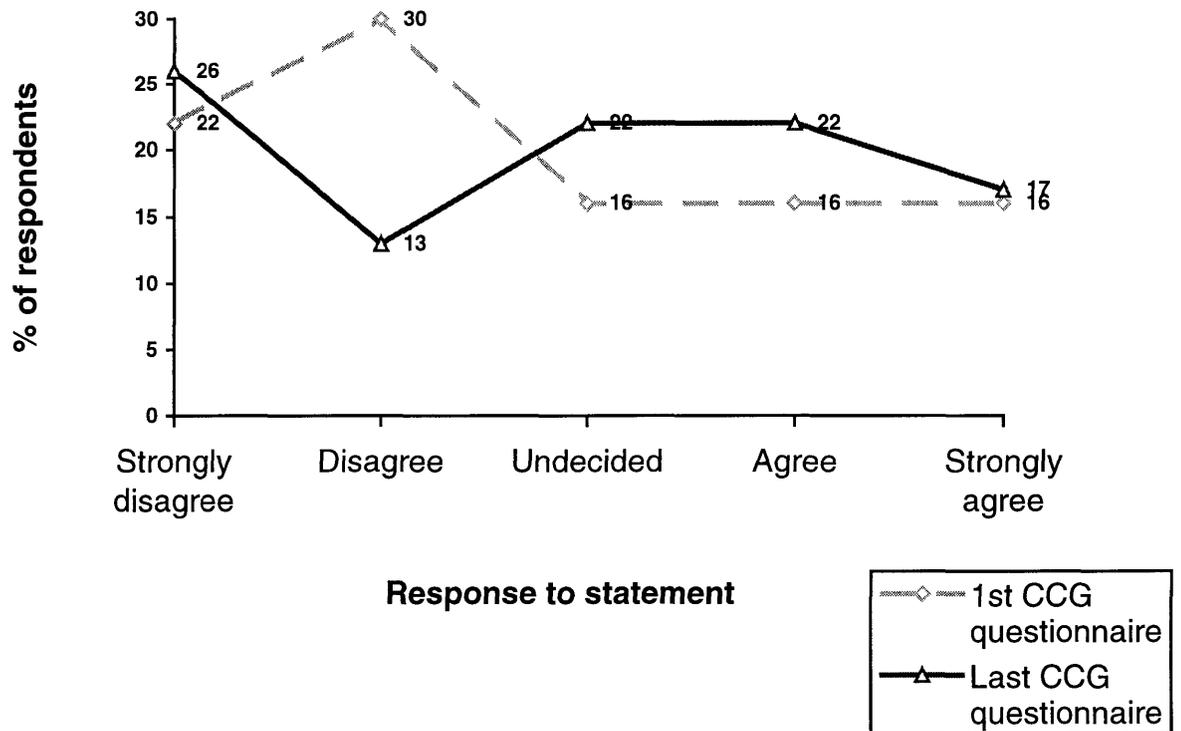


Figure 4-14 Shift in CCG perception of SFNSW.

Although there was no clear majority of opinion for or against the statement, there was a softening of participant attitudes towards the agency, that is, there were less people with negative attitudes towards the agency at the end of the CCP than there were at the beginning. Although this does not fully satisfy SFNSW's performance indicator (a positive shift in attitudes), this does indicate a favourable outcome objective for the agency.

Establish community monitoring program

District staff at Morisset had been interested in establishing a long term community based fauna and flora monitoring program well before the advent of the Morisset EIA. Staff saw an opportunity to achieve this through contacts established during the CCP. Although a community program was not established during the EIA period, some participants shared similar objectives.

'Monitoring - is there room for community groups to be more involved in monitoring. i.e. training programs could be run for community groups or even Labour Market Programs to assist with monitoring and research.' (Sci/Edu P13 Newsletter)

In addition, the District Forester also received a letter from a local conservation group requesting the development of a community based monitoring program supported by SFNSW (Lower Hunter Environment Group letter 8/8/95). There is every indication that such a program will eventuate, although district staff are reluctant to instigate proceedings until the EIS is determined and the full impact of monitoring commitments is finalised.

4.2.3 Common CCG and study team objectives

Establish new and useful contacts

Both the study team and the CCG expected that by the end of the CCP they would have expanded their contact networks. The study team anticipated that they would build a network of stakeholder contacts, while the CCG were seeking additional contacts within their interest group, between interest groups and with staff from the agency. Both of these major groups saw advantages in obtaining future sources of information and feedback that would benefit their individual goals. The audit review data suggests that this outcome objective was reached as the majority of CCG members considered they had established new and useful contacts (9%D, 4%U, 87%A).

Meaningful and worthwhile CCP

Common to both the CCG and the study team was an expectation that participation in the CCP would be worth the effort expended. Many were dissatisfied.

