

Towards a Framework for Community Stakeholder Engagement  
with Infrastructure Projects Through Social Media

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Doctor of Philosophy



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

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*A thesis submitted to fulfil requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

School of Project Management

Faculty of Engineering

The University of Sydney

2025

*This is to declare that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis results from my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or purpose.*

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## **Abstract**

In infrastructure projects, systematic engagement with the perspectives and positions of community stakeholders is usually challenging. In this study, social media is introduced as a platform for observing and gathering the voices and attitudes of community stakeholders.

Based on traditional stakeholder engagement theory, this research employs naturalistic inquiry to collect data on the organic interactions between stakeholders and projects on social media. It analyses and summarises stakeholder engagement patterns on social media, introducing a novel framework of stakeholder sentiment and emotion analysis. This theoretical framework includes a new social media dialogue model. It employs two main analytical tools: categorical grouping of online community stakeholders and a stakeholder emotion matrix based on social media data. The model also categorises the online response strategies for projects based on the output of these tools.

This study supplements current stakeholder engagement theory by providing a framework to guide online stakeholder engagement. The theoretical framework outlines the general environment for online stakeholder engagement, offers essential elements and steps for project stakeholder dialogues, and provides appropriate theories and methods for different dialogue stages and steps. It offers new perspectives and theories for future research on online stakeholder engagement.

The novel social media stakeholder framework proposed in this study can be applied to project stakeholder engagement practices, providing new analytical tools and response strategies for studying community stakeholder engagement via social media, which will enable practitioners to use social media to carry out community stakeholder engagement for projects more efficiently.

# Acknowledgements

Pursuing a PhD is an adventure full of challenges and rewards. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported me throughout this journey.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude towards my Supervisor, Associate Professor Ken Chung. Your guidance and support have been indispensable as I evolved from a novice to someone capable of conducting independent research and publishing papers. You have provided selfless academic support and invaluable advice for my long-term career planning. Your patience in answering my questions and helping me overcome numerous obstacles has been most appreciated. Your foresight and passion for academia have deeply inspired me, driving me to progress in my academic career. Thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement at every step of my advancement.

Secondly, I am immensely grateful to other scholars who have assisted me during my studies. Thank you to Professor Stewart Clegg for generously offering me numerous valuable suggestions. Your profound knowledge has always left me in awe. My sincere thanks also go to Professor Pernille Eskerod and Associate Professor Anna Lund Jepsen. Through our cooperation and discussions, I have gained much practical research experience, which has been crucial in guiding my work.

Thirdly, I wish to say thank you to my family. My parents, Hongwu and Wenjie, have always supported me, giving me the courage to overcome difficulties and complete my studies. I am grateful for their willingness to listen and to try to understand my struggles during challenging times, offering their life experience and encouragement. I also want to thank my cousins, Jingyu, who provided me with some advice on grammar revision based on her professional knowledge, and Meng, who has always been there to respond to my messages and care for my emotional wellbeing, which has been incredibly important for me while studying abroad. In addition, I want to thank my friend, Linxiao, who took me out for weekly dinners during the toughest periods of my writing, allowing me to take a breather from my thesis and not be overwhelmed by anxiety.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my proofreader, Rebecca Hazleden, for her valuable assistance during the final submission of my thesis.

Completing this journey for PhD has required immense dedication, perseverance, and hard work. I am so proud of what I have achieved so far and the growth I have experienced.

## **Acknowledgement of the use of AI**

During the preparation of this thesis, Grammarly and Writefull have been used for the purpose of text enhancement, including spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and synonyms. Zotero has been used for managing and inserting references. If any text was modified by generative AI, the author reviewed the results for errors and inaccuracies, and modified it as required. The author takes full responsibility for the submitted thesis and ensures the work is their own and has used generative AI within the parameters of use (see *The University of Sydney Generative AI Guide for Researchers*).

## Publications

- Jepsen, A. L., Eskerod, P., Chung, K. S. K., **Zhang, J.**, & Ortiz, M. (2025). Using websites and social media to support local community stakeholder attendance at project town hall meetings. *Project Leadership and Society*, 6, Article 100164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2024.100164>
- **Zhang, J.**, & Chung, K. S. K. (2024). Online naturalistic inquiry for stakeholder issue analysis: Design and implementation. *Project Leadership and Society*, 5, Article 100163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2024.100163>
- **Zhang, J.**, & Chung, K.S.K. (2024, June 25–28). Naturalistic data inquiry for stakeholder issue analysis via social media [Paper presentation]. European Academy of Management (EURAM) Conference 2024, University of Bath, United Kingdom.
- Chung, K. S. K., Eskerod, P., Jepsen, A. L., & **Zhang, J.** (2023). Response strategies for community stakeholder engagement on social media: A case study of a large infrastructure project. *International Journal of Project Management*, 41(5), Article 102495. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2023.102495>

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter serves as the introduction to this research, primarily elucidating the research background and the purpose of the study. Initially, it reviews the main background of the study, delves into the current state of stakeholder management research, and identifies the limitations in existing studies related to stakeholder engagement. Recognising the necessity for a framework for stakeholder engagement in the online digital space, this chapter outlines the main research questions and objectives and provides a high-level overview of a proposed conceptual framework. Subsequently, this chapter provides a brief overview of the research design and procedures employed in this study. Finally, it discusses the research implications and potential contributions of this study.

## **1.1 Stakeholder Management**

The role of stakeholder management in contemporary project management has seen significant development in recent years, becoming a crucial factor in creating shared value and measuring project success. Research in stakeholder management has progressively shifted its focus from internal to external stakeholders, leading to the emergence of studies dedicated to external stakeholders, including communities. These stakeholders are ever more legitimacy (in how quickly they can mobilise by projects) and urgent (in how they make their voices heard) with advancements in technology, and in particular social media, which has become a ubiquitous and integral part of daily life. Consequently, communication between projects and stakeholders is no longer confined to traditional face-to-face interactions; instead, it now encompasses a variety of modes and channels. The incorporation of social media into stakeholder engagement activities is poised to become a key development and challenge in future project stakeholder management. However, the rapid spread of information on social media also introduces risks to project delivery. A significant temporal organisational challenge is managing the attitudes, sentiments and emotions of online stakeholders throughout the project. To address this, this study proposes a new theoretical framework aimed at guiding and managing online stakeholder engagement in projects. This framework is based on findings about patterns of behaviour of, and emotions expressed by, project stakeholders within the social media space.

## 1.2 Background to the Study

In project management, the engagement of stakeholders has an important impact on the success and performance of the project (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017; Beringer et al., 2013). A large number of current stakeholder studies have clearly stated the importance of stakeholder management and systematically developed corresponding processes and techniques. In traditional stakeholder management, project teams usually focus on the stakeholders who own or control resources (Beringer et al., 2013; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017; Eskerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Frooman & Murrell, 2005), because these stakeholders can directly affect the progress of the project or even prevent the project from being carried out (Cuppen et al., 2016). In order to efficiently identify these stakeholders and correctly assess their priorities, scholars have developed a variety of identification and classification methods (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017; de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). By prioritising the engagement of stakeholders, project teams can manage them more effectively towards making positive contributions to the project (Davis, 2017). In some studies, stakeholder circle analysis (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017; Bourne & Walker, 2008) and social network analysis (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017; Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014; Mok et al., 2017; Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2019) have been used in complex projects to identify stakeholders (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017; de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). Using these tools, project owners and key players are regarded as core stakeholders, followed by stakeholders who have a dependent relationship with the project (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). In contrast, third-party institutions and organisations are more marginalised and have less direct influence on the project (Cuppen et al., 2016; de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). In some projects, classification according to the types of resources held by stakeholders is also an effective management method (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017; Frooman & Murrell, 2005).

However, if external stakeholders are not engaged early and well, they may be mobilised to join action groups to oppose the project, which could have a profound impact on it. Aarseth et al. (2013) emphasised the importance of managing external stakeholders in global projects, pointing out that a lack of support from local government, local authorities, local industry, and local organisations can be the key organisational challenges in global projects (Aarseth et al.,

2013). Chow and Leiringer (2021) explored how, in urban development projects in Hong Kong, material artifacts are used as a boundary object to facilitate exchanges across knowledge boundaries while also directing, controlling and managing the flow of information between engagements. Lehtinen and Aaltonen (2020) used case studies to reveal how internal stakeholders organise external stakeholders to engage in inter-organisational projects. Nguyen et al. (2019a) explored the combination of actions typically taken by external stakeholders to influence construction projects through a multi-case study. Nguyen et al. (2023) emphasised the need for managers to respond strategically when facing external stakeholders pressure which directly influencing projects. If project managers do not identify and respond to these combinations of actions promptly, external stakeholders may become more active in mobilising and forming opposition. Some examples here may be instructive when discussing the importance of external project stakeholder engagement. The North Houston Highway Improvement Project is a \$13 billion plan to expand road capacity, reduce congestion, improve safety, and enhance mobility (DeBenedetto, 2021; Saavedra, 2024). However, the project has also faced opposition from community groups concerned about the environmental impact and the relocation of people within the project's scope, notably the possible demolition of 1,235 homes, 331 businesses and five religious sites. These objections have led to the project being delayed and a federal lawsuit (DeBenedetto, 2021; Saavedra, 2024). This case shows that if external stakeholders are not involved early and well, they may join action groups and significantly impact a project even after it is launched. The impacts they have can include legal action, public protests, and political pressure, leading to increased project costs, schedule delays, and even project cancellation. Therefore, project managers must adopt strategic responses to deal with these external pressures, including negotiation, concession, manipulation, persuasion and other strategies (Nguyen et al., 2023). A similar pattern can be seen in other cases. For example, the Stuttgart 21 rail project has been vehemently opposed by environmentalists and residents due to its high cost, construction delays and environmental impact (Kirwa, 2024; Smith, 2024; Varley, 2015), and the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport Expansion project has faced stakeholder opposition, including political intervention, project cancellations, resource allocation challenges and funding issues, which have negatively impacted the project (Andae,

2024). These cases highlight the importance of early and effective engagement with external stakeholders and the need to manage these relationships during project planning and execution.

In a transnational analysis, De Luca et al. (2022) found that the characteristics of social media posts (such as content type, use of hashtags, presence of links, etc.) significantly affect the engagement of stakeholders. Social media provides a platform for community stakeholders to express and share their views and emotions. When stakeholders mobilise against a project, their collective action may create a sense of urgency for engagement, increasing the visibility and perceived importance of the problem. When they mobilise in favour of a project, they can amplify community support and positive feelings for the project through social media, thereby enhancing its legitimacy. In a systematic literature review, Hoffmann and Lutz (2015) revealed the impact of social media on governance and stakeholder engagement, especially in political and civic engagement. Studies have shown that making good use of the internet can increase stakeholder engagement in organisational affairs and promote good governance. A literature review by Krumay and Geyer (2016) indicated that social media tools offer simple, interactive, and cost-effective possibilities for interacting with different stakeholders, and found evidence that social media is an appropriate and practical way to build stakeholder engagement. J. Zhang and Chung (2024) defined online project stakeholders as users of all social media platforms and emphasised that such stakeholders can use the internet to express their views and demands.

Emotions play a crucial role on social media. Brynielsson et al. (2014) noted that one of the key factors influencing how people react and behave during a crisis is their social network and the information they receive through that network. 'Emotion' typically refers to specific, momentary psychological states such as joy, sadness, or anger, whereas 'sentiment' denotes more enduring emotional dispositions, such as an individual's general attitude or outlook toward something (Bandhakavi et al., 2021; Du & Sun, 2022). According to Bollen et al. (2011), sentiment analysis on social media shows that social, political, cultural and economic events significantly impact all dimensions of public sentiment. The large-scale analysis of sentiment can model collective mood trends and help us to understand their predictive value for existing social and economic indicators. Social media serves as a platform that allows stakeholders to express their emotional responses, which can be positive or negative and can influence the

opinions and behaviours of others. It provides a platform for stakeholders to express their voices and emotions, enhancing their sense of engagement and giving legitimacy to businesses and projects (Ninan, 2022; J. Zhang & Chung, 2024). By effectively managing and responding to their emotions, organisations can better communicate with stakeholders and improve project success rate and social impact.

With the shift in societal and private sector perceptions of the role of the modern business, and the growing recognition by management of the importance of intangible assets to the value and profitability of a business, traditional stakeholder management approaches are no longer adequate (Bendell, 2003). These approaches tend to downplay ethical and emotional considerations, but adequate stakeholder dialogue requires comprehensive and in-depth interactions (Bendell, 2003). The online space provides new platforms and tools for stakeholder dialogue but also presents new challenges, such as content management and conflict resolution (Bonsón & Flores, 2011).

Social media sites have not been fully embraced by project managers in the stakeholder engagement activities, and there is a lack of strategies for implementing effective online stakeholder dialogue (Bonsón & Flores, 2011). Stakeholder dialogue is the exchange of information and interactions between an organisation and any group or individual who can influence or be influenced by the achievement of the organisation's goals (R. Freeman, 2010). This dialogue is not just a one-way transfer of information but is mutual communication to gain understanding and consensus (Bendell, 2003). Dialogue can include consultation, co-creation, and collaboration (Miles & Ringham, 2019). It is integral to corporate social responsibility practices regarding relationship management with stakeholders other than investors (Kaptein & Van Tulder, 2003).

Stakeholder response is a dynamic and iterative process in which a company invests resources in interactions with other relevant players (Aksoy et al., 2022). It requires companies to be able to adapt to changing stakeholder expectations and behaviours. Marketing that allows public interactions is almost twice as effective in influencing performance as traditional advertising (Yang et al., 2015), underscoring the importance of effective stakeholder dialogue.

Wilson et al. (1999) discussed the impact of digital communications on the future of corporate reporting, highlighting a potential move away from stakeholder reporting towards stakeholder dialogue. Stakeholder engagement in the online space is a complex process requiring a new framework to understand and manage. Aksoy et al. (2022) proposed a stakeholder engagement framework based on triangulation, emphasising the relationship between firm performance and stakeholder engagement strategies (recognition, support, and dialogue). This demonstrates the need to understand stakeholder expectations better and manage their needs and values to improve company performance. Burchell and Cook (2006) discussed organisations' increasing focus on stakeholder dialogue and engagement processes to increase trust and accountability and provide better communication processes; they highlighted the inadequacies of traditional approaches and the need for new frameworks. To fill this theoretical gap, this study aims to build a social media based online stakeholder engagement framework for online project stakeholders.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The needs of stakeholders have a crucial influence on the project's success and failure (Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015). Organisations rely on stakeholders to achieve their projects' goals while also providing value in terms of the stakeholders' own goals. Regardless of whether it is a private or public project, all organisations that are dependent on the project should be considered, and the project should also be ethical and responsible to the stakeholders (Chow & Leiringer, 2020). The engagement of stakeholders is conducive to solving complex project problems because companies and organisations have played a vital role in influencing and changing society alongside various social movements, and corporate social responsibility has become greatly valued. Furthermore, project managers are also paying more attention to the engagement of different groups of project stakeholders (Davis, 2017), as different stakeholders have different criteria for project success (Davis, 2014), and they care about whether the project's final deliverables are in their own interests. The concerns and needs of stakeholders also change with the project's life cycle (Davis, 2017), and the impacts of different stakeholders on the project are varied and dynamic. In project management, the unpredictability of stakeholders is one of the difficulties, and stakeholder management is an activity to overcome

this difficulty (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020). Therefore, in stakeholder management, there is a need for research on the autonomous behaviour and motivation of stakeholders.

Currently, most of the current stakeholder literature focuses on managing internal stakeholders and core stakeholders while ignoring the identification and management of external stakeholders, especially community stakeholders (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017). One issue resulting from this is that the voices of community stakeholders and their potential impact on the project organisation have not been adequately researched. One of the reasons for this is that internal stakeholders have more resources of their own and more power over project resources (Aragónés-Beltrán et al., 2017). However, the influence of external stakeholders should not be ignored. Several cases in Olander and Landin's (2005) research show that the public may express their attitudes and represent the voices of community stakeholders through the media, and can bring about adverse effects on the project's progress. In such cases, the media plays a huge role; they publicise the doubts of community residents and use public opinion to pressure the project organisation into responding and changing (Olander & Landin, 2005). This illustrates that critically integrating the community's wishes into the project is one of the factors for project success, including wishes around both the ecological environment and the human environment (Purvis et al., 2015).

From a methodological perspective, in stakeholder management research, case analyses, rich pictures, causal mapping and systematic interviews are the most common data collection methods in project studies (Cuppen et al., 2016; Heravi et al., 2015; Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2019a; Olander & Landin, 2005; Purvis et al., 2015; Sergeeva et al., 2022). However, most stakeholder research is from the perspective of the project and organisation, as it observes, predicts and judges the stakeholders of the project (Cuppen et al., 2016; Mok et al., 2017; Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2019).

A need has been identified for naturalistic inquiry research, which can capture the voices and conversations of project actors in a naturally situated environment (J. Zhang & Chung, 2024). Stakeholders themselves can be independently minded individuals or groups of independent individuals, so the interaction between stakeholders and the project is organic and not influenced by the researchers (Chow & Leiringer, 2020). Traditional data collection methods

determine the topics of interviews and questionnaires (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015), and the content and order of the questions may have an influence on the interviewees, because they may contain a specific logic, and this logic and the influence of it on the interviewees is challenging to evaluate and/or control (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015). In addition, the interviewees' responses are affected by memory, prejudice and perspective, and their accuracy is often difficult to judge (Ninan, 2020). For research into viewpoints and discussions initiated by external stakeholders, the traditional interview mode would be very time-consuming, so a more convenient and efficient data collection method is necessary (Llamas & Belk, 2013).

The previous two issues (current research lacks sufficient focus on external stakeholder and lacks the collection of naturalistic data from external stakeholders' perspectives) relate to the gap in the current theory and methodology of project stakeholder management research, while the last issue (lack of practical tools to engage external stakeholders) focuses on the challenges project organisations face in practical stakeholder engagement. How project organisations respond to stakeholders, and the impact of those response strategies, along with their effectiveness, remain unexamined in stakeholder studies. Some studies on stakeholder management have proposed strategies for organising to respond to community stakeholders (Nguyen et al., 2019a). However, most of these discuss different response strategies and user feedback from the perspective of traditional companies and brands, such as marketing organisations and consumer behaviour advocates. Few studies have conducted systematic analysis and research on the feedback and responses of stakeholders (Butt et al., 2016). A study by K. Chung et al. (2023) is one of the few that have studied how project organisations respond to community stakeholders on social media in the context of infrastructure development. Under social media conditions, stakeholder analysis faces new challenges when it is used to design communication strategies for infrastructure projects, particularly regarding the completeness and depth of information acquisition—limitations that markedly diverge from traditional media approaches (K. Chung et al., 2023). This study argues that, when leveraging social media for stakeholder engagement, the processes of identifying stakeholders, assessing their influence and claims, and formulating responsive strategies all require deliberate recalibration (K. Chung et al., 2023). There are many differences in the degree and channels of community stakeholder

engagement in projects, and the project organisations' attitudes towards community stakeholder engagement are critical (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). Not all projects take the initiative to invite community stakeholders to engage in the project, and some organisations that publicly espouse their cooperation with the community do not fulfil their commitment to respect the community's wishes (Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019). Enabling external stakeholders, such as community residents, to engage with the project effectively is one of the issues that the project team has to consider, but it is challenging to achieve in the real world. The engagement of community stakeholders requires communication and feedback between the project organisation and the community (ElWakeel & Andersen, 2019), but an evaluation of the benefits of these exchanges for the management of stakeholders in the community is rarely undertaken (Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019). Whether the project organisation initiates stakeholder engagement activities, or community stakeholders voluntarily engage with the project, without effective communication to build a long-term mutually beneficial relationship, it is difficult for both the project and the community to gain mutual trust and develop further into a partnership, which harms the sustainability of the project's stakeholder engagement activities (Frerichs et al., 2017).

The above paragraphs present three issues (lacks sufficient focus on external stakeholder, lacks the collection of naturalistic data from external stakeholders' perspectives, and lack of practical tools to engage external stakeholders) in current project stakeholder engagement research from theoretical, methodological and practical perspectives respectively. This research will focus on these issues with the expectation that value will be created by addressing these issues.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The research questions for this project are:

Question 1: How do we capture, make sense of, and respond to, the voice and sentiment of community stakeholders in a naturalistic setting for better project understanding and outcomes?

Question 2: To what extent can we apply traditional project stakeholder assessment techniques (identify, analyse and prioritise) to stakeholders in the online space?

Question 3: What guidelines can be provided for project organisations to meaningfully respond to and engage with online stakeholders who may be supportive, neutral or opposed to the project?

Question 4: How can project organisations harness the online community's emotions and sentiments for better stakeholder dialogue?

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

Based on the above research questions, the main objectives of this study are set out below:

1. Use naturalistic inquiry to investigate the interaction patterns between external stakeholders themselves and projects and external stakeholders on social media platforms by identifying key interaction characteristics and their impact on project dialogue.
2. Develop a systematic set of methods and tools to help project teams accurately identify and analyse interactions of online stakeholders using a stakeholder-centric view for improving project stakeholder engagement.
3. Study and discuss stakeholders' emotions, as expressed on social media platforms and their impact on engagement, and analyse the potential emotional changes caused by project interaction.
4. Design and develop an assessment tool for measuring and analysing the engagement patterns of online stakeholders and the emotional states of stakeholders, and formulate corresponding response strategies to improve the active engagement of stakeholders and manage stakeholder emotions.
5. Create a new dialogue model to optimise the interaction between the project and online stakeholders and promote more effective communication and cooperation.

## **1.6 Research Design and Procedures**

This study uses a qualitative approach based on naturalistic inquiry, using social media data to carry out an online naturalistic inquiry. The context for the study is the development of the

Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA)<sup>1</sup> project, which is under construction at the time of writing. Using WSIA as the case study, the project's social media data — i.e., the interactions between stakeholders and the project as well as interactions between different stakeholders — formed the units of analysis.

This study's core area of enquiry is to explore online stakeholders' behaviour patterns. Using non-participant observation, the study collected data on stakeholder interactions on social media. After an initial comparison of multiple social media platforms, Facebook was selected as the main data source. This is because WSA frequently interacts with stakeholders on the Facebook platform and thus it was able to provide rich and sufficient data.

After data collection, the research team conducted analyses of themes, sentiments and emotions. In the process of data coding, the study conducted primary and secondary coding of three dimensions: 1) stakeholder issues and attitudes, 2) stakeholder sentiments and emotions, and 3) project response strategies. The study thus provides new perspectives and insights into the understanding of stakeholder behaviour patterns on social media.

The scope of this research is limited in several ways. First, it does not include analysis of stakeholder engagement activities that fall outside the defined data collection period. Second, it excludes any data beyond the data gathered from social media, such as offline communications or other digital platforms. Third, the study does not investigate the personal identities, demographic characteristics, or background information of individual stakeholders beyond their public online comments and posts. Additionally, it does not attempt to establish causal relationships or conduct in-depth profiling of independent stakeholders. Finally, this research does not involve the collection or analysis of data related to the actual decision-making processes behind stakeholder engagement plans implemented by the project organisation.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the engagement patterns of online stakeholders and the interaction behaviours between projects and their stakeholders. The primary contribution of this

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that from here on, WSIA and WSA (Western Sydney Airport) are used interchangeably (e.g. in the data).

research is the development of a new framework for online stakeholder engagement, which broadens the scope of stakeholder interaction and incorporates emotion theory into stakeholder management. The significance of this study is highlighted below from three perspectives: theoretical, methodological, and practical.

### *1.7.1 Theoretical Significance*

The theoretical contributions of this study are as follows. First, it proposes a new stakeholder dialogue model. By improving the 6C social media marketing model (Bickhoff et al., 2014), the study develops a new framework applicable to the dialogue between projects and stakeholders on social media. This new framework fills a theoretical gap by providing a systematic theoretical framework for online stakeholder engagement projects.

Second, the study extends the dimensional theory of stakeholder engagement. Applying the four stakeholder engagement dimensions proposed by R. Freeman et al. (2017) to the social media context, the study points out that stakeholder dialogue on social media not only facilitates communication with stakeholders but also reinforces multi-dimensional engagement, including problem analysis and learning. The study highlights that stakeholder dialogue on social media contributes to a deeper understanding of stakeholder needs and emotions and enhances trust relationships.

Third, the study enriches social media marketing theory and stakeholder theory. By proposing a new stakeholder dialogue model and extending R. Freeman et al.'s (2017) theory of stakeholder engagement dimensions, the study not only fills a gap in social media marketing theory but also reveals the unique role of social media in promoting stakeholder engagement in multiple dimensions. This provides new directions and perspectives for future research and helps academics and practitioners better understand the role of social media in stakeholder management.

Fourth, this study introduces the concept of stakeholder emotion work. This is a term that describes the management of emotions expressed by stakeholders online, which differs from traditional face-to-face stakeholder management methods. The study proposes tools for online emotion identification, analysis and response, and explores how to enhance stakeholder

engagement through emotion work. By introducing emotion management theory, this study highlights the importance of accessing stakeholder sentiments through emotion expressed in the digital space. The proposal of emotion management tools provides a new research direction for academia and a specific operational guide for practitioners, which helps to enhance the engagement and trust of stakeholders.

Finally, this study combines social media marketing, stakeholder theory, and emotion management theory to advance interdisciplinary research. This not only enriches the theoretical systems of these disciplines but also provides new ideas and methods for future research.

### *1.7.2 Methodological Significance*

The methodological significance of this study is that it provides a reliable and valid methodology for stakeholder research. It ensures the repeatability and consistency of the research results and provides a path for other researchers or practitioners to apply the same method and verify and extend the research results in different contexts. When analysing stakeholder engagement on social media, researchers and practitioners can gain insights into the behaviour patterns of stakeholders to develop more effective research plans and obtain new research results.

Specifically, this study adopts online naturalistic inquiry as the main methodology, following the rules of naturalistic research to minimise researcher interference with stakeholders' original activities while maintaining the data's natural integrity. This study uses publicly visible data published since the creation of the official project account, which provides a good environment for a long-term non-participant observation. Data from social media enables researchers to save time and costs during data collection while allowing observations of patterns of rich interactions and online behaviours, in contrast to traditional field surveys and interviews. For ethical reasons, this study de-identified and anonymised the account information of the social media users to protect user privacy and ensure non-traceability.

During the analysis phase, thematic analysis, sentiment analysis, and emotion analysis were undertaken. The data for the study came from social media, and was manually transformed into a database, which contained posts published by the project and the comments under each post.

Social media is a platform for interaction between the virtual world and the real world, and it represents the most natural form of online communication. By analysing these posts and comments, this study explores stakeholder engagement at different levels and reflects on the possibilities of using social media data in social science research.

Social media data has unique advantages over traditional data. Firstly, real-time social media data can provide reasonable indicators that reflect the immediate reactions and emotional changes of stakeholders. Secondly, the universality and diversity of social media data enable researchers to conduct analysis from different perspectives and at different levels, such as by analysing users' posts, comments, likes and sharing behaviours, to comprehensively understand users' interests, needs and attitudes. At the same time, the highly interactive and social nature of social media data can reveal the relationship network and influence structure among stakeholders. This has important implications for understanding stakeholder behaviour patterns and information transmission paths. By leveraging social media data, researchers and practitioners can gain rich, dynamic insights to develop better strategies and enhance stakeholder engagement and satisfaction.

### *1.7.3 Practical Significance*

The practical implications of this study are as follows. First, this study develops practical methods for analysing stakeholder engagement on social media, extracting the core issues of concern, and conducting sentiment analysis. These methods help project teams monitor and evaluate stakeholders' interactions in real time and to identify and analyse the core issues that stakeholders are most concerned about through technical means, such as keywords, tags, and content analysis, thus providing necessary references for project decision-making and strategy formulation. In addition, these tools can also analyse the emotional expression of stakeholders on social media, helping project teams understand their emotional status and adjust their strategies in a timely manner to improve communication effectiveness.

Second, this study highlights the importance of collecting stakeholder perspectives through social media, which can be systematically collected and analysed to maximise coverage of different stakeholders and identify their most pressing issues, thus providing valuable reference information for improving and optimising projects. This research provides strategies for dealing

with social media stakeholders, including information-driven, delivery-driven and issue-driven strategies. Applying these strategies can effectively improve the satisfaction and loyalty of stakeholders and increase their support and engagement in the project. In terms of sentiment analysis, the tools developed in this study can identify the emotional fluctuations of stakeholders and help project teams detect potential problems and crises in good time. This early warning mechanism enables the team to take action before the problem expands, reducing negative impacts and increasing stakeholder satisfaction and trust.

Third, the study explores the characteristics of different social media platforms and their impact on stakeholder engagement. By using multi-platform social media, in ways such as posting content, interacting on different platforms, and carrying out activities, project teams can maximise coverage, engage different types of stakeholders, and enhance the overall engagement effect. The study shows that community stakeholders can express their concerns and opinions about the project through social media, easily share their views, raise questions and suggestions, and thus influence the decision-making and implementation process of the project.

Fourth, the study examines the ways in which social media provides a direct channel for community stakeholders to communicate with the project team. Community stakeholders are often the object of direct project impact, and their feedback and opinions are critical to the success of the project. Through social media, community stakeholders can express their needs and expectations more conveniently and receive timely replies and feedback from the project team, ensuring that their voices are fully considered in the project decision-making process. This direct interaction helps to increase the sense of involvement and trust of stakeholders, thus enhancing their support and active engagement in the project. Through this multi-platform social media usage strategy, a project team is able to understand the needs and expectations of stakeholders in real time and quickly respond to their concerns and suggestions, ensuring transparency and openness of the project. The interactivity and comprehensive coverage of social media enable project teams to manage stakeholder relationships more effectively and improve the overall execution of the project.

Fifth, this study provides an integrated framework to help project teams better manage and channel stakeholder engagement through the development and application of social media tools and methods. Practitioners and project leaders can take full advantage of the powerful influence of social media platforms to actively listen to the voices of community stakeholders and analyse their issues, sentiments and emotions through the online stakeholder engagement framework developed in this study. Practitioners can collect and analyse discussions and feedback on social media, which helps them grasp stakeholders' perspectives and opinions and identify and solve problems promptly, having a better understanding on community needs and feedback. This ability is further enhanced by applying sentiment analysis techniques, enabling project leaders to decode emotional tendencies in text data and more accurately understand how stakeholders feel. Improving communication and dialogue with community stakeholders innovatively helps project leaders keep abreast of project progress and potential issues, enabling a rapid response. Through this online dialogue model, project leaders can promptly adjust and optimise response strategies, communicate effectively with stakeholders more openly and interactively, and improve project transparency, engagement, and community satisfaction. Above all, positive interactions and timely responses are key to building trust and transparency. Project leaders can engage in direct dialogue with the public through social media platforms, listening to their opinions and suggestions and openly responding to their questions and concerns. This open and interactive approach to communication enhances the credibility of the project. It promotes the engagement and support of community stakeholders, laying a solid foundation for the project's long-term success.

## **1.8 Structure of this Thesis**

The structure of the remainder of this thesis is as follows.

In Chapter 2, the literature review discusses traditional stakeholder management theories and existing stakeholder engagement theories and tools, with particular reference to the current situation of community stakeholders in infrastructure projects. It identifies the current research gap, and introduces organisational emotion theory and social media related theory, and proposes a naturalistic emotion stakeholder engagement framework as a new theoretical framework and research model.

Chapter 3 includes the research design and methodology of this study. Firstly, the main background of Western Sydney Airport, the case selected for this study, is briefly described. Then, the primary research methodology of this study, online naturalistic inquiry, is discussed. Combined with naturalistic inquiry, the data collection method of this study is elaborated, and the reasons for the selection of the social media platform are given. The ethical issues of using online public data are also discussed. Finally, the chapter provides a discussion and description of the data analysis process and a summary of the research design.

Chapter 4 states the main findings of this study, showing the first-order and second-order coding in the data analysis from three perspectives: stakeholder attitudes and issues, sentiment and emotions, and project response strategies. The behavioural patterns of the subjects found in the data are summarised.

Chapter 5 returns to a discussion of the theory, building on the findings in Chapter 4 and incorporating the motivational research questions raised in Chapter 2 to extend the social media stakeholder engagement framework. Using the new social media stakeholder engagement framework, this chapter summarises the new social media stakeholder dialogue model and develops new stakeholder analysis tools. Finally, according to the characteristics of different social media platforms, this chapter completes a multi-platform online stakeholder engagement framework.

Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the key findings and innovations of the study, discusses the main contributions of this study from the three perspectives of theory, method and practice, and discusses the implications. Finally, the chapter presents the limitations of this study and points to directions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on reviewing the current literature on project stakeholder engagement theories, in order to establish a framework for guiding the engagement of community stakeholders via social media.

With the widespread use of the internet, more external stakeholders have gained the opportunity to engage with projects through social media. The voices of these stakeholders can be difficult to capture under current traditional project stakeholder management frameworks, and it is difficult for them to directly influence project decision-making due to the limited power of those stakeholders, while in some cases, with appropriate influence strategies, external stakeholders, such as community stakeholders, can draw some impacts on a project. Stakeholders are more than isolated individuals who act solely on rational cost–benefit calculations; they coalesce into “affective publics” held together by emotional resonance. Drawing on sentiment and emotion theory, when a project issue sparks intense shared feelings, collective sentiment can override individual reasoning and shape stakeholders’ unified action. Based on these theories, this research will explore the formation of online engagement of stakeholders from the perspective of project value and emotions.

In this chapter, traditional theories of project stakeholders, including definitions, processes, and methods, will be discussed, followed by project stakeholder assessment methods, stakeholder influence strategies and stakeholder dialogue. Moreover, the engagement of community stakeholders in project practice in relation to infrastructure projects will also be discussed. Then, after exploring the gap in current project stakeholder research, the use of social media in stakeholder engagement will be considered.

### **2.2 Conceptual Foundations**

This study uses three main concepts — stakeholder engagement, social media, and emotion — which are interconnected to form the conceptual framework.

### *2.2.1 Stakeholder Engagement and Social Media*

The rapid growth of social media has had a profound impact on stakeholder engagement. According to R. Freeman et al.'s (2017) stakeholder engagement theory, social media has not only changed the way firms interact with stakeholders but also played a crucial role in enhancing engagement, improving transparency, and facilitating relationship building. The core feature of social media lies in its high degree of interactivity, which provides a more dynamic two-way communication method, which differs from traditional one-way communication media (Ninan, 2022). This two-way communication allows organisations to engage in real-time dialogue with stakeholders, leading to a significant increase in engagement. For example, a study by De Luca et al. (2022) showed that the characteristics of social media posts (such as the content of tweets and hashtag usage) by companies directly affects the engagement rate of stakeholders, indicating that the design of interactive content is crucial to promote stakeholder engagement. Z. Chen et al. (2017) found that start-ups improved their awareness of stakeholders through social media, promoted information sharing and word-of-mouth communication, established long-term relationships, and developed new business opportunities. This finding shows that social media is not only a communication tool but also a platform for strategic engagement. Thus, by using social media strategically, firms are able to manage their relationships with stakeholders better while enhancing their reputation and image.

Saxton and Waters (2014) divided the content posted by organisations on social media into three categories: information, publicity and mobilisation, and dialogue. Conversational content is more effective in attracting user interaction, which not only increases the sense of engagement but also profoundly strengthens the relationship with stakeholders. Men and Tsai (2016) emphasised that the project's strategies for stakeholders should be based on a deep understanding of the needs and interests of stakeholders in order to achieve more effective communication and interaction. Lehtinen and Aaltonen (2022) pointed out that social media can enable external stakeholders to engage in project activities, thus improving project performance. However, this engagement is more about the transfer of information than the co-creation of value. Through transparent and proactive communication, project managers can effectively influence the attitude of stakeholders towards the project and their level of

engagement. K. Chung et al. (2023) demonstrated that social media provides an efficient platform for the engagement of community stakeholders. Given that many projects failed to respond to community stakeholder comments in a timely manner and missed opportunities to strengthen relationships, K. Chung et al. (2023) additionally demonstrated challenges in applying existing frameworks for identifying and assessing stakeholders in the online space. They also provided a framework for stakeholder issue prioritisation and appropriate response strategies to engage community stakeholders via the social media environment (K. Chung et al., 2023)

Bonsón and Flores (2011) highlighted the great potential of using social media for truly effective stakeholder dialogue; through its high interactivity and immediacy, social media dramatically enhanced stakeholder engagement. Organisations can obtain feedback from stakeholders in real-time through social media and adjust accordingly; this rapid interaction enhances the sense of engagement among stakeholders while improving the transparency and coping ability of organisations (Khanal et al., 2021). Social media makes the organisation's operation and decision-making more open and transparent, thus enhancing the sense of trust of stakeholders in the organisation. By sharing information and responding to the concerns of stakeholders, organisations can establish a more solid trust relationship with stakeholders (Manetti et al., 2017). Social media thus provides a platform for long-term relationship building between organisations and stakeholders. Z. Chen et al. (2017) pointed out that social media can not only help organisations cultivate long-term relationships but also develop new business opportunities and enhance corporate image and reputation. This relationship building is not limited to the exchange of information, but also includes dialogue and cooperation. The diversity of social media platforms enables organisations to adopt diverse communication strategies based on the needs of different stakeholders. Whether it is information dissemination, publicity mobilisation, or dialogue establishment, social media provides an effective means to achieve extensive engagement of stakeholders (Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019; Saxton & Waters, 2014).

Social media thus has great potential to enhance stakeholder engagement. Its interactivity, transparency, and flexibility enable organisations to manage relationships with stakeholders

more effectively, enhance trust, and facilitate the building of long-term relationships. This research will explore how to optimise social media strategies to achieve more efficient stakeholder engagement and relationship management.

### *2.2.2 Social Media and Emotions*

The relationship between social media and emotions has attracted much attention, especially in the field of research on how social media shapes and transmits emotions, which in turn influence public and stakeholder behaviour. Sentiment analysis tools offer a new way to understand the public's collective emotional trends, especially on global platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook.

Social media is not only a platform for users to express emotions but also significantly impacts emotions through its content and interaction mechanisms. Bollen et al. (2011) showed that social media content was closely related to emotions and preeminent social, political and economic events that had a significant impact on public emotions. By analysing the content of tweets, they found that emotion swings not only directly reflect current events but may also predict socioeconomic phenomena. This approach to sentiment analysis demonstrates social media as an effective platform for emotional delivery and collective emotional expression. Large-scale sentiment analysis can reveal trends in public sentiment and provide data support for understanding the collective response of emotion at specific points in time (Bollen et al., 2011). Brynielsson et al. (2014) further extended this idea and discussed the application of social media emotion classification in crises. In crisis management, changes in public emotion directly affect organisations' response and behaviour when releasing information. Social media sentiment analysis was used to detect public reaction to crisis information; this tool, based on emotion classification, helps crisis managers better understand and predict public emotional reactions in emergency decision-making so they can take appropriate measures (Brynielsson et al., 2014). In addition, Ji et al. (2019) studied how the emotional content of information released by enterprises on social media affects public engagement. Using an analysis of Facebook posts, they found that affective factors, such as the presence of emotions, emotional valence (positive or negative emotions), and emotional intensity, all significantly influence public likes, shares, and comments (Ji et al., 2019). This indicates that companies can increase public engagement

by effectively using emotional content on social media. In particular, solid emotional messages are more likely to trigger public attention and reactions and promote online engagement.

Further, research has shown that the presence of emotional content can effectively attract the attention of stakeholders and motivate them to engage in the conversation. Jin et al. (2017) found that different combinations of social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram) affected users' emotional experience and motivation. This suggests that emotion expressed on social media is a multidimensional phenomenon that is not only influenced by the platform types but also closely related to the user's emotional motivation, and interaction. Ji et al. (2019) showed that emotional features (emotional presence, valence, and intensity) could stimulate deeper public engagement than functional features (interactivity and vividness). In corporate communication, emotional content is not only the transmitter of information but also a tool to stimulate in-depth interaction between the public and the brand (Ji et al., 2019). Such interaction is not limited to simple likes or shares but is more likely to trigger public comments and discussions, thus shaping the public's brand awareness and emotional connection.

The relationship between social media and emotions demonstrates a complex two-way interaction process. Social media is a channel for emotional expression and also has an influence on the emotional responses of the public and stakeholders. By analysing the emotional content of social media, researchers and enterprises can better understand public emotional fluctuations, predict collective emotional trends, and make more effective decisions in situations such as crisis management and brand communication.

### *2.2.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Emotions*

The development potential of emotion theory in the theory of stakeholder engagement is gradually becoming more valued. Research has shown that emotions not only affect individual decisions and behaviours but also profoundly affect stakeholder interactions within and outside organisations. Therefore, the incorporation of emotion theory into the theoretical framework of stakeholder engagement can provide researchers with a new perspective to better understand the complex dynamic relationship between organisations and stakeholders.

There is growing attention being paid to the impact of emotions on stakeholders. Ayoko et al. (2017) pointed out that, during organisational crises, the emotional reactions of stakeholders (such as employees) include negative emotions, such as anger, fear, shame and depression, which have a direct impact on their behaviours and attitudes. These stakeholders' emotions reflect their cognitive assessment of the crisis and drive the way they interact with the organisation. A study by Cao et al. (2021) on the supply chain shows that big data and information transparency affect the emotional state of stakeholders, and emotions further determine their trust and engagement in the organisation. Therefore, managers need to keenly identify and manage emotions in the stakeholder engagement process to avoid the long-term impact of negative emotions on the organisation.

Emotion theory can enrich the theoretical framework of stakeholder engagement. Traditional stakeholder theory focuses on rational factors such as interest, power and influence but it ignores the role of emotions in stakeholder decision-making. Emotion theory complements the non-rational element in stakeholder engagement by revealing the perceptions, and cognitive and emotional reactions of stakeholders. For example, using cognitive evaluation theory, Dufour et al. (2019) revealed how the emotional reactions of stakeholders after organisational misconduct affect their decision-making and action intentions; for example, anger or frustration of stakeholders with organisational behaviour may lead them to take actions such as boycotts or protests. In contrast, secondary emotions such as hope or regret may prompt them to adopt more moderate response strategies (Dufour et al., 2019). These processes of emotional reactions and action decisions are complex and dynamic, so incorporating emotion theory allows researchers to understand the complexity of stakeholder engagement more fully.

The research potential of emotion theory lies in the in-depth exploration of the complex relationship between emotion and stakeholder interaction. Research by Cennamo et al. (2012) showed that, when faced with stakeholder problems, family businesses often prioritise positive interaction with specific stakeholders, in order to consider socioemotional wealth. In this instance, the non-financial motives of family firms and the emotions of stakeholders are intertwined and affect the decision-making process. Emotions thus serve as a driving force for stakeholder engagement and a means for family firms to protect their socioemotional wealth.

Similarly, Ayoko et al. (2017) emphasised that the emotion management strategies of top managers for employees during the organisational crisis directly affected employees' trust and loyalty to the organisation. Therefore, emotions in the stakeholder engagement process can either be a positive factor driving organisational behaviour or a negative factor exacerbating conflict and distrust. Emotion theory can help projects better understand organisational behaviour and stakeholder responses during times of crisis, change, or conflict. For example, in the context of big data, Cao et al. (2021) explored the emotional reactions of stakeholders to technology adoption, revealing how emotions affect cooperation and information sharing between organisations and external stakeholders.

Combining emotion theory with stakeholder engagement theory helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of how organisations can maintain long-term relationships with stakeholders through emotion management and emotional interaction. This research direction not only enriches the theoretical framework but also puts forward new requirements for practical management, that is, how to effectively identify, manage and use emotions to optimise the stakeholder engagement process.

## **2.3 Stakeholder Engagement**

### *2.3.1 An Overview of Project Stakeholder Management and Classical Works*

#### 2.3.1.1 Definition and History of Project Stakeholder Management

R. Freeman defined stakeholders in 1984 as “any group or individual that can influence or be affected by the achievement of organisational goals” (Freeman, 2010). This is considered the classic definition of a stakeholder. However, the concept and theories of stakeholders are still considered confusing and vague (Donaldson & Preston, 1995), partly because there are both broad and narrow definitions of stakeholders. The broad definition of a stakeholder comes from Gray et al. (1996), who defined a stakeholder as “any human agency that can be influenced by, or can itself influence, the activities of the organisation in question”. The narrow definition of stakeholders is “individuals who own shares or vested interests in a company or groups that interact with companies” (Starik, 1994). Stakeholders in the narrow sense are often related to the group that has direct or economic interests in the organisation, while stakeholders in the

broad sense can be expanded reasonably to not only living entities like plants and animals, but also non-living forms like rocks and water (Starik, 1994). Therefore, the concept of stakeholder needs to be discussed in terms of the strategic goals of the enterprise and organisation.

The emergence of the concept of stakeholders stems from the continuous development of economic society and corporate management, in which corporate social responsibility has become an important issue for the public (Friedman & Miles, 2006). The question of to whom the company needs to be responsible has become the focus of discussion among researchers. Different understandings of stakeholders have become an important background factor to the study of stakeholder theory in combination with an examination of the strategic needs of organisations and companies. R. Freeman (2010) discussed stakeholders and strategic management from an organisational perspective and has been criticised as holding a firm-centric view of stakeholders. He proposed that with the development of the economy, the original organisational model does not meet today's needs and benefits in strategic organisational decision-making and proposed a simplified version of the stakeholder strategy formulation process. His stakeholder map identifies 12 stakeholder categories that need to be included in the company's strategic considerations (R. Freeman, 2010). Since then, stakeholder theory has diverged into three categories — 'descriptive', 'instrumental' and 'normative' — and these categories may coexist in actual project management (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Reed (2002) gave a clear description of the defined categories of these three types of stakeholders and replaced the original names of each category with the terms 'proactive', 'strategic' and 'normative'.

