



Years of relevant experience

- 20+ years

Qualifications and memberships

- Doctor of Philosophy (Organisational Communication)
- Master of Business Administration
- BA (Hons) Economics & Public Policy
- Industry Fellow, Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, University of Queensland
- Member, International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA)
- Full Member, Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ)

Key skills and competencies

- Social impact assessment
- Research and report writing
- Community engagement
- Social licence
- Development of frameworks and guidelines

Professional history

- Jan 2023 – present | SMEC: Technical Principal – Social Science
- 2016 – 2022 | NSW Department of Planning and Environment: SIA Specialist
- 2006 – 2016 | Social Performance Consultant

Professional overview

Dr Richard Parsons is recognised internationally as a leader in social impact assessment (SIA), social licence, and community engagement. Working with government, industry, academia, and not-for-profit organisations, he applies his work through values of compassion, respect, inclusivity, and impartiality. Much of his work is published in professional and academic journals.

From 2016-22, he led the technical development of policy and practice for SIA and social impact management for New South Wales (NSW) Government. In this time, he significantly expanded the practice of high-quality SIA by securing multi-stakeholder support, applying social research skills and subject-matter expertise of social issues in energy, mining, and infrastructure, nurturing staff to build skills and capacity, and developing extensive collaboration networks.

Relevant experience

Social Impact Assessment Specialist, Planning and Assessment Project Director, NSW Wellbeing Budget

NSW Department of Planning and Environment | **Date:** 2016 – 2022

Richard's main responsibilities included:

- leading the improvement of SIA policy and practice for planning in NSW
- leading the development of a wellbeing framework & budget for NSW
- leading reviews of SIAs for major development projects
- providing advice, support, and direction to build capacity in SIA
- managing competing interests of agencies, stakeholders, and communities
- developing effective systems and collaborative networks and relationships
- representing NSW Government in public forums
- leading the development of a state wellbeing framework

Key projects Richard contributed towards include:

(Infrastructure and industry)

- Inland Rail (several sections)
- Beaches Link
- WestConnex
- Parramatta Light Rail
- New Powerhouse
- New Grafton Gaol
- North Byron Parklands
- Warragamba Dam raising
- Sydney Zoo
- Ivanhoe Estate redevelopment
- Telopea Estate redevelopment
- Sirius building redevelopment
- Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment

(Energy and resources)

- Mount Piper Energy Recovery Project
- Dendrobium Mine Extension Project
- Narrabri Gas Project
- Mangoola Coal Continued Operations
- Glendell Continued Operations
- Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project
- Maxwell Project
- McPhillamy's Gold Project
- Snowy 2.0
- plus multiple quarry projects

Independent Social Performance Consultant, NSW

Date: 2006 – 2016

Investigating and analysing various social and community issues, particularly at the intersections of resources, sustainability, and society.

Services Richard provided include:

- managing consultancy projects to improve social performance
- developing participatory decision-making and communication frameworks
- undertaking literature reviews
- designing research methodologies
- primary research (interviews, observation, focus groups, text analysis)
- qualitative analysis and evaluation
- writing professional reports, research papers and articles
- facilitating workshops

Key projects Richard contributed towards include:

- Bioenergy and social licence (2015-2016)
Investigating the social-licence prospects for bioenergy in the NSW Northern Rivers.
- Glencore Coal stakeholder perception study (with ACCSR, 2014)
Review of stakeholder perceptions of a major resources company across sites.
- Powerlink Queensland stakeholder perception study (with ACCSR, 2014)
Review of stakeholder perceptions of a major power company.
- Clermont Preferred Future review (2013)
Review of initiative to identify opportunities for social development (community building, resilience and wellbeing) and economic transitioning post-mining.
- Mineral futures project (with CSIRO, 2009-2013)
 - (a) Researching theory and practice of social licence in the Australian minerals industry, examining how it is constructed, negotiated, and contested among stakeholders.
 - (b) Analysing community impacts of extractive industries.
- Social impact monitoring framework (with CSIRO, 2010-2013)
Developing a leading-practice framework for monitoring and managing social impacts on a major resources project. Designing and undertaking community engagement.
- Assessing economic contribution of refugees in Australia (for Multicultural Development Association, 2013)

Identifying how refugees contribute economically to Australia, and how various studies define the notion of 'contribution'.