‘We just spent hours and hours racking our brains and wasting reams of paper explaining things that will be of no consequence. I’m a cynic and the CCG process is making me more cynical.’ (Community P18 survey 4)

‘Not enough time for EIS to be meaningful’ (Community P21 Independent survey)

Some members expressed this dissatisfaction by refusing to participate. The record keeping data shows a gradual reduction in the CCG attendance over time, reflecting the level of importance members placed on the meetings (Figure 4-15).

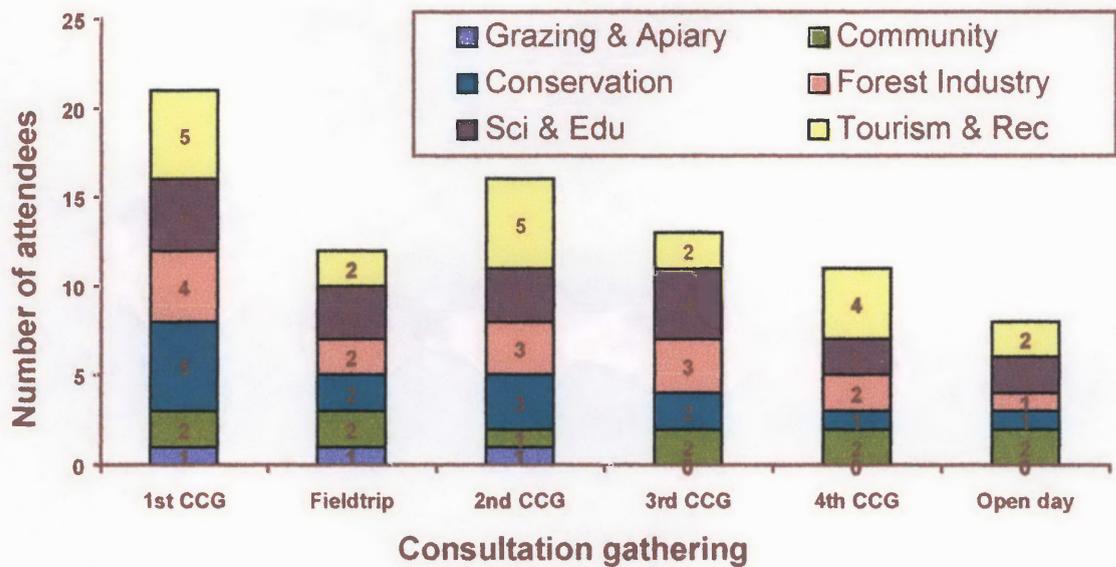


Figure 4-15 Attendance record of original CCG members.

Connor (1979) maintains that the demands of adult responsibilities commonly erodes participant attendance. While the drop in attendance of the original CCG members may have been the result of other higher priorities and commitments (Cartwright 1977), the qualitative data suggests that some members did not continue their attendance because they considered the CCP to be of little value. Connor (1979) and Fagence (1977) suggest that some participants find it difficult to sustain their interest as the relevance of a participation program wanes. Although the value ratings for CCG gatherings (Figure 4-3) indicates the majority of members believed the consultation gatherings were worthwhile events, the CCG was evenly divided in opinion as to whether the community consultation process, as a whole, was meaningful and worthwhile (39%D, 22%U, 39%A). Perhaps satisfaction with CCG gatherings alone was not enough for participants to consider the whole CCP worthwhile.

To develop a publicly supported preferred proposal

Both CCG members and the study team expected that the preferred proposal developed would be acceptable to the wider community and therefore publicly supported. Due to the time constraints on this evaluation project it was not possible to conduct market research to determine the level of community support for the preferred proposal. Instead, the evaluation focused on the CCG members' attitudes as a reflection of broader community opinion. Although, opinions were relatively evenly divided, most members were unsatisfied with the

Although, opinions were relatively evenly divided, most members were unsatisfied with the study team's preferred proposal (39%D, 31%U, 30%A), and were generally undecided as to whether the study team's preferred proposal would be publicly supported (30%D 44%U, 26%A).

To complete an Environmental Impact Statement which meets the reasonable expectations of stakeholders

Both the study team and the CCG expected the EIS to meet the reasonable expectations of stakeholders, although what constituted 'reasonable' was different for each member. Most of the CCG members were unsure if the EIS had met their expectations (26%D, 44%U, 30%A).

4.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

Major evaluation findings are expressed below as strengths and weaknesses relating to either the study team, the CCG or individual participants. For the purposes of this summary, those objectives which the CCG were either undecided or evenly divided on were considered to be weaknesses.