However, when traditional stakeholder classification frameworks are applied to the analysis of stakeholders on social media, their effectiveness becomes limited. Most conventional stakeholder theories and classification tools are based on the identification of stakeholders' real-world identities. In the context of social media, however, verifying the true identities of stakeholders is often difficult, due to platform policies, privacy concerns, and legal constraints in different jurisdictions. Moreover, the boundary between stakeholders' online engagement and their real-life contexts is often blurred. This overlap adds further complexity and ambiguity to the classification of online stakeholders. As a result, the applicability of traditional

stakeholder classification methods is questionable in the arena of the management of stakeholder engagement within digital environments.

The impact of stakeholders on project management is becoming more and more significant, and can include having a direct effect on the success of the project (Davis, 2016). Stakeholder management in project management is dynamic and needs to be adjusted according to stage in the project lifecycle (Aarseth et al., 2013). Unlike the triple constraint in traditional project management, project stakeholder management is 'soft', i.e., it has low dependence on procedural and other hard tools and has a high degree of flexibility, so it is easy to describe in theory but challenging to master in practice (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2016).

#### 2.3.1.2 Process of Project Stakeholder Management

Although stakeholder management relies more on 'soft' technologies, 'hard' procedures, such as basic stakeholder management processes, are also indispensable. Eskerod and Jepsen (2016) advocated a basic analytical framework of stakeholders, including project stakeholder identification, project stakeholder evaluation and project stakeholder priority.

Identifying project stakeholders is not only to be done in the early and planning stages of the project, but must also be repeated regularly throughout the project lifecycle (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2016). When identifying stakeholders, the project team can identify project stakeholders in different ways, such as looking for stakeholders from the different professional fields required by the project, simulating activities over the entire life cycle of the project to identify stakeholders, and using various lists or historical data (Bradley, 2016). In actual projects, the number of identified stakeholders is not absolute. Practically, most project organisations have not listed enough stakeholders, and grouping the identified stakeholders is also suggested by current scholars as a vital step that is conducive to management (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2016). This also aligns with the nature of stakeholder engagement on social media, where the empirical connection between stakeholders' identities and their expressed viewpoints tends to be relatively weak (K. Chung et al., 2023).

In the evaluation of stakeholders, the decisive factors are the stakeholders' contributions to and requirements of the project (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2016). Resources are the basis for the

stakeholders to contribute to the project, and the resources possessed by stakeholders facilitate or limit their contribution in creating project value (Savage et al., 1991). Public value is considered objective and unchanging, while project value affects stakeholders' behaviour in environmental, social, financial and system aspects (Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2019). As these are objective facts, it is easy for the project team to confirm and evaluate them. In contrast, the needs and interests of stakeholders are often subjective, and it is more difficult for the project team to evaluate and judge these factors accurately. To try to evaluate them, the project team can use the stakeholder potential matrix (Savage et al., 1991), stakeholder commitment matrix (McElroy & Mills, 2003) and attitude–information grid (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2016). In actual projects, resources are often limited, and stakeholder management cannot be undertaken under completely ideal conditions. Therefore, the project needs to prioritise stakeholders in the management process, allocate limited resources reasonably, and manage stakeholders with trade-offs.

Stakeholders have three crucial attributes when engaging with a project. They are: 1) the power to influence the project, 2) the legitimacy of their relationship with the project, and 3) stakeholders' urgency to the project (Mitchell et al., 1997). Furthermore, stakeholder groups have four factors that may affect the project: 1) knowledge (stakeholders' intangible capabilities in skills and knowledge), 2) social skills (the intangible value tied to individual social interactions), 3) assets (all stakeholder assets with monetary worth), and 4) externalities (the elements that foster stakeholders' external dependencies) (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017). By investigating, evaluating and analysing these factors, the status and weight of the activities that stakeholders engage in can be ascertained.

Moreover, the stakeholder circle mapping technique can also be used to visually analyse the importance of project stakeholders (Aragonés-Beltrán et al., 2017; Bourne & Walker, 2008). According to the concept of the stakeholder circle (Bourne & Walker, 2006, 2008), stakeholders' direct interest relationships and indirect dependency relationships are divided into three levels: 1) the project's own stakeholders, 2) secondary stakeholders and 3) third-party stakeholders (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). In addition, it must be noted that, as the project progresses,

stakeholders' priorities for a project are not static, so periodically reassessing the priority of stakeholders is essential.

These procedures and tools are the foundation for project stakeholder management, and successful stakeholder management is inseparable from understanding what motivates stakeholders to participate in and contribute to the project (Harrison et al., 2019). Stakeholders' perceptions of real input and gains vary and are affected by subjective factors. The project organisation needs to make predictions and judgments about the motives of these stakeholders and the expectations of returns to motivate stakeholders to contribute to the value creation of the project (Bosse et al., 2009).

Social media offers inherent advantages in enhancing the understanding of stakeholder perspectives. It democratises the flow of information, enabling organisations to interact with stakeholders in real time, foster a sense of community, and encourage direct dialogue. According to Tiew et al. (2015), media platforms, including social media, play a facilitative role in informing and persuading audiences, thereby empowering stakeholders. This reciprocal communication allows for deeper insights into stakeholder sentiments, as organisations can gather immediate feedback through comments, likes, and shares. Such feedback often provides authentic stakeholders' views.

Project managers need to make trade-offs in the management of stakeholders (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2016). In the early decision-making stage of the project, the reasonable selection of stakeholders to engage in the project decision-making is a challenge for the project team. Inappropriate stakeholders involved in decision-making may adversely affect the project. Therefore, the project team need different management strategies to deal with the complex situation. Stakeholder management strategies are mainly divided into two categories: positive and negative. Positive strategies refer to the project organisation proactively predicting stakeholders' possible behaviours and activities and managing these behaviours proactively. Negative strategies, also known as reactive strategies, refer to the project organisation's targeted response after the stakeholders have made requests or actions. Eskerod and Jepsen (2016) believe that a positive strategy is more conducive to strengthening the management of stakeholders, and the goals of a positive strategy are mainly focused around: 1) maintaining the

position of the stakeholders, 2) changing the negative attitudes of the stakeholders, 3) inspiring stakeholders by improving the perception of fairness, and 4) reducing the potential harm caused by stakeholders. These goals are all related to the factors considered in the stakeholder assessment. When communicating with stakeholders, the content, timing, and communication method are essential factors that the project organisation needs to consider. Therefore, the project team will adopt different communication methods for different stakeholders (Eskeroed & Jepsen, 2016). While the advantages of social media align well with these objectives, there is still a lack of systematic theories and tools to support its effective use.

### *2.3.2 Project Stakeholder Engagement Process in Projects*

The shift from stakeholder management to stakeholder engagement represents a critical transformation in the field of project management. While effective stakeholder management helps establish foundational relationships and communication channels, fostering active stakeholder engagement can deepen engagement and enhance project outcomes. Amoatey and Hayibor (2017) argue that the complexity of client organisations and their environments necessitates a clear mission statement for effective stakeholder management. Such clarity lays the groundwork for more meaningful stakeholder engagement in project development. As emphasised by Amadi et al. (2018), early and continuous stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle is essential. Proactive engagement helps identify stakeholder concerns and preferences, reducing the likelihood of conflicts in later stages of the project. This proactive approach enhances the relevance of stakeholder feedback, ensuring that the project better aligns with their needs and expectations. Moreover, when stakeholders are genuinely engaged, they feel valued and are more likely to contribute innovative ideas and solutions, ultimately improving project outcomes. Incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives fosters collaboration and elevates overall project quality, highlighting the necessity of transitioning from a management-centric model to participatory engagement practices (Mysore et al., 2019). Recognising the importance of stakeholder engagement contributes to the development of more resilient and responsive projects. In increasingly complex and interdependent environments, such engagement improves stakeholder satisfaction and increases the likelihood of project success.

### 2.3.2.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement with a project is related to the success of the project, and the stakeholder's engagement activities are also affected by the uncertainty, dynamics and complexity of projects. Beringer et al. (2013) revealed that the intensity of stakeholder engagement in the project significantly impacts project results. The engagement of stakeholders has a strong correlation with project performance, and the interests of stakeholders are also affected by the results of the project (Beringer et al., 2013). The influence of stakeholder engagement continually changes with the different project stages.

Stakeholders' views and positions on the project also have a dynamic nature (Bourne & Walker, 2006; Chow & Leiringer, 2020), thus making the stakeholder analysis process iterative rather than one-time only (Cuppen et al., 2016). Each project stakeholder has different responsibilities and rights, and they will change over the project life cycle process (Aarseth et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2015). In the research of Cuppen et al. (2016), the degree of stakeholder engagement is significantly related to stakeholders' rights in organisational decision-making. Moreover, stakeholder dynamics are prevalent in actual projects (ElWakeel & Andersen, 2019), and researchers generally support stakeholders' extensive engagement in project planning, considering and optimising project results from a social perspective (Erkul et al., 2019). With the increase in project complexity, stakeholder-engaging project management is considered a useful development of traditional project management theory (Sarhadi et al., 2018).

### 2.3.2.2 Stakeholder Engagement Process

The degree of stakeholder engagement varies from project to project. Many studies have put forward specific evaluation methods for the degree of stakeholder engagement. The measurement of stakeholder engagement integrates qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and researchers use a variety of stakeholder analysis tools to estimate and measure the engagement of project stakeholders.

Eskerod and Huemann (2013) emphasised the importance of engaging stakeholders at an extended level in a stakeholder management approach because, otherwise, it is impossible to truly understand their needs, desires, and concerns. Eskerod, Huemann and Ringhofer (2015)

put forward the concepts of “information-oriented” and “communication-oriented” engagement, distinguishing the different engagement types of one-way communication (such as newsletters and leaflets) and two-way communication (such as seminars and information evenings). In a literature review, Kujala et al. (2022) elucidated the construction of stakeholder engagement and provided an inclusive definition to unlock the full potential of stakeholder engagement in research. They identified the practical components of ethics, strategy, stakeholder engagement, and stakeholder goals, activities, and impacts. Their research reveals that the process of guiding stakeholder engagement still faces numerous challenges. Traditional modes of information exchange often fail to effectively promote stakeholder engagement (Bekkers et al., 2013), and may place a burden on project resources. As a result, stakeholder engagement can become marginalised and excluded from the core objectives of the project (Eskerod & Huemann, 2013).

At the practical level, Eskerod and Jepsen (2016) divided the activities of stakeholder engagement into two steps: analysis and interaction. Analysis involves identifying, evaluating, and prioritising stakeholders, while interaction is the purposeful communication designed and executed to meet stakeholder needs. Boesso and Kumar (2016) provided design principles for stakeholder engagement, including the three levels of organisation, values, and practices. They emphasised the importance of planning, flexibility, systematic input gathering, and iterative processes. These principles help to plan stakeholder engagement activities in research programs and to monitor and evaluate stakeholder engagement. Stocker et al. (2020) proposed an analytical criterion for identifying and categorising levels of engagement between firms and stakeholders. They adopted three levels of stakeholder engagement classification: information strategy, response strategy and engagement strategy. The results show that, although strategic interventions are the best quality ones, they are the least adopted by the companies studied, as they tend to focus their engagement actions at the least complex level.

Sachs and Kujala (2021) discussed the current and future debates on stakeholder engagement in management research, highlighting the strategic and normative camps and proposing future research needs. They emphasised the importance of stakeholder engagement in realising organisational and stakeholder value. Stakeholder value reflects their main value perspective towards project (Schormair & Gilbert, 2020). Aakhus and Bzdak (2015) discussed the

challenges of stakeholder engagement, such as expectations management, resource allocation, and conflicts of interest. They stressed that, while broad stakeholder definition and engagement is ideal, in practice, there may be a need to balance the needs and expectations of different stakeholders. Kujala et al. (2022) summarised future research avenues for stakeholder engagement research, including the primarily overlooked “dark side” of stakeholder engagement, including the adverse effects, conflicts, or potential harms arising from stakeholder engagement, and how to complement current understanding. They mention that future research needs to explore the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of stakeholder engagement more deeply.

### 2.3.2.3 Stakeholder Influence Strategies

In addition to considering stakeholder engagement from the perspective of project organisation, the situation in which stakeholders choose to actively engage in the project has also been considered by scholars, and some studies have proposed stakeholder influence strategies.

If stakeholders want to influence project results, they must increase their power to the extent that they can hinder the project’s progress (Cuppen et al., 2016). It is more difficult for external stakeholders to gain a strong voice than internal stakeholders (Nguyen et al., 2019a). Stakeholders can influence the project by controlling or restricting the source of the project’s resources (Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019), usually most feasible for internal stakeholders (Nguyen et al., 2019a). In stakeholder group mobilisation, the degree of overlap in the interests and identities of the stakeholder group members influences the likelihood of social activism occurring (Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003). External stakeholders need to use more complex and challenging methods to pressure the company or project organisation because they do not hold any traditional resources that can influence their projects. For example, some stakeholders try to increase their influence on the project by increasing the perceived legitimacy of stakeholders’ rights or needs.

The influence strategy of external stakeholders on the project usually has three stages:

1. criticising and questioning the project to reduce the credibility of the project,

- 2. disseminating the views as mentioned above, expanding the group base of views, and finally,
- 3. mobilising or organising these groups to effectively influence the project (Nguyen et al., 2019a).

The attributes of stakeholder behaviour include legitimacy, power and urgency (Nguyen et al., 2019b; Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019). Disputes with stakeholders affect the reputation of the project, and a poor reputation will harm the final delivery results of the project (Frooman, 1999). Moreover, some customers may use sabotage, or (threats of) strikes and boycotts to oppose the changes, while other stakeholders may have higher decision-making power in the project or join the opposition camp (Frooman, 1999).

Frooman (1999) systematically summarised and classified theories of stakeholder strategies to influence an organisation’s decision. Stakeholder withholding and usage strategies are based on resource dependency, which helps the stakeholders to expand their influence on projects. He also pointed out two different ways of executing and implementing these strategies: indirectly and directly (Frooman, 1999). For primary project stakeholder influence strategies, Frooman (1999) provided a four-dimensional concept: 1) direct withholding, 2) indirect withholding, 3) direct usage, and 4) indirect usage. Friedman and Miles (2006) added voice strategy and damage strategy to this strategies theory, outlining four main types of stakeholder strategies: 1) stakeholder withholding strategy, 2) stakeholder usage strategy, 3) voice strategy and 4) damage strategy. The above categories are summarised in Table 2-1

**Table 2-1** *Types of Stakeholder Influence Strategies*

Types of Stakeholder Strategies	Actions
Stakeholder withholding strategies	Boycotts Labour strikes and other forms of labour actions Negative investment screening and exclusion
Stakeholder usage strategy	Positive investment screening Shareholder activism and proxy resolution Stakeholder–organisation alliances

Types of Stakeholder Strategies	Actions
	Divestitures
Voice strategies	Constructive dialogues Letter-writing campaigns
Damage strategy	Boycotts as a damage strategy Direct activism Modified vendettas

Source: Friedman and Miles (2006).

In recent research on project stakeholders, the actions of bolstering and lobbying by external stakeholders are considered to have good results. In addition, coalition building, campaigns, conflict escalation, boycott, litigation and communication are also considered possible ways to pressure target organisations and projects (Nguyen et al., 2019a, 2019b).

Stakeholders' influence strategies are often related to the project's value, and the method and degree of these influences are different at different stages of the project (Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2019). For example, Loi (2016) revealed that the actions and responses of stakeholders include protests and safeguarding legitimate rights and interests through official channels. In addition, involving the most influential stakeholders in the early stages of the project is vital to the successful delivery of the project (Ross, 2009). For example, government stakeholders usually include the government's legitimate stakeholders and stakeholders from social regulations (Sallinen et al., 2013) because when the project involves social interests, society, citizens, and the government plays an intermediary role to link societal goals to the project. Usually, these demands need to be resolved through policy and legal channels (Sallinen et al., 2013).

Due to its immediacy and interactivity, social media provides stakeholders with a platform to express their opinions, enabling project teams to receive real-time feedback and thereby improve their understanding of stakeholder needs. Lobo and Abid (2020) highlight that social media facilitates influence strategies among internal stakeholders, encourages collective action, and helps build a foundation of mutual understanding and trust. This interactivity means stakeholder voices are more likely to be heard, allowing project managers to better grasp their needs and attitudes. Furthermore, social media serves as a public space for information sharing and discussion, helping stakeholders better understand each other's positions and expectations.

For example, Gomez-Carrasco and Michelon (2017) found that social media activity can significantly shape stakeholders' perceptions of a company, which in turn influences investor decision-making. Such interaction not only reduces misunderstandings in the communication process but also alleviates stakeholder anxiety caused by information asymmetry, ultimately strengthening their support for the project.

#### 2.3.2.4 Stakeholder Dialogue

In the theory of project stakeholder engagement, stakeholder dialogue involves both the project side and the stakeholder side. O'Riordan and Fairbrass (2008) believed that stakeholder dialogue can provide effective solutions for project managers to identify, solve and balance the demands of stakeholders. Kaptein and Van Tulder (2003) proposed a transition from the idea of "stakeholder debate" to "stakeholder dialogue". They outline ten basic conditions (include to know and be understood, trust and reliability, clear rules for the dialogue, a coherent vision on the dialogue, dialogue skills, expertise in the subject matter, clear dialogue structure, valid information as basis, consecutive meetings, feedback of results) for stakeholder dialogue in project implementation, and several basic dimensions for measuring stakeholder dialogue, including the topic type, the number of stakeholders involved, the frequency of dialogue, the number of topics included in a single dialogue, the type of problem orientation of the organisation, time orientation of the organisation, the organisation's members in the participants of the dialogue, the level of the organisation where the dialogue takes place, the monitoring of the quality of the dialogue, and whether it is included in the annual report of the organisation (Kaptein & Van Tulder, 2003). Using these stakeholder dialogue dimensions, Kaptein and Van Tulder (2003) discussed four types of stakeholder dialogue: 1) broadly active dialogue, 2) stakeholder group dialogue, 3) selectively reactive stakeholder dialogue, and 4) defensive dialogue.

Kujala and Sachs (2019) incorporated the idea of "moving from stakeholder debate to stakeholder dialogue" and "analysis of stakeholder dialogue process" into their "communicating with stakeholders" theme of stakeholder engagement. In addition to stakeholder communication, R. Freeman et al.'s (2017) elements of stakeholder engagement also include three other themes: examining stakeholder relations, learning with and from

stakeholders, and integrative stakeholder engagement. Therefore, stakeholder dialogue is not just about “communicating with stakeholders”.

Burchell and Cook (2006) pointed out that expanding stakeholder dialogue provides new opportunities for stakeholder learning and further stakeholder engagement. Effective stakeholder dialogue can promote a broad understanding between the organisation and its stakeholders. Cuppen (2012) also showed that stakeholder dialogue is able to focus on stakeholder learning as one of the main objectives. Stakeholder dialogue enhances co-learning between the organisation and stakeholders through deliberation and may also help them reach a consensus. At the same time, stakeholder dialogue is more open, which does not force one party to make a compromise to reach a consensus. However, as Burchell and Cook (2006) also acknowledge, stakeholder dialogue is usually a very slow and gradual process, and both the organisation and stakeholders need time and patience to develop new dialogue relationships, and, due to limited project resources, many project teams are deterred by this kind of deeply engaged stakeholder dialogue that requires more investment of resources. By shifting stakeholder dialogue to social media platforms, the problem of resource constraints may be alleviated.

Bonsón and Flores (2011) pointed out the potential of using social media for stakeholder dialogue in the banking industry, while Y.-R. Chen and Zhao (2021) found that social media improves user engagement and interactivity in the dialogue between brands and stakeholders and expands the scale of discussion. However, Elving and May (2017) disagreed, because organisations that rashly use social media for stakeholder dialogue may face more risks and may cause organisations to miss opportunities. In addition, Elving and May (2017) do not deny the feasibility and potential of using social media for stakeholder dialogue.

### *2.3.3 Community Stakeholders in Infrastructure Projects*

#### *2.3.3.1 The Engagement of External and Community Stakeholders*

Even if stakeholders have strategies and guidelines for engaging in the project, because of differences in resources, power and legal relationships, there are variations in the level of difficulty each stakeholder experiences in engaging with the project.

The engagement of internal stakeholders and external stakeholders with projects is not the same. There are two main reasons that cause external and community stakeholders to oppose a project: knowledge issues and interest issues (Cuppen et al., 2016). Regarding the problems caused by knowledge issues, the public's lack of knowledge can be resolved by publishing information and answering the public's questions and fears. In contrast, the problems caused by interest issues are more challenging to solve, but the correct facts can help external stakeholders better understand the benefits and value of the project (Cuppen et al., 2016). Derakhshan et al. (2019) concluded that the influence of community stakeholders is rarely mentioned in the research and is often overlooked in actual project management (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020). External and community stakeholders can have an impact on the project, but whether they have a direct impact on the project outcome has not been confirmed because internal stakeholders have more substantial rights in decision-making (Derakhshan et al., 2019), while the engagement of community stakeholders can be managed through the three concepts of governance, value and dynamics (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020). Internal stakeholders mainly refer to the project alliance's official members, and they usually support the project and provide assistance to the project through legal relationships. External stakeholders are not official members of the project, and maintain a non-commercial relationship with project, and the project, and have limited channels to influence the project (Aarseth et al., 2013; Ninan, Mahalingam, & Clegg, 2019).

#### 2.3.3.2 Interest and Value of Community Stakeholders

Most community stakeholders do not have contractual relationships with the project, and so their level of agreement or disagreement with the project's interest value become critical factors in whether they will pay attention to the project. Thus, the primary response of external stakeholders to the achievement of project objectives is either support or opposition and, in only some cases, neutral (Beringer et al., 2013).

Public opposition is an inherent political risk for public projects, and the risk is difficult to predict, while improper handling of it adversely affects the reputation of the project and the organisation (Cuppen et al., 2016; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017). The different values and interests of stakeholders lead to different requirements for project results (Davis, 2017), and project construction may have both positive and negative impacts on the community because

the needs of different stakeholders are varied (Chow & Leiringer, 2020; Olander & Landin, 2005; Yuan, 2017), so project results may be beneficial to some stakeholders but harm the value of other stakeholders (Olander & Landin, 2005).

Stakeholders' self-interest determines their attitudes towards the project's result. Purvis et al. (2015) divided stakeholders' attitudes into three types: active support, token support and counter-implementation actions, and they emphasised that stakeholders' attitudes are often profit-oriented. When the project value is the same as stakeholder value (Nguyen et al., 2019b), stakeholders will adopt a supportive attitude and take supportive actions (Bourne & Walker, 2006). In contrast, when project value and stakeholder value are in conflict, stakeholders will oppose the project and take actions, which may include boycotts (Purvis et al., 2015).

#### 2.3.3.3 Trust and Conflict in Community Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is affected by trust relationships and conflict with the project, and the project communication plan needs to focus more on the knowledge possessed by the stakeholders rather than the benefits they may gain from the project (Butt et al., 2016). There are two schools of thought about stakeholder management: the instrumental approach and the relational approach. Those taking instrumental approaches tend to use management methods and tools to mitigate negative stakeholder impacts on projects (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019), while relational approaches focus on building and maintaining interactions with different stakeholders (Mok et al., 2015).

Establishing stakeholder trust relationships helps management, and this requires effective communication (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). In practical project management activities, the lack of communication with and integration of stakeholders in the project organisation may cause the project to lose control — and conflicts of interest, lack of authority, and contract restrictions ultimately may lead to disputes between stakeholders (Butt et al., 2016). Simultaneously, the diversity caused by the organisational culture of the stakeholders may also lead to conflicts between project stakeholders and the organisation (Aarseth et al., 2013; Butt et al., 2016). Davis (2014) mentioned the different definitions of success held by different stakeholders may also lead to project decision-making conflicts. Furthermore, conflicts

between stakeholders due to misunderstandings are widespread, especially in international projects, and the different experiences, cultures, values and norms of local stakeholders may cause many potential conflicts (Aaltonen et al., 2010). The project organisation must communicate with stakeholders to establish cooperation. In this process, stakeholders engage in communication and share information to positively impact the final outcome (Bourne & Walker, 2006; Sarhadi et al., 2018; Schormair & Gilbert, 2020; Terje Karlsen, 2010).

The focus of stakeholder management on conflict management should be aimed at avoiding and preventing conflicts rather than resolving them (Ross, 2009), because stakeholder conflicts may directly lead to project delays or cost overruns (Sallinen et al., 2013), and any situation that produces substantial losses is not an ideal result of stakeholder management.

The differences among stakeholders' stem from the four aspects of facts, goals, methods and values, and pressure related to decision-making and the complexity of the project may cause conflicts and differences among stakeholders to intensify into conflicts (Ross, 2009; Teo & Loosemore, 2010). When faced with uncertainties and complex factors, organisations' abilities to maintain stakeholder relationships is different (Vaagaasar, 2011). Stakeholder-management capability does not emerge fully formed in complex project settings; it unfolds gradually as an emergent phenomenon (Vaagaasar, 2011). Its cultivation is essentially an iterative trial-and-error process in which the project team continuously experiments and refines its approach through ongoing interactions with diverse stakeholders. Over time, these accumulated experiences are distilled into a finely honed and meticulously tuned communicative competence (Vaagaasar, 2011).

In addition, trust also plays a vital role in the maintenance of stakeholder relationships, and this relationship is dynamic over the course of the project (Wu et al., 2020). Furthermore, Derakhshan et al. (2019) pointed out that trust in the project can help the project organisation reduce the cost of negotiation, transaction and monitoring in the process of signing the agreement to improve project performance, and communication can promote the establishment of alliances and trust among stakeholders (Nguyen et al., 2019a; Schormair & Gilbert, 2020).

#### 2.3.3.4 Community Understanding and Attitudes Towards Infrastructure Projects

For community stakeholders, infrastructure projects are more likely to be valued because such projects are directly related to residents' lives and welfare in the community. The public will actively engage in the discussion of large-scale energy infrastructure projects (Aarseth et al., 2013; Cuppen et al., 2016) because such projects are related to every resident's fundamental interests.

Safety, profitability, and sustainability are the public's core concerns for such projects, and the uncertainty of such projects can lead to value conflicts between the project and the public (Cuppen et al., 2016). Infrastructure projects are usually public and large (Chow & Leiringer, 2021) and designed to bring social changes. The initiators and customers of these projects are often government agencies, and private companies play the contractors' role (Derakhshan et al., 2019). One of the core values of infrastructure projects is to meet public needs, i.e., they do not have a narrow focus only on financial income, so the satisfaction with and perceived legitimacy of project results require high transparency and accountability to ensure the project achieves the target value (Derakhshan et al., 2019).

#### 2.3.3.5 The Challenges and Resistance of Infrastructure Projects

For infrastructure projects, Di Maddaloni and Davis (2017) mentioned that the local community should not be regarded as a single stakeholder, because different local communities have different concerns, worries, and fears, and their real interests are diverse. However, relatively few studies have linked such projects to diverse local communities (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017). Social risks are given a high priority in infrastructure construction projects, and stakeholders will pay special attention to these projects' impacts on their quality of life (Yu et al., 2017). Lack of information will also interact with the project's external uncertainty (Sallinen et al., 2013) and become part of the project's social risks (Yu et al., 2017). Erkul et al. (2019) found that large-scale basic transportation projects have different stakeholder bases, and that coordination and engagement with communities are highly complicated processes.

## **2.4 Limitations in Current Project Stakeholder Management Studies**

Most existing project stakeholder research focuses on internal or core stakeholder issues. There is thus a growing need for further research into external stakeholders and community stakeholders.

For example, Beringer et al. (2013) mainly focus on critical internal stakeholders and lack research on external stakeholders, which include community residents, local enterprises, and other third-party organisations. The research of de Oliveira and Rabechini (2019) only considered the main stakeholders and did not study other stakeholders who could also influence the results of the project. Through an extensive literature review, a theoretical perspective the necessity of soliciting opinions from the community, and more practical research has also been called for as a future area of research (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017). There is also a lack of continuous follow-up research, such as studies on the longer-term impact of community stakeholders employing a specific influence strategy. Community stakeholder engagement is dynamic and sudden (Chow & Leiringer, 2020). Stakeholder engagement evaluations have focused on evaluating the engagement and contribution of internal or core stakeholders, but there is almost no research discussing how external stakeholders should effectively engage in a project. Research into ongoing dialogue between stakeholders and projects and the impact of the response of the project on the stakeholders remains scarce and is much needed.

Ninan, Clegg, and Mahalingam (2019) mentioned that the government should pay attention to people's attitudes on social media and incorporate these views into decision-making considerations. They stated that few studies have tracked whether these community comments impact projects or target events over a certain period. In their research, they discussed the relatively positive responses of network stakeholders and project feedback but did not discuss social media's resistance and project officials' feedback on these attitudes (Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019).

Another gap in project stakeholder engagement research concerns methodology, as there has been little use of the technique of naturalistic investigation (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2019a). Naturalistic investigations emphasise conducting research in a natural

environment, which makes the findings more authentic and ecologically valid (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It employs certain scientific observation methods and explores the nature and patterns of human life and social phenomena through fine observation and rational thinking about reality (J. Zhang & Chung, 2024). It should be emphasised that naturalistic inquiry tends to work under natural conditions, improving the naturalness and objectivity of the research (Athens, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In internal stakeholder research, interviews and surveys of internal stakeholders may cause research results to be influenced by biased and subjective responses (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2019a); newspaper and media articles also have potential positions and biases (Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2019). Extensive stakeholder literature uses interviews (Aaltonen et al., 2010; Cuppen et al., 2016; Davis, 2017; Mok et al., 2017; Sallinen et al., 2013; Teo & Loosemore, 2010; Vrhovec et al., 2015), questionnaire surveys (Aarseth et al., 2013; Erkul et al., 2019; Fernando et al., 2020; Heravi et al., 2015; Y. Zhang et al., 2018), project archive documents (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2019a, 2019b), public reports (Olander & Landin, 2005), and news as presented by the media (Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2019). Most respondents were project stakeholders and had legal contractual relationships with the project, such as project managers, technical consultants, sponsors, contractors, and suppliers (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). This results in most research data sources being developed from the perspective of the project organisation (Mok et al., 2017), which creates data blind spots despite some studies using extended survey numbers and random sampling methods to improve the accuracy and credibility of the data and studies (Yu et al., 2017). These research methods limit the natural integrity of the data, and naturalistic surveys can help researchers mitigate this limitation. J. Zhang and Chung (2024) mentioned the advantages and feasibility of using naturalistic surveys on social media.

In addition, this research has demonstrated deficiencies in stakeholder engagement practices, particularly in applying emerging management methods, community stakeholder engagement, and investigation of communication channels and platforms. Current research has limitations regarding internal and external stakeholder communication and dialogue. In project stakeholder management, a core issue is stakeholder communication and dialogue effectiveness, especially

stakeholder engagement. Butt et al. (2016) noted that, despite the existence of multiple stakeholder management techniques and tools, existing research falls short in applying and practising emerging approaches. Di Maddaloni and Davis (2017) argued that social networks can be used to identify and assess the degree of engagement of internal stakeholders. However, this approach is often limited to external stakeholders related to internal members of the project and fails to cover community stakeholders more broadly.

A study by Chow and Leiringer (2021) emphasised that one of the core objectives of project stakeholder management should be to incorporate the aspirations of community stakeholders into the consideration of project value, rather than merely managing them. Eskerod, Huemann and Savage (2015) pointed out that current research rarely investigates communication channels and platforms between internal and external stakeholders. In addition, Butt et al. (2016) mentioned that stakeholder expertise and leadership styles are often overlooked when developing a project stakeholder communication plan. Community stakeholder engagement is considered an effective way to eliminate misunderstandings and improve satisfaction, but Yu et al. (2017) pointed out that the extent and impact of public and community stakeholder engagement lack basic standards and norms. Therefore, stakeholder engagement activities need to consider new stakeholder dialogue platforms and theoretical frameworks to achieve more effective stakeholder management.

## **2.5 Emotion Work and Stakeholders**

To address the abovementioned limitations, this research introduces a framework inspired by naturalistic inquiry for project stakeholder engagement over social media, drawing upon theoretical underpinnings from the literature on theories of emotion, online marketing frameworks, and stakeholder motivations. Stakeholders' emotional responses during the engagement process undoubtedly influence both the level of their engagement and the quality of their interactions. For instance, a stakeholders' emotional state can significantly affect their degree of support for a project, which is a psychological dynamic that is particularly evident in social movements and collective action. Therefore, exploring how emotions shape the nature and dynamics of social activities provides an important theoretical foundation.

### *2.5.1 Emotions in Organisation*

Mou and Lin (2014) defined emotions as organised behaviours affected by cognitive motivations and relationships, and state that they are perceived and measured in response to fluctuations and changes in the environment in which people find themselves. They also pointed out that emotions and personal response behaviours interact with each other. Thus, emotions play a critical role in social life. As the 'glue' of human society, emotions significantly impact human behaviour (Turner & Stets, 2005). In the same way, emotions in an organisation can benefit the organisational change process, instigate changes, and maintain the stability of organisational operations while the organisation is changing (Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017).

In stakeholder activities, emotions can promote or inspire stakeholders' influence strategies towards a project and increase the activity and intensity of stakeholder activities (Huy et al., 2014). Because of the close connection between emotions and social activities, researchers should consider the impact of causal effects on behaviour while considering cognitive driving factors. Many researchers have explored the role of emotions in organisations (Zietsma et al., 2019).

R. Collins (2014) stated that emotions usually arise in collective interaction and are intensified by the exchange and collision of emotions between groups. Individuals' feelings and expressions of emotions in society are affected by personal experience, cultural background and social norms (Illouz et al., 2014). Differences between social mentalities and individuals may cause the same emotions to be expressed differently. For a long time, organisational theory research mainly focused on rational methods until Hochschild (1979) proposed emotional rules, emotional performance rules, and emotional labour theory. Since then, personal emotions have become a normative research direction in organisational behaviour.

Lok et al. (2017) classified past emotional research into three categories: 1) structuralist, 2) people-centred and 3) strategic. The structuralist viewpoint discusses how emotions are combined with purposeful and dynamic forces to form social structures, and the ways in which organisations can have unique emotional cultures with organisational initiatives. In the people-centred view, the individual's emotional response to an organisation and its dynamics is studied, and generally it is considered that members may have different positive or negative emotions

towards organisational changes. The strategic view advocates using emotions as a tool or catalyst to accomplish organisational goals through a combination of emotions and rationality (Lok et al., 2017).

### *2.5.2 Seminal Theories in Organisational Emotion Research*

Given this trend towards emotional research in organisations, emotions have become a critical factor in institutional theory and social movement theory (Zietsma et al., 2019).

#### 2.5.2.1 Institutional Theory

Most theoretical research on institutionalism lacks the study of emotion, but emotion may become the fourth pillar of institutional supervision, regulation and cognition in institutional theory (Scott, 2014). The use of institutionalism in strategy and people-centred direction is mainstream in the organisational emotion research, while its role in structuralist research is limited (Zietsma et al., 2019). From a strategic perspective, personal emotions can be stimulated to maintain the organisational system or advance organisational system reforms (Creed et al., 2010). In discourse research, the role of emotion has been studied and confirmed, especially in value-based speech, which includes the expression of emotion (Zietsma et al., 2019). These need to resonate with the audience before they can play their pre-determined role (Giorgi, 2017). Jarvis et al. (2019) found that intuitive methods, such as images and videos, can stimulate the audience's emotions, and these emotions can further guide people to obtain a specific sense of mission demonstrate a shared.

From a person-centred perspective, emotions arise when individuals perceive that their values are threatened or conflicted (Lok & De Rond, 2013). One of the core aspects of system research is the identification and recognition of systemic contradictions (Seo & Creed, 2002). Based on that, the process of recognising those contradictions is highly dependent on people's emotional reactions (Haack & Sieweke, 2018). When there are contradictions in the organisational system, individuals' emotions are complicated and may erupt at different times due to different causes. However, because of differences in members' rights in organisations, evidence on the impact of the emotional outbursts of disadvantaged groups is limited. From the structuralist perspective,

research on emotion is still in its exploratory stage. Researchers believe that connections between emotions and systems will become a valuable research direction (Zietsma et al., 2019).

#### 2.5.2.2 Social Movement Theory

In social movements, the influence of emotions on collective behaviour is significant. If there is no correct judgment of emotions, researchers may find it difficult to accurately sense and track social movements (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005). Therefore, emotion has gradually become the core of some research in the field of social kinematics. This field focuses on people-centred research and strategic research, but it is relatively limited in structuralist research (Zietsma et al., 2019). In strategic research, the mobilisation of emotions is very significant, especially emotions that stimulate and guide individuals to engage in social movements. The foundation of a social movement lies in the consistency of people's understandings (Zietsma et al., 2019), which requires cognitive ability and emotional resonance of the audience (Benford, 1997) that is conducive to collective social movements and can change the status quo of contradictions and inequality. Therefore, emotion as a resource of social movements has been increasingly studied by scholars.

Emotion management can help organisations achieve strategic goals. The concept emphasises that the critical element of emotional capability lies in taking action to manage emotions (Huy & Scheef, 2019). Castello (2021) stated that social media plays the role of an echo chamber for organisational emotion, which can increase the amount of communication and store and record stakeholders' engagement. Barbera-Tomas et al. (2019) proposed that emotions have a crucial role in information transmission and public resonance on social media.

#### 2.5.3 *Emotional Energy*

The concept of emotional energy, as discussed in sociological literature, refers to the collective emotional involvement that drives social movements and activism. Emotional energy plays a critical role in shaping the dynamics of social movements, influencing participant engagement, mobilisation and sustainability. Fundamentally, it is tied to the shared experiences among movement participants. McCarthy and Glozer (2022) argued that emotional energy can be replenished through practices that foster emotional solidarity and sensory retreat — essential

for managing the often-painful emotions associated with activism. These moments of emotional replenishment help build a broader sense of community and shared purpose, strengthening collective action.

As Penttilä (2023) discussed, emotional connection is indispensable, as it establishes stable social bonds among movement participants and enhances their commitment and resilience in the face of common challenges. Emotional energy can significantly improve the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement strategies. Sloan and Oliver (2013) emphasised the importance of emotional engagement practices in multi-stakeholder partnerships, suggesting that such practices complement traditional credibility-building strategies. They argued that emotional trust, cultivated through both emotional and rational practices, can drive collective action across diverse stakeholder environments. This aligns with Ray and Miller (2017), who stressed that stakeholder engagement is fundamentally relational and heavily dependent on the establishment of emotional connections. These findings suggest that emotional energy is not merely a byproduct of engagement activities, but a key driver of collaboration and active participation.

Conversely, negative emotional experiences can undermine stakeholder engagement. According to Mysore et al. (2019), feelings of fear and anger can negatively impact stakeholder commitment and communication, creating barriers to effective engagement. Such emotions may limit stakeholder engagement and lead to misunderstandings, ultimately jeopardising the goals of collaborative efforts. This highlights the dual nature of emotional energy: while positive emotions can inspire engagement, negative emotions can disrupt productive engagement and hinder trust-building.

Addressing diverse emotional states is therefore essential for fostering meaningful interactions. Triplett et al. (2022) argued that understanding the emotional dynamics within stakeholder interactions can illuminate ways to strengthen engagement approaches, particularly in sensitive environments. By focusing on effective emotion management, organisations can enhance their ability to engage stakeholders in ways that prioritise psychological safety and warmth, thereby reinforcing trust and collaboration.

Social media platforms serve as vital arenas for emotional engagement in social movements. They facilitate the rapid dissemination of emotionally resonant narratives that connect with potential supporters, expanding the reach of movements and amplifying emotional arousal. For example, Švelch and Štětka (2016) discuss Facebook's role as a platform for emotional protest, noting that both positive and negative emotional expressions are crucial for motivating and sustaining activist loyalty. Similarly, Ma (2017) explored the use of emotional dramaturgy on social media, where activists strategically employ emotional framing to gain public support and cultivate a sense of urgency. These platforms help foster collective identity and shared emotional experiences, which are essential for motivating action and building solidarity.

Momin et al. (2023) examined how emotional expression in social media communication influences stakeholder perceptions and interactions. They found that emotionally intelligent messaging can enhance engagement by fostering authenticity and openness, thereby strengthening emotional connections between organisations and stakeholders. This aligns with the argument by Graffeo and Jin (2024), who emphasised that leaders must attend to the emotional dimensions of stakeholder relationships to maintain engagement and mitigate the impact of adverse events. The effectiveness of stakeholder engagement increasingly depends on the emotional tone set during interactions and stakeholders' openness to diverse emotional experiences.

## **2.6 Social Media in Project Stakeholder Engagement**

In this digital age, social media is an integral part of people's daily lives, allowing users to express their opinions and emotions and providing a platform for online social movements. It gives users platforms and channels to express their views and to redefine how organisations and projects communicate with stakeholders (Vignal Lambret & Barki, 2018). Jin et al. (2017) mentioned that stakeholders use social media based on their personal needs and desires. Social media can provide consumers and users with information, entertainment, self-expression and self-realisation, and can promote social interaction and development (Jin et al., 2017).

### *2.6.1 Fake News and Misinformation on Social Media*

With the widespread use of social media, misinformation and fake news proliferate (Al-Rawi, 2019; B. Collins et al., 2021), and misinformation spreads faster than most truths (Altay et al., 2020). Some people cannot distinguish the truth from fake news, so they choose not to share the information, whether they are true or false (B. Collins et al., 2021). On the other hand, for the people who decided to share the information, the more engaged online users are, the more likely they are to generate and spread fake news (Valenzuela et al., 2019), and in social media comments, it was found that users or individuals who are more knowledgeable about the topic in question are more likely to identify and report misinformation or fake news when they view it (Anspach & Carlson, 2020). Many users believe that fake news is more likely to affect others than themselves. However, respondents still opposed the proposal to introduce government censorship to address misinformation and fake news (Yang & Horning, 2020). In this environment, the official accounts of project teams have an irreplaceable role in dealing with fake news and misinformation on social media concerning individual projects.

### *2.6.2 Internal and External Stakeholders on Social Media*

Social media platforms allow both internal and external stakeholders to offer their views, thereby providing opportunities to influence others. While some views might negatively impact the project (Olander & Landin, 2005), the platforms also allow for the improvement of organisational efficiency in projects, help members establish contacts and maintain communication or trust relationships (Y. Zhang et al., 2018). In construction, for example, social media can help organisations integrate stakeholders into the project construction process, balance the project's common interests and each stakeholder's interests, and ultimately deliver organisational value (Loosemore, 2010). Over time, it is also possible for stakeholders to form a strong sense of identity, be exposed to social media marketing and branding of the project, and for project teams to influence project-related public opinion (Lobo & Abid, 2020).

Rosa et al. (2016) concluded that internal stakeholders could use social media to share lessons learned, promote joint learning, and improve the final project performance. Social media serves as an intermediary media to provide a limited communication channel for projects and stakeholders to understand their separate existence, goals, and ways to achieve them (Sallinen

et al., 2013). Ninan, Clegg, and Mahalingam (2019) stated that external stakeholders are more difficult to manage by the project organisation than internal stakeholders, but social media can amplify more social and community voices than traditional communication methods. Social media platforms can also provide channels for projects to communicate with local communities (Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019). The composition of stakeholders on social media is unstable at the beginning of a project; individual stakeholders who follow the project will meet and interact with each other, and they will gradually become a stakeholder group, the stability of which will gradually increase as the project progresses (Williams et al., 2015). More recently, scholars have studied how projects can respond to stakeholder issues on social media and have proposed various strategies for better project stakeholder engagement (K. Chung et al., 2023). Their study examined how project communication can deploy proactive feedback strategies to address both positive and negative stakeholder comments on social media, highlighting the role of acknowledgment tactics in motivating opinion leaders and strengthening overall supportive commitment. It explored how large-scale infrastructure projects handle negative comments from community stakeholders on social platforms, underscored the limitations of a “dismissal response strategy,” and argues that projects should adopt an “influence strategy” that directly confronts stakeholder concerns to signal recognition.

### *2.6.3 Expression of Voice and Emotion on Social Media*

As stakeholders on social media gradually form a group and integrate as a community of interest through communication and interaction, the expression of emotion and sentiment plays a vital role in online communication. Research into emotion on social media mainly focuses on the sharing of emotions and external influencing factors (Jin et al., 2017). The goal of sentiment analysis is to identify whether stakeholders express their attitudes and emotions towards a particular phenomenon, including its nature and intensity (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015). The text found on social media usually has a relatively short word limit and it may express or further strengthen the emotions users want to convey through symbols and emoticons (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015). In terms of reach, social media has a very high speed of information exchange, which leads to the rapid spread and intensification of emotions on social media (Vignal Lambret & Barki, 2018). Negative emotions are more likely to be spread quickly and

widely than positive emotions (Mou & Lin, 2014), and the spread of specific emotions on the internet may cause fatal damage to organisations and companies (Brummette & Fussell Sisco, 2015; Vignal Lambret & Barki, 2018).