- CSIRO Futures (2011-2012)
Reviewing literature, facilitating workshops, analysing data, and writing papers associated with a key national foresighting project.
- Sea floor exploration and mining project (with CSIRO, 2009-2012)
Investigating the social and regulatory dimensions of sea-floor exploration and mining.
- Promoting responsibility: Resource companies and Australia's international policy (for Australian Strategic Policy Institute, & Foundation for Development Cooperation, 2009-2010)
Rapporteur for the Independent Task Force examining the development impact of Australia's minerals companies operating overseas. The project identified ways in which companies and governments can achieve beneficial outcomes for communities.
- Climate change adaptation project (CSIRO, 2009)
A qualitative study to document the planning issues for climate change adaptation, to help design support programmes. Richard investigated how organisations are adapting, the principal drivers motivating them to adapt, and the barriers constraining adaptation.
- Intelligent grid project (CSIRO, 2007-8)
 - (a) A longitudinal case study to identify stakeholder views, and policy and regulatory issues, associated with large-scale uptake of solar-photovoltaic systems.
 - (b) Investigating householders' motivations to implement distributed energy initiatives.
- Carbon capture and storage project (CSIRO, 2006-9)
Investigating critical issues and concerns regarding carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) in Australia and New Zealand.

Doctoral Researcher | University of Queensland Business School / Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, QLD

Date: 2004 – 2008

Richard's doctoral research comprised two case studies of community engagement. He examined communication relationships between two large minerals processing sites and local communities. One study focused on engagement in the context of a sensitive environmental issue; the other focused on engagement with the local Indigenous community. In both cases, the purpose was twofold: to investigate how people 'on the ground' understand and experience community engagement; and to critically analyse the wider social practices that shape people's understandings.

During this time, he presented papers at four international conferences, and produced several publications (see below). He also worked as a Research Officer on a number of projects concerning social responsibility in the minerals industry. His doctoral thesis was also published as a book.

Research Associate and Project Manager | University of Queensland, QLD

Date: 2002 – 2004

Main responsibilities included:

- managing a number of projects on community engagement and social responsibility
- developing effective communication processes
- designing and implementing research strategies and
- producing business plans, reports, submissions, and briefs

Research Project Officer | Community Capital Project, QLD

Foresters ANA Friendly Society, Brisbane | **Date:** 2002 – 2003

Main responsibilities included:

- investigating how ethical investment is practised in Australia, particularly to consider whether it conforms with theories of ethics and sustainability

Social Research Interviewer and Mentor | Office for National Statistics, UK

Date: 1998 – 2000

Main responsibilities included:

- acting as a mentor to new staff, facilitating personal development and training
- managing and nurturing staff performance
- conducting face-to-face and telephone interviews (over 2000)
- interpreting qualitative material

Key achievements

- Provided expert review on social impacts of over 100 major development projects (2016-2022).
- Winner of DPE Secretary's values team award (2021).
- Secured executive approval to progress the first Wellbeing Budget for NSW (2021).
- Led technical development of the first SIA guideline for all development types in NSW (2021).
- Awarded honorary Industry Fellowship, UQ Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (2018).
- Led technical development of the first SIA guideline for major resources projects in NSW (2017).
- Represented CSIRO as a leading social scientist at 'Science meets Parliament' (2011).
- Appointed rapporteur on development impact of Australian mining companies overseas (2009).
- Completed PhD in Organisational Communication (2008).
- Secured funding for major Australian Research Council project on social capital (2002)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- **Parsons, R.** 2022. Planning for our wellbeing. *New Planner*, December, 16-17.
- **Parsons, R.** 2022. Using regulation to drive improvement in SIA. *Impact Assessment Outlook Journal*, 13, 15-17. https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/iema.net/documents/knowledge/policy/impact-assessment/iaoutlook/J37444_IEMA_Impact_Assessment_Outlook_Journal_V13_V4.pdf
- **Parsons, R.** & Luke, H. 2021. Comparing reflexive and assertive approaches to social licence and social impact assessment, *The Extractive Industries and Society* 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2020.06.022>
- **Parsons, R.** 2019. Forces for change in social impact assessment, *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 38(4), 278-286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2019.1692585>
- **Parsons, R.**, Everingham, J.-A. & Kemp, D. 2018. Developing social impact assessment guidelines in a pre-existing policy context, *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 37(2), 114-123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2018.1485612>
- **Parsons, R.** & Moffat, K. 2014. Integrating impact and relational dimensions of social licence and social impact assessment, *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 32(4), 273-282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2014.936107>
- **Parsons, R.**, Lacey, J., & Moffat, K. 2014. Maintaining legitimacy of a contested practice: How the minerals industry understands its 'social licence to operate', *Resources Policy*, 41, 83–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2014.04.002>