4.3.1 Process objectives

Study team strengths

The evaluation revealed that the study team:

- was qualified and professional in conducting the EIA, providing sound baseline data and implementing high quality and technically correct procedures;
- achieved a public awareness level of 12% as a result of an extensive and effective media campaign throughout the CCP;
- provided a fair and reasonable process for peer selection of CCG members;
- successfully explained EIA process and procedures to the CCG, indicated their likely influence on the EIS and how to participate, and kept them informed of EIA progress and any changes affecting it;
- interacted well with CCG members, being easily accessible to participants, answering questions and supplying data in an understandable form and providing informal and open dialogue;

- provided enough time for participants to digest and comprehend the often complex data supplied;
- held meetings and other gatherings that were well run and valued by participants. The forest field trip and workshop exercise provided the best opportunity for informal and detailed discussion among participants and the study team;
- was successful in exposing both the study team and the CCG to a wide range of community viewpoints and identifying key issues of community concern;
- treated CCG members fairly, providing adequate and equal opportunity for input into the EIA process, and supplying sufficient feedback and acknowledgement of input; and
- were professional and genuine in conducting the CCP, addressing all relevant issues and comments and providing data that was not deliberately misleading.

Study team weaknesses

The evaluation revealed that the study team:

- did not sufficiently address all likely environmental impacts in the EIA;
- did not supply enough data describing the environment;
- failed to provide timely data to the CCG which hindered CCG members' ability to develop informed opinion;
- did not convince the CCG that the EIA, and associated CCP, was unbiased, open, balanced and objective;
- was unsuccessful in applying the multi-criteria analysis process for selecting the preferred proposal. Many participants found it confusing, while others refused to discuss selection criteria without first defining the alternative development proposals;
- was unable to provide a sufficient number or duration of meetings for full discussion of key issues and alternative development proposals;
- did not provide participants with sufficient involvement in the decision making process;
- was not flexible enough to alter the CCP to suit the needs of CCG members;
- did not fully adopt CCG members recommendations; and
- did not give any guidance to the CCG on how to consult the wider community.

Community Consultation Group strengths

The evaluation revealed that the CCG:

- reflected a broad cross section of community views, interests and concerns;
- was successful in their advisory role, supplying local knowledge, expertise and data not already available to the study team;
- was successful in their role as community watchdog and whistle blower, applying pressure on the study team;
- treated each other fairly and equally;
- did not deliberately supply misleading information to the study team;
- gave the CCP a fair chance and reasonable opportunity to succeed during the initial stages of the CCP; and
- put forward realistic alternative proposals.

Community Consultation Group weaknesses

The evaluation revealed that the CCG:

- was not representative of the wider community in terms of education levels and attitude variables;
- did not interact and participate equally;
- was dominated by a small proportion of vocal individuals and, in general, by conservation interest groups (and associated hidden alliances), who abused the peer selection process resulting in an imbalance of representation;
- did not maintain an objective and balanced approach, were inflexible to compromise and negotiation, and were non cooperative and adversarial particularly during the later stages of the CCP;
- did not answer all study team data requests, in particular the multi-criteria analysis process;
- did not provide sufficient comment on the adequacy of EIA surveys, reports, mitigation prescriptions and other data; and
- did not adequately consult the wider community, provide feedback to the study team, or give a clear indication of what the community wanted.

Individual participant strengths

The evaluation revealed that the individual participants:

- adequately identified and represented their interest group expectations, preferences and priorities;
- gained mutual support from other participants with similar interests;
- educated other uninformed members and corrected misunderstandings;
- identified threats to their interest group enabling them to better focus their lobby efforts; and
- successfully lobbied support for their interest group's case.

Individual participant weaknesses

The evaluation revealed that the individual participants:

- did not sufficiently influence the opinions of either CCG members or the study team regarding the preferred proposal.

4.3.2 Outcome objectives

Community consultation process strengths

The evaluation revealed that by the end of the project the CCP:

- had improved participant personal knowledge;
- established new and useful contacts for both the participants and the study team;
- provided participants with useful information for other pursuits and forums;
- enabled participants to protect their interest group interests;
- contributed to interest group long term goals;
- better prepared participants for future lobby action if necessary;
- achieved a softening of participant perception of the agency as an environmentally responsible and competent forest manager; and
- laid the foundation for a community based fauna and flora monitoring program.

Community consultation process weaknesses

The evaluation revealed that by the end of the project the CCP:

- did not meet the personal objectives of participants;
- did not achieve gains for most interest groups;

- was not considered a meaningful and worthwhile experience by participants;
- was not considered to have produced a preferred proposal which would be publicly supported; and
- was not considered to have resulted in an EIS which meets the reasonable expectations of stakeholders.

4.4 Evaluation overview

Although the evaluation methodology achieved the stated aims of the case study, in hindsight, the evaluation may have been enhanced with the following modifications.

- Ideally the CCG should have been given the opportunity to discuss the evaluation criteria as a group to ensure validity of the evaluator's interpretations of their expectations.
- In addition to the CCG's expectations, the process evaluation would have benefited from inclusion and assessment of the study team's process expectations.
- Additional focus group meetings (with each major interest group) would have assisted in clarifying the key strengths and weaknesses of the CCP and enabled more detailed investigation into cause and effect relationships.
- The study would have also been enhanced by extending the evaluation through to the final stages of the CCP involving the review of and response to written public submissions by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.