Ninan (2020) found that most comments and user interactions on social media occur naturally. While traditional qualitative data collection methods may affect the collected data due to the human and non-subjective factors of the investigators, on social media, the data comes from each user and the communication and social activities of users, which can help researchers restore the actual public opinions and interactions of online society (Ninan, 2020). Based on that, J. Zhang & Chung (2024) proposed an online naturalistic inquiry methodology for studying sentiment, emotion and thematic analysis of stakeholder issues on social media (.

## **2.7 Framework for Engaging Online Community Stakeholders Using Emotion Theory**

In this research, to establish a community stakeholder engagement framework using social media as a communication platform for stakeholder value and sentiment analysis, theoretical underpinnings are drawn from the social media marketing model, value creation model, sentiment category, and organisational response strategies and integrated to develop a comprehensive model.

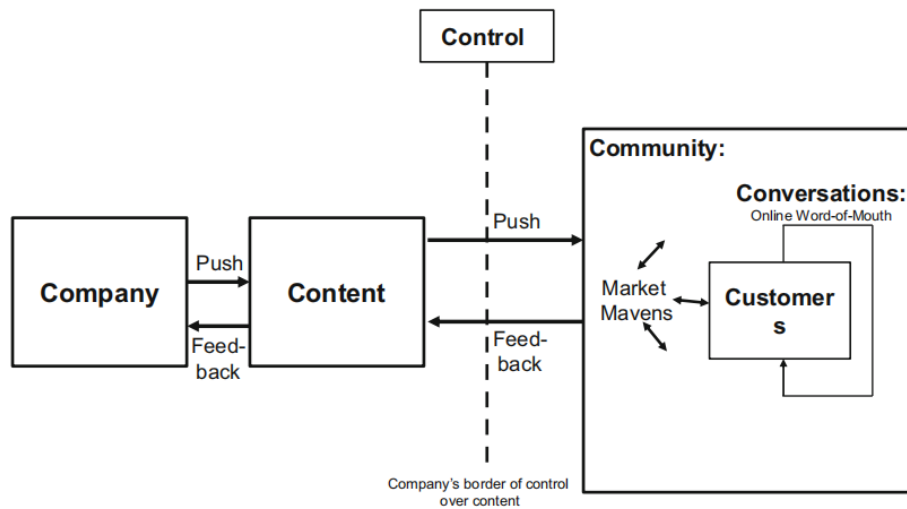
When constructing a new stakeholder engagement framework for online projects, it is crucial to introduce social media marketing theories from the marketing field, because these theories illuminate the interaction patterns between companies and stakeholders on social media. Aksoy et al. (2022) emphasised the importance of stakeholder engagement for corporate sustainability and long-term profitability and proposed a framework based on a triangulated methodology, which suggests that marketing theory can broaden the understanding of stakeholder engagement and thus facilitate more effective strategy development (Aksoy et al., 2022). A study by Santini et al. (2020) further confirms the direct impact of customer engagement on social media on corporate performance, including satisfaction, positive emotions and trust as key drivers of customer engagement. These findings highlight the role of social media marketing in shaping stakeholder attitudes and behaviours and its potential to increase brand loyalty and word-of-

mouth communication (Santini et al., 2020). In addition, Bickhoff et al. (2014) pointed out that social media technology promotes online dialogue and can significantly influence consumer behaviour. Social media marketing models can provide critical online communication channels for online projects, enhancing stakeholder engagement and brand support (Bickhoff et al., 2014). By effectively utilising social media, projects can better spread their message, raise awareness, and influence stakeholder attitudes and behaviours. The social media marketing model in marketing theory can provide a comprehensive basic mode of interaction between organisations and online communities to construct the online project stakeholder engagement framework.

### *2.7.1 Marketing Model on Social Media*

In a study of the voices of customers in social media, Bickhoff et al. (2014) proposed a 6C model to explain marketing activities in social media: company, contents, control, community, consumers and conversation. Figure 2-1 illustrates the interrelationship of the various elements of the 6C model. The company can control the concepts and content that it wants to express, but when the content is posted to the online community, the interpretation and dissemination of the information and content are no longer under its control. In the online community, there are a lot of potential customers, and these customers will naturally generate conversations about the information and content released by the company. It is worth mentioning that some customers in the community can be called ‘market mavens’, who assume the role of discourse people in the online community. Market mavens usually have more followers than ordinary users of social media. They can convey the information released by the company to ordinary customers who pay less attention to the company, and they can also represent the views of general customers and speak for them (Bickhoff et al., 2014).

**Figure 2-1** *The 6C Model (Company, Contents, Control, Community, Consumers, Conversation)*



Source: Bickhoff et al. (2014).

On social media, the model is not just relevant to traditional companies and brands but also other organisations that want to use social media to talk to their stakeholders. In the 6C model, the word ‘company’ can be replaced with any ‘project’ or ‘organisation’ that is able or willing to share content with the community on social media. The word ‘customer’ describes a type of stakeholder, so the concept can be extended, and in the model for this research ‘customer’ is thus replaced by the broader term ‘stakeholder’. By expanding and extending these two concepts in the 6C model, the new model can be applied to a broader range of stakeholder engagement on social media.

### 2.7.2 Organisational Response Theories and Emotion Models

In the field of marketing, crisis response strategies play a critical role in shaping stakeholder engagement, particularly in the context of online interactions. Crisis situations often demand swift and transparent communication to manage stakeholder perceptions and mitigate negative impacts (Ipcioglu, 2015; Vašíčková, 2020). Effective crisis response strategies are essential, as they determine how organisations convey information and respond to stakeholder inquiries. Increasingly, companies are leveraging social media platforms to provide timely updates and facilitate stakeholder interaction, creating opportunities for dialogue that were previously unavailable (Chong & Momin, 2021).

During the implementation of the project, there are two main types of response strategy for organisational crises: denying responsibility and admitting responsibility. The specific behaviours of denying responsibility include rejection, silence, and attack. In contrast, the behaviours associated with admitting responsibility include transfer, conflation and acknowledgement (Vignal Lambret & Barki, 2018).

Moreover, Brummette and Fussell Sisco (2015) considered and summarised an organisation’s main strategies to deal with stakeholders’ emotions from two different perspectives: cognitive type and emotional type. Rational thinking, positive thinking, avoiding and denying are recognised strategies of organisational management and control of stakeholder emotional responses. In contrast, emotional response strategies include searching for emotional support, emotional catharsis, and the search for instrumental support (Brummette & Fussell Sisco, 2015).

In the context of crisis management, the response strategy of the project organisation and the response strategy of the public have different classifications (S. Chung & Lee, 2016). The strategies commonly used by companies and organisations can be divided into crisis response strategies and technical translation strategies (S. Chung & Lee, 2016). Silence, denial, diminishing and dealing are available crisis response strategies, which can rebuild legitimacy and safeguard organisational reputation in a crisis (Coombs, 2006). Moreover, Stephens et al. (2005) stated that technical translation strategies include direct, elucidating, transformative and quasi-scientific, which work alongside message strategies to shape meaning, convey the organisation’s identity, foster trust and credibility, and reduce uncertainty. Public replies to messages sent by companies and organisations are also divided into two categories: cognitive response and affective response (S. Chung & Lee, 2016). Coombs and Holladay (2012) classify cognitive responses into rejection, conditional acceptance, acceptance, and no cognitive reaction. Affective responses include unfavourable, neutral, positive, mixed and no emotion (Choi & Lin, 2009). Table 2-2 lists the theories of response strategies in crisis management, customer management and stakeholder management.

**Table 2-2** *Theories on Response Strategies*

Theory	Author(s)	Main Content
Marketing Context		

Theory	Author(s)	Main Content
The organisation's communication strategies and public responses	S. Chung and Lee (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis communication messages</li> <li>• Two types of public response</li> </ul>
Crisis response strategies	Coombs (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silence</li> <li>• Denying</li> <li>• Diminishing</li> <li>• Dealing</li> </ul>
Technical translation strategies	Stephens et al. (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct</li> <li>• Elucidating</li> <li>• Transformative</li> <li>• Quasi-scientific</li> </ul>
Cognitive responses from customers	Coombs and Holladay (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejection</li> <li>• Conditional acceptance</li> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Others</li> <li>• No cognitive reaction</li> </ul>
Affective responses from customers	Choi and Lin (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative</li> <li>• Neutral</li> <li>• Positive</li> <li>• Mixed</li> <li>• No emotion</li> </ul>
Crisis response strategies	Coombs (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deny response option: attacking the accuser, denial, and scapegoating</li> <li>• Diminish response option: excusing and justifying</li> <li>• Deal response option: ingratiation, concern, compassion, regret, and apology</li> </ul>
Consumer responses to conflict-management strategies	Dineva et al. (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not intervening in the conflict</li> <li>• Avoiding engaging in conflict</li> <li>• Thanks cause supporter(s)</li> <li>• Agrees with cause supporter(s)</li> <li>• Further clarification about an issue causing the conflict.</li> <li>• Explaining an issue to conflicting parties</li> <li>• Providing additional information about an issue</li> <li>• An appeal to take action</li> <li>• Urging conflicting parties to change their behaviour</li> </ul>

Theory	Author(s)	Main Content
Customer response strategies	Einwiller and Steilen (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodative response strategies (apology, compensation, and corrective action)</li> <li>• Defensive response strategies (denial, shifting the blame, and strategy to evade responsibility)</li> </ul>
Emotional Labor Coping Strategies	Teoh et al. (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposition strategies (avoidance, deflecting, emotional out-letting, and confrontation)</li> <li>• Rumination strategies (faking behaviour, reasoning, resignation, and apathy)</li> <li>• Emotional regulation strategies (feeling alignment, self-control, empathy, and diversion)</li> <li>• Positive cognitive restructuring strategies (constructive behaviour, differentiation, social activities, and positive framing)</li> </ul>
<b>Project Management Context</b>		
Response strategies to stakeholder pressures	Aaltonen and Sivonen (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation strategy</li> <li>• Compromising strategy</li> <li>• Avoidance strategy</li> <li>• Dismissal strategy</li> <li>• Influence strategy</li> </ul>
Responses to external stakeholder	Nguyen et al. (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiating approach: manipulating, persuading, bargaining, and litigating</li> <li>• Conceding approach: complying, diverting, and terminating</li> </ul>
Response strategies for community stakeholder engagement on social media	K. Chung et al. (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge and encourage positive responses</li> <li>• Acknowledge stakeholder concerns and minimise concerns</li> <li>• Develop standard responses to issues that repeatedly appear</li> </ul>

Table 2-2 shows that most response strategies have their roots in the marketing field, with limited theories from the project studies area. Further, only a few theories consider the emotion model in their response strategies.

### 2.7.3 *The Integrated Online Community Stakeholders Engagement Framework*

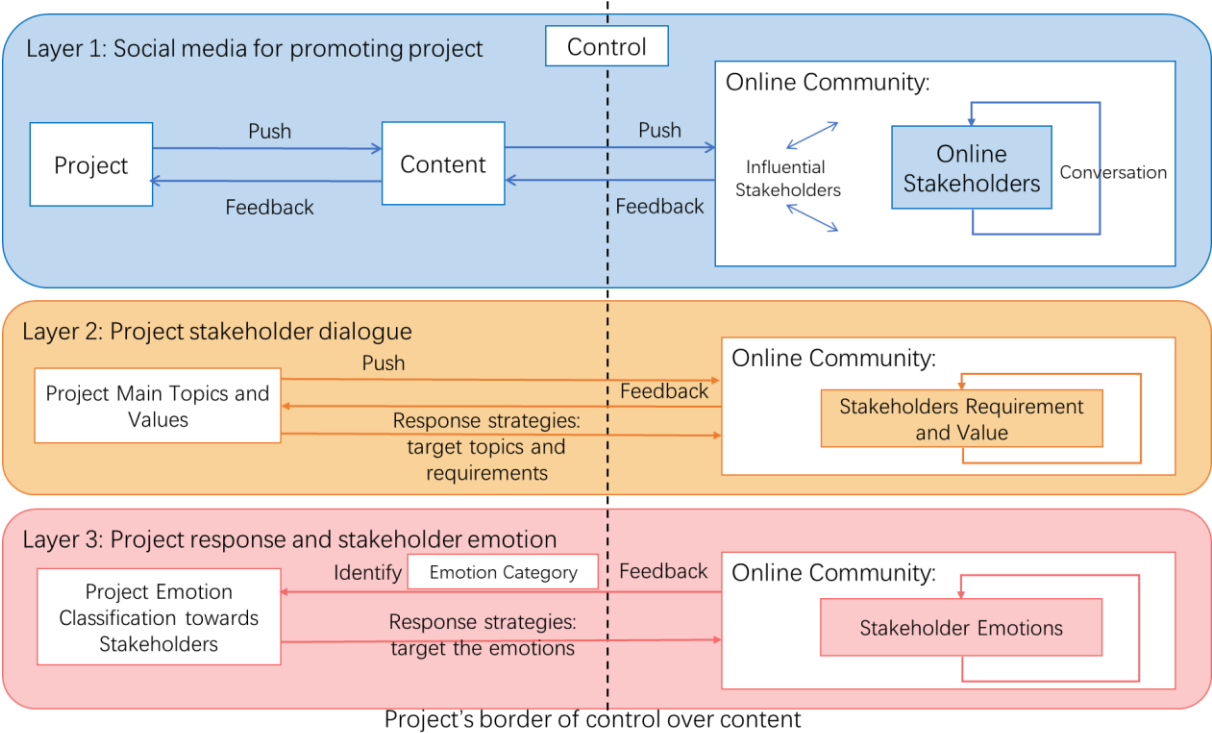
Figure 2-2 illustrates the integrated model of stakeholder engagement on social media based on thematic analysis and sentiment analysis. In the middle of the figure is a dotted vertical line labelled ‘control’, which divides the model into left and right sides. The activities and decisions on the left side are under the control of the project organisation, and the activities and reflections on the right side of the picture are those of the community stakeholders, which means that the organisation’s control on this side is significantly reduced.

The first layer of this model is based on the 6C model of social media marketing. As mentioned above, the model will be used here for project management, so some of the original terms will be replaced with project management terms (e.g., ‘market mavens’ is replaced with ‘influential stakeholders’). The model’s lefthand side represents the project perspective, while the righthand side represents the actual community stakeholder environment.

The second layer is a project dialogue model towards the project value and stakeholder demands. The project’s primary value and related topics will be ‘pushed’ to the online community. After receiving the project information, the stakeholders typically react by sharing their opinions in the online community with each other, including the stakeholders’ own concerns and topics that are voiced as feedback to the project. Based on the stakeholders’ feedback, the project can use response strategies to target stakeholders’ topics and requirements to create and establish a dialogue with stakeholders.

The third layer is the project response model, which considers the emotional fluctuations of project community stakeholders. The project team can only take action after stakeholders express their emotions in their dialogue and feedback process. The stakeholders’ emotions can be expressed through their communications in the online community. The project can then use the emotion category to identify different emotions from stakeholders and use the response strategies to target and manage the stakeholders’ emotions.

**Figure 2-2** *Integrated Framework for Online Community Stakeholders Engagement*



**2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed current stakeholder management theory, focusing on the research on stakeholder engagement, stakeholder influence strategies, and stakeholder dialogue. Combined with the current research status of community stakeholders in infrastructure projects, this chapter has identified the following three major research gaps. First, current stakeholder research pays more attention to internal stakeholders and less attention to external stakeholders, so there is room for development in external stakeholder research. Secondly, existing stakeholder research rarely adopts naturalistic inquiry methods, and naturalistic inquiry can help researchers explore the most organic behaviours and interactions of stakeholders and has great potential for the study of external stakeholders. Third, there is a lack of a clear framework for more effective project stakeholder engagement and dialogue, especially with external stakeholders.

In response to these research gaps, this chapter introduced the theory of emotion in organisational research, including stakeholder emotion as an important dimension of the stakeholder engagement framework. In addition, the chapter introduced social media as a

platform through which to engage with a broader range of external stakeholders. This chapter constructs an integrated framework for stakeholder engagement in online communities based on these theoretical concepts. The framework combines some theories related to social media marketing with theories of project stakeholder engagement and dialogue to build the first layer of the framework, social media for promoting projects, and the second layer, project stakeholder dialogue. The theory related to stakeholder response strategy and emotion is considered in the third layer: project response and stakeholder emotion. The chapter has laid the theoretical foundation for this research and provided theoretical support for the methodology discussion in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the methodology, data collection, data analysis, and research findings of this study. First, online naturalistic inquiry will be discussed as the methodological base of this research, and the case study, Western Sydney International Airport, will be introduced. The chapter outlines that the case study is the domain of the research, and online naturalistic inquiry is the method used. Traditional thematic analysis will be used when analysing the collected data.

### **3.2 Online Naturalistic Inquiry**

Naturalistic inquiry is a qualitative research methodology aimed at understanding phenomena within their natural contexts, emphasising the importance of interpreting human experiences from the participants' perspectives. Rooted in a constructivist epistemology, this approach views reality as socially constructed and subjective, allowing for multiple interpretations of a single phenomenon (Athens, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The core principles guiding naturalistic inquiry stress the need for context sensitive, richly interpretive research that responds to the complexity of human behaviour.

Ontologically, naturalistic inquiry adopts a relativist stance, recognising that reality is subjective and constructed through individual experiences and social interactions. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain, this ontological position acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, each shaped by individuals' backgrounds and lived experiences. Rather than imposing fixed categories or predefined theories, this relativist view underscores the importance of understanding phenomena as they emerge in natural settings. For instance, Gonyea et al. (2014) argue that the naturalistic framework embraces the diversity of realities and emphasises the need to validate the contexts and frameworks through which individuals derive meaning. In practice, naturalistic researchers focus on providing detailed, contextualised descriptions of phenomena, aiming to capture the essence of participants' lived experiences. Athens (2010) demonstrates how naturalistic inquiry enables researchers to gain deep insights into participants' realities, highlighting the relevance of cultural, social, and personal contexts in shaping individual experiences. This approach stands in contrast to traditional positivist frameworks,

which often assume a single, objective reality that can be measured independently of individual perspectives.

Epistemologically, naturalistic inquiry is grounded in constructivism, which posits that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered. This paradigm emphasises the importance of understanding the meanings and interpretations individuals assign to their experiences, thereby valuing qualitative insights over quantitative metrics. As Mhlauli (2013) notes, this constructivist epistemology recognises that knowledge emerges from the interaction between researchers and participants, highlighting the inherently subjective nature of the inquiry process.

Naturalistic inquiry relies on an iterative process of data collection and analysis, allowing researchers to refine their understanding through ongoing engagement with participants. Voorheis et al. (2023) further elaborate that the principles of naturalistic inquiry call for rich, descriptive data that accurately reflects participants' perspectives and experiences in their own words. This ensures that the knowledge generated through research is meaningful, relevant, and reflective of the inherent complexity of human behaviour.

The paradigm of naturalistic inquiry, anchored in relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology, thus prioritises the understanding of multiple realities and the co-construction of knowledge. This approach enables researchers to explore the complexity of human experience within natural environments, enriching our understanding of social phenomena through detailed qualitative analysis. By grounding research into individuals' lived realities, naturalistic inquiry offers valuable insights that are essential for informing practice and policy across disciplines.

Applying naturalistic inquiry to the study of online social media offers significant advantages for understanding human behaviour, particularly in relation to social interaction, identity formation, and community dynamics in digital environments. This qualitative approach is especially relevant in contemporary research contexts, where online platforms serve as key spaces for communication, engagement, and information exchange. Naturalistic inquiry emphasises examining phenomena within their natural contexts without imposing predetermined frameworks or theories, thereby promoting a more authentic representation of participants' experiences and interactions (Athens, 2010). In social media research, this

approach allows researchers to explore how users express themselves, respond to social cues, and navigate interpersonal relationships, yielding rich descriptive insights while minimising researcher interference and preserving naturalistic integrity.

The ontological stance of naturalistic inquiry aligns with the understanding that multiple realities exist within social media interactions. Every participant's experiences and interpretations are considered valid, and the diverse ways individuals construct meaning in digital environments are acknowledged (McInnes et al., 2017). The method's capacity to capture nuanced responses within participants' natural habitats makes it suitable for examining the complex interplay of factors influencing online behaviour.

Just as netnography emerged as a qualitative research form rooted in ethnography (Kozinets, 2010), naturalistic inquiry has also evolved to utilise online interactions as data sources. It provides a framework for observing and analysing social behaviour in digital environments, effectively bridging the gap between traditional qualitative methods and virtual engagement (J. Zhang & Chung, 2024). Online naturalistic inquiry enables researchers to capture the context in which social media interactions occur, offering insights into the cultural, social, and emotional foundations of users' online behaviour—critical for analysing identity and community in virtual spaces.

Digital platforms grant researchers access to diverse populations and large volumes of data that may be difficult to obtain through traditional methods. This increased accessibility allows for the exploration of various demographic groups and niche communities, leading to findings that reflect a broad range of experiences (J. Zhang & Chung, 2024). Using online naturalistic inquiry in social media research ensures that participants' voices are authentically represented. Researchers can observe participants' most genuine behaviours and construct theories based on their interactions and patterns in natural conditions (J. Zhang & Chung, 2024).

### **3.3 Domain of the Study: The Case of Western Sydney International Airport**

A case study is the methodology of this research. This is a research methodology that is used to examine phenomena in a natural setting through various sources of data intending to test

theory against the empirical world (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021a, 2021b). Case studies are applied to describe and explain research subjects and further predict or manage them. It is also useful for gaining insight into actors' emotions, interactions, and social relationships (Woodside, 2010). Case studies include observation and document analysis (Eshuis et al., 2014), and Dille and Söderlund (2013) pointed out that case studies can be built on the richness of online data. In this study, the Western Sydney International Airport, which is undergoing construction at the time of writing, has been selected as the case study context.

Qualitative research often emphasises the importance of context in shaping behaviour, actions, and perceptions. A single case study offers the opportunity to collect rich, contextual details that reveal how various factors interact within a specific environment. This approach aligns closely with the principles of naturalistic inquiry, which seeks to understand phenomena within their natural settings and highlights the relevance of specific contexts (Bozoklu, 2018). A single case study does not preclude the inclusion of multiple perspectives; rather, it can incorporate the voices of various stakeholders within that context. McHugh et al. (2018) underscore the importance of stakeholder engagement in understanding complex issues, suggesting that even within a single case, diverse viewpoints can enrich interpretation and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding. This approach facilitates a holistic view of the case, enhances the robustness of findings, and provides insights that resonate with broader stakeholder concerns.

### *3.3.1 Western Sydney International Airport Background*

Western Sydney International Airport, named on 4 March 2019 as Nancy-Bird Walton Airport, is a new international airport located near Badgerys Creek in Sydney, Australia. The airport will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, complementing Kingsford Smith Airport, which is currently at capacity due to statutory curfews and flight restrictions. The first stage of construction for the new airport began on 24 September 2018, and it is expected to be completed and open to the public by December 2026 (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022e). The site was officially designated by the federal government on 15 April 2014 (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional

Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022c), after 40 years of debate about the location of another airport within the Greater Sydney region (CAPA, 2022).

There have been plans to develop a second airport for Sydney since the 1960s. In February 1986, the federal government selected Badgerys Creek as the site for Sydney's second largest airport (CAPA, 2022). The federal government spent approximately \$1.7 million on land acquisitions for the site between 1986 and 1991. The final site covered a total of 1,780 hectares (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022d). However, following the acquisitions, the government decided that a third runway at Sydney Airport would be more suitable, and stopped all construction at the Badgerys Creek site (CAPA, 2022; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022f). However, there remained concern that Kingsford Smith Airport's capacity might be exhausted by 2030, especially with the imposition of strict night flying restrictions in 1995 (CAPA, 2022; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022f, 2022d). As a result, work on a second airport resumed in earnest in 2008. In a government report, Badgerys Creek was selected as the best place for the second airport in Sydney, and the report recommended that planning begin (CAPA, 2022).

The federal government announced on 15 April 2014 that Badgerys Creek would be the site of a second Sydney airport (CAPA, 2022; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022d). Construction of the Badgerys Creek airport site began in September 2018 and is scheduled to open by 2026 (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022c). The federal government announced on 4 March 2019 that the airport would be known as Nancy-Bird Walton International Airport in honour of Australian aviator Nancy-Bird Walton (McNab, 2019).

However, some issues have emerged. The airport is located near the settlement of Luddenham and the Blue Mountains National Park, which is recognised as a World Heritage Site, raising serious questions about the claimed wildness, wild rivers, amenities, World Heritage Site recognition, and the economic structure of the Blue Mountains (Arup Pty Ltd & Western

Sydney Airport, 2022; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022a; Grant, 2021). To address these issues, a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) released on 19 October 2015 describes the projected international extension path of Western Sydney Airport from its first opening in the mid-2020s (CAPA, 2019; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022a).

According to the state government, the airport will create almost 28,000 jobs by 2031 (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts, 2022b; Commonwealth of Australia, 2017). According to one study, the airport was expected to directly support 3,231 jobs during construction, 13,169 jobs in the first five years of operation, and 24,046 jobs in the following ten years (Ernst & Young, 2017).

### **3.4 Data Collection Process**

Online naturalistic inquiry is a new research approach to establish online social media research. In order to reduce the negative impact of the researcher's involvement on the spontaneous and natural communication of online users, the data collection was covert (Frude et al., 2020). Collecting online data requires the researcher to observe the online community for a sufficient length of time to become familiar with the environment and culture of that online community (Costello et al., 2017).

The seclusion that comes with covert observation does not influence the discussions that naturally occur in the online community, and it provides a high degree of social distance between the researcher and the community members, which reduce the influence of researchers' participant behaviour (Sthapit, 2018). The data collection process was inconspicuous to users on social media, and the data collected covered only public comments that already existed (Frude et al., 2020). In naturalistic inquiry, it is expected that a large amount of data is collected, each piece of data is reviewed, and any meaningless and irrelevant data is discarded (Rageh et al., 2013).

Comments on the airport construction project (either for or against) were collected, and thematic, sentiment and emotion analyses were conducted of the text and content of the posts

and comments. The focus of this study is the project's responses and reactions to the different online stakeholders.

### *3.4.1 Social Media Data Collection*

This research examines Western Sydney International Airport's official social media accounts and how they communicate and interact with stakeholders. Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA) has official X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn profiles, and similar accounts elsewhere. During the time of data collection, for example, on 8 February 2022, WSIA had 1,511 Twitter followers, 17,275 Facebook followers, 2,528 Instagram followers and 28,873 LinkedIn followers. As of 31 December 2024, WSIA had 2,090 X followers, 135,022 Facebook followers, 24,100 Instagram followers and 60,000 LinkedIn followers. It can be seen from this that WSIA has many more followers on Facebook and LinkedIn than the other two social media sites. When this research examined community stakeholder engagement in terms of the quantity and quality of comments posted by both community members and project team members on all four platforms, it found significantly more stakeholder activity on Facebook than on the other three platforms because of Facebook's widespread popularity and ease of contact (and in contrast to X, for example, no restrictive character limit) (Amade, 2017; Jin et al., 2017). This is attributable to the fact that Facebook is more open (in contrast to X, which has character limits and is thus more beneficial for information dissemination than information exchange), and more suited towards private and social use (e.g., it is useful for community news and updates and reaching out directly to members of the community), whereas LinkedIn is targeted towards professional use and one's professional circle or occupational group of associates and acquaintances (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Instagram, in general, appeals to a much younger generation than those who care about developments surrounding their locality (Jin et al., 2017).

Taking the posts released by WSIA on 2021 May 27 as an example, this research compared the related activity index on various platforms, which can be seen in Table 3-1. The post discusses the Reconciliation Action Plan developed by WSIA to communicate with the local Indigenous community. Table 3-1 shows the extent of online stakeholder interaction across different platforms expressed as 'likes' (indicating either a neutral or positive acknowledgement of posts),

‘comments’ (indicating a willingness to respond or forward by tagging other community members) or ‘shares’ (indicating one’s eagerness to disseminate or spread the post).

**Table 3-1** Comparison of the Stakeholder Interaction in Different Platforms

Platform	Likes	Comment	Share
X/Twitter	4	2	1
Facebook	759	93	42
Instagram	68	0	0
LinkedIn	215	6	1

In the table above, Facebook’s online stakeholder engagement, demonstrated by the number of likes and comments, is significantly higher than that of the other three platforms, including LinkedIn. Furthermore, access to posts in the WSIA account on LinkedIn is limited to the current year. Without access to posts from the previous years, the larger and more complete picture of the extent of stakeholder engagement is missing. Facebook, on the other hand, allows researchers unrestricted access to posts historically and chronologically. For these reasons, Facebook was selected as the key data source.

Two official Facebook pages were chosen as data sources: Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA) and Western Sydney Airport Local Community (WSALC), while a public group, Residents Against Western Sydney Airport, was identified as the primary platform for community stakeholders to express their opinions.

The X (formerly Twitter) accounts corresponding to the WSIA and Residents against Western Sydney Airport groups (WSIA and Rawsa7) had fewer active accounts, and could not provide enough data for the research, so X (formerly Twitter) was considered only a supplementary data collection platform.

Every post with comments on these social media accounts and pages was recorded in the database. The later content analysis allowed for the exclusion of meaningless data.

The pages and accounts viewed for data collection are shown in Table 3-2. In the table, “active” and “inactive” are defined separately for owners and commenters to capture two distinct

dimensions of engagement. For the owner’s activity level, an account is labelled active when the owner consistently maintains it by publishing or reposting new content at least once a month. Conversely, an account becomes inactive when the owner stops posting altogether, and the timeline remains unchanged. Regarding commenter activity, an account is considered active if, on average, every post attracts more than ten comments, indicating a lively discussion around the content. An account is deemed inactive when its posts receive an average of ten comments or fewer, signalling limited conversational engagement.

**Table 3-2** *The Activity Level of the Pages, Groups and Accounts on Social Media*

Pages/groups/accounts	The activity level of the owner	The activity level of commenters	Type of account	Communications with project-related accounts
Facebook				
Western Sydney International Airport	Active	Active	Official Page	Yes
Western Sydney Airport Local Community	Active	Active	Official Page	Yes
Residents Against Western Sydney Airport	Active	Active	Public Group	No
Western Sydney Airport	Inactive	Inactive	Official Page	No
Western Sydney Airport Resistance Group	Active	Inactive	Personal Page	No
X/Twitter				
Western Sydney International Airport	Active	Active	Official Account	N/A
Rawsa (X ID for Residents Against Western Sydney Airport)	Active	Active	Personal Account	N/A

The pages or accounts with active owners and commenters were selected as the data sources. Data was collected from Facebook from September 2018 to August 2022, with each page’s data saved in a separate document based on the month, with the document code saved as the page name plus the year, month and post number (e.g., ‘WSIA\_2020\_08\_5’ is the data from WSIA for 2020 August and the WSIA published five posts in that month). The data was first saved in a Word document, which served as the data’s analysis file and included the most comprehensive

text and image information. The target time periods for data collection on Facebook are listed in Table 3-3 below.

**Table 3-3** *The Data Collection Period in Pages and Groups on Facebook*

Pages/Groups in Facebook	Period	Official/ Personal	Data type
Western Sydney International Airport	01/09/2018 - 31/12/2022	Official Page	Main data source
Western Sydney Airport Local Community	01/10/2018 - 31/12/2022	Official Page	Supplemental data source

For WSIA and WSALC, the data was collected from when the page was first established (September 2018 for WSIA and October 2018 for WSIA). The data collection results are shown in the table below.

**Table 3-4** *Data Collection, Western Sydney International Airport Page and Western Sydney Airport Local Community Page*

Year-Month	Western Sydney International Airport posts per month	Words Count in Word Files	Western Sydney Airport Local Community posts per month	Words Count in Word files
2018-09	5	1055	N/A	N/A
2018-10	21	3694	16	3025
2018-11	17	2292	13	1846
2018-12	10	985	4	286
2019-01	7	1670	6	1507
2019-02	5	526	6	2134
2019-03	4	569	7	3335
2019-04	1	116	9	1800
2019-05	6	773	12	1436

Year-Month	Western Sydney International Airport posts per month	Words Count in Word Files	Western Sydney Airport Local Community posts per month	Words Count in Word files
2019-06	13	2879	15	2708
2019-07	12	2842	14	2655
2019-08	6	1538	19	4598
2019-09	11	2774	12	3358
2019-10	12	6444	7	1396
2019-11	13	2006	6	719
2019-12	14	2713	8	1425
2020-01	5	528	8	1690
2020-02	8	1515	5	928
2020-03	3	726	9	1838
2020-04	2	147	4	1360
2020-05	6	1466	8	2285
2020-06	5	3377	8	1429
2020-07	1	196	13	3192
2020-08	0	0	8	1758
2020-09	3	812	11	3555
2020-10	3	247	8	1329
2020-11	3	258	6	876
2020-12	2	3805	9	1970
2021-01	1	156	2	141
2021-02	7	2233	8	678
2021-03	10	3016	11	1372
2021-04	11	8246	3	263
2021-05	8	8176	4	437
2021-06	10	15065	9	831

Year-Month	Western Sydney International Airport posts per month	Words Count in Word Files	Western Sydney Airport Local Community posts per month	Words Count in Word files
2021-07	6	3064	3	316
2021-08	3	4763	1	79
2021-09	8	14020	7	2415
2021-10	4	8505	7	1202
2021-11	17	8845	9	2233
2021-12	6	863	4	604
2022-01	8	3954	4	970
2022-02	10	10291	4	753
2022-03	13	6503	19	4553
2022-04	5	1730	10	3894
2022-05	3	1407	5	529
2022-06	15	5311	6	604
2022-07	11	13766	2	251
2022-08	16	12252	6	1119
2022-09	15	4053	7	1720
2022-10	12	6316	9	2758
2022-11	8	2992	8	1245
2022-12	12	1997	9	3127

### 3.4.2 Ethics in Research

The ethics of online qualitative research remain debatable (Rageh et al., 2013). Some claim that researchers should openly disclose the existence and intentions of their research to the community they are studying, even if it is an online community, and use confidentiality measures and anonymisation to protect the publisher of the information (Kozinets, 2010). Kozinets (2010) frames the ethics of netnography around four pivotal questions—whether

online communities count as public or private spaces, how to secure informed consent from their members, how to prevent any harm to those members, and how to portray their data—then offers a concise four-step protocol of identifying and informing, requesting permission, obtaining consent, and properly crediting sources to guide every stage of the research process. However, others believe that the rules set by Kozinets (2010) need to be updated (Rageh et al., 2013) and that appropriate covert observation is the only option for some specific topics (Langer & Beckman, 2005). Using a covert approach also respects the essence of the naturalistic inquiry aspect of netnography so as not to interfere with communication in online communities. In covert research, the researcher does not intervene in communication or in-depth interaction between community members (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012).

In this research, as a non-participant observer, there was no urgency for me to articulate my research objectives or obtain informed consent during the data collection process, as all data sources were publicly available (Sthapit, 2018). This research had approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Research Integrity and Ethics Administration at the University of Sydney. Anonymisation and de-identification of usernames are critical methods to protect online community users and prevent activity tracing. In this study, all collected usernames were anonymised using numbers and alphanumeric characters. Each selected piece of raw data intended for publication underwent basic grammatical modifications that did not alter the original meaning, in order to reduce the risk of traceability. Finally, the author conducted searches on the published raw data to ensure that users could not be identified or traced.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Process**

In the data analysis process, naturalistic inquiry focuses more on patterns than causality analysis the main explanatory mechanism (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative research methods are used in this study because they are conducive to studying the patterns of human activities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The content analysis focuses on the main topics in comments for thematic analysis, the sentiment in comments for the sentiment analysis, and the behaviour and responses of the project officials on social media.

### *3.5.1 Analysis of Social Media Data*

Focusing on online stakeholder comments, expressions of sentiment, and WSIA responses to online stakeholder comments, the Gioia thematic analysis method was used to guide the structure of the analysis (Gioia et al., 2013). The coding was done in NVivo R1. The content of posts was coded using two steps: first-order analysis and second-order analysis.

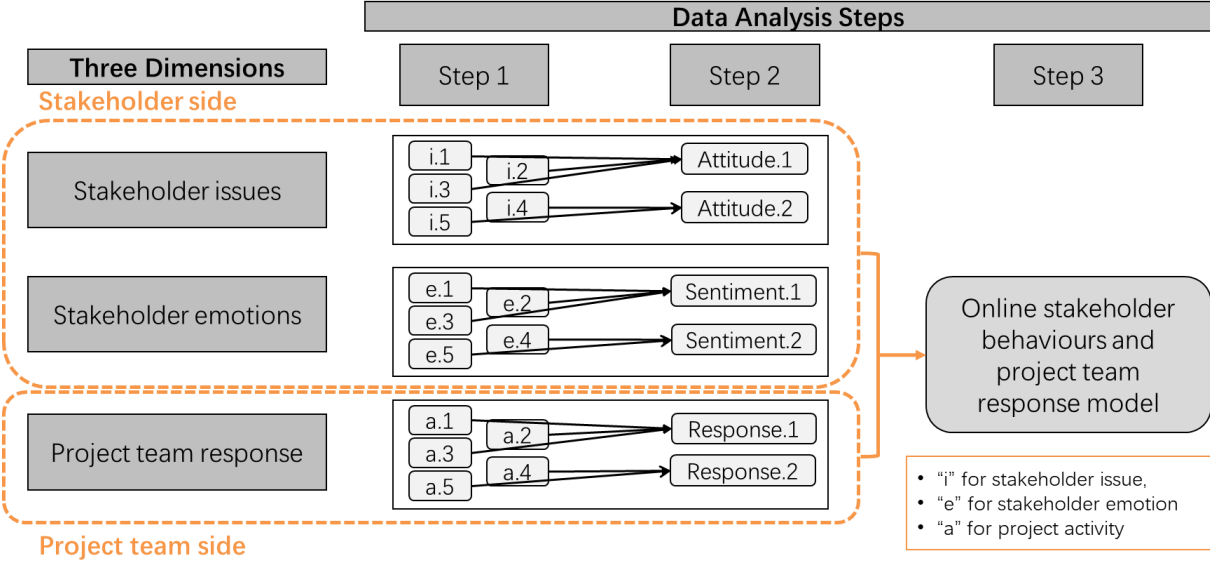
The first-order analysis used first-order ideas to identify all topics in the data, such as the language used by posters (Gioia et al., 2013). Since different stakeholders have different concerns, some may be more interested in the construction and implementation phases of the project than others. In contrast, some may be more interested in the project's impact on their lifestyles. During the second-order analysis, the number of themes was reduced under the umbrellas of second-order (i.e., academic) constructs (Gioia et al., 2013). In research, a theme is a recurring topic or a particular meaning brought about by an experience (Graneheim et al., 2017).

#### *3.5.1.1 Step 1: Initial Coding*

The dataset was analysed from three dimensions: stakeholder issues, stakeholder emotions, and project team responses. In this research, stakeholder issues include the arguments and voices relating to one or more specific project matter of online stakeholders in the WSIA Facebook page comments. The stakeholder emotions dimension identifies different emotions (e.g., anger, depression and joy) in online comments; the classification of these emotions mainly refers to the types of emotions expressed in protest (Jasper, 1998, p. 406) and some other emotion analysis models (Mou & Lin, 2014; Richins, 1997; Soussan & Trovati, 2020) (refer to Table 3-5).

In addition, the project team's response focuses on WSIA's selection behaviour and management strategies when responding to online stakeholders' comments.

**Figure 3-1** Data Analysis Steps and Three Coding Dimensions



The topics in the comments were first coded extensively to identify the stakeholder issues and emotions of the online stakeholders towards the project. In the coding about stakeholders’ expressed stakeholder issues, some chose to express their support or disapproval directly, and these were coded accordingly. For example, in some comments, online stakeholders directly expressed their opinions about supporting the project’s construction and welcomed the future WSIA’s offering of the convenience of travel; these comments were coded as “Support project implementation”. In contrast, others felt the need to state their positions with the help of facts and other relevant opinions, which this research codes and summarises at the first-order concept level. For instance, some online stakeholder comments expressing dissatisfaction with airport design and facilities were coded as “Dissatisfaction with airport design and facilities”. Other online stakeholders said the WSIA would bring more pollution to the local area and damage the local ecosystem, and such comments were coded as “Ecology and pollution” at the first-order concept level.

Regarding the direct coding of emotion, this research was guided by the theories of emotion classification proposed by Jasper (1998, p. 406), Mou and Lin (2014), Richins (1997), and Soussan and Trovati (2020), and adapted the classification model to the project context to guide the initial coding of emotions. For example, some stakeholders expressed anger towards the project and the project team out of dissatisfaction, and these were coded as emotions of “Anger”.

The expression of other stakeholders who expressed anticipation, aspiration, and satisfaction with the project, were coded as “Joy and Hope”.

Finally, the project team’s response behaviours and actions were identified and coded according to their motivation and the content of their responses. For example, some stakeholders helped the WSIA project team to answer other stakeholders’ questions. In that case, the WSIA project team replied to stakeholder and confirmed the answer and provided more explanation to the original questioner, and such responses were coded as “Confirm the information from the stakeholders”. In contrast, the WSIA’s attempts to clarify fake news and rectify rumours were coded as “Correcting rumours”.

#### 3.5.1.2 Step 2: Conceptual Categories

After the initial coding was complete, this research generalised the coding of the three dimensions of stakeholder issues, stakeholder emotion, and project team response into second-order concepts, or ‘conceptual categories’.

The criteria for classifying the stakeholder issues into conceptual categories included two tiers for the stakeholder attitude dimension: attitudes toward the WSIA project and the WSIA project team. Based on these two tiers, four categories (stakeholder attitudes) were created. For instance, the stakeholder issue “Support the airport implementation” was categorised into “Support for both airport and project team”. Online comments supporting the project but opposing the project team’s decisions and work, categorised under “Dissatisfaction with the airport design and facilities”, were grouped under “Support for airport but dissatisfaction with project team”. Other comments, which discussed the potential pollution that WSIA would bring to the local area, were classified into categories such as “Ecology and pollution” and “Flight paths and curfew”, and were grouped into “Opposition to both airport and project team”. In addition, some of the issues raised by online stakeholders did not show any particular attitude towards the WSIA project or project team, and these comments were placed into a category named “Neutral to airport and project team”.

Next, the category themes of stakeholder emotion considered the polarity of sentiment. As well as the two general categories of positive sentiment and negative sentiment, this research added

a neutral theme that emerged from the data. For example, “Anger” was grouped into “Negative emotions,” and “Joy and hope” was categorised into “Positive emotions”. Where the text lacked evidence of emotion, it was coded into “Neutral emotions”.

In addition, this research classifies the project team’s responses according to whether they are targeting at stakeholder issues or stakeholder emotions. issue-related response strategy focused on taking actions to the stakeholder issues from the online stakeholders. On the other hand, emotion-related response strategy focused on managing the emotions shown in the online comments.

#### 3.5.1.3 Step 3: Aggregation of Dimensions and Model Development

After completing the structured coding, the response methods and strategies deployed by the WSIA were analysed. By combining the three dimensions of stakeholder attitudes, stakeholder emotions and project team response, and considering the effects of each response strategy, it was possible to develop a model of the WSIA project team’s response patterns. In addition, based on the activity and performance of WSIA’s Facebook page, the patterns and effects of WSIA’s stakeholder engagement activities were categorised and evaluated.

#### 3.5.2 *Thematic Analysis*

Many qualitative studies have used thematic analysis (Sthapit, 2018), and rigorous thematic analysis can produce more trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Unlike content analysis, which treats the entire post as the unit of analysis, thematic analysis is divided into open-ended and axial coding (Azer & Alexander, 2018). Deriving categories from open-ended and axial coding forms the conceptual framework that ultimately articulates the theoretical results (Holder & Ruhanen, 2019; Sthapit, 2018). Open-ended coding splits the data, considering all possibilities for labelling each piece of data with a code. Axial coding, on the other hand, considers the intersections and connections between concepts (Azer & Alexander, 2018). These two coding processes represent a continuous integration process between the existing literature’s conceptual framework and the new concepts that emerge from the data (Azer & Alexander, 2018).

Thematic analysis is a fundamental approach of qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), but it is not a standalone method and needs to be combined with other methods to address the research questions (Nowell et al., 2017). Words and phrases are used to construct thematic categories, and thematic analysis is conducted based on terminology (Passebois Ducros & Euzéby, 2020). Meanwhile, word frequencies in the data are also taken into account to generate word clouds, and some words that do not contribute to the analysis are eliminated. As manual coding proceeds, the conceptual framework for coding themes is gradually fleshed out (Passebois Ducros & Euzéby, 2020).

The NVivo R1 has auto-code function for the thematic analysis. However, the automated data analysis of NVivo R1 relies heavily on the frequency of occurrence of words and phrases. The results of the automated analysis provide the researcher with an overall vague and preliminary conceptual framework of the themes, but there may be significant errors in the automated analysis.