- **Parsons, R.** & Moffat, K. 2014. Constructing the meaning of 'social licence', *Social Epistemology*, 28(3-4), 340-363. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02691728.2014.922645>
- Mason, C., Paxton, G., **Parsons, R.**, & Moffat, K. 2014. "For the benefit of Australians": Exploring national expectations of the mining industry, *Resources Policy*, 41(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2014.01.008>
- **Parsons, R.**, Lederwasch, A., & Moffat, K. 2013. Clermont Preferred Future: Stakeholder reflections on a community foresight and planning initiative, *Resources*, 2(4), 528-554. <https://doi.org/10.3390/resources2040528>
- **Parsons, R.** 2010. *Constructions of Community Engagement: A critical study*. Saarbrücken: Lambert.
- **Parsons, R.** & McKenna, B. J. 2009. Constructing social responsibility through corporate sustainability reporting. In T. Lê, Q. Lê & M. Short (Eds.), *Critical Discourse Analysis: An interdisciplinary perspective* (183-200). New York: Nova Science.
- **Parsons, R.** 2008. *We're all stakeholders now: The influence of western discourses of 'community engagement' in an Australian Aboriginal community*, *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 4(2/3), 99-126. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/17422040810869972/full/html>
- **Parsons, R.** 2007. We've given you jobs; What more do you want? In D. Page & T. Zorn (Eds.), *Management Communication: New Zealand and Australian case studies* (26-32). North Shore, NZ: Pearson Education.
- **Parsons, R.** & McKenna, B. 2006, 26-28 July. *Rationalising corporate-community engagement: A critical discourse perspective*. Paper presented at the 7th International Conference on Organisational Discourse: Identity, Ideology and Idiosyncrasy, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.
- **Parsons, R.** 2005, 4-6 July. *The social responsibility of business is to challenge its assumptions*. Paper presented at the 4th International Critical Management Studies Conference, Cambridge, UK.

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS (selected)

- **Parsons, R.** et al. 2022. *A wellbeing budget for NSW: Foundation paper*. NSW Department of Planning and Environment.
- **Parsons, R.** 2016. *Social licence for bioenergy: Prospects in the NSW Northern Rivers*. A report for the Northern Rivers BioHubs project.
- **Parsons, R.** 2013. *Assessing the economic contribution of refugees in Australia*. Brisbane: Multicultural Development Association.
- **Parsons, R.**, Lacey, J., & Moffat, K. 2012. *Exploring the concept of a social licence to operate in the Australian minerals industry: Results from interviews with industry representatives*. Canberra: CSIRO.
- Littleboy, A., Hajkowicz, S., Moody, J., **Parsons, R.**, and Wilhelmseder, L. 2012. *Signposts for Queensland: An analysis of future pathways*. A report for the Queensland Govt Dept of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation prepared in collaboration with the Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist. Canberra: CSIRO.
- **Parsons, R.**, Paxton, G., Mason, C., & Moffat, K. 2010. *Public expectations for seafloor exploration and mining in Australia: Comparisons with onshore mining*. CSIRO.
- Paxton, G., **Parsons, R.**, & Boughen, N. 2010. *Exploring the foundation for effective stakeholder engagement in marine aggregates mining: Experiences in the United Kingdom and the United States*. CSIRO.
- Gardner, J., **Parsons, R.** & Paxton, G. 2010. *Adaptation benchmarking survey: Initial report*. CSIRO Climate Adaptation Flagship Working Paper No. 4.
- **Parsons, R.** & Ashworth, P. 2008. *Assessing uptake of solar PV in northern NSW: Case study of bulk buying community solar program*. CSIRO.
- **Parsons, R.** & Ashworth, P. 2007. *The Intelligent Grid Project - Social research programme. Case studies of domestic consumers: Summary report*. CSIRO.
- Ashworth, P. & **Parsons, R.** 2006. *Prioritised assessment of issues and concerns of carbon capture and storage: Australia and New Zealand region*. CSIRO.