The agreement between manual and automatic analyses is low (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015). Critical attitudes may sometimes take the form of sarcasm, where comments may have seemingly positive words but express negative sentiment. Such information needs to be contextualised in a particular context, in which manual analysis is relied upon, as automatic software analysis may be confused by positive words and lead to incorrect conclusions (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015). Software analysis of the text can increase the credibility of qualitative research, but still have limitations (Mary, 2009). For example, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software like MAXQDA (Koka et al., 2021) and ATLAS.ti (Hwang, 2008; Paulus & Bennett, 2017) can provide a more convenient program for researchers to code and visualise the qualitative data analysis, but the accuracy of the results needs to be carefully tested due to the limitations of automated analysis (Brown et al., 1990).

Based on previous discussion, in this research the thematic analysis relied on the themes expressed in the comments and the context of the posts from the project account, and was done manually. The online community discussed WSIA's functions and services, its impact on the environment, and residents' lives.

After reading all the data three times, the topics of public interest were summarised as follows:

- Environmental and pollution-related issues. This theme stems from the location of the airport site, which is in an area adjacent to a nature reserve. Residents expressed concerns about the potential for air, soil, water and ecological pollution from the project.
- Flight paths and noise. The WSIA was intended to operate 24 hours a day with no curfew, and residents were concerned about the impact of aircraft noise on their daily lives; they wanted the airport officials to announce the flight paths for the airport as soon as possible.
- Infrastructure development around the airport. WSIA is located in a peripheral location in terms of the existing public transport system, so access to the airport was a concern for potential future passengers. They said it was critical that the public transport system provide services at appropriate times, as the airport would operate 24 hours a day.
- Future airport services for passengers. Potential customers looking forward to the airport were interested in the airlines that would be based there, the types of aircraft that would be available, the airport's signalling system, and the airport's fuel supply.
- Government action issues. As the airport is a government-funded project, the community discussed government decisions and the use of funds.
- Economic and employment issues. When the project was first announced, it was expected to boost the local economy and increase employment. However, the local community was very concerned about whether the project was likely to deliver these promised benefits.

On the other hand, some topics were related to the project's construction management aspect. Because the airport was still in the construction phase, the topics discussed by the public in this category were mainly the airport's planning and design, the technical aspects of the project's construction, the achievements of the project team so far, and the progress of the project.

- Planning and design of the airport. The design of the airport terminal was one of the issues of interest to the public, with the local community expecting a landmark building. Therefore, many suggestions about it were made in the online comments. There was also great interest in the timing of the airport's opening. The future potential of WSIA to

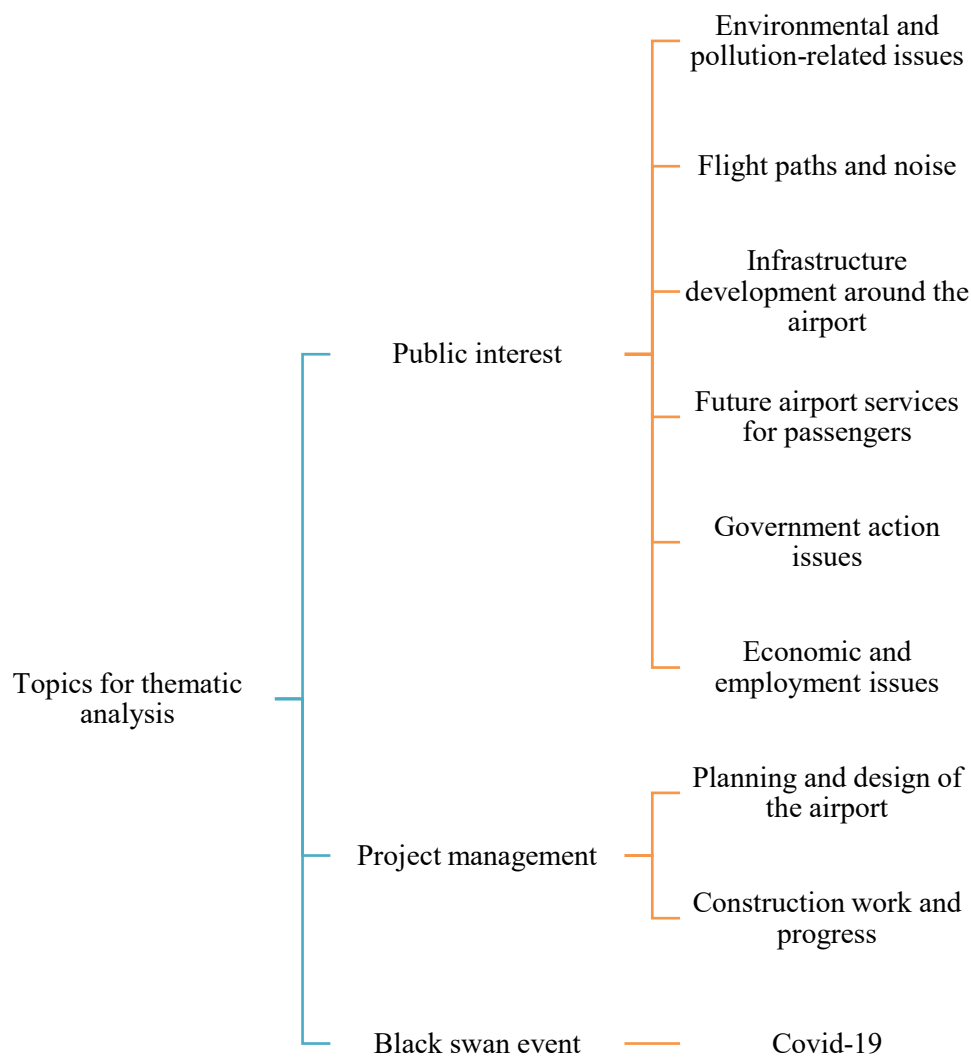
accommodate Sydney’s passenger traffic alongside Sydney’s current airport was also widely discussed.

- Information about construction work and progress on the project were shared on the official accounts, and the local community was keen to participate in the discussions.

In addition, a black swan event related to project risk management—COVID-19—gradually emerged in online community discussions in 2020, so this particular context was also considered.

The thematic analysis was conducted based on these topics; a brief summary is provided in Figure 3-1.

**Figure 3-2** *Topics to Consider in Thematic Analysis*



### 3.5.3 *Sentiment and Emotion Analysis*

In the core theory model of this research, emotion is the main concept shaping online community stakeholder engagement. The study of the nature and state of emotions is likely to become increasingly popular while facing additional challenges: for example, the expression of emotions can vary in syntactic features and style across time and cultural contexts (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015).

One of the methods used to analyse emotions is sentiment analysis. Sentiment analysis, also known as opinion mining, focuses on the subjects' attitudes towards a topic (Uren et al., 2016). For project stakeholders, sentiment analysis aims to identify whether stakeholders are expressing emotions about a particular topic and the nature and intensity of those emotions (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015). Another essential task of sentiment analysis is to determine the polarity of a text, whether positive or negative. Further analysis can classify the text under study into a specific sentiment category (Uren et al., 2016). Positive and negative emotions can be identified in a text (Thelwall et al., 2011), which are also the most helpful classification for sentiment analysis in the research (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015). Multiple emotions may be included in the same text (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015).

Based on the same reason discussed in the thematic analysis, although NVivo R1 has an automatic sentiment analysis function, results are error-prone due to the diversity of forms of expression in online comments. Therefore, it was necessary to undertake the sentiment analysis manually.

Although sentiment analysis can offer general insights into public emotional trends, it often lacks the capacity to explore the depth and complexity of participants' emotional experiences (Punetha & Jain, 2023), making it less effective for nuanced emotional interpretation. Against this backdrop, while sentiment analysis provides a useful foundation for identifying emotional cues in textual data, it must be complemented by other research methods to fully capture the multidimensional nature and impact of emotions. Therefore, this study will explore an integrated analytical approach that combines sentiment analysis with emotion analysis to examine stakeholders' emotional expressions more comprehensively.

**Figure 3-3** *Sentiment and Emotion Analysis*



As shown in Figure 3-3, emotion analysis requires the use of emotion analysis models. When conducting social media analysis, many sentiment theories are used to interpret emotional data. Richins’s (1997) model proposed 13 types of emotion: anger, worry, fear, shame, jealousy, dissatisfaction, sadness, loneliness, love, romance, peace, optimism, and satisfaction (Jin et al., 2017). A different classification model containing ten basic emotions was proposed by Izard (1977), consisting of surprise, joy, interest, sadness, fear, disgust, anger, guilt, shame, and contempt (Mou & Lin, 2014). Soussan and Trovati’s (2020) research uses categories to analyse business conversations, consisting of anger, feature, complaint, positive, negative, pricing, feedback, request, happiness, sadness, hate, surprise, love and worry.

Dufour et al. (2019) revealed that, in their study, the initial feedback of stakeholders to the project depends on primary emotions (the immediate, visceral reactions), while secondary emotions (the subsequent, reflective feelings) impact the motivation of stakeholders’ actions. Vignal Lambret and Barki (2018) stated that in terms of emotional response to social media, the choice should be preventive and targeted communication. Emotions accompany all social behavior, supplying motives and goals (Jasper, 1998). In social movements, individual and collective emotions do not flow in one direction; they resonate in a loop. Personal anger or hope, once voiced in public space, is amplified by the group’s rhythms, chants, and symbols into a shared intensity that, in turn, reinforces or reshapes each participant’s feelings—turning the hesitant more resolute and the militant more circumspect. Emotions circulate through bodily co-presence, online interactions, and story-sharing, continuously exchanging energy and

blurring the boundary between self and collective, ultimately shaping the movement’s force, trajectory, and staying power. (Jasper, 1998,).

Table 3-5 provides a summary of different emotional categories.

**Table 3-5** *The Different Classifications of Emotion Models*

Richins (1997)	(Mou & Lin, 2014)	Soussan and Trovati (2020)	Jasper (1998, p. 406)	General
Anger	Anger	Anger	Anger	Anger
			Compassion	Compassion
		Complaint		Complaint
	Contempt			Contempt
			Cynicism	Cynicism
			Defiance	Defiance
			Depression	Depression
	Disgust			Disgust
Dissatisfaction				Dissatisfaction
			Dread	Dread
			Enthusiasm	Enthusiasm
			Envy	Envy
Fear	Fear		Fear	Fear
		Features		Feature
		Feedback		Feedback
			Grief	Grief
	Guilt			Guilt
		Happiness		Happiness
		Hate	Hatred	Hate/Hatred
			Hope	Hope
			Hostility	Hostility
			Indignation	Indignation
	Interest			Interest
Jealousy				Jealousy
	Joy		Joy	Joy
			Loathing	Loathing
Loneliness				Loneliness
			Loss	Loss

Richins (1997)	(Mou & Lin, 2014)	Soussan and Trovati (2020)	Jasper (1998, p. 406)	General
Love		Love	Love	Love
			Loyalty	Loyalty
		Negative		Negative
Optimism				Optimism
			Outrage	Outrage
			Paranoia	Paranoia
Peacefulness				Peace
			Pity	Pity
		Positive		Positive
		Pricing		Pricing
			Pride	Pride
		Request		Request
			Resentment	Resentment
			Resignation	Resignation
			Respect	Respect
Romance				Romance
Sadness	Sadness	Sadness		Sadness
Satisfaction				Satisfaction
Shame	Shame		Shame	Shame
			Solidarity	Solidarity
			Sorrow	Sorrow
	Surprise	Surprise		Surprise
			Suspicion	Suspicion
			Sympathy	Sympathy
			Trust	Trust
Worry		Worry		Worry

Categorising these emotions as positive, negative, and neutral provides the basis for sentiment analysis. Thus, for this research, Table 3-6 below describes the emotion pool in this analysis and its classification into sentiment polarities. Although some codes (e.g., “complaint”, “interest”, and “request”) are not strictly emotions, in emotional energy theory (McCarthy & Glozer, 2022; Sloan & Oliver (2013)), those actions guide or motivate behaviour because they tend to trigger or stimulate a specific emotional response.

**Table 3-6** *The Emotion Pool and Emotion Polarity*

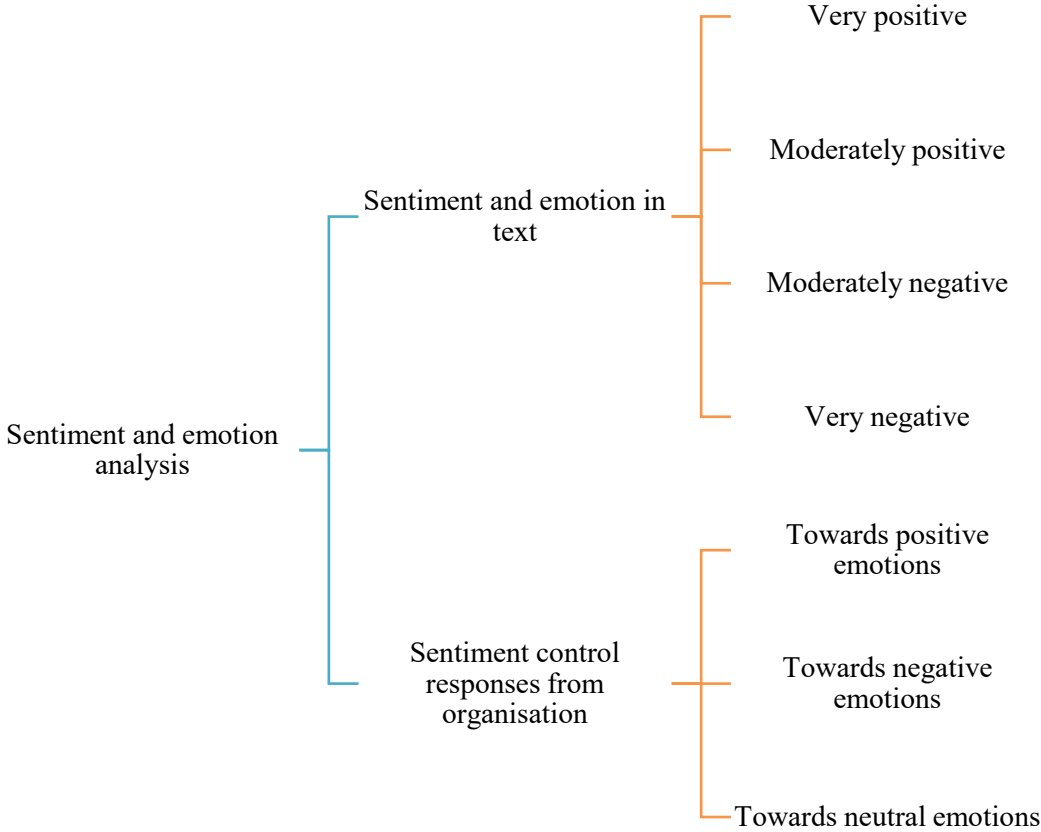
Sentiment Polarity	Emotions
Positive	Enthusiasm, Happiness, Hope, Interest, Joy, Love, Loyalty, Optimism, Peacefulness, Pride, Respect, Romance, Satisfaction, Solidarity, Surprise, Trust
Negative	Anger, Compassion, Complaint, Contempt, Cynicism, Defiance, Depression, Disgust, Dissatisfaction, Dread, Envy, Fear, Grief, Guilt, Hate/Hatred, Hostility, Indignation, Jealousy, Loathing, Loneliness, Loss, Outrage, Paranoia, Pity, Request, Resentment, Sadness, Shame, Sorrow, Suspicion, Sympathy, Worry
Neutral	Feature, Feedback, Resignation

The initial sentiment analysis is mainly divided into “very positive”, “moderately positive”, “moderately negative” and “very negative”. Comments that did not bear sentiment were not included in the coding. To support that, this research also incorporates emotional energy theory (Boyns & Luery, 2015; R. Collins, 1993), and the coding process used emotional energy level to analyse different emotions to generate the emotion framework.

The responses of official project accounts to public comments are also key to this study. The analysis of sentiment in official responses considers the sentiment of the text itself and the potential targets of sentiment moderation in the official responses. The official responses were initially categorised under “amplify emotions” and “dampen emotions”, and as the coding progressed, these were refined with “towards positive emotions” and “towards negative emotions”. As some of the stakeholders held neutral emotions, another code for organisation response, “towards neutral emotions”, was added to the codebook.

Figure 3-4 shows the coding structure of the sentiment analysis.

**Figure 3-4** Coding Structure for Sentiment Analysis



*3.5.4 Inter-coder Reliability*

Inter-coder reliability (ICR) is a critical metric in research, particularly in studies involving qualitative data analysis and coding frameworks. It assesses the degree of consistency among different coders when categorising or interpreting the same data, ensuring that the findings are trustworthy and replicable. This discussion outlines the concept of ICR, its significance, and the rationale for its application in research practice.

The necessity of ICR in research stems from the inherent subjectivity of qualitative analysis. As Massing et al. (2019) emphasise, while ICR is essential for quality assurance, the primary concern remains the validity of the coding process itself. Validity depends on clearly articulated coding instructions, and ICR reflects the extent to which these instructions yield consistent results across different coders. Therefore, achieving high ICR is crucial for confirming that the coding process is both accurate and consistent.

In fact, substantial ICR directly enhances the empirical strength of research findings. In some studies involving multiple coders, impressive levels of ICR have been achieved. For example, X. Zhang et al. (2024) reported a high ICR score (0.92), indicating strong agreement among coders following iterative discussions to reconcile discrepancies. Caplan et al. (2019) reported an ICR of 0.98, which is considered excellent. Such reliability metrics not only bolster the credibility of qualitative results but also demonstrate that interpretive judgments made by coders are coherent and well-founded. These illustrate how systematic coding practices and rigorous evaluation of coder agreement can lead to more reliable outcomes, thereby supporting the validity of conclusions drawn from qualitative data. High ICR reduces the likelihood of biased interpretations, which is particularly important in research addressing multifaceted topics that may invite divergent viewpoints.

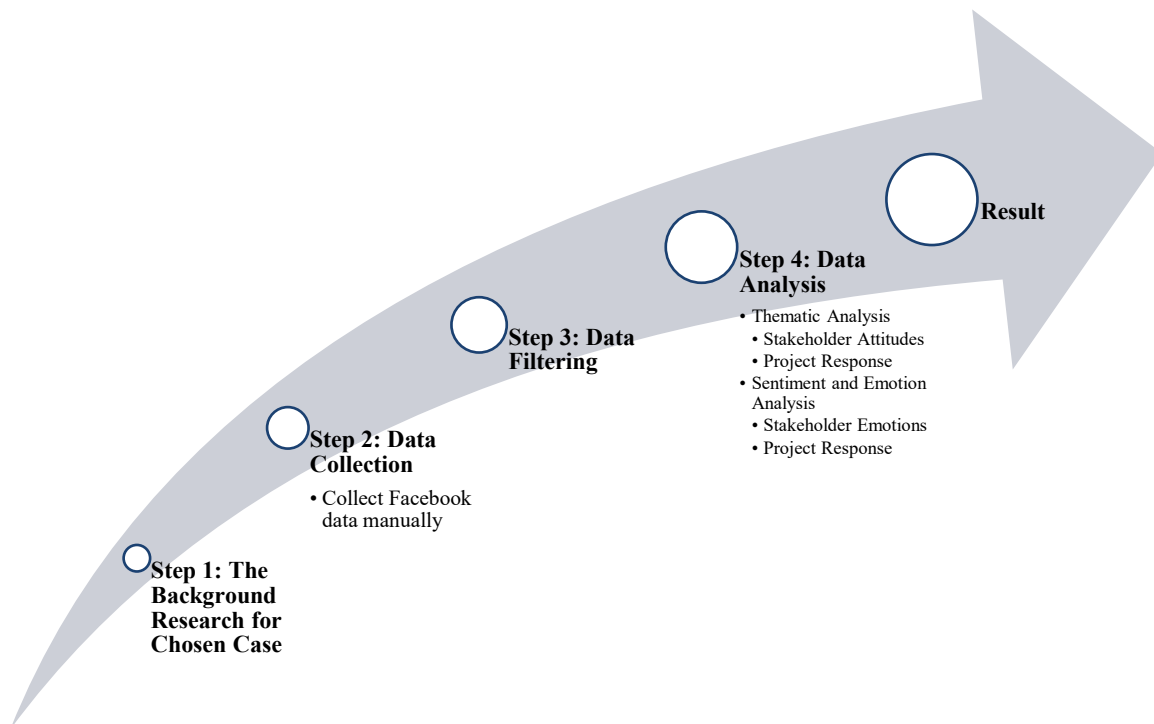
Given these considerations, incorporating ICR into research establishes a foundation of reliability, enabling researchers to present their findings with confidence. Furthermore, as qualitative methods continue to evolve, the inclusion of ICR assessment is increasingly recognised as best practice. As Sanders and Cuneo (2010) point out, despite criticisms of quantifying qualitative research, ICR is a widely accepted strategy for establishing reliability in team-based qualitative studies. The growing acceptance of this approach reflects a broader consensus on the importance of transparency and rigour in qualitative data analysis.

To ensure the validity of the coding in this research, the data were coded by the author and two other scholars with expertise in project stakeholder engagement, initially with pilot data for inter-coding testing. Inter-coder agreement was reached to ensure the credibility of the data analysis (Canhoto & Padmanabhan, 2015) and reliability of the data (Maxwell, 2013). The inter-coder reliability in this research is 0.86.

### **3.6 Summary of the Research Process**

The following figure illustrates the overall research process.

**Figure 3-5** *The Research Process*



Step 1: The WSIA project was used as the basis for the research. The researcher wanted first to understand its background and the history of its development.

Step 2: Social media pages and accounts related to the project were searched and selected, and publicly available data on social media lines was collected and recorded manually.

Step 3: Initial content analysis was carried out along with filtering of each file to remove irrelevant data.

Step 4: This step was broken down into two processes:

- Coding of themes in the data to filter out themes and sub-themes.
- Sentiment and emotion analysis of the data, coding the sentiment in the text data and assessing the impact of the text data on the change and development of sentiment.

Step 5: Based on the initial coding in Step 4, build the final framework based on the patterns of the online stakeholder engagement behaviours.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the research methodology structure and process for this research. Online naturalistic inquiry was outlined as the primary methods when developing the research process, and traditional thematic analysis and sentiment analysis guide were pinpointed as the data analysis processes.

# Chapter 4: Results

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the data analysis. It analyses the roles of two major social media accounts related to Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA) in its stakeholder engagement activities. It presents a thematic analysis of the WSIA stakeholders' voices and a sentiment and emotion analysis of online stakeholders' emotions. Finally, a classification of WSIA's response strategies is also presented.

## 4.2 Account Roles, Positioning, and Functions

In this research, the data source is two leading social media accounts: Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA) and Western Sydney Airport Local Community (WSALC) Facebook pages. There are some important differences between these two accounts.

### 4.2.1 *Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA)*

The WSIA Facebook account was created in September 2018 as the official account for Western Sydney Airport (WSIA), which was created by the project team after the project started construction. The project team also created accounts with the same name on other social media platforms (including X, Instagram and LinkedIn), where they used the official account to provide updates on the project, but the Facebook account gained more attention and interaction with users than the accounts on other platforms.

#### 4.2.1.1 WSIA Thematic Scope

WSIA used proactive posting to gain the attention of stakeholders. The topics of WSIA's posts included basic information about the airport project, promoting the value of the project to stakeholders, updating them on the project's construction progress, the construction of the experience centre and its opening hours, promoting the naming of the airport and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) code, and announcing the percentage of employees who were local residents in the middle or end of the year to show the project's contribution to local employment. WSIA also published celebratory posts to greet stakeholders on common holidays, show concern about the engagement of Indigenous Australians, and

occasionally post about working with Indigenous people. As more construction milestones were completed, the team conducted an online raffle to select stakeholders for a one-day trip to the construction site and posted photos of these stakeholders with the airport runway as a follow-up to the tour. The analysis of this research covered all the topics mentioned above.

#### 4.2.1.2 WSIA Account Roles

WSIA's Facebook page was the project's leading social media account and used social media platforms to stimulate stakeholder discussions and communicate directly with stakeholders. The page demonstrated to stakeholders the value and benefits the project would bring to the local community and the city. It also provided the expected service outcomes for those served when completed. The WSIA account was designed to attract the attention of stakeholders online and to select stakeholders for offline visits (including activities at the experience centre and visits to the construction site). They also considered integration into community culture, emphasising Indigenous cultural integration and cooperation. This allows for WSIA to shift the content of the page from the project's construction to the airport's daily operation and will allow the page to promote the airport's operational activities once construction is complete.

#### 4.2.2 *Western Sydney Airport Local Community (WSALC)*

The WSALC Facebook account was created in October 2018. This account emphasises that it is not an official project page. It was set up to ask questions raised by the community and to inform the community of the answers it receives. WSALC thus became an intermediary between the project and the community's stakeholders, providing an informal channel for information on stakeholder activities. WSALC not only focuses on airport project construction but also provides regular updates of information on other infrastructure projects related to WSA, including the new highway and underground construction. In terms of engagement with community stakeholders, WSALC focuses on the demands of community stakeholders and provides the information they receive from the project to the public through postings. This account exists only on Facebook, and no account with the same name has been created on any other platform.

#### 4.2.2.1 WSALC Thematic Scope

WSALC focuses not only on the progress of the WSIA project but equally on the package of infrastructure projects associated with the airport, including the construction of the new (M12) highway, the construction of the metro railway around WSIA, the construction of water and power facilities associated with the airport, and the planning of the aerotropolis for the Western Sydney region. An aerotropolis is a metropolitan sub-region—often described as an “airport city” and its surrounding corridors—whose infrastructure, land-use patterns, and economic activity are all organized around a major airport (Corrêa Pereira et al., 2023).

WSALC’s posts include many images taken during the WSIA’s construction, including of the relocation and demolition of existing buildings on the construction site before the earthworks, of the construction company chosen for the earthworks, and of the signing of the construction contract. WSALC has also focused on community stakeholders’ concerns about flight path design, noise issues, and the status of the planned aerotropolis, posting frequent updates on the progress of this information and the dates for releasing it and soliciting feedback from the community. Furthermore, WSALC posted significant information on road traffic controls and adjustments due to the project’s construction to inform community stakeholders about road closures and openings well in advance to minimise impacts on people’s travel plans. WSALC also shared or forwarded several posts from other accounts, including WSIA, the major Sydney press media, councillors’ posts related to the project, and other local community organisations’ posts related to the project. The Forum on Western Sydney Airport (FOWSA), a regular forum for communicating with stakeholders at Western Sydney Airport, was also mentioned on the account, including posts concerning the dates of meetings held and information on open public meetings.

#### 4.2.2.2 WSALC Account Roles

The role of the WSALC is to act as an intermediary between the project and the community stakeholders. The WSALC helps the community stakeholders to find the information they want about the project. As a result, WSALC became a channel to convey the questions and concerns of the community stakeholders to the project team and to inform the community stakeholders

of the answers. WSALC also forwards WSIA’s posts about the project’s progress, demonstrating support from the WSALC account owner for the progress of the airport construction project. On the other hand, WSALC also forwards posts that address requests from some of the community to show support for that community’s request. WSALC thus demonstrates a neutral position between the project team and the community stakeholders.

4.2.3 Comparison

The WSIA and WSALC accounts have different communication patterns with community stakeholders, and the figure below shows the pattern of information exchange between them. WSALC receives some project information from WSIA, and a large amount of the information they receive is published as posts to community stakeholders. The WSIA also publicises or showcases the project through its posts. Community stakeholders respond more often to WSIA posts, and a smaller number of community stakeholders leave comments for WSALC.

Figure 4-1 Information Exchanges between the Accounts

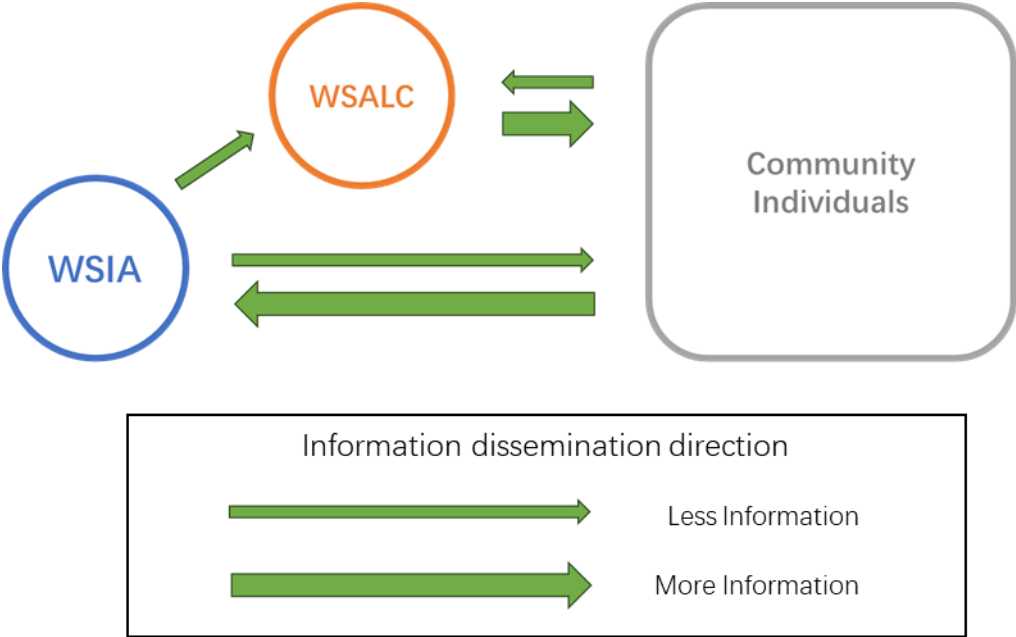
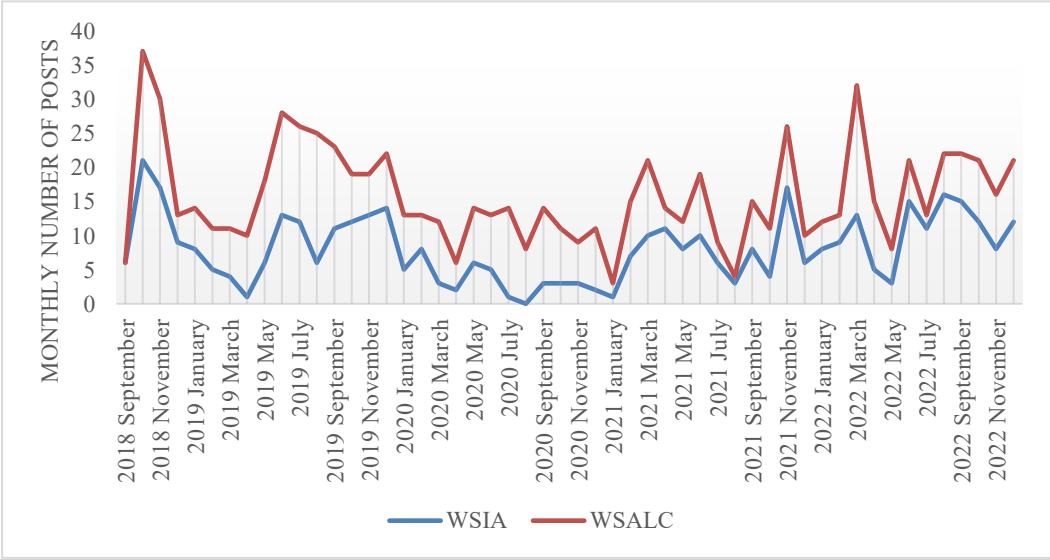
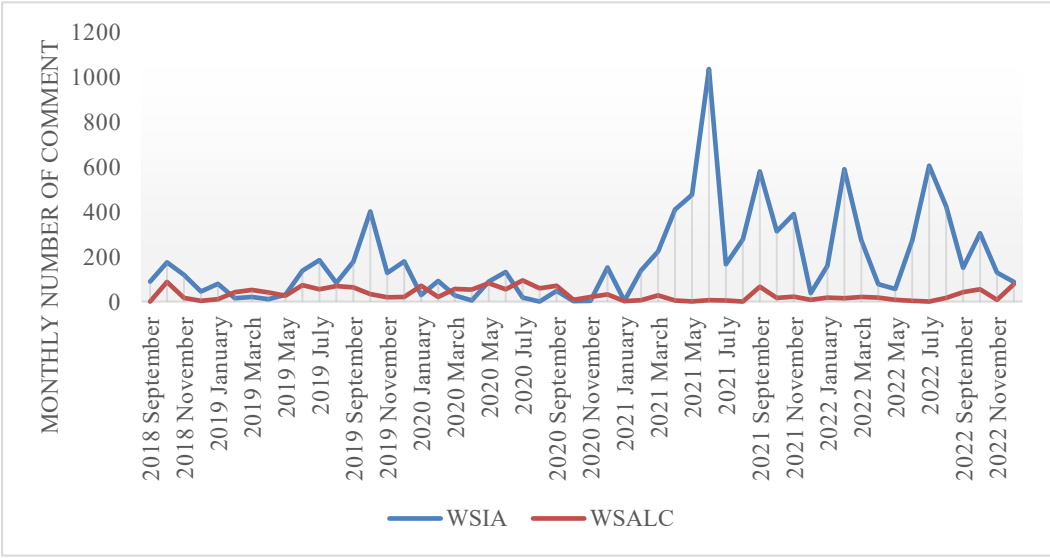


Figure 4-2 and Figure 4-3 show a comparison of the monthly post numbers and the stakeholder comment numbers between WSIA and WSALC from September 2019 to December 2022.

**Figure 4-2 Comparison of the Monthly Number of Posts by the Organisation**



**Figure 4-3 Comparison of the Monthly Number of Comments by Stakeholders**



As you can see from the figures above, WSALC published more posts than WSIA almost every month. However, the number of stakeholder comments they received was lower. Community stakeholders were more likely to leave publicly visible comments directly on posts published by WSIA. Figure 4-4 shows the linear correlation between the number of posts and the number of comment activities between the two accounts. The posts sent out by WSIA were more likely to receive comments from more stakeholders, meaning WSIA gained more attention than WSALC.

**Figure 4-4** *Linear Relationship between Monthly Posts and Monthly Stakeholders' Comment Numbers*

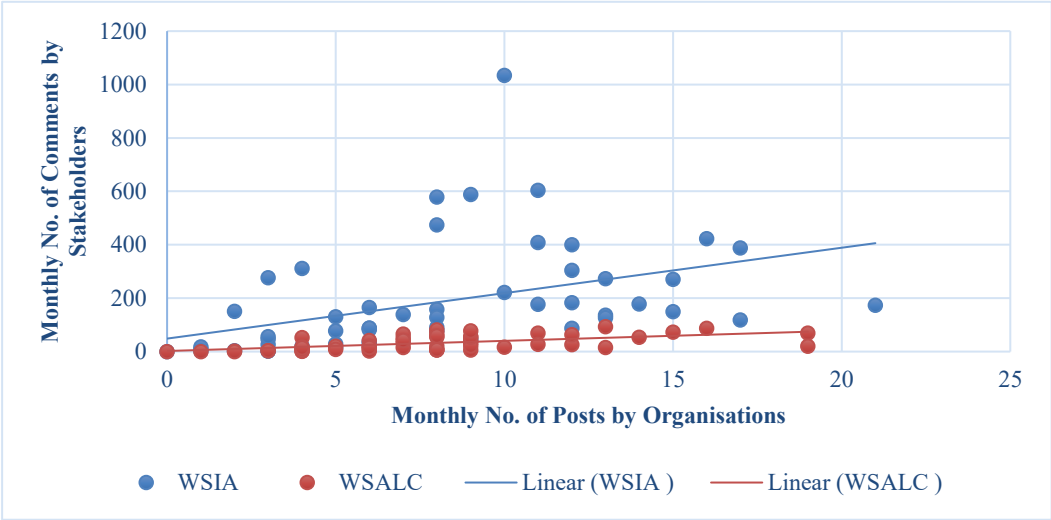
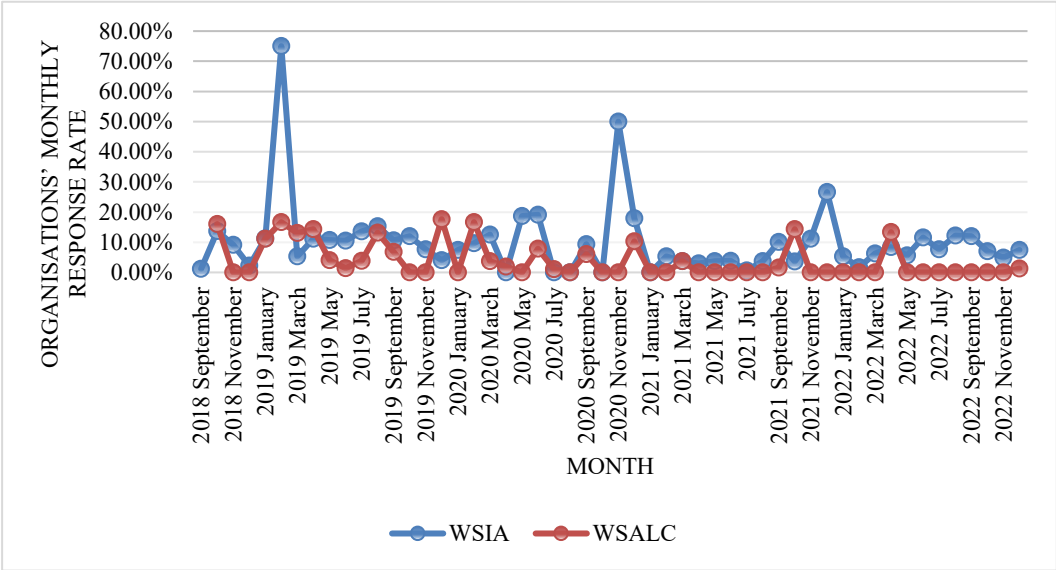


Figure 4-5 shows the response rates to stakeholder comments for both WSIA and WSALC. Because WSIA posts received more stakeholder comments and had a more comprehensive range of content to respond to, WSIA had a higher monthly response rate than WSALC. The response rate of WSALC in many months was zero.

**Figure 4-5** *Comparison of Monthly Reply Rates*



Based on the above data, a large amount of qualitative analysis in this research used WSIA as the primary data source, and WSALC data was used as supplementary data.

### 4.3 Issues and Attitudes

For the thematic analysis, this research focuses on the issues and attitudes of the stakeholders. Online stakeholder attitudes towards projects and project teams in WSIA projects form the core of their stakeholder issues. However, stakeholders’ attitudes towards projects and project teams may differ. This section analysed and summarised the stakeholder issues to these different stakeholder attitudes.

#### 4.3.1 Support for both Airport and Project Team

In comments that support both the project and the project team, comments from online stakeholders mainly include supporting the construction of the project, supporting the activities of the project team, providing advice and assistance to the project team, commenting as part of the project team, and helping the project provide explanations.

**Table 4-1** Supporting both Airport and Project Team

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Support for both airport and project team</b>	Support the construction of the project
	Support the activities of the project team
	Provide advice and assistance to the project team
	Comment as part of the project team
	Help the project to explain and clarify

##### 4.3.1.1 Support for the Construction of the Project

Among community members who supported the project, their online comments mainly reflected the view that constructing a second airport would boost the local economy, and that this impact would further expand, providing more business opportunities for Sydney and Australia. Some online stakeholders believed that the construction and management of the airport would bring more jobs to the local area and future generations. For example, one said:

MD1558: “More employment opportunities for our kids, and our kids’ kids ☺” (refer to Table 4-2).



Supporting the construction of the project: examples and evidence
<p>RM9922: Congratulations! Visitors Centre is first permanent building raised on land side of future almighty Western Sydney Airport. V. C. building is also first landmark in Badgerys Creek. [Can't] waiting next week to landing in Sydney. And to see new Visitors Centre and construction side of WSA.</p> <p>RM9922</p>
<p>CD9X39: Can't wait, bring it on.</p>
<p>JK9X71: JK9X72, it's going to be awesome and so close to home.</p>
<p>CA0630: Big improvement for west Sydney, we need more jobs.</p>
<p>BR9Y26: And people said it would never happen. Keep up the good work WSACo.</p>
<p>LG0Z22: I am impressed with the fact you guys are taking the time to respond to posts. Well done!</p>
<p>SG1473: The Airport brings a new chapter to Western Sydney. In reality, when we look to Sydney Airport, people got used to flights and so forth.</p> <p>Western Sydney has a lot to look forward to. At the end of the day, we just have to wait and see what the future brings.</p> <p>Great to see young people get opportunity like jobs and so forth.</p> <p>Great for families with various shops and other things.</p> <p>Why go to Sydney CBD when you [can] enjoy shopping in Western Sydney?</p> <p>Think of tourists who come to visit Western Sydney, what great news to see more visit various places of interest that Western Sydney has to offer.</p> <p>What more can I say???</p>
<p>NW1X11: I can't wait for it to be open. I've heard about this all of my life and I'm so excited for the jobs it will create. My son was only saying the other day he'd like to be a Pilot and work at Western Sydney Airport (he's 12).</p>
<p>MD1558: More employment opportunities for our kids, and our kids' kids 👍</p>

#### 4.3.1.2 Support for the Activities of the Project Team

The airport project team built an airport experience centre to show the public the impact of the future airport on the local community. Throughout the construction of this standalone structure from inception to completion, several online community members expressed their desire to visit the experience centre. They asked WSIA for information on the location and opening hours of the experience centre. Some organisations also ask if group visits can be booked, while some schools organise tours for their students. One comment was:

CT226: “Do you make bookings for school holidays in a big group?” (refer to Table 4-3).

However, some stakeholders also expressed interest in participating in the airport project and requested employment information in the comments:

PC0625: “I live in Seven Hills, plz share more info about jobs” (refer to Table 4-3).

Furthermore, during the COVID-19 lockdown period, to promote the project, the WSIA authorities marketed an online draw that allowed people to win a vacation trip abroad. Online participants were very active and expressed their desire to travel overseas through WSIA in the future.

**Table 4-3** Supporting the Activities of the Project Team: Examples and Evidence

Supporting the activities of the project team: examples and evidence
TM8Y40: This is awesome, and I can't wait to see this built!
LG9910: KI9910...maybe we can go check this out one day???
CT226: Do you make bookings for school holidays in a big group?
NJ9X38: Oh, I think this deserves our utmost attention! Who's in?
AA9X48: Western Sydney International: It would be nice to see some local Indigenous influences in the design and structure, being that it's on the largest Aboriginal land in Sydney.
CM9Y3: Thanks. I'll be working on the bulk earthworks job soon so will check it out when we move to site. 😊
CJ9Z2: SG9Z2 should go check it out next time we are in that area.
PC0625: I live in Seven Hills, plz share more info about jobs.
JN1445: I am glad I got to work with you Hughie!! Enjoy retirement mate. 🍷
NO191: Exciting place to visit.

#### 4.3.1.3 Provide Advice and Assistance to the Project Team

Several online stakeholders who supported the airport wanted it to become a new landmark for Sydney and had high expectations for the future comfort and convenience of using the airport. Therefore, some community members provided several suggestions for the airport project in their comments, hoping that some successful examples of airport construction would provide a reference for the project team. For example, one said:

DB545: “Please copy what T5 at Heathrow do for security. Works a charm” (refer to Table 4-4).

Some eager community members expressed their needs and expectations of the airport, including its facilities and services. Meanwhile, online stakeholders who wished to visit the experience centre also pointed out that its opening hours were not friendly to working people. They hoped that the project team could consider opening on weekends to allow them to visit.

DW9X30: “Why don’t you open on weekends so us locals that work can visit?” (refer to Table 4-4).

**Table 4-4** *Providing Advice and Assistance to the Project Team: Examples and Evidence*

Providing advice and assistance to the project team: examples and evidence
RL914: WSIA will be awesome if you guys can bring in shuttle buses over the next year or 2, many of these visitors probably don’t drive like myself, students, and those tourists including myself. Reckon once the airport is open, [I] think there might be large crowds to watch the first arrivals/departures.
MH9715: Hopefully the needs of plane spotters have been taken into consideration during the design phase.
JS9X2: Would be good if it was open during weekends...
DW9X30: Why don’t you open on weekends so us locals that work can visit?
DB545: Please copy what T5 at Heathrow do for security. Works a charm.
NL098: Please model in on Singapore’s Changi airport when it comes to ambience.
AE1548: It would be good if you could superimpose the actual airport over this picture so we could get a clearer idea on how it would look.
MG1680: It has to integrate with the existing Sydney flows and routes.
JK16113: SH16113 What about high-speed rail system just to get to the airport. Hey SH16113. I’m awesome .... I don’t need a cross strip.
SR1X21: Just have plenty of vehicle parking!!

#### 4.3.1.4 Comment as Part of the Project Team

Under some posts, the commenter has shown that they are part of the team, have contributed to the project, or have appeared in photos and videos posted by the project.

BR959: “Congratulations to all involved in this particular achievement. It was a pleasure working with you all” (refer to Table 4-5).

This shows the attitude of the project team members in that they are satisfied with what they are working on and think they are contributing to the great achievement of the project.

**Table 4-5** *Commenting as Part of the Project Team: Examples and Evidence*

Commenting as part of the project team: examples and evidence
GF8X43: [Reply to someone who recognised this person in the WSIA’s photo] Thanks tams I am in its babes.
BR959: Congratulations to all involved in this particular achievement. It was a pleasure working with you all.
PR9945: JA9945 this photo was taken a few weeks ago. I’m at the front somewhere.
MK9948: RC9948 couldn’t you see me in the photo?
DG074: TB074 is that the one you’re in? TB074: DG074 yeah that’s the one I’m in. 😊😊
SB128: Thats me! It was a pleasure to take you out for a spin, Scott.
DA1235: JM1235 that’s me lol and TG1235 JM1235: DA1235 Don’t forget RK1235 was there as well. AX1235 taking all the credit.

#### 4.3.1.5 Help the Project to Explain and Clarify

Some stakeholders responded to questions from other stakeholders by answering them on behalf of the project team. Similarly, when some comments contained misconceptions or rumours about the project, some stakeholders volunteered to try to help the project correct the misinformation. This happened after the project shared project information that showed more physical evidence of delivery.

VD9918: “CM9917 It services 10 million passengers per year. Why would they need to service its full 82 million people per year capacity right when it opens?” (refer to Table 4-6).

This stakeholder is trying to help the project explain why the airport only built one runway, using the estimated number of passengers to support their point and convening other stakeholders.



**Table 4-7** *Neutral to Airport and Project Team*

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Neutral to Airport and Project Team</b>	Neutral comments
	Tag someone to notify
	Ask for more information

4.3.2.1 Asking for Further Information

Some users only ask for basic information about the project, and these comments are usually limited to several words and do not show their attitudes and emotions.

**Table 4-8** *Ask for Further Information — Examples and Evidence*

Ask for further information - examples and evidence
EA8Y12: What information do you offer?
SJ914: When does it open to the public?
FC9626: Luddenham’s a big city. Exactly where is this?
MH1516: What will happen to Sydney Airport by then lahhh?
LD1554: And when is the 1st Train due?
ZT1681: Whereabouts is this airport located?

4.3.2.2 Neutral Comment

Some comments only expressed the stakeholder’s opinion and did not express any attitude towards the project. These comments usually include explanatory notes on technical expertise or feelings about the work shown by the project and are generally neutral. These comments appear as the first comments or subsequent comments (through replies) made by stakeholders.

**Table 4-9** *Neutral Comments: Examples and Evidence*

Neutral comments: examples and evidence
NH9511: TD9511 wow
KM1573: Well, it’s happening.

### 4.3.2.3 Tagging Someone to Notify Them

Some stakeholders tagged other members to help their friends and family follow the news and information posted by WSIA. This was the primary feature of the online information dissemination behaviour, and we can observe these community members using their social networks to share or disseminate information to targeted others whom they perceive as a relevant audience or someone who would note the information with interest.

**Table 4-10** *Tagging Someone to Notify Them: Examples and Evidence*

Tagging someone to notify them: examples and evidence
GG8Y41: SK8Y41
LT915: VL915. NB915. CN915. ML915
SA9X71: ET9X71 what the new airport is going to look like.
KA9X77: JA9X77
JA9X78: KA9X78 seen it

### 4.3.3 Opposition to both Airport and Project Team

Among the WSIA’s stakeholders, those who opposed projects often opposed the project team’s posts. The crux of these comments contained practical and socially meaningful topics and issues, including ecology and pollution, flight paths and curfews, blaming the government; they also noted that that their daily life was affected.

**Table 4-11** *Opposition to both Airport and Project Team*

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
Opposition to both airport and project team	Ecology and pollution
	Flight paths and curfew
	Blaming the government
	Daily life affected

#### 4.3.3.1 Flight Path and Curfew

Some local opponents were affected by the noise caused by the airport, which is planned to be a 24-hour operation airport. A large percentage of comments opposed the construction of WSIA

for this reason, and there were frequent requests for WSIA to publish the future flight paths. One said:

EE9X70: “Can’t wait to be exposed to the noise and pollution of non-stop aircraft, flying at low altitude 24/7 (365 days of the year). Such a thrilling prospect!” (refer to Table 4-12).

However, WSIA’s repeated delays have further contributed to increased comments on this issue. In addition to persistent enquiries about flight paths, some community members who found that they could not stop the project’s construction asked them to set a curfew, like the pre-existing Sydney airport, or ask the WSIA project owner to compensate residents affected by noise with soundproofing materials.

RB1X1: “Release the flight paths and establish a curfew. Aircraft noise 24/7 will be unbearable. Whole communities of young families have built their homes on land released around this airport” (refer to Table 4-12).

**Table 4-12** *Flight Paths and Curfew: Examples and Evidence*

Flight paths and curfew: examples and evidence
RM9X38: NJ9X38 would love to but bit late notice for Most of the Population who will be affected by a No Curfew Airport 😞
EE9X70: Can’t wait to be exposed to the noise and pollution of non-stop aircraft, flying at low altitude 24/7 (365 days of the year). Such a thrilling prospect!
ES679: I can’t wait, simply can’t wait for constant noise above my quiet house.
DF1018: Give the public the flight paths. Then we will see how many people will be affected by the noise.
PL1477: NC1476 and pollution, noise, traffic congestion.
JC1529: MO1529 they have re-zoned the residential areas to Agribusiness to protect the 24/7 curfew, construction at the moment is 24/6 days a week. Not enough properties to cause any grief at the moment, wait till the flight paths are released and then the sh*# will hit the fan.
KT1647: Wait till the noise kicks in, no curfews. People will be upset.
RB1X1: Release the flight paths and establish a curfew. Aircraft noise 24/7 will be unbearable. Whole communities of young families have built their homes on land released around this airport.

Flight paths and curfew: examples and evidence
LN1X4: Flight paths. Show us the flightpaths. You have all this wonderful technology, but you don't know the way the planes will take off or land? Or will they miraculously appear the day after the state and federal elections next year?
DO1X9: I will let you know when the Airport is up and running 24/7 and I can't hear the TV for the noise! 👍
JM1939: WSIA my mistake. As this post seemed to indicate, you were in the position to inform the community of WSA's progress. I assumed you would've been informed about this critically important aspect of planning. How awful that you're being kept in the dark too.
RB1X1: JP1X2 Sydney's Kingsford Smith airport has a curfew. It can and should be done for all residents from the area around the new airport to the Blue Mountains.
MQ1X7: Stop showing this. I already know that I will not get any sleep, the airport after it opens will be operating 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.
RM1X21: So, what happened to the politicians who paid 10x what the land was worth?
DV1542: WSIA oh come on. You don't design a damned airport worth billions of dollars without knowing what the flight paths are! You lot have been hiding this information from the public for years and I reckon your "Consultation" will be "take it or leave it".
DW1541: Idiotic decision placing a 24-hour International airport at this particular site. Pure politics, and as others have said, the flight paths would have been decided on a long time ago.

#### 4.3.3.2 Ecological and Pollution Concerns

Some opponents were concerned about the pollution and ecological damage caused by the airport during and after its construction. As the WSIA airport is located very close to a local nature reserve, stakeholders and residents were concerned about air and noise pollution from the airport's operation on the natural environment, especially as Australia's flora and fauna are unique and irreplaceable.

LS0Z16: "Who really cares? Probably casuals anyway. Dumb decision adding more pollution to an area that may well see it sit and hover there for years, plus it's near our key water supply" (refer to Table 4-13).

CS1553: "Awful scar on the landscape! 24-hour noise! Trucks and congestion on the roads!" (refer to Table 4-13).

As a result, many online stakeholders felt that the construction of WSIA was the wrong decision.

**Table 4-13 Ecology and Pollution: Examples and Evidence**

Ecology and pollution: examples and evidence
GG012: Can't wait for the temperature & pollution to increase in the western suburbs soup bowl... Oh, & the 24/7 jet engine noise will come in handy when I forget to set my alarm at 3am.
LD0516: Airport in a river basin will be mega pollution, bad idea.
KL0514: WSIA At the moment the skies are clear, and the air pollution has dropped — the last thing we need is a massive increase in air pollution in Western Sydney.
LS0Z16: Who really cares? Probably casuals anyway. Dumb decision adding more pollution to an area that may well see it sit and hover there for years, plus it's near our key water supply.
KD1512: Word is that the airport will be used mainly for freight. Not international arrivals. Therefore, if that's true there will be more trucks on the roads, more pollution and more noise.
KD1526: SM1525 more trucks and pollution. Exactly what is needed.
PP1528: Imagine the same picture without any surrounding green colour, is the sad reality of the future up to 2026... 😞 .
CS1553: Awful scar on the landscape! 24-hour noise! Trucks and congestion on the roads!
GE1557: Blue skies full of pollution from glorified buses with wings. 🙄🙄🙄 Show us the flight paths! What are you hiding??
NC1610: SH1612 more traffic, more pollution, more noise, more headaches for the local area.

4.3.3.3 Blaming the Government

Some stakeholders believed that Sydney's current existing airport is sufficient to meet Sydney's flight demands and that building this new airport to completion was a waste of time and money. They saw the new airport as a white elephant, so stakeholders blamed the government for making a wrong decision.

DV0Z20: "They should build the airport in the shape of a great white elephant. Another joke imposed on the people of western Sydney so some well-connected land bankers and developers could make huge profits" (refer to Table 4-14).

This view was very frequently expressed during the lockdown caused by Covid-19. Other online stakeholders believed that the WSIA airport was a politically motivated project of politicians and would not benefit residents.

**Table 4-14** *Blaming the Government: Examples and Evidence*

Blaming the government: examples and evidence
JT0627: Western Sydney Airport is going to be a white elephant paid for by the citizens of Australia. First of all, the aviation industry is environmentally unsustainable. Aviation is responsible for at least 12% of climate change emissions and so far, there is no proven way that “potential alternative fuels” are going to fix this problem. Then there is COVID. Over 40% of industry types believe that it could be up to three years before the industry recovers and that was before these second and third waves. There is a quickly accelerating demand for governments to act on curbing emissions. We know for certain that the pace of atmospheric warming is going to present unforeseen problems such as fires, floods and storms which are going to render a folly such as the Western Sydney Airport redundant. WSA is an unnecessary and unsustainable piece of transport infrastructure that needs to be stopped immediately.
DV0Z20: They should build the airport in the shape of a great white elephant. Another joke imposed on the people of western Sydney so some well-connected land bankers and developers could make huge profits.
DH1482: Instead of wasting \$\$\$ on this white elephant... Put the funds into bringing our industry back to our country and making Australia independent again...
DF1528: An elephant that is very white. Don’t think they have taken the fog factor or instrument approach factors into account.
PM1541: Will go down in history as one of the biggest white elephants ever constructed in Australia, possibly top ten in the world.
PF1617: RD1617 Just like Madrid’s second airport. Google Don Quixote airport to see how to build a white elephant. BCA is going down the same path. Why do you think no private enterprise will finance this? The taxpayer stands to lose billions.
GY1685: Waste of time and money — lift the curfew at Sydney!
TW185: Biggest waste of money ever.
SR1811: I wonder with the shutdown. Was it just a waste of time and money?

4.3.3.4 Daily Life Affected

Some stakeholders complained that their daily lives were affected by the project’s construction. Moreover, they did not want an airport built in their neighbourhood. Some other stakeholders planned to move to other communities. They even put sarcasm in their words to express their opinions.

DA9637: “RC9637 GREAT it already takes us 5 minutes just to get out of the driveway in the mornings. I can’t turn right anymore, we have to turn left. Sucks” (refer to Table 4-15).

MD252: “I’m glad I don’t live that side of the mountains anymore. I’m glad the government was happy to sell out to and have no consideration for the people it’s not going to help anyone from the area” (refer to Table 4-15).

**Table 4-15** *Daily Life Affected: Examples and Evidence*

Daily life affected: examples and evidence
DA9637: RC9637 GREAT it already takes us 5 minutes just to get out of the driveway in mornings. I can’t turn right anymore, we have to turn left. Sucks. RC9637: DA9637 looks like it’s going to be rather painful for the next few years.
FC9X21: We moved down to Harrington Park from Castle Hill 7 years ago when this area was semi-rural.... not anymore!
JC017: Why the road closures, what’s happening?
TN036: All that land but the tipper trucks still have to wait along the roadside on Elizabeth Dr leaving mud all over the road when they drive off.
RD1211: Should do for Western Sydney folk but for Blue Mts ppl travelling down and up the hill? Nightmare ....
HK2111: GH2111 many residents have already been advised they can’t build granny flats, sheds, additional storeys to their existing properties. Councils are still in the process of telling residents what they can’t do on their land. The government is drip feeding information to protect themselves for the upcoming election.
MD252: I’m glad I don’t live that side of the mountains anymore, I’m glad the government was happy to sell out to and have no consideration for the people it’s not going to help anyone from the area
DW8Y24: Perhaps you need to stop digging up all our phone cables. 😡😡

#### 4.3.4 Support for Airport but Dissatisfaction with Project Team

In the comments of online stakeholders, some have an attitude of supporting the project but are opposed to or dissatisfied with the work or decisions of the project team. These views focus mainly on dissatisfaction with the airport facilities and design, dissatisfaction with the project online activities, and dissatisfaction with project’s decisions and the state of the work. Additionally, some stakeholders also tried to reduce the expectations of others.

**Table 4-16** *Contradicting Airport and Project Team*

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Contradicting airport and project team</b>	Dissatisfaction with the airport facilities and design
	Dissatisfaction with the project online activities
	Dissatisfaction with project decisions and the state of work
	Reducing expectations of others

4.3.4.1 Dissatisfaction with the Airport Facilities and Design

Many online stakeholders were concerned about the facilities needed to operate the airport and questioned the design of the airport’s facilities. They were also concerned about the shape of the terminal building and the number of runways required to meet demand. When the project released the airport design renderings, some stakeholders felt that the project design was not attractive enough.

AP9X71: “Inside looks great. Outside looks a little plain Jane. Maybe should have got Zaha Hadid to design the exterior. Look at Beijing Daxing Airport” (refer to Table 4-17).

Some commented that the airport design was more like a club or train station than an international airport. They valued the airport as representing the local area, and the design disappointed them. In response to the project’s proposed facilities and design, including transportation from the surrounding areas, the facilities for replenishment of aeroplane fuel, and the taking off and landing of aircraft in the perceived bad weather of the area, some stakeholders with professional background and experience in travel and tourism shared their concerns about the airport’s functional design. One said:

FG1522: “I wonder how many flights are going to be delayed because of fog. It’s one of the worst areas in Sydney for fog. I know, as I drive past the new airport most days” (refer to Table 4-17).

**Table 4-17** *Dissatisfaction with the Airport Facilities and Design: Examples and Evidence*

Dissatisfaction with the airport facilities and design: examples and evidence
AP9X71: Inside looks great. Outside looks a little plain Jane. Maybe should have got Zaha Hadid to design the exterior. Look at Beijing Daxing Airport.
GP0Z10: So it's going to be a domestic airport for a long time, still, what happens when the passengers get to St Marys in the morning with luggage. No room on the train with luggage.
CC963: 200 days a year, deep fog in the morning. Planes can't land.
MS971: Looking at the pic, how does one get into or to the airport. I guess runway frogger must be the go.
FG1522: I wonder how many flights are going to be delayed because of fog. It's one of the worst areas in Sydney for fog. I know as I drive past the new airport most days.
AP1519: Where will the fuel lines be to service the airport? No way could you truck in the amount required, that would be stupid beyond belief.
DB1540: AS1539 like build a motorway with only two lanes each way? .... and then after only 10 years.... it needs to be disrupted for 2 years to be widened.
SK1X7: Yet again, Australia is the laughing stock of the world. 8 billion to build a single runway and a single terminal. The cost of expanding and construction AFTER there is an active runway and passenger jet movements is horrendous. These people have absolutely no idea. To complete a second runway and the terminals that were initially concepts will be over 40 billion. The biggest waste and mismanagement of taxpayer money going. Construction started over 12 months ago, but the plans and design team have only just released the design. How is this not mismanagement. Planning at the government's finest. NON-EXISTENT.
KJ1X13: When is the jet fuel pipeline going to be completed to take tankers off the road? When is the high-speed rail link to be completed?
DB1X23: And no fuel pipeline.... so, there will be hundreds of tankers going back and forth. It's called how not to plan an airport.

4.3.4.2 Dissatisfaction with the Project's Online Activities

Some of the comments from community members expressed dissatisfaction with the content of the official responses from the WSIA project. Regarding the flight path responses, some online stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the perfunctory responses of WSIA, pointing out that they were avoiding the actual issue and alluding to the situation that WSIA authorities had withheld information on flight paths as they knew them but were not willing to share the details, as evidenced in the following stakeholder statement.

JW9X32: “Will you have flight paths? What about the infrastructure that was promised and now cancelled? Like the train line?” (refer to Table 4-18).

LN1X4: “Flight paths. Show us the flightpaths. You have all this wonderful technology, but you don’t know the way the planes will take off or land? Or will they miraculously appear the day after the state and federal elections next year?” (refer to Table 4-18).

In some comments, online stakeholders questioned the team’s definition of ‘local employment’, and argued that their local employment rates were not transparent; they challenged the WSIA’s standard of residents when they are calculating the local employment rate. These online commenters believed that WSIA’s replies to their questions did not answer the question but instead tried to divert attention. One complained:

JR1544: “The only answer you will receive here is, spin, spin, spin!” (refer to Table 4-18).

Sometimes, the dissatisfaction with the WSIA’s responses was not only expressed by the questioner but also by other stakeholders who challenged the WSIA’s replies.

**Table 4-18** *Dissatisfaction with the Project Online Activities: Examples and Evidence*

Dissatisfaction with the project online activities: examples and evidence
JW9X32: Will you have flight paths? What about the infrastructure that was promised and now cancelled? Like the train line?
DS0Z26: Western Sydney International Airport. Do you have the flight paths map I can view? All the maps I have seen are for feasibility only.
DS0Z26: Western Sydney International Airport that’s the Federal Government? What department?
RR0Z14: Sorry, but when I see self-promotion like this, I have an extremely difficult time believing ANY of it, ESPECIALLY when it comes from a government institution.
MH957: BG957 Government policy, tell me nothing and show even less...
JR1544: The only answer you will receive here is, spin, spin, spin!
VK1544: Western Sydney International Airport lies, lies, and more lies.
KD1544: Western Sydney International Airport once again. Will the government be paying for sound proofing for those living in a twenty-kilometre radius of the Airport???
DB1629: Western Sydney International Airport great political answer... managed to avoid any responsibility.

**Dissatisfaction with the project online activities: examples and evidence**

RB1644: CW1644 Flight paths! This Government will not release them, as they have been an ongoing issue for years. And even cost the Liberal Party a seat. ...Second Sydney Airport A Chronology - Parliament of Australia

**4.3.4.3 Dissatisfaction with Project Decisions and the State of Work**

Some community members expressed disapproval of the decision-making of the project organisation, while others felt that the project was not working efficiently enough.

GH9921: “They’re working too slow 😞” (refer to Table 4-19).

When the project decided to build the experience centre, some thought the WSIA project team should have used the resources to construct the airport. After the experience centre opened, some also questioned whether the WSIA project team should have put more effort into building the actual airport rather than using the centre for publicity and marketing.

DH8X43: “Maybe just build the airport?” (refer to Table 4-19).

Shooting photos and videos during some promotional activities led to the suspension of work on the project, which also drew the ire of some online stakeholders.

SW0623: “Can’t you guys go back to work soon??? You got work to do!” (refer to Table 4-19).

**Table 4-19** *Dissatisfaction Project Decisions and the State of Work: Examples and Evidence*

Dissatisfaction project decisions and the state of work: examples and evidence
DH8X43: Maybe just build the airport?
GH9921: They’re working too slow. 😞
AB9X65: Wonder which country they have copied this design from but will claim to be original!
AK9X64: Why does it take 5 years to construct the world’s biggest airport in Istanbul, but it takes us 9 years to build something a quarter of the size?
SW0623: Can’t you guys go back to work soon??? You got work to do!
RM0Z23: They still haven’t employed enough people which can only mean there is a high possibility it won’t be finished on time.
DL0Z15: 4 local government areas larger than most European countries and all you can manage is 54% [this is the local employment rate released by WSIA].

Dissatisfaction project decisions and the state of work: examples and evidence
WB0Z14: It will still be over budget and time, guaranteed.
HH1566: TR1566 finally someone with some sense. The speed at which infrastructure projects are done in Australia is appalling, together with the ridiculous price tag. But no accountability ever. I'm sick of things progressing so slowly. To be fair, the NSW LNP has committed to and have finished projects, while NSW Labor hardly got anything done in the many years before.
GW1637: I've only got 1 question.....HOW MANY AIRPORTS HAS THIS COMPANY BUILT? DON'T BOTHER TO ANSWER, AS I SUGGEST THIS IS THE FIRST ONE.

#### 4.3.4.4 Reducing Expectations of Others

When some stakeholders had positive or overly optimistic expectations, some other stakeholders responded either more sensibly or more pessimistically in response, and provided more objective examples and data to reduce others' expectations of the project.

GS9X81: "You must be confusing the new airport with Singapore or many of the other world class airports ...!" (refer to Table 4-20).

This stakeholder is responding to another stakeholder who compliments WSIA's design and services, saying that he or she may make a mistake with the airport they are talking about, indicating that the WSIA design is not of that class.

**Table 4-20** *Reducing Expectations of Others: Examples and Evidence*

Reducing expectations of others: examples and evidence
DK9620: RM9620 it's just an airport. Not really groundbreaking like the harbour bridge/opera house. Governments of today wouldn't be able to build either of those projects in NSW.
PS9638: Let me guess, it will be the New South Wales standard two lane each way grid lock as usual.
DM973: Well, I am willing to bet that that will exclude Aussies, as in the Sydney Rail Project.
GS9X81: You must be confusing the new airport with Singapore or many of the other world class airports ...!
KC9Z22: WSIA are you sure it is not 2620?
SP0Z12: TO0Z11....Haha! That'll be a "no reply"... they are already testing flight paths ... haven't you noticed the planes overhead the last 2 yrs, cause they're hoping you haven't...
JC2113: GH2111 The government will probably have it SOLD before they intend on building the second runway so it's no concern to them.
RE241: SL241 It [the construction progress of the airport] won't be direct. We need to go to St. Mary's and change to go to Central.

## 4.4 Emotion and Sentiment

The emotions of the stakeholders were analysed using emotion classification models (Jasper, 1998; Mou & Lin, 2014; Richins, 1997; Soussan & Trovati, 2020), and the analysis also considered the energy of the emotions (Boyns & Luery, 2015; Brackett et al., 2019; Hernandez et al., 2012). I classified emotions through sentiment and emotion analysis into three polar categories: positive, negative, and neutral/absent.

### 4.4.1 Positive Sentiment

The online responses of WSIA showed more positive emotions when responding to comments with positive emotions. Here is an example:

AM1648: “Looks very nice! 🙌🙌 Two questions. Can you confirm how many terminals there will be? How many departure gates will the airport have? Thanks” (refer to Table 4-48).

WSIA: “AM1648, we’re really proud of the design. We’ll have a single, integrated domestic and international terminal, which means a better passenger experience through faster transfer times. Stage one of the airport opening in late 2026 will have 9 swing gates capable of boarding a range of international and domestic aircraft, as well as more gates for remote boarding. We can’t wait to welcome you!” (refer to Table 4-48).

In terms of the categories of positive emotions expressed by stakeholders relative to WSIA, most of the positive emotions belong to “Joy and happiness”, “Interest”, “Enthusiasm”, and “Pride and respect”.

**Table 4-21** *Positive Sentiment*

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Positive</b>	Joy and happiness
	Interest
	Enthusiasm
	Hope
	Pride and respect

#### 4.4.1.1 Joy and Happiness

Of the positive sentiments in the data, joy and happiness are the most common emotions, and these can be considered the underpinning and foundation of all the positive sentiments. Stakeholders showed joy and happiness when they felt satisfied with what the project showed them, including the airport blueprints, the design rendering graph, and the construction site photos. The emotions of joy and happiness in the comments included the keywords: amazing, beautiful, nice, good, awesome, love, fantastic, lol (laugh out loud), haha, and cool. Community stakeholders did not employ long words when expressing joy and happiness. They expressed their agreement and satisfaction with the topics the project brought up in their social media posts and, therefore, did not offer more opinions.

EA8Y12: “WSIA ok that’s fantastic” (refer to Table 4-22).

MJ9X16: “AB9X16 Ah nice, thanks. I’m glad the current one stays open as I love spotting there” (refer to Table 4-22).

**Table 4-22** *Joy and Happiness - Examples and Evidence*

Joy and happiness: examples and evidence
RW8914: TJ8914 We should visit once completed for sure.
CS8X9: WSIA been in and out of the first stage of lend lease sites, looking good. 👍
NH8Y7: Awesome TD8Y7.
AS8Y7: Great. 👍
EA8Y12: WSIA ok that’s fantastic.
KB8Y18: Great use of otherwise wasted grass!
RM919: GC919 yes, definitely the best.
GJ938: Congratulations to SWZ on naming our new airport and what an appropriate name as well, looking forward to seeing a world class airport becoming developed. ❤️✈️❤️✈️
GH974: Can I get a skim cappuccino there while I’m spying on the team? 😊
MJ9X16: AB9X16 Ah nice, thanks. I’m glad the current one stays open as I love spotting there.

#### 4.4.1.2 Interest

Some stakeholders showed that they were interested in the project when asked questions about it, and these comments were more likely to develop into positive emotions with higher energy

and, therefore, had a positive emotional disposition. Furthermore, some stakeholders expressed an interest in participating in the project (including providing construction equipment and materials and an interest in seeking employment).

SM915: “An address would be hopeful. 😊” (refer to Table 4-23).

PK8Y41: “This will be good. Very interesting. School excursions etc. Remember the visitor centre for new parliament house in ACT. Interesting to watch it all develop” (refer to Table 4-23).

**Table 4-23 Interest: Examples and Evidence**

Interest: examples and evidence
PN8X25: Is a western Sydney airport being set up? Where is HQ? Will you be recruiting staff?
PK8Y41: This will be good. Very interesting. School excursions etc. Remember the visitor centre for new parliament house in ACT. Interesting to watch it all develop.
SJ914: When does it open to the public?
WW9515: Will a future Sydney metro station be located underground under the new airport?
RB973: When will the winning design be announced?
GC9X2: Is this open for everyone to have a look?
MF0215: When do the major earthworks start?
SW095: Who will be at new Western Sydney airports?
LJ033: Western Sydney International, what is the estimated time it will take from the new airport to central, where heaps will want to go? Thanks.
SW095: [About the airline companies] Who will be at new Western Sydney airports.
VF0Z761: How many years more before operational?
CM1523: My questions to Western Sydney Airport. Where is the support infrastructure. Freeways, rail links etc?
MC3994: What do we see or experience in this centre?

4.4.1.3 Enthusiasm

Some stakeholders expressed enthusiasm for the project, saying they could not wait for it to be completed. These stakeholders said they hoped the project would be completed as soon as possible, and they wanted to experience the service offered by the new airport. The exclamation mark can be a sign in identifying this emotion.

NY8X43: “CP8X43 so exciting!!” (refer to Table 4-24).

MB253: “Can’t wait till it’s finished. ❤️❤️” (refer to Table 4-24).

**Table 4-24** *Enthusiasm: Examples and Evidence*

Enthusiasm: examples and evidence
RM8X3: WSIA where the future is, all ready [here]! Go to west... ❤️🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸.
ES8X6: WSIA that’s great! You’ll be able to handle diversions from Sydney Airport if they haven’t upgraded theirs by then. 😊
HC8Y10: We should all go lol.
SM915: An address would be hopeful. 😊
NY8X43: CP8X43 so exciting!!
RL918: Looks good. Wonder how long till all the earth moving is complete and the construction of the terminal, other buildings, aprons, taxi ways, runway etc, will begin. Will be awesome to see it all coming together.
AD9630: Have to drive out there to have a look. It will be great when it is finished, can’t wait.
LT9X43: It looks very modern, can’t wait to use it.
LP054: Awesome and inspirational!!
MB253: Can’t wait till it’s finished. ❤️❤️
SP1Z13: That’s great news! ... hopefully better than Kingsford Smith and Singapore airports.
EH1Y51: I have entered!! What a wonderful Giveaway, fingers crossed I win my Dream Holiday to Portugal!! I have been waiting to visit for a long time. 🙌🙌🙌❤️❤️❤️🥰🥰🥰
AM1498: Copy that WSA. 😊😊😊..... I reckon the rest of the crew will say the same. As one of the beneficiaries in the community, it’s a great privilege to be part of this gigantic project. The Western Sydney International Airport will not only benefit the local communities, it will greatly benefit the whole of Sydney and Australia in general. This project will add to the Economic and Infrastructure development while providing thousands of jobs. On behalf of myself, young operators and [trainees], we are grateful for such opportunities to come to our doorsteps. It’s the biggest platform anyone can have in the civil industry. The largest earthworks that has ever happened in Australia, working with the best engineers, best superintendents, best foremen and leading hands, best operators and most of all the leading civil construction company Acciona. How good is that.... Can’t be better. 😊😊👍. One proud man.
JH1518: That’s awesome. 🙌 I drive around all the time. 👍👍
ZA1653: Wonderful! It would be great if you commence WS airport- Macarthur railway link asap.
JD176: Wow! What a fantastic CGI render. Congratulations to whichever business did this, it’s brilliant.

#### 4.4.1.4 Hope

Some stakeholders hoped the project could be built better and closer to what they saw in their imagination. They expressed their requirements and expectations for the project, including the design of the terminal building, the airport facilities and services, and the airlines they would like to see at the airport. They mentioned examples of airport projects with excellent designs they had seen or visited and hoped that the project could improve its design and services based on these examples. For example:

MH062: “I wish you would build the airport terminal like Melbourne. One large terminal with 2 terminals within so people flying in from domestic can walk to the international and vice versa. Make transiting easy not hard like Kingsford Smith” (refer to Table 4-25).

Comments with hopeful emotions tended to show positive and well-received examples. In contrast, individuals who felt worried tended to show negative examples. Stakeholders with both emotions chose to help the project to have a boarder view from a passenger perspective, hoping to contribute to the delivery progress of WSIA.

**Table 4-25** *Hope: Examples and Evidence*

Hope: examples and evidence
GJ8X35: To be employed at Western Sydney Airport. 🙏🙏🙏
RL913: Hope by the time [it] starts taking shape there [it] will be easy to get to by public transport.
AL967: Please have more than adequate amount of pick-up bays (3 mins wait time), enough parking space and not too expensive!! These are key to a successful turnaround of cars and quickness around an airport.
RL9X18: WSIA oh thought so... some terminals I've been to have no windows that give good views of the airfield such as T4 in Melbourne (Jetstar). The best airfield views I've witnessed have been at Honolulu where some are like the pic (open air no glass).

## Hope: examples and evidence



BR9X57: I like the looks of it but the layout is the same as [just] about all of the newest airports. My favourite airport in the world is the Tampa airport. The designers used the mantra “passengers first” when putting it to paper. Their criteria was the customer wouldn’t have to walk further than 270 M after arrival into the airport. The star shape with shuttles makes this all possible. I’m amazed that all the airports aren’t designed that way. It is certainly not the most beautiful airport in the world but its latest upgrade makes it attractive and it’s amazing that it’s so current after its opening in the early 70’s. I can’t think of a single airport that looks so good after all that time. My flights all seem to land at the furthest point from customs! The walk on arrival in Bangkok, Shanghai, Tokyo, or Singapore is brutal after a double-digit flight! <https://www.tampabay.com/.../why-is-tampa-international.../>



TAMPABAY.COM

Why is Tampa International Airport so well-loved? Well, it was designed that way.

VD9X80: I hope reports that it will have a cinema/virtual viewing theatre for those with delays and long connections are true. And an entertainment quarter for adults as well as a kids club that does kids exercise activities to help them cope with long haul flights. Sleep pods would be awesome too, where for a fee people can occupy a cubicle type space with a bed and TV. Beats seeing bodies all over the floor.

NK9Y17: We want greater customer service with no ripping off money. Car park should be free for customers, not like Kingsford Airport...

MH062: I wish you would build the airport terminal like Melbourne. One large terminal with 2 terminals within so people flying in from domestic can walk to the international and vice versa. Make transiting easy, not hard like Kingsford Smith.

AM254: Let’s hope all the freight logistics companies move out there too, and make it B-double friendly.

DH9X63: The design looks like an impressive centre piece, with thoughts and scope for the expansion of the runways and facilities around it. At the moment it seems like a long way from where most tourists stay

**Hope: examples and evidence**

and play, but presumably it will give opportunity to develop other attractions in the western districts of Sydney.

**4.4.1.5 Pride and Respect**

Pride and respect often appear together in stakeholders’ comments addressing the project outcomes. In comments from some stakeholders, they show they are proud of the achievements of the project team. They also show that they have a feeling of respect for what the project has accomplished, recognising and respecting the project’s work and productivity.

Another topic that will raise stakeholders’ pride and respect is the naming of the new airport: Nancy-Bird Walton. Some stakeholders have expressed respect for the famous Australian female aviator.

PR935: “What a wonderful gesture to a magnificent Australian pioneer. Brilliant work, people. 👍” (refer to Table 4-26).

KA1923: “PT1920 Do you know who this Lady is? Before you comment, you should find out. Nancy deserves to have our new *Airport* named after her” (refer to Table 4-26).

**Table 4-26** *Pride and Respect: Examples and Evidence*

<b>Pride and respect: examples and evidence</b>
PR935: What a wonderful gesture to a magnificent Australian pioneer. Brilliant work, people. 👍
BR959: Congratulations to all involved in this particular achievement. It was a pleasure working with you all.
RM9922: Congratulations! Visitors Centre is first permanent building raised on land side of future almighty Western Sydney Airport. V. C. building is also first landmark in Badgerys Creek. [Can’t] waiting next week to landing in Sydney. And to see new Visitors Centre and construction side of WSA.RM9922:
AA9X48: Looks nice... and big! And named after Australia's first female commercial pilot 👍
KC037: Great progress.
TM058: Great work, team WSIA.
DE058: Looking good fellas!
TM1342: BP1342 on the job one week, already smashing records. 🍌👍
PV249: Finally, some good progress! Good job!
KA1923: PT1920 Do you know who this Lady is? Before you comment, you should find out. Nancy deserves to have our new Airport named after her.

#### 4.4.2 Negative Sentiment

Negative sentiments required special attention and prioritisation from the WSIA online stakeholder management team. There were ten categories of negative emotions: “Anger”, “Compassion, sympathy and pity”, “Complaint”, “Contempt and depression”, “Cynicism”, “Pessimism”, “Paranoia and Suspicion”, “Worry”, “Disgust and hatred”, and “Request”.

**Table 4-27 Negative Sentiment**

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Negative</b>	Anger
	Compassion, sympathy and pity
	Complaint
	Contempt
	Cynicism
	Pessimism
	Paranoia and Suspicion
	Worry
	Disgust and hatred
	Request

##### 4.4.2.1 Anger

In this study, anger is commonly associated with the attitude of the team project and their handling of certain issues. In particular, anger appeared in stakeholders’ comments when they felt that the project had deliberately ignored their voices about flight path questions; the airport did not announce the final flight paths for a long time. Stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction and anger at the noise problems at night that the airport would cause to the local community once it was built. After their questions were ignored and avoided for a long time, stakeholders’ negative emotions like worry were more likely to develop to anger.

GE1557: “Blue skies full of pollution from glorified buses with wings. 😡 😡 😡 Show us the flight paths! What are you hiding???” (refer to Table 4-28).

In some cases, when stakeholders discovered that the account authors may have deliberately deleted their comments or others' comments, they became furious, believing that the project team was deliberately trying to silence the voices of community stakeholders to prevent them from rebelling. Emojis are the most directly observable expression of anger, and capital letters in the text also reflect an intense emotional energy.

**Table 4-28 Anger: Examples and Evidence**

Anger: examples and evidence
AB9X39: Wonder which country they have copied this design from but will claim to be original!
LS0Z4: Really? Show us some figures. Number employed and hours worked by each. How are you calculating? If a truck driver is hired to make two deliveries, is that counted as 2 jobs? If three casuals are employed for a few hours each, is that counted as 3 jobs?
SM1525: Posted on other groups. Badgerys Creek Airport Hills Shire Opposition Group  Current news for Western Sydney Airport and its 24/7 operations: The Financial Review published an article on the 6th of May 2021, which is headed, WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT LOOKS TO JUMP INTO RED-HOT CARGO MARKET. According to the first paragraph of the article, Western Sydney Airport is looking for expressions of interest from cargo operators as from next Thursday morning. The article also describes the freight market as a “red-hot”, and one which Western Sydney Airport will be able to capitalize upon. 
KD1556: Has anyone else managed to sell their land that’s worth 3 million for 30 million. ????
GE1557: Blue skies full of pollution from glorified buses with wings.  Show us the flight paths! What are you hiding??
KD1628: Yep. So tell me. Heard a rumour worth mentioning. Is it true that you’re offering property owners in the area who didn’t want to sell, whose land was previously valued at 12 million dollars, just 1 dollar per acre? And have the rates gone up to 51 thousand dollars per year? Yes, that’s right, 51 or is that 58 thousand dollars per year. I thought that the rates reflect the value of the land. Isn’t that correct???? Just asking. Is that how the government treats people. Can’t get them to sell to developers so force them out????? Yet they were happy to pay 30 million for land worth just 3 million dollars. Once again. Just heard it on the grapevine and absolutely believe what I was told.
RS16122: MH16122 it’s our money they are wasting. 
GM174: I have no doubt the facility will be world class but good luck getting there. The great minds of the planning and infrastructure we have, have come up with 2 lanes of road each way. Is it only me that can foresee utter chaos from day 1. Surely there should be at least 4 lanes? Camden Valley Way has 2 lanes each way and cannot cope now in 2021, in peak times. In 5 years’ time spare me, if you believe in God, you’ll need all the help he can give you!!!!

Anger: examples and evidence
VE1X8: MQ1X7 join our club. We are under the flight path, and it is annoying. The gov. looked after their Eastern suburbs friends and the poor inner west copped it instead. Closed borders gave us some respite.
SW0623: Can't you guys go back to work soon??? You got work to do!
AH1497: Well, I will lose somewhere to live! And it's not easy for single older women to find accommodation that is affordable on the age pension!
DV1542: WSIA oh come on. You don't design a damned airport worth billions of dollars without knowing what the flight paths are! You lot have been hiding this information from the public for years and I reckon your "Consultation" will be "take it or leave it".

#### 4.4.2.2 Compassion, Sympathy, and Pity

A small number of stakeholders expressed their sympathy for residents in the Western Sydney area who had been or would be negatively affected by the construction and impact of the airport on their daily lives. These emotions often did not originate from residents of the local community.

MZ9X67: "All of this area will suffer... let's hope that Warragamba dam can SAVE Penrith/Mulgoa and Lower Blue Mountains... Surely our governments would not allow flight PATHS over the bulk of Sydney's water supply..." (refer to Table 4-29).

**Table 4-29** *Compassion, Sympathy, and Pity: Examples and Evidence*

Compassion, sympathy, and pity: examples and evidence
DM0Z16: BCA residents to suffer 24 hour flights overlooked by LNP supporters.
DC0Z16: I live in the East and fully support people in the West who need respite from planes flying overhead at night.
RC197: From someone who lives under the approach path of Kingsford Smith... These last few months of limited air travel have been peaceful. Quiet. You guys in the west won't know what hit you, when flights start up out there.
RH1X19: So why is it then the other airport has a curfew, but this one does not. The noise in the flight path will be horrendous to say the least. I guess not many care about the west, only the fact they mention there will be jobs, yeah ok, but some already work shift work and 24/7 noise day and night compared to the others end [the first airport]. Over 35 yrs ago we lived near the city and moved out west, less noise from planes overhead and no homes vibrating from overhead noise. Doesn't anyone care about families in the west?
MZ9X67: All of this area will suffer.... let's hope that Warragamba dam can SAVE Penrith/Mulgoa and Lower Blue Mountains...

**Compassion, sympathy, and pity: examples and evidence**

Surely our governments would not allow flight PATHS over the bulk of Sydney’s water supply...

4.4.2.3 Complaint

In this study, when stakeholders were unhappy with the efficiency and work of the project, they expressed complaints and emotions, believing that the project team was wasting time and money.

GK8Y15: “I drive through that site a lot of times. I now see the trees being pushed down, etc. It looks like it’s being all mulched up into piles. I personally feel it’s a BIG waste of firewood that can be easily chopped up and offered for a small cost to the community/public for warmth for winters to come and will bring some money back in to cover the cost of doing that process” (refer to Table 4-30).

Some stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction by sharing their own experiences as proof of the irrationality of the project design and the disturbance to the community’s daily life during the project construction process.

TN036: “All that land, but the tipper trucks still have to wait along the roadside on Elizabeth Dr leaving mud all over the road when they drive off” (refer to Table 4-30).

**Table 4-30** *Complaint: Examples and Evidence*

Complaint: examples and evidence
GK8Y15: I drive through that site a lot of times. I now see the trees being pushed down, etc. It looks like it’s being all mulched up into piles. I personally feel it’s a BIG waste of firewood that can be easily chopped up and offered for a small cost to the community/public for warmth for winters to come and will bring some money back in to cover the cost of doing that process.
TP9623: You know all of this, but you still don’t know which direction the runway will be.
GC9735: PD9735 big dirt.
KW9X17: TC9X17 not just those near the site ... those who will be living under the flight paths which, by the way, are yet to be announced.
DW9X30: Why don’t you open on weekends, so us locals that work can visit?
UV028: Monday to Thursday only? That limits the potential visitors ... How about open on Saturday too so you can bring the kids, when you’re not at work, and they’re not at school. 🙄

Complaint: examples and evidence
FF024: China can build a hospital in 10 days, airport in Sydney, 10 years.
TN036: All that land but the tipper trucks still have to wait along the roadside on Elizabeth Dr, leaving mud all over the road when they drive off.

#### 4.4.2.4 Contempt

When the project tried to show its progress and results on social media, some stakeholders, dissatisfied with the efficiency of the project, expressed contempt and defiance to the project team, believing that it was their lack of capacity that prevented the project from being completed as quickly as the stakeholders expected (expectations that were often unrealistic), or that there was a perfect design airport, WSIA should follow that one and done even better.

BH8Z10: “Faster! Faster! Even the Wagonner brothers built an airport from the ground up in just on 4 years. And it is bigger than your stage one! Surely in NSW we can get some major projects up and running in less time than a decade. Tullamarine did not take this long” (refer to Table 4-31).

Meanwhile, some stakeholders, referring to the historical performance of some local infrastructure projects in Australia, felt that delays and cost overruns were predictable and did not surprise them.

GS324: “Another Avalon ... too far from the city, no fast way of getting there, no capacity for international flights” (refer to Table 4-31).

**Table 4-31** *Contempt: Examples and Evidence*

Contempt and defiance: examples and evidence
DF8X10: NK8X9, they really have no idea about logistics! If there isn't a plan for a fuel pipeline from Kurnell already, they are doomed!
PM8X11: DF8X11 they on drugs, mate, or if not they should be. This project, like many others in government hands, is being managed by “experts by appointment”.
BH8Z10: Faster! Faster! Even the Wagonner brothers built an airport from the ground up in just on 4 years. And it is bigger than your stage one! Surely in NSW we can get some major projects up and running in less time than a decade. Tullamarine did not take this long.
SS021: You have the land. You have the population.

Contempt and defiance: examples and evidence
You should have done 4 lanes each way. It doesn't take a genius to think of it.
GK033: Laughing stock of the world! Who opens a brand-new airport with 1 runway and no train line!
MN099: How boring of a design. All this wait for a square building. My 9-year-old could do better; that's disgusting.
RS137: The council around here can't even move 5 cubic metres in a week.
GS324: Another Avalon.... too far from the city, no fast way of getting there, no capacity for international flights.

#### 4.4.2.5 Cynicism

Some stakeholders felt cynicism towards the project team. They made sarcastic comments using positive words to express a negative attitude or emotion that sometimes resonated with other stakeholders.

ED1559: “What a fantastic example of wasting billions to reinvent an already existing wheel. 🙌 🙌 🙌” (refer to Table 4-32).

Stakeholders used such sarcasm on social media to express dissatisfaction when they could not change a decision made by the project team, which had more power. Negative sentiment combined with positive words may make other stakeholders and WSIA misunderstood the real sentiment.

**Table 4-32** *Cynicism: Examples and Evidence*

Cynicism: examples and evidence
GG012: Can't wait for the temperature & pollution to increase in the western suburbs soup bowl... Oh, & the 24/7 jet engine noise will come in handy when I forget to set my alarm at 3am.
ES0626: I can't wait, simply can't wait for constant noise above my quiet house.
ED1559: What a fantastic example of wasting billions to reinvent an already existing wheel. 🙌 🙌 🙌
HH1567: TR1566 finally someone with some sense. The speed at which infrastructure projects are done in Australia is appalling, together with the ridiculous price tag. But no accountability ever. I'm sick of things progressing so slowly. To be fair, the NSW LNP has committed to and have finished projects, while NSW Labor hardly got anything done in the many years before.
AG1697: Ah ok, so they are using a new technology where they can swing the runways to suit their moods? Wow, how impressive.

Cynicism: examples and evidence
JS185: Fantastic for a few, a disaster for the rest of us!
CD1X10: When you look at other recent new airports from around the world, this new airport design is far behind and nowhere near as good. Looks more like my local RSL club.
WB1X11: CD1X10 so correct. Having lived abroad 30 years and watched new airports going up, this Badgerys Creek will look like a lunch hall in comparison. No imagination at all, plain jane stuff.
TW1X21: What they said in the [20]70s was 125,000 full time jobs. Now they are saying 25,000 jobs. Truth is, you'd be lucky to get 5,000 jobs.

#### 4.4.2.6 Pessimism

Like cynicism, pessimism occurred where stakeholders perceived that they were powerless to do anything about the development of events, and this type of emotion was often accompanied by a reluctant acceptance of reality. This emotion has a low energy value and can turn into sadness when emotional energy is strengthened.

LF1530: “JC1530 Nobody will win any legal action against the airport and while some will complain, many more would complain if it was not up and running as intended. It should have been built 30 years ago” (refer to Table 4-33).

Some stakeholders had a pessimistic view of the project’s progress, believing that the project would not be completed on time and would likely encounter frequent stoppages. Other stakeholders embodied pessimism when lowering others’ expectations.

SK8Y41: “Yes! It’ll be a frequent stop no doubt” (refer to Table 4-33).

TJ8X2: “We do everything wrong and it costs millions” (refer to Table 4-33).

**Table 4-33** *Pessimism: Examples and Evidence*

Pessimism: examples and evidence
TJ8X2: We do everything wrong and it costs millions.
TS8X9: Badgerys Creek has been talked about by various governments for 40 years. It will be 40 more before it is finished, if ever. Give it up and stop wasting taxpayer money.
SK8Y41: Yes! It’ll be a frequent stop no doubt.
PM9116: WSIA Is that where everyone in the community says they don’t want any planes flying over their house? It’s pretty obvious looking at a map that plonking a new airport in Western Sydney will not only

Pessimism: examples and evidence
<p>destroy any GA training in the Sydney basin but will also make it rather tricky for any GA aircraft to transit to Bankstown from the west.</p> <p>Maybe there is a secret plan to decommission Bankstown and sell off all the land. Remember Hoxton Park?</p>
<p>PT9116: PM9116, shutting down Bankstown [is] not likely, given the massive recent investments in the TOLL rescue helicopter base and the new police air wing development. It's not just GA training that will be affected ... Aeromedical services such as Care Flight use Bankstown. The current instrument approaches pass right through final approach to the proposed WSA runway 23 ... These aircraft are not sophisticated enough to use the "advanced landing systems" (RNP RNAV) that WSA Co is spruiking. Again, no planning or consultation, resulting in a probably unworkable situation which may ultimately impact the lives of the less fortunate. All in the name of votes... 🙄</p>
<p>RC9636: DA9636 looks like it's going to be rather painful for the next few years.</p>
<p>FP9911: Shame it's not open weekends.</p>
<p>AK9X64: MR9X65 And if a lot of other government projects are anything to go by, our project management skills are probably pretty bad also.</p>
<p>MB1526: Sad that the precious people that live around Mascot airport will not have to endure noise 24/7 but people of western Sydney do...</p>
<p>MB181: [Reply to a comment from a resident] I feel sorry for your A0181 ... that bend is huge ... 😞</p>
<p>LF1530: JC1530 Nobody will win any legal action against the airport and while some will complain, many more would complain if it was not up and running as intended. It should have been built 30 years ago.</p>

#### 4.4.2.7 Paranoia and Suspicion

Paranoia and suspicion are emotions that often occur together. In their comments, the stakeholders questioned the implementation and decisions of the project, perceived the behaviour of the project team as suspicious, questioned the justice and the purpose of the project actions, or perceived the project as deliberately withholding information or falsifying data. For example, when the project announced the proportion of local employees involved in the project's construction, some stakeholders questioned the accuracy of the data and suspected that the project was fudging the number by blurring the definition of the word 'local' to create an ideal proportion of local employees:

GM0Z21: "54%, if 'local' means Western Sydney area, then another 30% for other NSW workers, that may be OK. However, those figures are most unlikely!" (refer to Table 4-34).

Concerning the delays in the release of the flight paths, some stakeholders suspected that the project team already knew the planned flight paths but were choosing to hide them from the public. These comments invariably placed the project and community stakeholders on separate sides of the fence, suggesting that the project was concealing the flight paths that would affect community stakeholders once the project is completed, ignoring community input, and attempting to reduce the lead time for community feedback and response to the plans.

DV1542: “WSIA oh come on. You don’t design a damned airport worth billions of dollars without knowing what the flight paths are! You lot have been hiding this information from the public for years and I reckon your ‘Consultation’ will be ‘take it or leave it’” (refer to Table 4-34).

**Table 4-34** *Paranoia and Suspicion: Examples and Evidence*

Paranoia and suspicion: examples and evidence
<p>CM9917: Wait, what?            One runway servicing international and domestic?            30,000 people servicing one runway?            Umm 🙄</p>
<p>JW9X32: Will you have flight paths?            What about the Infrastructure that was promised and now cancelled? Like the train line?</p>
<p>JE0Z22: Even though its mostly Pie in the Sky B.S. ??</p>
<p>GM0Z21: 54%, if ‘local’ means Western Sydney area, then another 30% for other NSW workers, that may be OK. However, those figures are most unlikely!</p>
<p>WB1555: The road that’s on the right-hand side of the construction site is Elizabeth Drive. In the bottom right hand corner, you can see a new roundabout which takes traffic to Badgerys Creek Road. From the roundabout to the Northern Rd will become a tollway, just to screw a bit more money out of the taxpayer.</p>
<p>AS1539: Why not build the second runway now, get it over and done with. It will never be cheaper than doing it now, rather than wait 30 years.</p>
<p>DB1540: AS1539 like build a motorway with only two lanes each way? .... and then after only 10 years.... it needs to be disrupted for 2 years to be widened.</p>
<p>PT1920: Ok, but airport name not good enough I reckon, should be decided on a referendum.</p>
<p>PT1920: KA1923 I did but there are many other reasons, so referendum is the best way to resolve it.</p>
<p>PT1920: AH1924 Many Heroes out there. We need a name which belongs to majority. Referendum is the best way.</p>

Paranoia and suspicion: examples and evidence
RR1499: You're not building it for the people of Western Sydney who will have to deal with the noise and pollution, you're building it so that corporate mates of the LNP can make a big, fat pile of money. End of story.
MC2374: 2026 = 2030++ trust the government?? "NUP"
DV1542: WSIA oh come on. You don't design a damned airport worth billions of dollars without knowing what the flight paths are! You lot have been hiding this information from the public for years and I reckon your 'Consultation' will be 'take it or leave it'.

#### 4.4.2.8 Worry

Stakeholders expressed worry about the project's planning, design, implementation, and delivery. These stakeholders were concerned that the project was heading in the wrong direction. They cited their own experiences of flying, or of the shortcomings of unsatisfactory airports, in the hope that the new airport would not repeat the same mistakes. This emotion often coexisted with hope (under the classification of positive sentiments) in stakeholders' comments. Some examples of worry include:

TF968: "AL967 Please have more than adequate amount of pick-up bays (3 mins wait time), enough parking space and not too expensive!! These are key to a successful turnaround of cars and quickness around an airport" (refer to Table 4-35).

LM1211: "Will it operate any better than those disasters in MEL, BNE and SYD? Three of the worst airports in the world, especially if you want to catch an aeroplane" (refer to Table 4-35).

**Table 4-35** *Worry: Examples and Evidence*

Worry: examples and evidence
DA8X1: Feel like two runways won't be enough, most modern airports are looking to increase to three or four runways.
SM9118: What about all the dams they're filling in and killing all the turtles. They should allow turtle rescue NSW in to rehome them.
LL9515: Let's worry about how to get there first... 🤔
TF968: AL967 Please have more than adequate amount of pick-up bays (3 mins wait time), enough parking space and not too expensive!! These are key to a successful turnaround of cars and quickness around an airport.

#### Worry: examples and evidence

SH9610: WSIA why does the obstacle surface run to 5nm to the side of the runways. You are not for a moment considering providing a circling approach??

EE9X68: I live in the Blue Mountains. Will my property value decrease as a result of this proposed airport and the unknown flight paths?

VD9Z16: Have a question regarding the design. If I arrive at WSA on a flight at one end of the Airport, and my connecting flight is down the other end, how will I get there? Especially if my luggage isn't transferred for me and I have to carry that with me. What will be the distance between the two red markers? Looks almost the length of the 3.7km runway in the image, that's a long hike. 😊



PG0Z3: You need to be fairly local to wherever you work these days as the traffic congestion and high cost of tolls makes it uneconomical to travel far. In the far west of Sydney, ...and lack of government planning for infrastructure makes peak hour a four hour in the morning and four hour at night reality. Hopefully the road improvements for the airport will help ease things, but at the moment it is a nightmare.

LM1211: Will it operate any better than those disasters in MEL, BNE and SYD? Three of the worst airports in the world, especially if you want to catch an aeroplane.

MZ9X67: All of this area will suffer ... let's hope that Warragamba dam can SAVE Penrith/Mulgoa and Lower Blue Mountains ...

Surely our governments would not allow flight PATHS over the bulk of Sydney's water supply.

#### 4.4.2.9 Disgust and Hatred

Stakeholders who were disgusted with the project's decisions and behaviours used words including "disgust", "loathing", and "hate" to express strong resentment and hostility. There were sometimes taboo words in these comments. Emojis were also used to express these emotions.

AM1634: “Are you going to have a proper covered carpark for Rideshare vehicles or will it be [a] tiny and disgusting carpark like the one in Sydney Domestic Airport??”  
(refer to Table 4-36).

**Table 4-36 Disgust and Hatred: Examples and Evidence**

Disgust and hatred: examples and evidence
JK034: WSIA - you only need one runway for 25 years... because you use the latest technology... What technology is that? Also do you have the airspace plans for that area adjacent to the current Bankstown and Camden aerodromes finalised? Will Bankstown be able to continue to operate? Will Bankstown have an instrument approach? (the current one would go straight through the new aerodrome), if not, does that mean Bankstown will become a VFR only aerodrome? How about Camden? If these 2 training aerodromes (and associated training area that the new airport sits in the middle of) go, will the new airport be able to support the training operations currently done by Bankstown and Camden on its single runway?
LS0Z24: MM0Z24 the residents of Mascot describe it as kerosene because of its odour and residue, and the ‘Chem trail machine’ is the aircraft. I love to fly but would hate to live under a flight path close to an airport.
CH0Z13: I reckon you mob should have some locals working on releasing flight paths. Hate for it to be too late to contest them. Or is that the plan? 😬
PD0Z15: What a load of rubbish. 60% of Sydney workforce are Irish. 😬
CS1553: Awful scar on the landscape! 24-hour noise! Trucks and congestion on the roads!
DB1540: 24-hour noise, planes dumping fuel over Sydney’s water supply, no rail service, goat tracks for roads to access, more agricultural land that should be feeding this city lost. What a stupid idea.
AM1634: Are you going to have a proper covered carpark for Rideshare vehicles or will it be tiny and disgusting carpark like the one in Sydney Domestic Airport??
DF1X4: Absolutely!! It’s a wasteland. Don’t go there without 50cal mounted on the roof of your armoured vehicle. Drive by shootings, road rage attacks probably being fuelled by the rage of living so close to your neighbour you can catch Covid from him in your own home. It’s a great place to go ANYWHERE from.
DH1X6: LN1X6 well, indicative flight paths have been released. The airport is not responsible for flight paths, you are barking up the wrong tree.

#### 4.4.2.10 Request

Some stakeholders made requests of the project in their comments, expecting WSIA to respond. When the project did not respond, these stakeholders’ feelings tended to turn towards negative sentiment, and their negative emotional energy increased. Examples of such questions include:

SR9922: “Flight paths? Does anyone actually know where they will be!?” refer to Table 4-37).

JW9X32: “Will you have flight paths? What about the Infrastructure that was promised and now cancelled? Like the train line?” (refer to Table 4-37).

**Table 4-37** Request: Examples and Evidence

Request: examples and evidence
SP9741: Can WSA provide some stats as to how many people who live within the Western Sydney region got a job so far?
SR9922: Flight paths? Does anyone actually know where they will be!?
SV9X13: And still no news on the flight path???
JW9X32: Will you have flight paths? What about the Infrastructure that was promised and now cancelled? Like the train line?
GK034: WSIA, I’m an airline pilot, so can you please advise what magical system you’ll be using to minimise delays at an airport using 1 runway?😬 Aircraft still have wake turbulence separation standards. Will there be a curfew?😬
EG0626: Why aren’t flight paths revealed yet??
RC0Z8: I’m more interested in where the flight paths are.😬
MO0Z10: Define local in this context.
DS0Z25: WSIA Do you have the flight paths map I can view? All the maps I have seen are for feasibility only.

#### 4.4.3 Neutral Sentiments

There are also many comments in WSIA’s online stakeholder reviews where emotion was neutral. These comments did not express positive or negative sentiments, so they were coded as “Absence of emotions”.

##### 4.4.3.1 Absence of Emotions

Some comments contain descriptions, scientific explanations, and texts expressed very rationally. These comments only discussed objective facts and did not reflect additional personal emotions. Other comments were classified in this category because the comment text does not convey any particular emotions. For example:

GH9714: “No TBMs there, there are no tunnels.”

RE9X54: “NS9X53 Badgerys Creek is southwest of Parramatta. Not very far from Parramatta but in the Liverpool council region”

## 4.5 Online Response Strategies

There are two main categories of online response strategies for stakeholders: attitude-related response strategies and emotion-related response strategies. According to their needs, the team could select one of these categories of response or use both attitude-related and emotion-related strategies together when responding to stakeholders.

### 4.5.1 Issue-related Response Strategy

Issue-related response strategies were for topics raised by stakeholders. Based on the project response, WISA’s actions can be classified into three categories: information-driven, delivery-driven, and issue-driven.

**Table 4-38** *Issue-related Response Strategy*

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Information-driven</b>	Provide basic information
	Correcting rumours
	Confirm the information from the stakeholders
<b>Delivery-driven</b>	Describe and explain the team’s work
	Show concern for stakeholders’ suggestions
	Explain the techniques airport planning uses
<b>Issue-driven</b>	Transfer responsibility
	Show understanding to stakeholders

#### 4.5.1.1 Information-driven

The information-driven response strategy was based on information exchange. The project team’s response to stakeholders was based on information from official documents. The information was provided not just to individual stakeholders but to all stakeholders who browsed the comments. Under this classification, the project team showed three main

behaviours: 1) providing basic information, 2) correcting rumours, and 3) confirming information from stakeholders.

**Providing basic information.** The strategy of providing basic information was the most common. In response to the stakeholders’ questions, the project provided them with basic information about the project, including the airport opening date, the construction of the runway and the terminal building, and the project’s current stage. After the construction of the experience centre was completed, WSIA also answered stakeholders’ questions about the experience centre’s opening hours. WSIA sometimes also commented on its posts to provide the sources of the images and videos used in that post.

CH8X26: “When will it be completed?”

WSIA: “Hi CH8X26, the first services will begin in 2026” (refer to Table 4-39).

**Table 4-39** *Providing Basic Information: Examples and Evidence*

Providing basic information: examples and evidence
<p>WC8X23: Can we land on it yet?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi WC8X23, not quite. The early earthworks that have started doesn’t include the runway. It’ll be open in 2026.</p>
<p>PN8X25: Is a western Sydney airport being set up? Where is HQ? Will you be recruiting staff?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi PN8X25, the company delivering Western Sydney Airport is based in Liverpool. Keep an eye on our website <a href="http://wsaco.com.au">wsaco.com.au</a> for any opportunities or feel free to send your resume to <a href="mailto:info@wsaco.com.au">info@wsaco.com.au</a>.</p>
<p>CH8X26: When will it be completed?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi CH8X26, the first services will begin in 2026.</p>
<p>EA8Y12: What information do you offer?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi EA8Y12, there’ll be information about the airport, its benefits to Western Sydney and how it will be built. We’ll be able to show you what the airport will look like on site using augmented reality, before it’s been built.</p>
<p>EK8Y21: How far [is] this one from Liverpool?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi EK8Y21, it is about 20 minutes from the centre of Liverpool.</p>
<p>JC8Y44: Hi, is the business park going to be located on the Southern service entry on the Northern rd. opp Leppington Pastarol?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi JC8Y44, it will be located off Elizabeth Drive at the main entrance to the airport.</p>
<p>SJ914: When does it open to the public?</p>

Providing basic information: examples and evidence
WSIA: The Visitor Centre is due to open its doors in mid-2019. We hope to see you there!
SM915: An address would be hopeful. 😊 WSIA: Hi SM915, it's located off Eaton Road in Luddenham. To enter, you'll need to turn left off the Northern Road, heading in the direction of Campbelltown. The Centre will open in the coming weeks.
GH9615: Cool, whereabouts is it? WSIA: Hi GH9615, it's being built on the airport site at Luddenham. The large windows face out to where the first runway and the terminal will be built in the coming years.
TP9623: GF9623 they just want to talk themselves up and not give the information that people who live near the 24-HOUR airport want. WSIA: Hi TP9623, the runways will be 3.7km long and run parallel across the site, which has a general north-east/south-west orientation. The runways will be built following an optimal orientation of 50/230 degree (magnetic) heading. The second parallel runway will not be built until the 2050s.
VD011: When does the experience centre reopen? WSIA: Hi VD011 the experience centre will reopen today.

**Correcting rumours.** Another information-driven response strategy was correcting rumours, in which the project responded to inaccurate information, 'fake news', and incorrect speculation. In response to these, the project team made efforts to correct misinformation or dispel stakeholder misconceptions to reduce the spread of inaccurate information. Topics related to this response strategy include the future business of the airport, whether the existing Sydney Kingsford Airport would close when WSIA is completed, and whether WSIA would be a cargo-only or domestic-only service.


AS1515: "For sure this new airport will be served by many foreign airlines that fly to Sydney! Can't wait for that to happen! Sad to see Kingsford Smith Airport shutting down for good!" (refer to Table 4-40).

WSIA: "Hey AS1515. No, we will not be replacing Sydney Airport. We are excited that as Sydney's new airport, Western Sydney International will mean that for the first time, airlines and passengers will have a choice about which airport they want to use" (refer to Table 4-40).

JH1517: "Both International AND domestic at opening? I read somewhere that it was to be testing domestic flights only for the first 5 years of opening" (refer to Table 4-40).

WSIA: “Hi JH1517, from day one Western Sydney International will be a full service international and domestic passenger airport” (refer to Table 4-40).

**Table 4-40** *Correcting Rumours: Examples and Evidence*


Correcting rumours: examples and evidence
<p>LM994: GH994 Qantas are not going there.</p> <p>WSIA: Hi LM994, that’s not true. Qantas and Virgin are both on board, helping us plan and design the airport ahead of the first flights. <a href="http://www.southwestvoice.com.au/qantas-virgin-get-on.../">http://www.southwestvoice.com.au/qantas-virgin-get-on.../</a></p>  <p>SOUTHWESTVOICE.COM.AU</p> <p>Qantas, Virgin get on board Western Sydney Airport</p>
<p>BR0510 Is it true that the Chinese are building the airport?</p> <p>WSIA: Western Sydney Airport is an Australian Government owned company. We are building and will operate the airport.</p>
<p>GP0Z10: So, it’s going to be a domestic airport for a long time. Still, what happens when the passengers get to St Marys in the morning with luggage? No room on the train with luggage.</p> <p>WSIA: Hi GP0Z10, Western Sydney International Airport will have a mix of international and domestic passenger services when it opens in late 2026.</p>
<p>JH1517: Both international AND domestic at opening?</p> <p>I read somewhere that it was to be testing domestic flights only for the first 5 years of opening.</p> <p>WSIA: Hi JH1517, from day one Western Sydney International will be a full service international and domestic passenger airport.</p>
<p>AS1515: For sure this new airport will be served by many foreign airlines that fly to Sydney!</p> <p>Can’t wait for that to happen!</p> <p>Sad to see Kingsford Smith Airport shutting down for good!</p> <p>WSIA: Hey AS1515. No, we will not be replacing Sydney Airport. We are excited that as Sydney’s new airport, Western Sydney International will mean that for the first time, airlines and passengers will have a choice about which airport they want to use.</p>
<p>MH1516: What will happen to Sydney Airport by then, lahhh?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi MH1516, Sydney Airport will continue to operate when we welcome our first passengers in 2026.</p>
<p>SL1514: When did they change plans &amp; decide to send international flights there?</p> <p>WSIA: SL1514 Western Sydney International Airport has always been planned to be both an international and domestic passenger airport.</p>

**Confirming information from the stakeholders.** The final information-driven strategy was confirming the information from the stakeholders. As construction of the WSIA began and attempts were being made to integrate into the community through publicity, more stakeholders became aware of basic information about the project. These knowledgeable stakeholders helped the project by answering questions from other stakeholders about basic project information. When the comments from these self-initiated stakeholders were correct, WSIA agreed that the information was accurate and sometimes provided more detailed information on the topic.

MA992: “I think it’s on Eaton Rd” (refer to Table 4-41).

WSIA: “That’s right, MA992. 100 Eaton Road, Luddenham” (refer to Table 4-41).

**Table 4-41** *Confirming Information from Stakeholders: Examples and Evidence*

Confirming information from stakeholders: examples and evidence
<p>SK8X24: Is it done yet?</p> <p>These things take toooooo long.</p> <p>Only 400 weeks to go. Yay</p> <p>WSIA: Hi SK8X24, if only it was finished. Only 400 or so weeks to go!</p>
<p>GT9815: Basically it’s the road you see in this photo?</p>  <p>WSIA: Hi GT9815, you’re right, you can see the entrance to the airport here. Badgerys Creek Road is in the left of the picture.</p>
<p>MA992: I think it’s on Eaton Rd.</p> <p>WSIA: That’s right, MA992. 100 Eaton Road, Luddenham.</p>
<p>BH9Y23: CJ9Y23 No new motorway from M7 being built and apparently new metro rail line linking to western rail line.</p> <p>WSIA: That’s right, BH9Y23. The new motorway between the M7 at Cecil Hills and The Northern Rd is called the M12 and the metro line is called the Sydney Metro Greater West. Both of them enter the airport around this part shown in the photo.</p>
<p>RL9Z20: Omg, love it. 🤩 Will definitely fly in from Melb to experience it.</p> <p>GG9Z21: LoL this is going to be for freight.</p>

Confirming information from stakeholders: examples and evidence

RL9Z20: GG9Z21 I don't think that's correct, cause there's gonna be a passenger terminal. Western Sydney International could you confirm this ??🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄

MM9Z21: GG9Z21 that's not correct.

WSIA: Hi RL9Z20, yes, this is a passenger terminal, where we'll welcome a mix of international and domestic flights from your favourite full service and low-cost carriers. In fact, the terminal will be able to service about 10 million passengers a year when it opens in 2026.

4.5.1.2 Delivery-driven

In response to some stakeholder concerns, the project provided a descriptive reaction based on what the project team had delivered. The main behaviours of the project in this strategy were: 1) describing and explaining the team's work, 2) showing interest in stakeholders' suggestions, and 3) explaining the techniques that airport planning uses.

**Describing and explaining the team's work.** In response to comments that questioned the efficiency of the project's work and the validity of its decisions, the team described and explain the team's work to these stakeholders to demonstrate its efforts to deliver the project. In addition, the project responds by highlighting the historic magnitude of the earthworks, showing stakeholders the challenges they faced and how they are working to overcome them to deliver the project. When explaining the decision, the project explains to the stakeholder the rationale for their decision in an attempt to say that the stakeholder's current decision is the best choice based on trade-offs.

JS9725: "Very slow work. When's it going to be complete?? 🙄" (refer to Table 4-42).

MM9725: "JS9725 2026" (refer to Table 4-42).

WSIA: "Hi JS9725, the site is 1,780 hectares, so we have a massive task ahead of us. We're on track for the first passenger flights to take off in 2026" (refer to Table 4-42).

**Table 4-42** Describe and Explain the Team's Work: Examples and Evidence

Describe and explain the team's work: examples and evidence

TS8X9: Badgerys Creek has been talked about by various governments for 40 years. It will be 40 more before it is finished, if ever. Give it up and stop wasting taxpayer money. 🙄

Describe and explain the team's work: examples and evidence

WSIA: TS8X9, you're right - it's been talked about for so long, but now it's happening - construction started last month and everything is on track for a 2026 opening.

SC8X20: I've noticed the earth moving equipment used in the press event showing the first sods of soil being turned are no longer on site and earthworks didn't actually start. When will the earthworks start for real?

WSIA: Hi SC8X20, it may not be immediately obvious with the large site, but there are now 30 workers on site with a range of equipment – including the equipment used to break ground. So far, the scrapers, graders and dozers have built a haul road to take material back to the temporary stockpile, currently under construction. We've also been busy with remediation works, installing offices and facilities, removing existing fence lines, tidying up rubbish items and installing erosion and sediment controls – very important with this recent rain.

CJ933: What time can we expect the noise curfew to kick in? Will it be at 11pm like the people of the eastern suburbs are privileged enough to currently experience?

WSIA: Hi CJ933, the airport was always planned to operate 24/7, like most airports around Australia. The airport site has been protected against incompatible development for around three decades – in contrast, Kingsford Smith has some of the most densely populated suburbs in the country on its doorstep.

JS9725: Very slow work. When's it going to be complete?? 🤔

MM9725: JS9725 2026

WSIA: Hi JS9725, the site is 1,780 hectares, so we have a massive task ahead of us. We're on track for the first passenger flights to take off in 2026.

GH9921: They're working too slow. 😊

WSIA: It was built in two minutes! I think that's pretty quick. 😊

RM0225: When initial earthworks are complete, does that mean construction of the terminal building can commence?

WSIA: Hi RM0225, the next stage is levelling the rest of the site. So far, we have been working on a small portion of the site- only 6% of the total. Once levelled, then we can start working on the terminal, airfields, and other roads inside the precinct.

OS0512: Hypocrisy on an industrial scale. Who cares about the health of western Sydney and the Blue Mountains when the airport is functioning? I thought it was a spoof.

WSIA: Thanks for joining in the conversation. We love it when people are passionate about our beautiful region.

All over the world, airports and communities exist side by side for mutual benefit. In order to be approved, WSA passed a rigorous expert environmental assessment that considered people's health. We're proud that airport construction is helping deliver the region the jobs and business opportunities that are sorely needed, especially in the COVID-19 recovery — and there'll be even more jobs when the airport opens!

**Describe and explain the team’s work: examples and evidence**

PW0519: More pollution from the big polluters, emissions, so what happened to climate action?

WSIA: Hi PW0519, thanks for joining the conversation. We’re building an airport for Western Sydney’s future, which is why we’re focussed on sustainability and minimising the impact of the airport on the environment.

There are strong rules around the sustainability standards we have to meet as we design and build the airport, but we are always looking for opportunities to go further in ensuring the airport represents a commitment to future generations.

**Showing interest in stakeholders’ suggestions.** The project showed interest in the suggestions of stakeholders when they took the form of constructive feedback to the project — for example, by indicating to stakeholders that the project had received the suggestions and would pass them on to the relevant technical experts or that the project has received requests from multiple stakeholders on the same issue, and stating that the project would reconsider the current plan and may make changes. Effective responses to stakeholder suggestions demonstrated that the project valued the voices of stakeholders and gave them a sense that their opinions would be considered and may be incorporated into the project’s decision-making. This created a sense of engagement for the stakeholders and gave them hope for the project’s future. In addition, this strategy created a friendly organisational image for the project in the online community and demonstrated the project’s attitude towards its stakeholders.

RL913: “Or maybe if we sometimes have shuttle buses available to and from the CBD” (refer to Table 4-43).

WSIA: “That’s a good idea, RL913 We’ll look into it” (refer to Table 4-43).

**Table 4-43** *Showing Interest in Stakeholders’ Suggestions: Examples and Evidence*

**Showing interest in stakeholders’ suggestions: examples and evidence**

DW8Y24: Perhaps you need to stop digging up all our phone cables. 🙄🙄

WSIA: Hi DW8Y24, I’d be happy to look into it for you. Feel free to send me the details in a direct message and I will look into it.

RL913: Or maybe if we sometimes have shuttle buses available to and from the CBD.

WSIA: That’s a good idea, RL913. We’ll look into it.

SP925: From Western Sydney airport to Nadi, Fiji Islands. Please allow Fiji Airways, Qantas, Jetstar and Virgin to operate from WSA.

Showing interest in stakeholders' suggestions: examples and evidence
WSIA: Hi SP925, we'd love to welcome these airlines to Western Sydney Airport.
AS925: From Western Sydney Airport to Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Thailand. Please allow Thai Airways and Qantas to operate from WSA. WSIA: Absolutely, AS925. We'd love to connect with Suvarnabhumi Airport and welcome Thai Airways and Qantas to Sydney's new international airport 😊.
CM9Y3: Is this open on the weekend? WSIA: Hi CM9Y3, at this stage we're open Monday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm. We are looking to see if we can open on weekends due to popular demand. We'll provide an update when we can on this page.
AR9Y18: Will you be having other community open days? Already booked for this weekend... WSIA: Hi AR9Y18, I'll find out and get back to you. WSIA: Hi AR9Y18, the good news is there'll be more open days for the community. Stay tuned for the next one around February or March next year.

**Explaining the techniques airport planning uses.** Finally, in response to the environmental and construction challenges faced by the project, some stakeholders asked the project team about their solutions or questioned the existing solutions. The team explained to these stakeholders the techniques that the airport was planning to use. These conversations were related to facility planning and design, including fuel transport issues, take-off and landing of aircrafts in extreme weather events, and some construction techniques that the project demonstrated. This strategy demonstrated to the stakeholders the techniques the project would use and reflected the project's expertise in the technical field.

ES8X6: "Do you know what category of ILS it will be yet?" (refer to Table 4-44).

WSIA: "We're planning for CAT IIIB, ES8X6!" (refer to Table 4-44).

ES8X6: "WSIA that's great! You'll be able to handle diversions from Sydney Airport if they haven't upgraded theirs by then 😊" (refer to Table 4-44).

**Table 4-44** *Explaining the Techniques Airport Planning Uses: Examples and Evidence*

Explaining the techniques airport planning uses: examples and evidence
JR894: A ridiculous decision in placing another airport in Sydney. We have Canberra A/P not far away with plenty of expansion possibilities. All we needed was a fast train to Sydney. It would've had less impact on the populace of Sydney. There are still a few factors that have not been answered. How do you

## Explaining the techniques airport planning uses: examples and evidence

get the jet fuel to Badgerys Creek? The other is it's 24 HOUR operation ... Just what we'll all look forward to, jets flying over our houses whilst we try to sleep ... Mascot will keep its curfew...

WSIA: Hi JR894, I understand there's a range of views in the community about the airport after many years, and some views are held strongly. Re your question on jet fuel, it will initially be brought in by road tankers like airports of similar size, such as Gold Coast or Adelaide. A dedicated fuel pipeline will become viable when the airport grows. The airport was always planned to provide 24-hour services, like most airports in Australia, including Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Our airport site has been protected against incompatible development for about three decades — in contrast, Kingsford Smith has some of the most densely populated suburbs in Australia on its doorstep.

AH8X5: Will this runway be long enough for future aircraft that will be able to fly Sydney–London/Sydney–New York, considering the extra fuel that will be needed to be carried??

WSIA: Hi AH8X5, it will be long enough for ultra long-range aircraft. In fact, it'll be longer than Perth's runway, which caters for the direct flight to London today.

ES8X6: Do you know what category of ILS it will be yet?

WSIA: We're planning for CAT IIIB, ES8X6!

ES8X6: WSIA that's great! You'll be able to handle diversions from Sydney Airport if they haven't upgraded theirs by then. 😊

CD8Y3: Just a question considering there is no oceans nearby, where are the aeroplanes going to fuel dump? On top of our houses? The bush? 🤔

FD8Y4: CD8Y3 maybe the Nepean river??

CD8Y3: DM8Y4 hmm I thought fuel dumping was the case in an emergency; however, if so where would it be dumped?

CD8Y3: FD8Y4 possibly however how big is Nepean river?

WSIA: Hi CD8Y3, jettisoning fuel in an emergency is extremely rare, and many modern planes aren't even capable of doing it. It's only done under very strict regulations that are designed to protect people's safety. If you'd like to know more details, you can refer to the Environmental Assessment here: <http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../fuel-jettisoning.aspx> David.

HN8Y4: Last time, one-off accident, a bit scary, the plane took off from Bankstown airport and crashed near somewhere in Canley Heights.

GK033: Laughing stock of the world! Who opens a brand-new airport with 1 runway and no train line!

WSIA: Hi GK033, we won't need a second runway for about 25 years, that's because our runway will use the latest technology to safely move more aircraft, plus we have very favourable local wind conditions.

As for the train line — great news — we'll have one! The Sydney Metro Greater West is set to connect the Airport with the rest of Sydney's rail network from when the Airport opens.

JR0Z9: Should have extended Canberra a/p and then built a fast train to Sydney. A 24-hour a/p in Sydney. People still don't realise that this will happen. And another question I asked many, many years ago. How

### Explaining the techniques airport planning uses: examples and evidence

does the jet fuel, and ancillary fuel needs get to BC a/p? Hundreds of tankers on the already clogged streets of Sydney? Certainly, no pipeline in sight.

WSIA: JR0Z9, great question. Initially fuel will get to Western Sydney International by road, which is how it works in many airports across Australia.

Initially it's been estimated that a small number of fuel trucks, around 5, will be needed when the airport first opens, this is because most domestic flights don't need to refuel after every landing.

Given that the M12 will provide a motorway connection from the rest of the motorway network straight to the airport, this relatively small number of fuel trucks will mostly travel on motorways, which means they won't clog local roads.

As the airport grows, there will be a point when the airport needs more fuel and a fuel line becomes viable.

#### 4.5.1.3 Issue-driven

Some of the topics and events in the stakeholder comments had prominent negative impacts, so when faced with comments related to these issues, the project adopted one of two more cautious and passive behaviours: 1) transferring responsibility, or 2) showing understanding to stakeholders.

**Transfer responsibility.** The most common issue of this type was the flight path, which was not unilaterally decided by the airport but designed by government planning and construction departments. The project team could not resolve the conflicts related to the flight path through a simple response. Therefore, the project informed stakeholders on social media that the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications was responsible for designing flight paths; they also tagged that department's Facebook account. This shifted the responsibility for the issue to other organisations and reduced the likelihood of more negative comments from stakeholders pursuing the issue under the WSIA account.

DS0Z26: "WSIA Do you have the flight paths map I can view? All the maps I have seen are for feasibility only" (refer to Table 4-45).

WSIA: "DS0Z26 Flight paths are still being developed by the Australian Government. Draft flight paths will be released for community feedback before they are finalised" (refer to Table 4-45).

DS0Z26: “WSIA that’s the Federal Government? What department?” (refer to Table 4-45).

WSIA: “Airspace development is being led by the Dept. of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Communications” (refer to Table 4-45).

**Table 4-45** *Transferring Responsibility: Examples and Evidence*

Transferring responsibility: examples and evidence
<p>SC8X7: What will the lower limit of the Class C airspace over Camden be?</p> <p>WSIA: SC8X7, we can answer any questions you have about the airport construction project. AirServices Australia look after airspace design, but remember we are a few years away from planes flying from Western Sydney Airport.</p>
<p>SC8X37: Will the rail system run 24 hours to match the airport hours?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi SC8X37, this will be up to the rail operator to decide.</p>
<p>EB926: Why is there no curfew over the world heritage listed national park?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi EB926, the airport has always been planned to operate on a curfew-free basis like most around the world, including in Australia.</p> <p>EB926: These flights are over densely populated areas and sensitive bushland. It will be distributing noise pollution and pollution. What is being done to mitigate this? Sydney airport has a curfew.</p> <p>WSIA: The flight paths are still being determined. An expert team will follow best practice principles to plan flight paths for Western Sydney Airport. It’s a complicated process that will take time, but the focus will be on maximising safety while minimising impacts on residential areas. There’ll be opportunities for the community to be involved. You can get more information here:  <a href="http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../flight.../index.aspx">http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../flight.../index.aspx</a></p>
<p>SC9611: Has the airspace model been released as yet? I’m struggling to understand how this will be such an efficient airport given the runway configuration and proximity to Mascot, Bankstown and Camden airports?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi SC9611, the airspace and flight path design is still under development and is being led by the Australian Government. You can get more information on their website.  <a href="https://www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../index.aspx">https://www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../index.aspx</a> Here’s a factsheet that has a good overview of the process that will be used and what stage we’re currently at:  <a href="https://www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../Factsheet...">https://www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../Factsheet...</a></p>
<p>SH9612: WSIA why does the obstacle surface run to 5nm to the side of the runways? You are not for a moment considering providing a circling approach??</p>
<p>GG9Z31: So many plans except the one that really matters. Where are the flight paths going?</p>

### Transferring responsibility: examples and evidence

WSIA: Hi GG9Z31, rest assured the Australian Government is working very carefully on the complex task of getting the flight paths right. You can get more info on the process, including when it will be released for community feedback, here: [www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/about/flight-paths](http://www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/about/flight-paths)

RA067: I would love to know where the station at Orchard Hills will be...

WSIA: RA067 Follow Sydney Metro — NSW GOV for more information about the Sydney Metro—Western Sydney Airport as planning continues.

DS0Z26: WSIA Do you have the flight paths map I can view? All the maps I have seen are for feasibility only.

WSIA: DS0Z26 Flight paths are still being developed by the Australian Government. Draft flight paths will be released for community feedback before they are finalised.

DS0Z26: WSIA that's the Federal Government? What department?

WSIA: Airspace development is being led by the Dept. of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Communications.

**Showing understanding to stakeholders.** For very negative comments on some topics that had the potential to cause conflict, the project showed understanding to stakeholders, which also relates to the emotional strategy (discussed below). The project expressed its understanding of the stakeholders' dissatisfaction and tried to stabilise their emotional energy. This is a prudent way of responding, as the project demonstrated that the project understood the situation of the stakeholders and the reasons for their dissatisfaction and tried to articulate the project's position to the stakeholders in the hope that they would understand the reasons for the project's decision.

JR894: "A ridiculous decision in placing another airport in Sydney. We have Canberra A/P not far away with plenty of expansion possibilities. All we needed was a fast train to Sydney. It would've had less impact on the populace of Sydney. There are still a few factors that have not been answered. How do you get the jet fuel to Badgerys Creek? The other is its 24-HOUR operation ... Just what we'll all look forward to, jets flying over our houses whilst we try to sleep ... Mascot will keep its curfew" (refer to Table 4-46).

WSIA: "Hi JR894, I understand there's a range of views in the community about the airport after many years, and some views are held strongly. Re your question on jet fuel, it will initially be brought in by road tankers like airports of similar size, such as Gold

Coast or Adelaide. A dedicated fuel pipeline will become viable when the airport grows. The airport was always planned to provide 24-hour services, like most airports in Australia, including Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Our airport site has been protected against incompatible development for about three decades — in contrast, Kingsford Smith has some of the most densely populated suburbs in Australia on its doorstep” (refer to Table 4-46).

**Table 4-46** *Showing Understanding to Stakeholders: Examples and Evidence*

Showing understanding to stakeholders: examples and evidence
<p>JR894: A ridiculous decision in placing another airport in Sydney. We have Canberra A/P not far away with plenty of expansion possibilities. All we needed was a fast train to Sydney. It would've had less impact on the populace of Sydney. There are still a few factors that have not been answered. How do you get the jet fuel to Badgerys Creek? The other is its 24-HOUR operation ... Just what we'll all look forward to, jets flying over our houses whilst we try to sleep ... Mascot will keep its curfew...</p> <p>WSIA: Hi JR894, I understand there's a range of views in the community about the airport after many years, and some views are held strongly. Re your question on jet fuel, it will initially be brought in by road tankers like airports of similar size, such as Gold Coast or Adelaide. A dedicated fuel pipeline will become viable when the airport grows. The airport was always planned to provide 24-hour services, like most airports in Australia including Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Our airport site has been protected against incompatible development for about three decades — in contrast, Kingsford Smith has some of the most densely populated suburbs in Australia on its doorstep.</p>
<p>GG9634: Better line haul connectivity for air freight. Why would WS residents' priority be with better connection to an airport that they may use once a year?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi GG9634, you're quite right, it will help with freight connectivity, but there are many thousands of drivers who use the Northern Road between Campbelltown and Penrith every day who will benefit from the upgrade.</p>
<p>DW9Z32: When will you change opening hours so that us locals that work can view the complex? We are the most affected! And this is my third request.</p> <p>WSIA: Hi DW9Z32, I'm sorry that I am unable to give you an answer as to when, but I can assure you we are working on it. Thank you for your patience in the meantime.</p>
<p>OS0512: Hypocrisy on an industrial scale. Who cares about the health of western Sydney and the Blue Mountains when the airport is functioning? I thought it was a spoof.</p> <p>WSIA: Thanks for joining in the conversation. We love it when people are passionate about our beautiful region.</p> <p>All over the world, airports and communities exist side by side for mutual benefit.</p>

#### Showing understanding to stakeholders: examples and evidence

In order to be approved, WSA passed a rigorous expert environmental assessment that considered people's health.

We're proud that airport construction is helping deliver the region the jobs and business opportunities that are sorely needed, especially in the COVID-19 recovery — and there'll be even more jobs when the airport opens!

#### 4.5.2 Emotion-related Response Strategy

This research also considers the stakeholders' emotions to be critical when the project was responding to community stakeholders. There were two main dimensions on which stakeholder strategies in the emotion domain were based: emotional polarity (Mohammad & Turney, 2013; Pang & Lee, 2008) and emotional energy (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Brackett & Katulak, 2007). However, the most crucial element for the team to consider when adopting an emotion-related response strategy was the nature of the stakeholder's emotion. Therefore, this discussion of emotion-related response strategy starts with sentiment classification.

**Table 4-47** *Emotion-related Response Strategy*

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Strategy for positive sentiment</b>	Maintain a positive energy
	Amplify the positive emotional energy
<b>Strategy for negative sentiment</b>	Maintain and reduce the negative energy
	Try to turn negative into positive
<b>Strategy for neutral sentiment</b>	Try to turn neutral to positive

##### 4.5.2.1 Strategy for Positive Sentiment

The project employed two strategies for positive emotions: 1) maintaining the positive energy and 2) amplifying the positive energy.

**Maintaining a positive sentiment.** The project used this strategy in two ways. First, when the positive sentiment of the stakeholder was already at a high level, and the project wanted to maintain this high level, they combined their response with an issue-related strategy to satisfy the stakeholder's needs.

SM915: “An address would be hopeful 😊” (refer to Table 4-48).

WSIA: “Hi SM915, it’s located off Eaton Road in Luddenham. To enter, you’ll need to turn left off the Northern Road, heading in the direction of Campbelltown. The Centre will open in the coming weeks” (refer to Table 4-48).

GS916: “WSIA Grand ideas I hope this is a winner and not another ‘we should have done this and that’ project! Let’s be ahead on this one with no regrets later please!!!” (refer to Table 4-48).

Second, when the stakeholder’s positive sentiment was not high, or the content of the stakeholder’s concern lacked an emotional component, such as rational discussions of science and technology or the provision of simple information, the project’s response maintained the same energy. This is because when a project needs to demonstrate its professionalism, rationality is more important than emotion. This strategy helped the WSIA establish a more authoritative image.

AL9813: “Looks awesome. Whereabouts on the photo will the new entry be to the airport?” (refer to Table 4-48).

WSIA: “Hi AL9813, it is around where Elizabeth Drive and Badgerys Creek Road meet today. The entrance will go under Elizabeth Drive and be wide enough for a link to the new toll-free M12 and also have the new metro line running next to it” (refer to Table 4-48).

Maintaining a positive sentiment is a communication approach centred on empathy, aiming to build trust and a collaborative atmosphere by understanding and responding to stakeholders’ emotions. This strategy emphasises that project teams should not only focus on task execution but also on maintaining relationships with stakeholders—especially when facing pressure, changes, or conflicts—by responding to their concerns and expectations with a positive and empathetic attitude. Through active listening, emotional validation, and the use of encouraging language, project teams can effectively sustain a positive emotional tone, enhance stakeholder engagement and satisfaction, and steadily drive the project toward shared

goals. This strategy not only improves communication quality but also helps create a supportive and emotionally healthy project environment.

**Table 4-48** *Maintaining a Positive Energy: Examples and Evidence*

Maintaining a positive energy: examples and evidence
<p>AL9813: Looks awesome. Whereabouts on the photo will the new entry be to the airport?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi AL9813, it is around where Elizabeth Drive and Badgerys Creek Road meet today. The entrance will go under Elizabeth Drive and be wide enough for a link to the new toll-free M12 and also have the new metro line running next to it.</p> <p>GS916: “WSIA Grand ideas I hope this is a winner and not another ‘we should have done this and that’ project! Let’s be ahead on this one with no regrets later please!!!</p>
<p>RL9816: Thanks for the aerial shot, really shows the progress. When will the 2nd runway be Built?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi RL9816, we plan to build a second parallel runway around the 2050s, when the airport grows with increased demand.</p> <p>GH9817: WSIA wow I wouldn’t be surprised if Kingsford Smith gets knocked down.</p> <p>RL9816: GH9817 I don’t think it will be, due to increasing passenger numbers.</p>
<p>PK8Y4: Jobs? Vacancies</p> <p>WSIA: Hi PK8Y4, the construction work underway is being done by a joint venture of CPB Contractors and Lendlease. You can contact them at <a href="mailto:WSAenquiries@cpbljv.com.au">WSAenquiries@cpbljv.com.au</a>.</p>
<p>SM915: An address would be hopeful. 😊</p> <p>WSIA: Hi SM915, it’s located off Eaton Road in Luddenham. To enter, you’ll need to turn left off the Northern Road, heading in the direction of Campbelltown. The centre will open in the coming weeks.</p>
<p>WC8X23: Can we land on it yet?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi WC8X23, not quite. The early earthworks that have started doesn’t include the runway. It’ll be open in 2026.</p>
<p>AM1648: Looks very nice! 🙌🙌</p> <p>Two questions.</p> <p>Can you confirm how many terminals there will be?</p> <p>How many departure gates the airport will have?</p> <p>Thanks.</p> <p>WSIA: AM1648, we’re really proud of the design. We’ll have a single, integrated domestic and international terminal, which means a better passenger experience through faster transfer times.</p> <p>Stage one of the airport opening in late 2026 will have 9 swing gates capable of boarding a range of international and domestic aircraft, as well as more gates for remote boarding.</p> <p>We can’t wait to welcome you!</p>



Amplifying positive emotional energy: examples and evidence
<p>WSIA: Hi PK956, the construction of the visitor centre at Luddenham is going well. If you've seen it lately it now has a roof! We're getting it ready to open soon.</p>
<p>GW9616: I hope there are plans for web cams and time-lapse coverage for those of us who won't be there to see it (until we fly into it!)</p> <p>WSIA: Absolutely, GW9616. Keep on following this page for time lapse and other up close views of the construction of Western Sydney International.</p>
<p>RM972: Hope [they will] be [the] most beautiful buildings on Western Sydney Airport!</p> <p>WSA [will] come to be leader in airports business. Not only in Australia,</p> <p>But at least in [the] South hemisphere. 🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐</p> <p>WSIA: Hi RM972, we hope it will also give people who visit our airport an amazing experience that will have them wanting to come back!</p> <p>RM972: WSIA. WSA will be [a] magnet to travellers, airlines and public. Prime example of know-how in [the] aviation business. Last Friday I have participated in [the] opening ceremony of opening small International Airport Morava Kraljevo, here in Serbia. Was so great.</p> <p>How will be mega great day of opening of Western Sydney Airport? Hope to be alive, and to witness that historic day.</p> <p>Anyway. WSA is already dream airport of future in aviation business. Which started already to grow from [the] ground up. 🌐🌐🌐</p>
<p>GH9744: Noice, it looks like a David Jones clothing shop. 😊</p> <p>WSIA: Only better!</p> <p>GH9744: WSIA there's no other store like David Jones. 😊</p>
<p>MH062: I wish you would build the airport terminal like Melbourne. One large terminal with 2 terminals within so people flying in from domestic can walk to the international and vice versa. Make transiting easy not hard like Kingsford Smith.</p> <p>WSIA: MH062 Great news, Western Sydney International will have a single, integrated international and domestic passenger terminal. We want everything to be as easy as possible!</p> <p>MH062: Western Sydney International Airport Fantastic news, but why the need for two stations? Wouldn't it make more sense to have station in middle and save the dollars on a second station?</p>

#### 4.5.2.2 Strategy for Negative Sentiment

The project employed two main strategies for negative emotion comments: 1) maintain and dampen negative energy, and 2) try to turn negative to positive.

**Maintain and dampen negative sentiment.** In this strategy, the behaviours of maintaining and reducing negative energy were often present in WSIA responses simultaneously. The team aimed to keep the negative energy of the stakeholders at their current levels and to reduce the

negative energy as much as possible. The team tended to choose a specific ‘template’ at the beginning of its response to stabilise the stakeholder’s emotional energy, and later in the text they attempted to lower the stakeholder’s negative energy based on the source of the stakeholder’s negativity in conjunction with issue-related response strategies.

SR9922: “Flight paths? Does anyone actually know where they will be!?” (refer to Table 4-50).

WSIA: “Hi SR9922, the flight paths are still being designed, and you can expect to see draft flight paths and have a chance to provide feedback around 2021. The flight paths are being designed by a team of experts based on maximising safety, efficiency and capacity, and minimising aircraft noise impacts on the community. See more information here ---> <http://www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../fli.../index.aspx>” (refer to Table 4-50).

Maintaining and dampening negative sentiment is a strategic emotional response approach, suitable for when stakeholders express dissatisfaction, anxiety, or criticism. This strategy adopts a deflection perspective, aiming to ease emotional conflict and prevent escalation by subtly shifting attention or responsibility, while preserving the trust foundation of the project team. From an empathetic standpoint, the project teams first acknowledge that stakeholders’ emotions are real and valid, expressing understanding and respect rather than directly refuting or dismissing them. However, in the process of responding, teams can use deflection techniques to redirect part of the responsibility or the root cause of the issue to external factors—such as policy changes, market conditions, or supply chain delays—thereby reducing the direct blame placed on the team or individuals. This is not about shirking responsibility, but rather about providing reasonable context and constraints to help stakeholders better understand the complexity of the issue and reduce negative sentiment toward the team.

At the same time, this strategy also involves ‘maintaining’ a certain level of negative sentiment—not overly suppressing or ignoring it, but allowing it to be expressed within a manageable range to release pressure and build emotional resonance. In doing so, the WSIA project team demonstrated respect for their stakeholders’ feelings while guiding emotions

towards a more rational and controllable direction through deflection and explanation, laying the groundwork for future solutions and collaboration.

**Table 4-50** *Maintaining and Dampening Negative Energy: Examples and Evidence*

Maintaining and dampening negative energy: examples and evidence
<p>JR894: A ridiculous decision in placing another airport in Sydney. We have Canberra A/P not far away with plenty of expansion possibilities. All we needed was a fast train to Sydney. It would've had less impact on the populace of Sydney. There are still a few factors that have not been answered. How do you get the jet fuel to Badgerys Creek? The other is its 24-HOUR operation ... Just what we'll all look forward to, jets flying over our houses whilst we try to sleep ... Mascot will keep its curfew.</p> <p>WSIA: Hi JR894, I understand there's a range of views in the community about the airport after many years, and some views are held strongly. Re your question on jet fuel, it will initially be brought in by road tankers like airports of similar size, such as Gold Coast or Adelaide. A dedicated fuel pipeline will become viable when the airport grows. The airport was always planned to provide 24-hour services, like most airports in Australia, including Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Our airport site has been protected against incompatible development for about three decades — in contrast, Kingsford Smith has some of the most densely populated suburbs in Australia on its doorstep.</p>
<p>GG9634: Better line haul connectivity for air freight. Why would WS residents' priority be with better connection to an airport that they may use once a year?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi GG9634, you're quite right it will help with freight connectivity, but there are many thousands of drivers who use the Northern Road between Campbelltown and Penrith every day who will benefit from the upgrade.</p>
<p>SP9741: Can WSA provide some stats as to how many people who live within the Western Sydney region got a job so far?</p> <p>WSIA: Hi SP9741, I don't have the exact figure for how many people from Western Sydney have worked on the project so far, but I can tell you we have a target of at least 30% of construction jobs going to people who live in Western Sydney. The target rises to 50% of jobs when the airport opens.</p>
<p>RC9816: I say a big NO to building a 2nd runway in the 2050s. Please reconsider that very casual remark SWZ. Wouldn't it be prudent to review when the 2nd runway is built a few years (re 5 yrs) after WSZ is commissioned?</p> <p>By ignoring and deferring decisions is how we got into this mess, i.e., think "traffic generators" principle. Build it and they will come!</p> <p>WSIA: Hi RC9816, I appreciate your point. Rest assured it's not a casual remark. The single runway is more than capable of meeting even the highest demand forecasts in the early years and the second will be built when demand increases significantly into the future. The runway makes the most of the predictable wind conditions on the site needed for take-off and landing. This means a cross runway isn't needed.</p>

## Maintaining and dampening negative energy: examples and evidence

SR9922: Flight paths? Does anyone actually know where they will be!?

WSIA: Hi SR9922, the flight paths are still being designed, and you can expect to see draft flight paths and have a chance to provide feedback around 2021. The flight paths are being designed by a team of experts based on maximising safety, efficiency and capacity, and minimising aircraft noise impacts on the community. See more information here ---  
> <http://www.westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../fli.../index.aspx>

DT8D1729: ...so have the flight paths been confirmed as yet?

WSIA: Hi DT8D1729, the flight paths for Western Sydney Airport are being planned. It's a complicated process that will take time, but it will focus on maximising safety while minimising impacts on residential areas. There'll be opportunities for the community to be involved. You can get more information here: <http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/.../flight.../index.aspx>

DT8D1729: Thanks for the reply. Seems crazy to plan for a 24-hour airport whilst at the same time opening up huge areas of land to high density housing, without the crucial part of confirming flight paths. In years to come, questions will be asked as to who was there first ... yes, some will say the airport was always planned for there, although countless govts reserved the land, sold the land and then re-purchased the land, so nothing was set in stone!

MZ8D1819: And we all know that the flight paths have been changed to accommodate new land Development while adversely affecting the landowners in the South Creek Precinct.

**Trying to turn negative sentiment into positive sentiment.** This is a risky strategy for responding to negative sentiments, as it is usually based on the project team believing that the reason for the negative sentiment is based on misunderstandings about the project, which can be changed by the provision of explanations. This judgment is entirely based on the subjective views of the team member. If the account manager's judgment is correct, and the response's content addresses the stakeholder's misunderstanding and gains the stakeholder's acceptance, then it successfully converts a negative emotion into a positive one. However, when the team member misjudges the situation, this strategy has the opposite effect; that is, it increases the negative emotional energy of the stakeholder. In this case, the positive words used in this bureaucratic response may further trigger stakeholder resentment.

KL0Z2: "Why isn't it 100%??" (refer to Table 4-51)

WSIA: "KL0Z2 We're all about local jobs. Our construction target is 30%, so we're really proud of the fact we're exceeding that goal by a long way!" (refer to Table 4-51)

PG0Z2: “But that doesn’t answer her question. Why not 100% and can you define ‘local’? Within a radius of how many kilometres? Are you looking at the individual employees’ home addresses or the registered offices of the contractors employing them?”  
(refer to Table 4-51)

Trying to turn negative sentiment into positive sentiment is an emotion response strategy centred on psychological diversion. It aims to guide stakeholders to shift their attention away from personal stress and dissatisfaction, and refocus on other organisations, the team, or more hopeful goals, thereby achieving a positive emotional transformation.

The strategy of diversion does not directly confront or suppress negative emotions, but instead dilutes their intensity by creating new focal points. This kind of ‘role redirection’ helps stakeholders move away from passive emotional experiences and stimulates their sense of value and influence, gradually shifting their emotional direction. Additionally, by emphasising collective achievements, showcasing positive feedback from others, or sharing small project successes, the strategy effectively redirects attention from problems to progress and hope. The key lies in helping stakeholders see others, engage with others, and support others, thereby gaining a new psychological perspective and an emotional release path, ultimately transforming negative sentiment into positive energy.

**Table 4-51** *Trying to Turn Negative Emotion Positive: Examples and Evidence*

Trying to turn negative emotion positive: examples and evidence
<p>TS8X9: Badgerys Creek has been talked about by various governments for 40 years. It will be 40 more before it is finished, if ever. Give it up and stop wasting taxpayer money.</p> <p>WSIA: TS8X9, you’re right — it’s been talked about for so long, but now it’s happening — construction started last month and everything is on track for a 2026 opening.</p> <p>CS8X9: WSIA been in and out of the first stage of lend lease sites, looking good.</p>
<p>GH9921: They’re working too slow 😞</p> <p>WSIA: It was built in two minutes! I think that’s pretty quick. 😊</p>
<p>SR0511: Least she is working, most of them don’t.</p> <p>SC0511: SR0511 are you implying most Western Sydney people don’t work?</p> <p>SR0511: SC0511 maybe</p> <p>SC0511: Huh</p> <p>WSIA: SR0511, on behalf of Western Sydney, allow us to say...</p>



JM0512: SR0511 you're on crack if you think people from the west don't work.

SR0511: JM0512: yeah, u got some?

SP0620: Hardly any board member from Western Sydney and majority of the workers don't come from Western Sydney precinct.

WSIA: Hi SP0620, we're exceeding our local employment targets — we're proud to say you'll find Western Sydney locals in every part of our business, that's what our project is all about!

SW0623: Can't you guys go back to work soon??? You got work to do!

WSIA: We moved quickly to get social distancing and extra health measures in place across the project, so we never stopped! Work to build the airport is charging ahead and we're on track for our 2026 opening!



KL0Z2: Why isn't it 100%??

WSIA: KL0Z2 We're all about local jobs. Our construction target is 30%, so we're really proud of the fact we're exceeding that goal by a long way!

PG0Z2: But that doesn't answer her question. Why not 100% and can you define 'local'? Within a radius of how many kilometres? Are you looking at the individual employees' home addresses or the registered offices of the contractors employing them?

WSIA: PG0Z2 Individual employees' home addresses that are in Western Sydney or the Blue Mountains. We're really proud of the fact 54% of our team are locals!

#### 4.5.2.3 Strategy for Neutral Sentiment

For emotionally neutral or rational comments with no underlying emotional tendencies, the strategy of emotional energy is not applicable, so there was only one common approach under this category: trying to turn neutral into positive. The team used positive language to generate positive emotions from these stakeholders and, at the same time, helped WSIA maintain its image of being willing to engage with stakeholders. However, based on the data, it was clear that comments with neutral sentiments were less likely to gain the project's attention. Here is one example of this strategy:

BH0513: “Not a lot of air traffic in Sydney atm”.

WSIA: “Luckily, we’re not opening until 2026! Things will be well and truly back on track then”.

Another example shows the WSIA successfully steer the stakeholders’ from neutral to positive sentiment.

ES8D812: “Do you know what category of ILS it will be yet?”

WSIA: “We’re planning for CAT IIIB, ES8D812!”

ES8D812: “WSIA that’s great! You’ll be able to handle diversions from Sydney Airport if they haven’t upgraded theirs by then”.

In summary, there are two main dimensions to consider in the emotion-related response strategy: emotional polarity and emotional energy. The emotional polarity response strategy aimed almost exclusively to convert all nonpositive sentiments into positive sentiments. For the other dimension, emotional energy response strategies had different purposes for negative and positive emotions. For positive emotions, the emotional energy response strategy aimed to maintain and amplify the positive emotional energy of the stakeholders. For negative emotions, the emotional energy response strategies aimed to maintain and reduce stakeholders’ negative emotional energy. The following table shows the reclassified emotion-related response strategy in these two dimensions.

**Table 4-52** *Emotion-related Response Strategy: Reclassification*

Second-order themes	First-order concepts
<b>Emotional polarity response strategy</b>	Try to turn negative into positive
	Try to turn neutral to positive
<b>Emotional energy response strategy</b>	Maintain a positive energy
	Amplify the positive emotional energy
	Maintain and reduce the negative energy

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described the findings in the data, including the role of the project's social media accounts, the themes of online stakeholder voices, the emotions in the comments of stakeholders, and the project response strategies of online stakeholders. The WSIA Facebook page, as the official account, gained the attention of broader stakeholders. At the same time, WSALC, an intermediary, provided more abundant information related to WSIA to stakeholders.

For the thematic analysis, the concerns and behaviours of the online stakeholders were classified according to their different attitudes towards the airport and the project team, including those contradicting the airport and the project team. The stakeholders in this category acknowledged the value of the new airport but expressed dissatisfaction with the project team.

The sentiment and emotion analysis in this study considered the various emotional classification models (Jasper, 1998; Mou & Lin, 2014; Richins, 1997; Soussan & Trovati, 2020) and the concept of emotional energy (Boyns & Luery, 2015; Brackett et al., 2019; Hernandez et al., 2012), which helped the analysis of the online response strategy. Finally, based on the results of thematic analysis and sentiment and emotion analysis, this chapter analysed two online response strategies: issue-related response strategy and emotion-related response strategy.

The next chapter will discuss the level of engagement of the project stakeholders, the model of emotional energy, and the impact of the online response of the project on issues and emotions.

# Chapter 5: Discussion

## 5.1 Introduction

In light of the findings from Chapter 4, this chapter will address the four main research questions raised in Chapter 2 in synthesis with the findings from the data analysis. To recap, the research questions are:

Question 1: How do we capture, make sense of, and respond to, the voice and sentiment of community stakeholders in a naturalistic setting for better project understanding and outcomes?

Question 2: To what extent can we apply traditional stakeholder assessment techniques (e.g., identify, analyse, and prioritise) to online stakeholders?

Question 3: What guidelines can be provided for project organisations to meaningfully engage with online stakeholders who may be supportive, neutral, or opposed to the project?

Question 4: How can project organisations harness the emotions and sentiments of the online community for better stakeholder dialogue?

Furthermore, this chapter develops a stakeholder dialogue model for projects conducting community stakeholder engagement activities on social media. The chapter discusses the three main steps for stakeholder dialogue on social media and then proposes a model for stakeholder engagement based on stakeholder dialogue theory. After considering the different functions of social media platforms, the final stakeholder dialogue model for multiple platforms is presented. Finally, the social media stakeholder engagement framework is established.

## 5.2 Social Media Stakeholder Engagement Framework

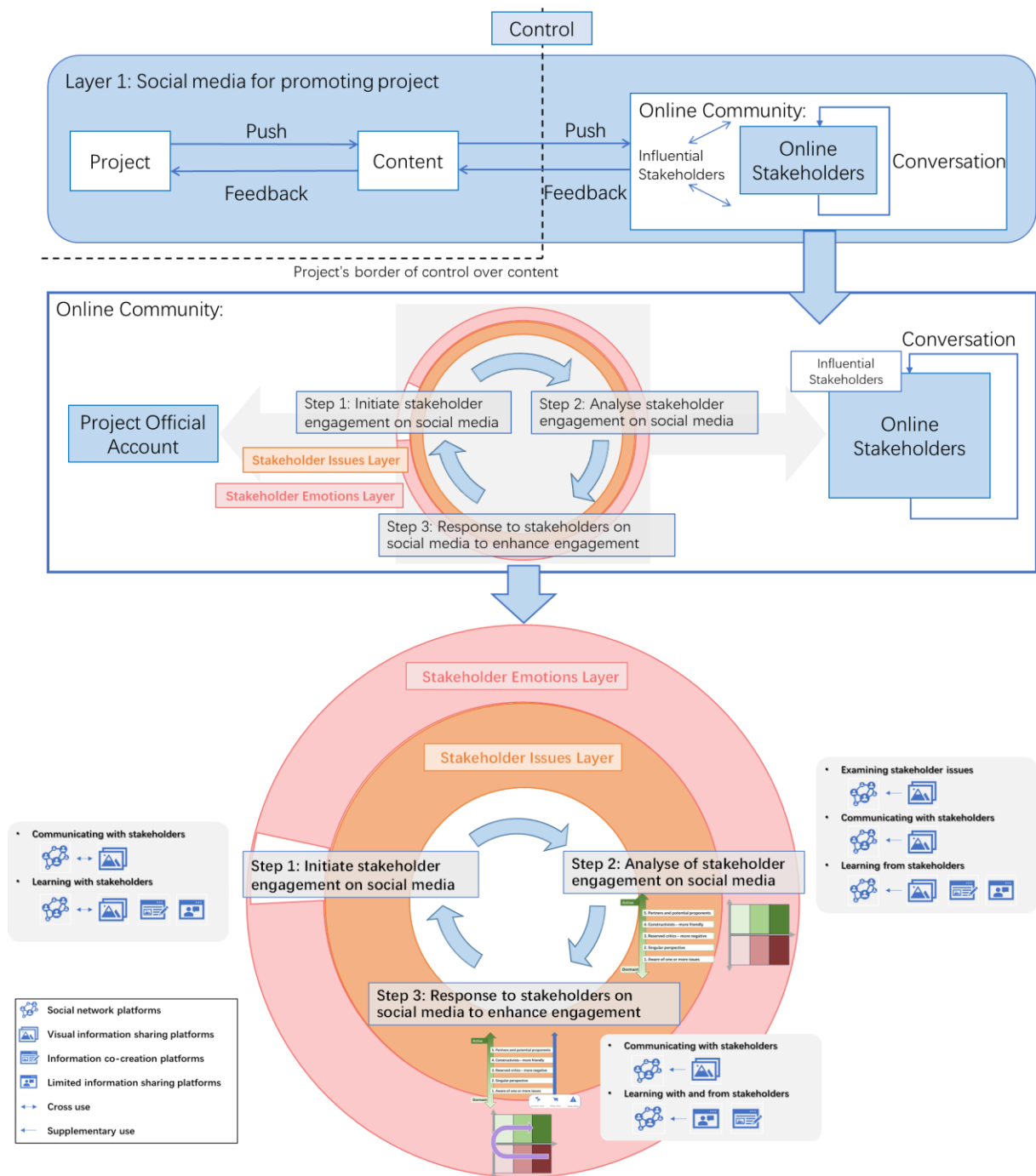
Based on the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 (refer to Figure 2-2) and the data analysis in Chapter 4, the modified framework for social media stakeholder engagement in Figure 5-1 is obtained. Based on the findings in Chapter 4, this study summarises the model in which projects use stakeholder dialogue to drive stakeholder engagement in online communities on social media. On social media, the project enters the online community of stakeholders by

establishing an independent social media official account, which is the basis for communication with stakeholders.

R. Freeman et al. (2017) demonstrated the importance of stakeholder engagement through case studies and proposed six principles of engagement, including value creation, interconnection, and cooperation. These principles emphasise the importance of collaboration and relationships among stakeholders. By building close relationships with stakeholders, the project organisation can better understand stakeholder needs and expectations, thereby co-creating value. In addition, the success of stakeholder dialogue depends not only on the frequency of communication but, more importantly, on the meaning and context of the dialogue content (Lehtimäki & Kujala, 2017). Social media platforms provide an open and transparent communication platform for enterprises and stakeholders. By using social media, projects can respond to stakeholder concerns and feedback more quickly and build closer relationships. The project organisation can enhance its reputation and improve stakeholder satisfaction by establishing an open and transparent dialogue mechanism. In this framework, layer 1 shows social media's essential content exchange pattern to promote projects. Such stakeholder engagement activities can only happen in the online community.

Social media stakeholder engagement relies on the social media stakeholder dialogue model with two layers: the stakeholder issues layer and the stakeholder emotions layer. Projects can apply the social media stakeholder dialogue model to engage online stakeholders. The social media stakeholder dialogue model includes three main steps: 1) initiate stakeholder engagement on social media; 2) analyse stakeholder engagement on social media; and 3) respond to stakeholders on social media to enhance the engagement. Each step includes tools and methods, strategies, and the use of different platforms for social media stakeholder dialogue.

**Figure 5-1 Social Media Stakeholder Engagement Framework**



The follow section provides the details of each of the steps in the online stakeholder dialogue model.

### **5.3 Step One: Initiate Stakeholder Engagement on Social Media**

Stakeholder engagement refers to the goals, practices, and impacts of stakeholder relationships in businesses and other organisations (Sachs & Kujala, 2021). The use of social media can lead to a behavioural tendency of immediate and improvisational information exchange and communication, which may make stakeholders act on unverified and inaccurate information, thus affecting stakeholders' cognitive aspects (Ram & Titarenko, 2022). In this study, the project team guided and attracted stakeholders by creating social media accounts certified by the platform, and the discussion about the project was thus focused on the official account so that stakeholders could gain immediate official information from this account. This is the foundation for conducting the stakeholder dialogue on social media. From the case study in this research, we can see that social media is used for stakeholder engagement work, transmitting and exchanging information with online stakeholders, showing its potential in engaging stakeholders. The openness and accessibility of social media are helpful for widely disseminating project information across time and geographic barriers (Lobo & Abid, 2020; Ram & Titarenko, 2022; Renzl, 2008).

The case study shows social media's advantages in engaging with online stakeholders. Argyris and Monu's (2015) eight affordances of social media as a tool show that social media can support projects to present their opinions, record online stakeholders' activities, build connections with online stakeholders, and even influence and engage stakeholders. Some of those affordances are unique to social media. Chow and Leiringer (2020) stated that the premise of public engagement is to invite community members to engage in a project's decision-making processes, and they regarded public engagement as a dynamic and emergent behaviour. The affordances of social media allowed the project team to use this tool to fully exploit and adapt to the emergent and dynamic nature of stakeholder engagement activities.

It can be seen from the data in Chapter 4 that the official Facebook page of the project helped the project capture the voices and sentiments of the community stakeholders. Stakeholders could search for the project name to find the official account and obtain basic project information. The content posted on the project's Facebook page allows the online stakeholders (or community) to quickly understand the latest progress of the project. Timing is not essential

in online stakeholder engagement activities because online stakeholders can click the ‘follow’ button and start to follow the project at any time; the project has been running for three years, but some stakeholders still ask questions similar to ones asked three years ago.

Influencer social media accounts also play critical roles in stakeholder engagement by providing supplementary channels for online stakeholders to start communicating with the project (Seo et al., 2019). Different stakeholders have different understandings of the project. The project needs to pay attention to this, and engage with these different stakeholders simultaneously on social media.

During a project’s construction, more and more new online stakeholders begin to pay attention to the project. Gaining stakeholder attention is the first step in connecting with online stakeholders. Stakeholder attention to projects is often not limited to online activities while they communicate with the project, but obtaining a response through social media is quicker and more convenient than offline communication. Organisations can respond to the consumer insights they generate through social media monitoring and analytics by modifying their social media monitoring and analytics (Pang & Lee, 2008).

The type of information on offer significantly impacts engagement. Online stakeholders are more likely to have more conversations under posts that include videos or provide coupons. Santoso et al. (2020) concluded that stakeholders who engage with government-managed social media accounts prefer content with videos or photos. This indicates that visual information on social media can attract online stakeholders to view and understand the context, and online stakeholders whose engagement is caused by lucky draws or coupons may only focus on the benefits they can gain from the activities.

#### **5.4 Step Two: Analyse Stakeholder Engagement on Social Media**

Research by Lobo and Abid (2020) shows that stakeholders can form a strong identity with the help of social media. According to K. Chung et al. (2023), stakeholder analysis on social media may move away from analysing stakeholders themselves towards analysing their main issues. In this study, the attention of stakeholders to the project on social media did not depend on a single event. Further, the reactions of stakeholders to the project were diverse, including

ignoring the project, browsing the project account, liking the project posts, sharing posts on social media, and commenting on the project.

This study focuses on online stakeholders' comments on social media, which show different levels of engagement, by considering Sachs and Kujala's (2021) four dimensions of stakeholder engagement theory (examining stakeholder relationships, communicating with stakeholders, learning with and from stakeholders, and comprehensive engagement of stakeholders) and Cao et al.'s (2021) three dimensions of consumer engagement (cognition, emotion and behaviour).

Step two of this stakeholder dialogue model is about analysing stakeholder engagement on social media. It is based on two tools: the categorical groups of online community stakeholders and the stakeholder emotion matrix on social media.

#### *5.4.1 The Categorical Groups of Online Community Stakeholders*

The categorical groups of online community stakeholders are based primarily on the stakeholders' comments, their understandings of the project, and their intentions to engage in a dialogue with it. Cuppen et al. (2016) mentioned that many scholars believe that the two typical misunderstandings in public opposition to projects are knowledge issues and interest issues. However, the attitude and engagement of stakeholders in projects are more complex and dynamic than this would suggest. The credibility of the project organisation is essential when channelling stakeholder engagement, requiring the project to have a dialogue model that can accommodate interaction and exchange with and among stakeholders with different values, knowledge, and interests (Cuppen et al., 2016). The dialogue process is also a stakeholder learning process, and learning requires open exploration of different perspectives, which is imperative when ill-informed misconceptions prevail among external stakeholders (Cuppen et al., 2016).

The project learning process in the dialogue with stakeholders is two-way. Stakeholders learn information related to the project from the project, and at the same time, the project obtains information and points of view from the comments of stakeholders, which can be used to improve the implementation and delivery of the project. In this case, the stakeholders' cognition

of the project, including their understanding of, knowledge of and interest in the project, is one of the factors to consider when discussing the level of engagement of the project on social media.

Effective communication relies on different factors, including being transformative, trusting and honest, and respecting each other. Trust is vital in stakeholder relations and project management (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). Trust is essential for problem-solving because it encourages the exchange of relevant information and determines whether team members are willing to allow others to influence their decisions and actions. There is a strong correlation between project success and stakeholder trust because building trust can lead to constructive working relationships, and understanding how to resolve different relationships among stakeholders helps to balance the conflict issues that often arise in projects (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019; Pinto et al., 2009). Building relationships of trust can facilitate communication, leadership, and interpersonal relationships, improving stakeholders' adaptability and providing space for alternative solutions when conflicts or problems arise in the project. The dynamics of relationships contribute to a virtuous cycle of trust (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). Trust is built and maintained after multiple interactions over a long-term effort (Karlsen et al., 2008).

Hartman (2003) listed three factors of trust: integrity, ability and intuition. According to Rose and Schlichter (2013), trust can also promote engagement, and there is a close relationship between trust and project success (Pinto et al., 2009). As part of the social exchange theory, Zucker (1986) proposed three trust production mechanisms. These trust production mechanisms are feature-based trust, process-based trust, and institution-based trust (Ninan et al., 2023; Remidez & Jones, 2012). Van Zyl (2009) argued that social media accelerates the development of trust, relationship building, and effective community communication because it lessens the amount of time needed for social networking. Social media makes 'small talk' possible, which facilitates familiarity and helps to establish a harmonious relationship and an environment of cultivation, support, collaboration, and trust (Pinto et al., 2009). However, the numerous forms of jumbled information on social media can obstruct the building of trust between the project and online stakeholders. This research takes trust as another vital factor in judging the level of stakeholder engagement when discussing the stakeholder engagement situation on social media.

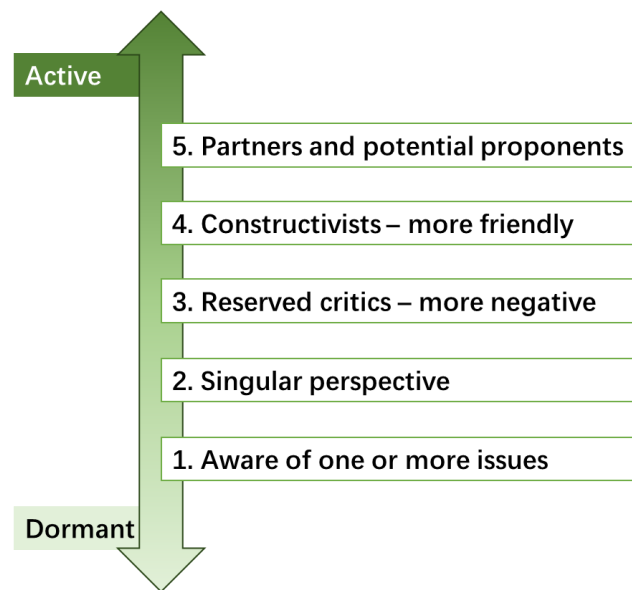
#### 5.4.1.1 Dormant to Active

Stakeholder engagement on social media is limited, and this section discusses the range of stakeholder engagement that is reflected on social media. Online stakeholders are diverse, which makes them different from the traditional identification of stakeholder groups. It is generally challenging to define the group or individuals visiting a particular page on social media, and the project team cannot know the background information of the stakeholders hidden behind the accounts. Different stakeholders have different perceptions and understandings of the project and different cultural and educational backgrounds, leading to different attitudes towards the project and the project teams.

Wang et al. (2020) analysed three possible reactions of users on social media during crisis events: ignoring the event, noticing the event but remaining silent, condemning the company, and spreading negative information. Purvis et al. (2015) discussed the main direction and strength of stakeholder engagement: active and token support and opposition to implementation engagement. Mitchell et al. (1997) defined stakeholders according to their level of engagement: he identified dormant, discretionary, and demanding stakeholders; on social media, the lowest level of stakeholder engagement is potential or dormant stakeholders. These stakeholders react to a project by ignoring the event or noting it but remaining silent (Wang et al., 2020). The highest level of engagement by stakeholders on social media is seen in those who engage in relevant project-related activities offline and have in-depth knowledge of the status of the project. This type is regarded as an actively engaged stakeholder (Purvis et al., 2015).

On the dormant to active scale, and considering the issues that have been identified in Section 4.3, the degree of stakeholder engagement can be divided into five categorical groups: 1) those who are aware of one or more issues, 2) those who hold a singular perspective, 3) reserved critics, who are more negative, 4) constructivists, who are more friendly, and 5) partners and potential proponents (refer to Figure 5-2).

**Figure 5-2** *Categorical Groups of Online Community Stakeholders*



#### 5.4.1.2 Those Aware of One or More Issues

In the categorical groups of online community stakeholders, awareness of one or more issues belongs to the first level of the online stakeholder classification group. This level corresponds to dormant stakeholders, who may be completely uninformed about the project or event, have minimal information, and may not understand the project’s decision-making processes or its possible impact.

Online stakeholders who are aware of one or more issues are aware that a project or event is underway but have limited knowledge of its details, i.e., they are aware of the project’s existence but may not be clear about its objectives, plans, or possible impacts.

Stakeholders who are aware of one or more issues have the following characteristics: First, they notice the existence of a project or event, which means that they may be aware that the project or event will impact their interests. This is related to how much information the online stakeholders had about the project before they commented online. Online comments from stakeholders who possess less project-related information are more likely to align with the characteristics of this group. Secondly, they might understand how the project or event affects their interests, which may include economic, social, environmental, and other aspects (Cuppen et al., 2016). The relationship between stakeholders in this category and projects is still in the early stage of trust-building (Karlsen et al., 2008).

This categorical group includes stakeholder issues stemming from two attitudes: neutral to the airport and project team, and support for the airport and project team. Of these, the three stakeholder issues under the “neutral to airport and project team” attitude (which are “ask for more information”, “tag someone to notify them”, and “neutral” comments) all fall within this categorical group.

SJ914: “When does it open to the public?” (refer to Table 4-8).

JA9X78: “KA9X78 seen it” (refer to Table 4-10).

KM1573: “Well, it’s happening” (refer to Table 4-9).

Based on the data in Section 4.3.2, we can see that some stakeholders actively seek information by directly asking questions, showing interest but limited understanding, indicating awareness of specific issues rather than deep engagement. Others tag friends without adding comments, suggesting an intent to share rather than express a stance online, which also reflects a surface-level awareness in their online interactions. Lastly, many comments are too vague or brief to determine the stakeholder’s position or relevance to the project, making them difficult to analyse meaningfully. Overall, the data reveals that most neutral stakeholders engage with the project at a low level, with limited insight or commitment, highlighting challenges in interpreting stakeholder sentiment based solely on social media interactions.

For those who support for both the airport and the project team, some of the data comes from the stakeholder issue “support for the construction of the project”. However, these stakeholders do not demonstrate a deep understanding of the project, and their level of engagement remains limited. Some online viewers express satisfaction with the content shared by the project on social media after viewing the posts. In many cases, such expressions are limited to brief comments or emojis, reflecting a positive attitude but minimal engagement.

AD8X43: “Can’t wait for it all to happen, love it” (refer to Table 4-2).

MD1558: “More employment opportunities for our kids, and our kids’ kids 🙌” (refer to Table 4-2).

Among the stakeholders with supportive attitudes, some express support to the WSIA posts without citing reasons such as job creation, satisfaction with project outcomes, and agreement with decisions shared on the project's social media — including airport-driven employment, construction achievements, or challenges overcome. However, these expressions are typically limited to limited comment length and context, which cannot present a deeper understanding of the project. This is the embodiment of stakeholders' trust in the information provided by the project, but it also belongs to the feature-based trust (Ninan et al., 2023; Remidez & Jones, 2012), as these stakeholders show their trust and support only based on the words project officially released.

#### 5.4.1.3 Singular Perspective

The online stakeholders' comments that express apparent attitudes and opinions can be seen as having a higher level of engagement than awareness. In this engagement group, stakeholders show their positions on and opinions about the project. The project has heard the demands and needs of the stakeholders, and the stakeholders have transmitted information while expressing their attitudes (Cao et al., 2021). Compared with the previous group discussed above, the stakeholders who have awareness of one or more issues at the singular perspective level have a higher understanding of the project, but their attention to and understanding of the project are limited and their views are one-sided. A singular perspective means that stakeholders only focus on some topics of the project and that their attention to these topics is greater than they do to the project as a whole.

Stakeholders at the singular perspective level have some knowledge of the project or event but incomplete knowledge of the details or the whole picture; they may be aware of some specific issues of the project but may lack comprehensive background knowledge or in-depth knowledge. They may understand some aspects of the project but know little about other aspects. In their comments, these stakeholders oppose the project and express their reasons for not supporting it. The opponents' comments often show the central conflict between the project and its stakeholders. Opponents focus on the negative changes that the project will bring to their daily lives.

This categorical group includes those who show opposition to both the airport and project team and those who show support for the airport but dissatisfaction with the project team. Within the attitude of opposition to both the airport and project team, issues such as ecology and pollution and worry over flight paths and curfew reflect the key concerns of stakeholders in this group.

LN1X4: “Flight paths. Show us the flightpaths. You have all this wonderful technology, but you don’t know the way the planes will take off or land? Or will they miraculously appear the day after the state and federal elections next year?” (refer to Table 4-12).

LS0Z16: “Dumb decision adding more pollution to an area that may well see it sit and hover there for years plus its near our key water supply” (refer to Table 4-13).

Based on data in Section 4.3.3.2 and Section 4.3.3.1, we can see that opponents are more likely to be community stakeholders, as they will directly experience the project’s local impacts. Their concerns focus on noise, environmental pollution, and disruptions caused by construction. These stakeholders have a strong sense of uncertainty about the adverse effects and changes that the project may bring to the local community, which often causes negative emotions. Community stakeholders hope that the project team can provide the necessary information or solutions. For example, in response to flight path concerns, some stakeholders oppose 24/7 airport operations, others request early publication of flight routes to assess local impact, and some demand compensation for affected areas. These varied responses reflect differing levels of acceptance and negotiation among stakeholders facing the same core issue.

This group of stakeholders is more inclined to focus on a significant topic, which is their core interest in the project. Within these core interests, the interests of these stakeholders may be identical or contradictory to those of the project (Cuppen et al., 2016). They understand the issues related to the interests of these projects, but their understanding of the knowledge related to the projects may be limited (Cuppen et al., 2016). These stakeholders do not show comprehensive attention to and understanding of the project but only show care about whether their individual issue receives a response and solution from the project. Stakeholders who oppose the project or the team show a higher degree of general distrust in the project. Although this group has a high level of awareness of the project, this is due to their low level of trust.

Ninan et al. (2023) mentioned that the trust restoration process is complicated because the factors that destroy the trust relationship between stakeholders and the project are diverse. The distrust of this group of stakeholders towards the project comes from intuition-based distrust (Hartman, 2003) and process-based distrust (Zucker, 1986), which related to stakeholders' personal understanding of the project team's behaviours during the engagement activities. They think the project team have the dishonest behaviours during the online engagement.

In this categorical group, some stakeholders can be identified as community stakeholders based on information they provided in their comments. Since this group contains stakeholders who oppose and contradict the team's messages, these stakeholders are likely to show dissatisfaction with the project or the project group. Therefore, the project needs to focus on this categorical group to understand the main issues community stakeholders are concerned about.

#### 5.4.1.4 Reserved Critics — More Negative

Compared with the previously mentioned categorical groups, the stakeholders in the group of reserved critics usually have a more comprehensive understanding of the project. Stakeholders in this category have a certain degree of understanding of the project or event, and they may have reservations about some aspects of the project because of doubts or uncertainties. They have a higher degree of awareness of the information about and benefits of the project (Cao et al., 2021), but they may choose to keep their distance, not actively acquire information about the project or event, or be sceptical of the information obtained. These stakeholders thus take a cautious approach to engagement in the project or event, which means that they may maintain a wait-and-see attitude towards some aspects of the project and are reluctant to take on too much responsibility or risk. In addition, they may be pessimistic about the project's success, have doubts about the methods or strategies to achieve the goals, and may want to see more assurance or evidence. This reflects the distrust of such stakeholders in the project's capabilities (Hartman, 2003).

In this categorical group, stakeholder attitudes mainly fall under the groupings of "opposition to both the airport and project team" or "support for the airport but dissatisfaction with the project team". Two attitudes from the "opposition to both the airport and project team"

category—“blaming the government” and “daily life affected”—are representative of this group.

JT0627: “Western Sydney Airport is going to be a white elephant paid for by the citizens of Australia. First of all, the aviation industry is environmentally unsustainable. Aviation is responsible for at least 12% of climate change emissions and so far, there is no proven way that “potential alternative fuels” are going to fix this problem. Then there is COVID. Over 40% of industry types believe that it could be up to three years before the industry recovers and that was before these second and third waves. There is a quickly accelerating demand for governments to act on curbing emissions. We know for certain that the pace of atmospheric warming is going to present unforeseen problems such as fires, floods and storms which are going to render a folly such as the Western Sydney Airport redundant. WSA is an unnecessary and unsustainable piece of transport infrastructure that needs to be stopped immediately (refer to Table 4-14).

As noted earlier, many infrastructure projects are government-led, aiming to meet national and urban development needs while supporting residents’ quality of life. Some opponents in this study question the necessity of a new airport, suggesting it would become a white elephant. They doubt that tourist numbers will grow as projected and worry that, if airlines or travellers do not use the airport, it will waste taxpayers’ money. These concerns are also shaped by criticism toward government bureaucracy and past project performance.

Issues under the attitude “support for the airport but dissatisfaction with the project team” reflect the characteristics of this group.

DB1629: “Western Sydney International Airport great political answer ... managed to avoid any responsibility” (refer to Table 4-18).

WB0Z14: “It will still be over budget and time guaranteed” (refer to Table 4-19).

JC2113: “GH2111 the Government will probably have it SOLD before they intend on building the second runway so it’s no concern to them” (refer to Table 4-20).

Some contradicting stakeholders, despite having a relatively deep understanding of the project, express distrust by lowering their expectations and adopting a critical, non-cooperative stance.

They support the idea of a second airport but oppose its location in their own community. Others question the credibility of local employment figures shared by the project team, suspecting exaggeration or fabrication. These concerns are more common among local stakeholders, whose attitudes are complex—they acknowledge the potential benefits of the project but remain critical about their realisation and worry that negative impacts may outweigh the positives.

The stakeholders in the “reserved critics” group have a clear understanding of the project, but they take a reserved attitude when they engage with the project team (Cao et al., 2021). Based on Zucker’s (1986) and Hartman’s (2003) views on trust, we can state that the distrust of the stakeholders in this group is based on the project characteristics and the project team’s ability. The project team can rebuild the trust relationship by proving its ability to the stakeholders.

#### 5.4.1.5 Constructivists — More Friendly

When online stakeholders have a comprehensive understanding of the project or event and are willing to communicate and learn from the project, they fall into the category of constructivists. These stakeholders have a deeper understanding of the project and know the goals, plans, progress, and possible impacts of the project or event (Cuppen et al., 2016). They may engage in some project discussions or obtain information updates about the project through relevant channels. In addition, online stakeholders with professional backgrounds have professional knowledge and experience on projects or events and may be domain experts or practitioners in related industries. They may have a good understanding of the project’s details, technical implementation, and potential challenges and can provide essential insights and support for its success. Finally, constructivist stakeholders share information and experiences with the project, and have a more friendly and cooperative attitude (Cao et al., 2021), which is more conducive to communication and exchange with the project than stakeholders at the level of reserved critics.

This group consists of those stakeholders who hold the attitudes of “support for the airport but dissatisfaction with the project team” and “support for both the airport and project team”. Within the “support for the airport but dissatisfaction with the project team” category, some

stakeholders not only raised concerns but also shared their views and offered suggestions to the project. For example:

FG1522: “I wonder how many flights are going to be delayed because of fog. It’s one of the worst areas in Sydney for fog. I know, as I drive past the new airport most days” (refer to Table 4-17).

Some stakeholders with the attitudes of “support for the airport but dissatisfaction with the project team” actively engage by offering constructive feedback, particularly on the airport’s design and functionality. Their concerns focus on practical aspects, such as terminal and runway design, the impact of local foggy weather on flight operations, and the lack of a dedicated fuel pipeline. These issues directly relate to the airport’s core functions—serving airlines, flights, and passengers—and its broader economic value. These stakeholders often have industry experience or technical knowledge, and some may even be future airport users, such as crew members. Their insights into infrastructure and operational needs are valuable and actionable. By voicing specific concerns and suggestions, they demonstrate a willingness to communicate with the project team and contribute to improving the airport’s design and service capabilities.

Another group of stakeholders who offer constructive suggestions come from the attitude category “Support for both the airport and project team”. Unlike the previously mentioned stakeholders, these individuals may not have professional expertise but still support the project by directly offering suggestions related to stakeholder engagement. For example:

DW9X30: “Why don’t you open on weekends so us locals that work can visit?” (refer to Table 4-4).

Among stakeholders who support both the project and the project team, some identify as future passengers. They share personal experiences from other airports, highlighting both positive and negative aspects of airport services. These comments offer valuable insights into passenger expectations—such as convenient public transport access, parking availability, and baggage carousel design. These stakeholders provide friendly, user-focused suggestions. While they may not have professional expertise, their feedback reflects real customer needs and can help the project team enhance service quality and overall project value, as some of them get response

from the project that the social media team will pass this on to the experts. Such stakeholders have a substantial degree of trust in the project, which leads to their friendly attitude towards the behaviours of stakeholder engagement (Remidez & Jones, 2012). These stakeholders' trust in the project comes from the project team's ability (Hartman, 2003) and process-based trust (Zucker, 1986). These stakeholders do not discuss the value and interests of the project but provide their own experience and skills to the project on the premise of identifying with the value of the project, based on their knowledge and insights, and effectively help the project practice to learn from stakeholders (R. Freeman et al., 2017).

#### 5.4.1.6 Partners and Potential Proponents

Partners and potential proponents have the highest engagement levels, which is reflected in online stakeholder activities. Unlike stakeholders in the previous categories, the behaviour of these stakeholders is not limited to online discussions (Cao et al., 2021), as they choose to engage in real-life project activities and share their feedback with other stakeholders online. They may have engaged in conferences, workshops, discussions or decision-making processes, and their comments usually relate to the feelings, perspectives, or outcomes experienced by the stakeholders regarding the project or event. This includes the impacts, challenges, gains or achievements they experienced during the project or event.

As well as being present at the meetings, discussions, or activities of the project or event, and having some knowledge of the overall situation of the project, they may be part of the project team or have a crucial role in the project. These stakeholders help the project jointly maintain the trust relationship between the project and other stakeholders (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). They improve the credibility of the project by showing the transparency of the project to other stakeholders.

PR9945: "JA9945 this photo was taken a few weeks ago. I'm at the front somewhere"  
(refer to Table 4-5).

This categorical group includes only stakeholders from the "support for both the airport and project team" attitude group, specifically those associated with the attitudes of "support for the

activities of the project team,” “comment as part of the project team,” and “help the project to explain and clarify”.

LG9910: “KI9910 ... maybe we can go check this out one day???” (refer to Table 4-3).

BR959: “Congratulations to all involved in this particular achievement. It was a pleasure working with you all” (refer to Table 4-5).

VD9918: “CM9917 It services 10 million passengers per year. Why would they need to service its full 82 million people per year capacity right when it opens?” (refer to Table 4-6).

The project team adopts both online and offline methods to engage with community stakeholders, which have been positively received. Regular updates, such as photos and videos of the construction site, are shared on social media to keep stakeholders informed. Additionally, the creation of an experience centre has encouraged community involvement by offering a physical space for dialogue. When stakeholders raised concerns about its limited opening hours, the project responded by adjusting the schedule, demonstrating responsiveness and alignment of interests. This example reflects a high level of stakeholder engagement, where both parties share common goals. The experience centre serves as a valuable offline platform that complements online communication, fostering deeper interaction.

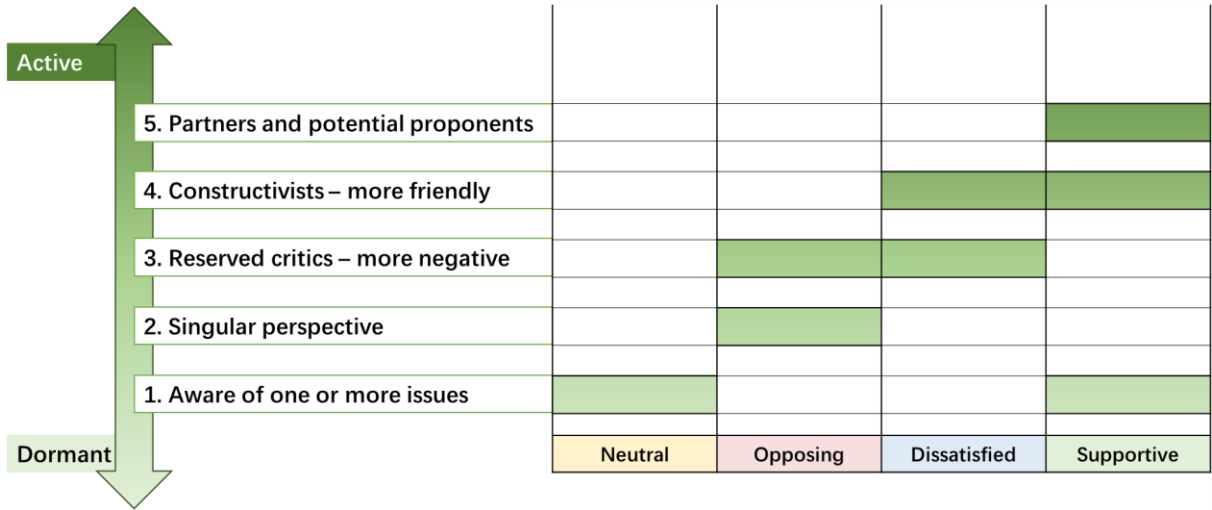
Some long-term supporters also play an active role online. With their deep understanding of the project, they often answer questions from other users before the project team does, showing strong engagement and a willingness to support communication. Some indicated their involvement in the project’s construction, suggesting they may be internal stakeholders with the highest level of participation.

Outside the mainstream narrative of the project, these stakeholders provide personal experience to support the credibility of the project, provide the foundation for integrity and trust for the project (Hartman, 2003), and reflect the process-based trust of these stakeholders (Zucker, 1986). At the same time, these stakeholders also provide feedback on the project after their engagement in offline activities. This further helps the project improve its project construction

and stakeholder engagement work and provides a foundation for learning from stakeholders for project realisation (R. Freeman et al., 2017).

According to the above analysis, the four principal attitudes of stakeholders on social media are shown in the stakeholder engagement classification group, as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 5-3** *The Four Stakeholders’ Attitudes in the Categorical Groups of Online Community Stakeholders*



5.4.2 *The Stakeholder Emotion Matrix on Social Media*

Another stakeholder engagement factor is emotion, which is also mentioned by Cao et al. (2021) in their customer engagement dimensions. Sloan and Oliver (2013) found that establishing trust is a dynamic process in which emotion plays a significant role. Positive or negative experiences determine future expectations and emotional responses (de Oliveira & Rabechini, 2019). Key emotional events may unexpectedly interrupt the cooperative process and become turning points in the development of trust. The sentiments of the stakeholders can be identified as positive and negative, which are the two polarities of emotions (Etter et al., 2018; Pang & Lee, 2008). This section introduces emotional energy as another dimension in constructing the model (Brackett & Geher, 2006), and establishes a new matrix for evaluating the emotional situations of stakeholders on social media.

#### 5.4.2.1 Emotional Polarity — Emotional Energy

The stakeholder emotion matrix in this study consists of two dimensions: emotional polarity and emotional energy. Among them, emotional polarity is located on the vertical axis of the matrix, with neutral emotions as the origin (Etter et al., 2018). The emotional polarity of each identified emotion was classified in Chapter 4. Based on the emotion model of Feldman Barrett and Russell (1998), Barsade and Gibson (2007) developed the emotional cycle model by combining emotional energy with pleasure value.

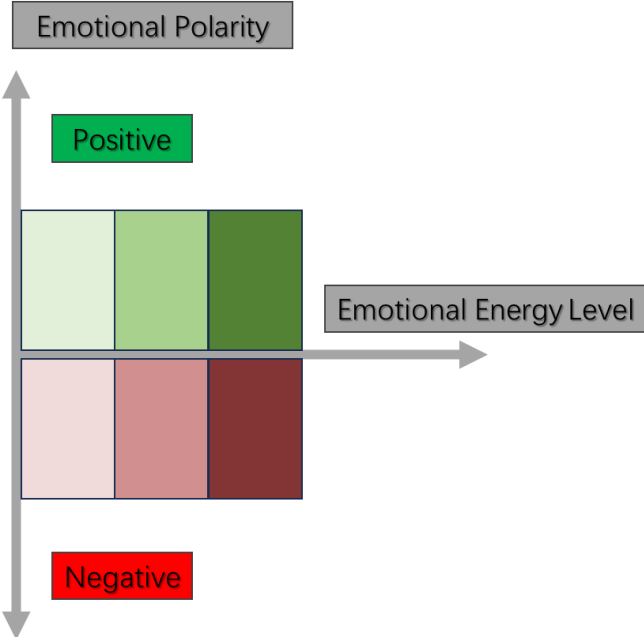
The emotional energy in this research is another dimension, and is on the horizontal axis of the matrix. Emotional energy has only one direction, divided into low emotional energy, medium emotional energy, and high emotional energy from the origin. Boyns and Luery (2015) believed that emotional energy can be an essential source of “sociological motivation”, in which emotional energy interacts with social exchange, power/state dynamics, and thinking. The level of emotional energy is directly related to feelings of group solidarity, so higher emotional energy leads to higher levels of solidarity among stakeholders and a greater desire to repeat similar interactions. Higher emotional energy levels can manifest as more intense or ‘dramatic’ emotions. Higher positive and negative emotional energy levels have a higher drive, also known as more dramatic emotions (Boyns & Luery, 2015; R. Collins, 1993).

Positive emotional energy is the emotional energy of affinity, while negative emotional energy is the emotional energy of hostility (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Low levels of positive emotional energy can lead to social experiences of boredom, alienation, and isolation. High levels of positive emotional energy can lead to feelings of joy, love, ecstasy, passion, and enthusiasm (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Low levels of negativity can lead to unkindness, apathy, and frustrating social experiences. Higher levels of negative emotional energy can manifest as more intense emotions and lead to the social experiences of conflict, aggression, distrust, cruelty, and revenge (Boyns & Luery, 2015).

The stakeholder emotion matrix created in this study adds a new category between the low and high emotional energy levels: medium. This new level of emotional energy was introduced to capture nuanced differences in emotional energy more precisely, preventing the loss of

information that occurs when a middle group is forced into low or high categories (Brummette & Fussell Sisco, 2015; Dufour et al., 2019; Mohammad & Turney, 2013). Figure 5-4 shows the fundamental matrix without any detailed emotions. In the following section, the emotions identified in Chapter 4 will be assigned to this emotion matrix.

**Figure 5-4** Stakeholder Emotion Matrix on Social Media



5.4.2.2 Positive Polarity — Low Energy

There are two primary emotions in this module: hope and interest. These have a positive emotional tendency, but their emotional energy level is lower. Because stakeholders’ hopes and interests have positive emotional tendencies but the possibility of turning to negative emotions, they are classified as positive emotions with low emotional energy.

**Hope.** . Hope is a positive emotional state that engages optimistic expectations and confidence in the future. When stakeholders feel hope, they tend to be optimistic about the future and expect positive outcomes or changes (Dufour et al., 2019; Jasper, 1998). Hope is usually accompanied by a clear perception of goals, positive expectations, and the ability and desire to achieve those goals (Dufour et al., 2019; Jasper, 1998). Hope comes from stakeholders’ expectations for better things in the future. The perspective of the stakeholders in this study, when expressing the

emotion of hope, usually includes providing suggestions for the project. These suggestions are subjective and reflect individual preferences. For example:

AM254: “Let’s hope all the freight logistics companies move out there too, and make it B-double friendly” (refer to Table 4-25).

Stakeholders with this emotion have low motivation on taking actions and are inclined to trust the actions of the project team after providing their information to the project rather than engaging with the project further. The emotion of hope has a low energy level, which leads to lower motivation for stakeholders to take action (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Hope has a limited role in driving stakeholder activity, and, although it can inspire individual optimism and motivation, it may not be sufficient to drive stakeholder activities independently (Dufour et al., 2019). In the face of challenges and difficulties, hope may be affected, thus weakening individual motivation and willingness to act (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). If individuals lack support and problem-solving skills when faced with difficulties, they may feel disappointed and defeated, leading to diminished hope.

**Interest.** Interest is an intense desire or curiosity about a particular activity, topic, or goal. Stakeholder interest is the motivation to have a better understanding of something. Individuals who are interested in something tend to experience a positive emotional state that can stimulate their motivation and actions (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). Interest engages an individual’s cognition, emotions, and motivations, often accompanied by a desire to learn, explore, and engage (Mou & Lin, 2014). The behaviour of stakeholders who request information from the project is prompted by the emotion of being interested in the project, and they ask the project about the location and opening hours of the airport.

WW9515: “Will a future Sydney metro station be located underground under the new airport?” (refer to Table 4-23).

RB973: “When will the winning design be announced?” (refer to Table 4-23).

This indicates that stakeholders are interested in the project but does not indicate whether they will take action in engaging with the project team’s activities. Therefore, interest also belongs to a low-energy level of emotion (Boyns & Luery, 2015). The energy level that interest

generates is low, and the possibility among such stakeholders of taking action is limited. Interest is often subjective to stakeholders, so its influence is limited by the stakeholder's background and preference (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). Stakeholder activities typically involve multiple stakeholders with different interests and objectives (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Interest alone cannot support the actions of stakeholders as a single driving force; it needs the support of other emotions.

#### 5.4.2.3 Positive Polarity — Medium Energy

The only emotions in this category are joy and happiness, the most common and numerous emotions in positive polarity. Joy and happiness clearly belong to positive emotions, but their emotional energy is not enough to drive them to produce more practical stakeholder engagement behaviours.

**Joy and Happiness.** Joy is a strong positive emotion, often associated with pleasure and satisfaction from a particular event or experience. When stakeholders experience joy, they tend to feel excited, satisfied and pleasant, and this emotion is often accompanied by smiles, laughter, or other expressions of pleasure (Jasper, 1998; Mou & Lin, 2014).

Happiness is a more persistent and holistic emotional state that manifests itself as overall satisfaction and happiness with life. Happiness is not only determined by specific events or experiences but is related to a stakeholder's values, goals, and life satisfaction. Happiness usually encompasses a positive attitude towards life, inner satisfaction, and peace of mind (Soussan & Trovati, 2020).

The essence of both of these emotion words is that stakeholders feel happy. This is the most common emotion among the positive emotions of the stakeholders, and the positive emotions most expressed by stakeholders include joy and happiness. The happiness of stakeholders can be triggered by any of the topics mentioned by the project team, so this is also the emotion that covers the broadest category of stakeholder topics.

There are various ways for stakeholders to express joy and happiness online. They can use emojis, simple words, slang, internet expressions, or memes to express their happy emotions directly. For example:

CS8X9: “WSIA been in and out of the first stage of lend lease sites, looking good. 👍”  
(refer to Table 4-22).

GJ938: “Congratulations to SWZ on naming our new airport and what an appropriate name as well, looking forward to seeing a world class airport becoming developed. ❤️  
✈️❤️✈️” (refer to Table 4-22).

Joy and happiness have robust interactivity and reflect the positive tendency of stakeholders to engage in discussions online, so they are considered to contain medium energy levels (Boyns & Luery, 2015). When stakeholders experience joy and happiness, they are often more willing to invest time, energy, and resources in pursuing goals or engaging in social activities because they can further enhance their joy and happiness by doing so (Boyns & Luery, 2015). This positive emotional state can motivate stakeholders to be more creative and motivated to solve problems, thus driving the development and progress of stakeholder activities (Jasper, 1998). When stakeholders feel joy and happiness, they are often more willing to support, cooperate, and share resources to achieve common goals and interests (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). When stakeholders can achieve their goals and gain satisfaction from this, they tend to feel happiness and fulfilment, further pushing them to engage actively and support project-related activities.

#### 5.4.2.4 Positive Polarity — High Energy

Positive emotions at high energy levels include enthusiasm, pride, and respect. This high energy level is reflected in the stakeholders’ actions that emotions can trigger.

**Enthusiasm.** The enthusiasm of stakeholders may directly lead them to carry out certain actual social activities. Enthusiasm is a positive emotional state that is contagious and motivating and can trigger positive emotions and actions among stakeholders. When stakeholders show enthusiasm, their emotions usually have high positivity, motivation, and optimism, which can be transmitted to other stakeholders, thus creating an emotional resonance (Jasper, 1998).

Enthusiastic emotions in this study emerged when stakeholders expressed strong expectations for the project and their desire to engage in the project's offline activities. For example:

ES8X6: "WSIA that's great! You'll be able to handle diversions from Sydney Airport if they haven't upgraded theirs by then. 😊" (refer to Table 4-24).

EH1Y51: "I have entered!! What a wonderful Giveaway, fingers crossed I win my Dream Holiday to Portugal!! I have been waiting to visit for a long time.

🙏 🙏 🙏 ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ 😄 😄 😄" (refer to Table 4-24).

Enthusiasm is vital in driving social activity and motivating stakeholders to engage in project activities. When enthusiastic about the project, stakeholders are more likely to invest time, energy, and resources in engaging with it (Boyns & Luery, 2015; Jasper, 1998). Enthusiasm can also stimulate creativity and innovation because, in a positive emotional state, stakeholders are more willing to accept new ideas and approaches from the project (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). Stakeholders with enthusiastic emotions expressed more intention or were already engaged in project activities, directly reflecting the social drive of high emotional energy.

**Pride and Respect.** Pride is a positive emotional state usually derived from the stakeholders' satisfaction with their own or others' achievements, qualities, or behaviours. It involves the affirmation of self-worth and increased self-confidence. When a stakeholder feels proud, they experience a euphemistic emotion that can inspire positive behaviours and attitudes and contribute to their self-esteem and confidence (Jasper, 1998).

Respect is a kind of recognition and courtesy based on the value, rights, and dignity of others, reflecting the respect and courtesy of a stakeholder for others and the importance attached to their views, feelings, and rights. Respect is usually based on reciprocity, fairness, and respect for the boundaries of others, and it helps promote good interpersonal relationships and social interactions (Jasper, 1998).

In this study, stakeholders express respect and pride for the efforts and work of the project team, and they may choose to stand up for the stakeholders and organisations they respect when other online stakeholders denigrate them. For example:

TM058: “Great work, team WSIA” (refer to Table 4-26).

TM1342: “BP1342 on the job one week, already smashing records 🏆🏆” (refer to Table 4-26).

Pride and respect motivate stakeholders to act. This is especially clear when stakeholders consider themselves relevant to the project’s success. Stakeholders try to maintain or enhance this pride and respect to engage more actively in relevant activities (Boyns & Luery, 2015; Mohammad & Turney, 2013). In addition, pride and respect can help stakeholders build self-esteem. Through engagement and contribution, stakeholders can experience a sense of achievement in the activities, thus building stronger self-esteem and self-confidence, which further drives their positive actions (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Stakeholders who feel pride and respect may take action to help the project communicate with other stakeholders and maintain the project’s position and reputation in the online stakeholder dialogue, which reflects the way these two emotions drive people to take practical actions in the online stakeholder dialogue.

#### 5.4.2.5 Negative Polarity — Low Energy

There are five emotion categories from Chapter 4 that are allocated to “negative polarity — low energy”. These are associated and classified as: “compassion, sympathy and pity”, “complaint”, “pessimism”, “request”, and “worry”. These low-energy emotions are negative, and may also generate other kinds of low-energy emotions that are less likely to drive stakeholders to take action.

**Compassion, Sympathy, and Pity.** Compassion is a deeply emotional experience that involves understanding and empathy for the plight or pain of others. It manifests itself not only as an emotional concern for others but also as a desire to help and support them (Jasper, 1998; Kemper, 1993). Sympathy and pity are similar to compassion but tend to manifest more as empathy for the suffering of others. It is usually a type of emotional resonance, in that stakeholders understand and feel the struggles of others through their own emotional experiences. Sympathy may not necessarily be accompanied by positive action (Jasper, 1998; Kemper, 1993). The stakeholders in this study express compassion, sympathy, and pity for the stakeholder groups whose values are being damaged by the project:

MZ9X67: “All of this area will suffer ... let’s hope that Warragamba dam can SAVE Penrith/Mulgoa and Lower Blue Mountains. Surely our governments would not allow flight PATHS over the bulk of Sydney’s water supply” (refer to Table 4-29).

However, this emotion category also reflects the inability of ordinary citizens to do anything about the situation. The emotions may stimulate stakeholder attention and support for other stakeholders but are not usually accompanied by action (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Although compassion and pity can lead to momentary empathy and care, they are often insufficient to drive long-term active engagement or effective action. In addition, these emotions can lead to a negative judgment of stakeholders or a tendency to see them as weak rather than engendering respect and cooperation. To drive stakeholder activities, in addition to compassion, pity, and empathy, it is necessary to have positive action-orientated emotions that stimulate practical action and engagement to promote social change and development (Mohammad & Turney, 2013).

**Complaint.** Complaining expresses dissatisfaction or a feeling of unpleasantness, usually involving criticism or blame for a situation, action, or outcome. Complaints may stem from a stakeholder’s dissatisfaction with the current situation, dissatisfaction with the behaviour of others, or dissatisfaction with their own situation. In the theory of emotional energy, complaints are usually regarded as a negative way of expressing emotions, which may trigger negative emotions and affect the motivation and effect of social activities (Soussan & Trovati, 2020).

Complaining can have adverse effects. Excessive complaining can lead to the spread of negative feelings and reduce stakeholders’ motivation to engage with the project. In addition, excessive complaining may generate negative energy that disrupts the process of exploring and implementing positive solutions (Boyns & Luery, 2015). When stakeholders express complaints, they point out where a certain dissatisfaction or problem exists, thus triggering attention and discussion in that area (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). When the stakeholders in this study express the emotion of complaint, the emotion is often closely related to the actual topic of complaint, which provides the project with actual problems to be solved. For example:

GK8Y15: “I drive through that site a lot of times. I now see the trees being pushed down etc. It looks like it’s being all mulched up into piles. I personally feel it’s a BIG waste of firewood that can be easily chopped up and offered for a small cost to the community/public for warmth for winters to come and will bring some money back in to cover the cost of doing that process” (refer to Table 4-30).

At the same time, they can also cause other stakeholders with the same emotions to continue to discuss the problem, which may eventually lead to dissatisfaction with the project team. This can bring about more uncertainty in the project’s stakeholder dialogue, and the negative emotions of stakeholders can be intensified due to extensive discussion, which further leads to the escalation of negative emotional energy in the group (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Therefore, although the emotion of the complaint itself has low emotional energy, its negative emotional energy can increase through the social interaction of emotions and evolve into higher energy emotions.

**Pessimism.** Pessimism is a negative emotional state that typically involves pessimistic expectations about the future and a negative view of problems. When stakeholders feel pessimistic, they may feel disappointed, depressed, or hopeless about the prospects of the project (Soussan & Trovati, 2020). Pessimism may stem from the harmful effects of past experiences, adverse expectations of what may happen in the future, or dissatisfaction or unease with the current situation (Brummette & Fussell Sisco, 2015). In this study, the pessimistic stakeholders expressed a lack of interest in the project and the government’s decisions, and they passively accepted what they saw as the disastrous consequences brought by these decisions.

TS8X9: “Badgerys Creek has been talked about by various governments for 40 years. It will be 40 more before it is finished, if ever. Give it up and stop wasting taxpayer money” (refer to Table 4-33).

Pessimism tends to weaken the motivation of stakeholders to engage in activities. When stakeholders are pessimistic about projects, they may feel disappointed, helpless, or hopeless, and thus have reduced willingness to engage in project activities (Boyns & Luery, 2015).

Therefore, this emotion is allocated to a low energy level, with fewer online or offline activities caused by this emotion.

**Request.** Emotional energy theory focuses on the influence of emotions on behaviour and social interactions. A request expresses a wish, need, or expectation, often involving particular requests or suggestions made to others (Soussan & Trovati, 2020). A request is a way of expressing a need or a wish. When concerned or dissatisfied, stakeholders can ask to solve problems or meet their needs. However, this may trigger anger or dissatisfaction if the request is rejected or ignored. The requests of the stakeholders in this study contain specific requirements. For example:

GK034: “WSIA, I’m an airline pilot, so can you please advise what magical system you’ll be using to minimise delays at an airport using 1 runway? 😞 Aircraft still have wake turbulence separation standards. Will there be a curfew? 😞” (refer to Table 4-37).

Stakeholders use a formal tone or strong language to challenge the authority of the project team to obtain the information they need. The success of a request often depends on the willingness and ability of the recipient to grant it, which means that the request may not have the desired effect (Soussan & Trovati, 2020). In most cases, when the answer from the project team leaves the stakeholders dissatisfied, the stakeholders will have negative emotions. As a result, the request has a negative polarity and is endowed with a low energy level.

**Worry.** Worry is a negative emotional state that typically engages anxiety and worry about adverse or unpleasant events or outcomes that may occur in the future (Bericat, 2016). Stakeholders’ worry may arise from fear of the unknown, anticipation of possible adverse effects, or doubts about their own abilities or resources. When stakeholders feel worried, they tend to experience emotional insecurity (Bericat, 2016; Dufour et al., 2019; Roseman, 1984). The stakeholders in this study express their worries about the project’s decision-making and the possibility of an adverse event. Excessive worry can have a negative impact. Worry tends to weaken the motivation of stakeholders to engage in activities.

EE9X68: “I live in the Blue Mountains. Will my property value decrease as a result of this proposed airport and the unknown flight paths?” (refer to Table 4-35).

When stakeholders worry excessively about possible risks and challenges, they may feel frustrated, powerless, or do nothing, thus reducing their willingness to engage in project activities (Boyns & Luery, 2015). In addition, worry can make stakeholders and the community more inclined to take conservative, evasive, or harmful actions rather than actively exploring and implementing solutions (Boyns & Luery, 2015; Mohammad & Turney, 2013). However, worry can equally motivate stakeholders to take care and precautions in response to possible adverse events or outcomes and may motivate stakeholders to pay more attention to possible risks and challenges, thus prompting them to make plans and take action to mitigate potential negative impacts (Boyns & Luery, 2015; Jasper, 1998). As this emotion has two opposite potential influences on stakeholder actions, worry is categorised as low energy but having a high potential to develop into an emotion with a higher level of energy.

#### 5.4.2.6 Negative Polarity — Medium Energy

“Contempt”, “cynicism”, and “paranoia and suspicion” are categorised into the negative polarity with medium energy square. The emotions in this square can be identified as negative, and their energy level is higher. They may lead stakeholders to take hostile action and influence more stakeholders to gain negative emotions.

**Contempt.** Contempt is a negative emotional state manifesting as disdain or disrespect for other stakeholders or events. Stakeholders may act arrogantly, sarcastically, or apathetically when they feel contempt (Mou & Lin, 2014). Contempt often stems from dissatisfaction with others’ abilities, qualities, or actions and disrespect for their authority or status (Soussan & Trovati, 2020). The stakeholders in this study expressed contempt for the project team’s abilities, and showed their dissatisfaction with the efficiency and quality of project implementation presented by the project. For example:

SS021: “You have the land. You have the population. You should have done 4 lanes each way. It doesn’t take a genius to think of it” (refer to Table 4-31).

When stakeholders show contempt, they may lose the trust and respect of others, leading to the deterioration of cooperative relationships, which affects the coordination and execution of stakeholder dialogue activities (Dufour et al., 2019). According to Izard (1977), contempt is the

coldest of the three emotions (anger, disgust, and contempt) in the hostile triad. It does not affect the intention to attack or retreat (Haidt, 2003). Therefore, the emotional energy of contempt is categorised as moderate.

**Cynicism.** Cynicism is a negative emotional state characterised by scepticism or distrust about society, human behaviour, or values (Jasper, 1998). Cynicism tends to involve negative, apathetic, or distrustful attitudes, and cynics may perceive social or human behaviour as motivated by selfishness or hypocrisy. Cynicism often stems from disappointment in social reality, distrust of authority, or suspicion of people's values (Jasper, 1998). Cynicism is the emotion that stakeholders in this study express when faced with disappointing project decisions and outcomes, and the combination of such emotions and the creative self-expression of stakeholders resonates with other stakeholders. For example:

GG012: "Can't wait for the temperature & pollution to increase in the western suburbs soup bowl ... Oh, & the 24/7 jet engine noise will come in handy when I forget to set my alarm at 3am" (refer to Table 4-32).

Cynicism can undermine the motivation of stakeholders. They may lose interest in engaging in social activities or pursuing common goals because they believe any such effort is futile or doomed to failure (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Stakeholders with cynical emotions often lack trust in and respect for the project, leading to disharmony and fragmentation in activities (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). At the same time, cynicism can spread negative energy and inhibit the innovation and enthusiasm of stakeholders (Boyns & Luery, 2015). Cynicism inhibits stakeholders from taking positive action, and comments containing cynicism can spread negative emotions widely and affect other stakeholders. Based on the influence on the community, this emotion is classified as medium energy.

**Paranoia and Suspicion.** Paranoia is thus a kind of extreme suspicion and distrust, manifesting as excessive worry about others. Paranoid stakeholders may believe that the authorities are treating them dishonestly or intents to harm them. This emotion is often accompanied by extreme tension, vigilance towards interpersonal relationships, and excessive worry about possible dangers or threats (Jasper, 1998).

Suspicion is a kind of distrust or doubt about the actions or motives of others, which is manifested as doubt or questions about the intentions of others. Suspicion may come from ignorance of others' true intentions or distrust based on others' past behaviours. Differing from paranoia, suspicion is more reasonable, focusing on situation-specific behaviours (Jasper, 1998).

In this study, stakeholders feel paranoia and suspicion when viewing the information provided by the project, and they feel a high level of distrust in the project. Even when the project and other stakeholders provide explanations and clarifications for their suspicions, they do not change their suspicious outlook. For example:

DV1542: "WSIA oh come on. You don't design a damned airport worth billions of dollars without knowing what the flight paths are! You lot have been hiding this information from the public for years and I reckon your 'Consultation' will be 'take it or leave it'" (refer to Table 4-34).

Paranoia and suspicion often prevent cooperation and trust-building among stakeholders, because, when stakeholders have paranoid or sceptical emotions, they may develop a distrust of the intentions of others, leading to the breakdown of cooperative relationships (Jasper, 1998). When stakeholders feel paranoia or suspicion, they may be reluctant to share information, express opinions, or accept any new options (Mohammad & Turney, 2013), leading to unnecessary conflicts and disputes (Jasper, 1998). Paranoia and suspicion felt by stakeholders are negative phenomena in the online community, and increase the possibility for conflict. Based on this, paranoia and suspicion are classified as medium energy.

#### 5.4.2.7 Negative Polarity — High Energy

Negative emotions with high energy levels can encourage stakeholders to generate group emotions and may jointly promote social activities, further hindering the project's progress. Therefore, the project needs to prioritise the negative emotions of stakeholders with high energy levels, and measures should be taken to alleviate these emotions when necessary. This category includes "anger" and "disgust and hatred".

**Anger.** Anger is a strong negative emotion that usually involves reactions to unfairness, dissatisfaction, or victimisation. Anger can be triggered by dissatisfaction with the actions or

situations of projects or damage to stakeholders' power or resources. In the theory of emotional energy, anger is considered an emotion that can be the driving force that motivates the actions and reactions of stakeholders (Bericat, 2016; Brummette & Fussell Sisco, 2015).

In this study, stakeholders show anger when the project does not adequately respond to or address their main concerns. The feelings of complaint and suspicion may turn into anger due to dissatisfaction with the attitude within, and content of, the responses received. Anger can motivate stakeholders to actively engage in social activities to promote change and achieve the common good.

GE1557: "Blue skies full of pollution from glorified buses with wings. ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Show us the flight paths! What are you hiding??" (refer to Table 4-28).

When stakeholders perceive injustice or have a grievance with a project, anger may become a driving force for action, justice, or solutions (Bericat, 2016; Schieman, 2006). In the face of injustice or dissatisfaction, anger may motivate stakeholders to pay more attention to the problem and devote more energy and resources to solving the problem or achieving the goal (Kemper, 1990), such as employing stakeholder influence strategies to prevent projects from being implemented. Anger may also facilitate communication and solidarity among stakeholders, which can be a shared emotional bond that motivates stakeholders to unite and work together to solve problems or fight for rights and interests (Dufour et al., 2019). The effect of anger on the social activities of stakeholders thus brings significant uncertainty and risk to the project. Therefore, the project needs to pay attention to the anger of stakeholders on social media, properly manage it, and alleviate it through communication.

**Disgust and Hatred.** Disgust is a strong negative emotion that usually involves a profound dislike or aversion to something or a situation. Such emotions may come from moral dissatisfaction with a specific behaviour, attitude, or opinion, or an aversion to anything inconsistent with stakeholder's values or preferences (Dufour et al., 2019; Izard, 1977).

Hatred is a form of extreme dissatisfaction and hostility towards others, often expressed in intense feelings of hostility or enmity. Hatred may arise from an extreme dislike of the actions or characteristics of others or from anger and resentment at the harm or injustice that people

have done to them or others. Hatred is often accompanied by a desire to cause damage to or destruction of the wishes of others (Dufour et al., 2019; Horberg et al., 2009).

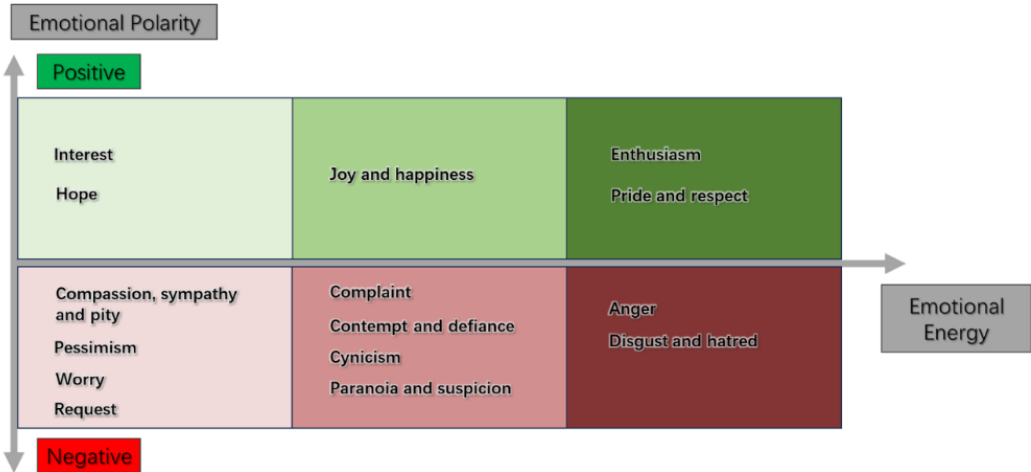
The examples of disgust and hatred identified in this study include strong personal views of stakeholders, whose words sometimes contain prejudice, discrimination and insults to others, which has the potential to lead to conflicts and attacks.

DF1X4: “Absolutely!! It’s a wasteland. Don’t go there without 50cal mounted on the roof of your armoured vehicle. Drive by shootings, road rage attacks probably being fuelled by the rage of living so close to your neighbour you can catch Covid from him in your own home. It’s a great place to go ANYWHERE from” (refer to Table 4-36).

This emotion not only harms the project activities but also damages the harmony among the stakeholder community. It may also lead to negative consequences, such as violent behaviour, conflict, and destruction. Therefore, the project needs to carefully handle and mitigate the emotions of disgust and hatred from stakeholders and protect stakeholders from such emotions.

Based on the above discussion, the sentiments embodied on social media by project stakeholders are summarised as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 5-5 Stakeholder Emotion Matrix on Social Media with Detailed Emotions**



# 5.5 Step Three: Respond to Stakeholders on Social Media to Enhance Engagement

Based on the two stakeholder engagement analysis models in step two, after the project has completed the analysis of the issues and emotions contained in stakeholders’ comments, they can respond in one of two ways: using response strategies for issues, or using response strategies for emotions (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Iftikhar et al., 2021). By applying these strategies, the project can enhance stakeholder engagement.

## 5.5.1 Stakeholder Response Strategies for Issues

Based on the information in Chapter 4, Figure 5-6 shows three main types of stakeholder response strategies for issues, each of them aiming to respond to stakeholders in a way that increases the stakeholder engagement level from dormant to active (see Figure 5-7).

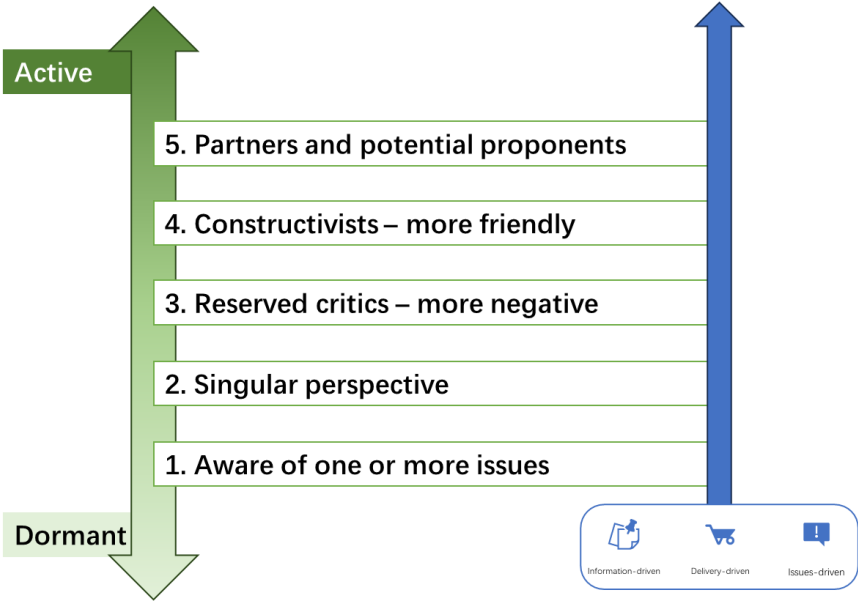
**Figure 5-6 Stakeholder Response Strategies for Issues**



Stakeholder response strategies for issues can be broadly classified into three categories, each reflecting a distinct approach to addressing stakeholder concerns and enhancing engagement. Information-driven strategies focus on improving transparency and communication by providing timely, accurate, and accessible information to stakeholders. Delivery-driven strategies emphasise responsiveness and adaptability in project execution, aiming to adjust plans or operations based on stakeholder feedback. Lastly, issue-driven strategies target specific

concerns raised by stakeholders, offering tailored solutions or mitigation measures to address critical issues directly. Together, these strategies form a comprehensive framework for managing stakeholder relationships and ensuring project alignment with community expectations.

**Figure 5-7** Using Stakeholder Response Strategies for Issues with Categorical Groups



5.5.1.1 Information-driven Strategies

As seen in Chapter 4, information-driven strategies include providing information, correcting rumours and confirming information provided by stakeholders. The information in a response is usually basic information about the project, which published project or government reports can generally verify. For example:

CH8X26: “When will it be completed?” (refer to Table 4-39).

WSIA: “Hi CH8X26, the first services will begin in 2026” (refer to Table 4-39).

AS1515: “Sad to see Kingsford Smith Airport shutting down for good!” (refer to Table 4-40).

WSIA: “Hey AS1515. No, we will not be replacing Sydney Airport. We are excited that as Sydney’s new airport ... airlines and passengers will have a choice about which airport they want to use” (refer to Table 4-40).

BH9Y23: “CJ9Y23 No new motorway from M7 being built and apparently new metro rail line linking to western rail line” (refer to Table 4-41).

WSIA: “That’s right, BH9Y23. The new motorway between the M7 at Cecil Hills and The Northern Rd is called the M12 and the metro line is called the Sydney Metro Greater West. Both of them enter the airport around this part shown in the photo. Both of them enter the airport around this part shown in the photo” (refer to Table 4-41).

In this study, information-driven strategies align with several elements from Dineva et al.’s (2020) consumer responses to conflict-management strategies, including providing additional information about an issue, further clarification about an issue causing the conflict, thanking cause supporters, and agreeing with cause supporters. However, unlike Dineva et al.’s (2020) framework, which focuses on responses after a conflict arises, this study emphasises proactive communication. In the context of social media, where dialogue between the project and online stakeholders is limited to text, the timing of responses can be such that they occur before conflict emerges, with the aim of preventing or mitigating potential tensions in advance.

For stakeholders who ask basic questions—such as ones about project timelines or locations—providing clear and timely information enhances transparency and builds trust (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Dineva et al., 2020). This openness reduces speculation and misunderstanding, encourages cooperation, and strengthens stakeholder relationships (Pinto et al., 2009). Moreover, proactively addressing misinformation or rumours—such as concerns about airport closures—helps maintain the project’s credibility and stakeholder confidence (Brummette & Fussell Sisco, 2015; Z. Chen et al., 2017). Timely corrections not only prevent negative emotions but also demonstrate the project’s commitment to transparency and open dialogue (Aksoy et al., 2022). Recognising stakeholder contributions, such as sharing information or answering questions, further reinforces engagement. When stakeholders feel valued, they are

more likely to remain loyal and actively participate in project discussions and decisions (Kujala & Sachs, 2019; Valenzuela, 2013; Weitzner & Deutsch, 2015).

#### 5.5.1.2 Delivery-driven Strategies

Delivery-driven strategies include describing and explaining the team's work, showing interest in stakeholders' suggestions, and explaining the techniques airport planning uses. Delivery-driven strategies consider the current delivery stage and the future product. The responses revolve around the details of the final deliverable:

TS8X9: "Badgerys Creek has been talked about by various governments for 40 years. It will be 40 more before it is finished if ever. Give it up and stop wasting taxpayer money. 🤦" (refer to Table 4-42).

WSIA: "TS8X9, you're right — it's been talked about for so long, but now it's happening - construction started last month and everything is on track for a 2026 opening" (refer to Table 4-42).

RL913: "Or maybe if we sometimes have shuttle buses available to and from the CBD" (refer to Table 4-43).

WSIA: "That's a good idea, RL913. We'll look into it" (refer to Table 4-43).

AH8X5: "Will this runway be long enough for future aircraft that will be able to fly Sydney–London/Sydney–New York, considering the extra fuel that will be needed to be carried??" (refer to Table 4-44).

WSIA: Hi AH8X5, it will be long enough for ultra long-range aircraft. In fact, it'll be longer than Perth's runway, which caters for the direct flight to London today" (refer to Table 4-44).

The delivery-driven strategies in this study align with several approaches from Coombs's (2006) crisis response strategies and Dineva et al.'s (2020) consumer responses to conflict-

management strategies, including excusing and justifying an issue (Coombs, 2006), explaining an issue to conflicting parties, and making an appeal for action (Dineva et al., 2020). For example, the project responds to stakeholder doubts about the efficacy of team activities by explaining and justifying the work already completed. For issues that can be addressed with evidence—such as the use of verified new technologies—the project can directly clarify its approach to stakeholders. Additionally, expressing a clear intention to take action helps strengthen stakeholder dialogue and encourages deeper online engagement. When such intentions are followed by concrete actions, they demonstrate the project’s respect for stakeholder input and help build direct trust between the project and its stakeholders.

Delivery-driven strategies are essential for building trust, credibility, and engagement with stakeholders in social media environments. Transparently describing the project team’s efforts, supported by evidence such as documents, photographs, or video projects, can demonstrate real progress and competence (Dineva et al., 2020). These strategies help reduce uncertainty (Z. Chen et al., 2017), improve the project’s reputation (Ninan, Clegg, & Mahalingam, 2019; Zucker, 1986), and increase stakeholder confidence and willingness to cooperate. When stakeholders see that their concerns are acknowledged and addressed, they are more likely to remain patient and supportive (Z. Chen et al., 2017), giving the project time to implement solutions and avoiding negative fallout (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009). Additionally, explaining the use of new technologies helps stakeholders understand the value and impact of these technologies (Kujala & Sachs, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023). This not only addresses technical concerns—such as weather-related operational challenges—but also encourages informed dialogue among stakeholders, including those with relevant expertise. As a result, stakeholders may shift from scepticism to active support, contributing to a more informed and collaborative online environment. Finally, expressing interest in stakeholder suggestions signals respect and responsiveness. It shows that the project values stakeholder input and is open to improvement (Cennamo et al., 2012), which strengthens long-term relationships and promotes deeper engagement (Dineva et al., 2020).

### 5.5.1.3 Issue-driven Strategies

Issue-driven strategies include transferring responsibility and showing an understanding of stakeholders' grievances. These two issue-driven strategies are focused on issues that are difficult to solve through online stakeholder engagement. Critical issues in projects may require long-term offline negotiation between projects and stakeholders, so these strategies aim to reduce the online conflict that may be caused by the issues and to buy time for projects to develop a solution. For example:

SC9611: "Has the airspace model been released as yet? I'm struggling to understand how this will be such an efficient airport given the runway configuration and proximity to Mascot, Bankstown and Camden airports?" (refer to Table 4-45).

WSIA: "Hi SC9611, the airspace and flight path design is still under development and is being led by the Australian Government. You can get more information on their website" (refer to Table 4-45).

SH9612: "WSIA why does the obstacle surface run to 5nm to the side of the runways? You are not for a moment considering providing a circling approach??" (refer to Table 4-45).

DW9Z32: "When will you change opening hours so that us locals that work can view the complex? We are the most affected! And this is my third request" (refer to Table 4-46).

WSIA: "Hi DW9Z32, I'm sorry that I am unable to give you an answer as to when, but I can assure you we are working on it. Thank you for your patience in the meantime" (refer to Table 4-46).

Issue-driven strategies are commonly found in existing stakeholder response frameworks, including customer response strategies (Einwiller & Steilen, 2015), response strategies to stakeholder pressures (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009), and response strategies to external stakeholders (Nguyen et al., 2023). Among these, transferring responsibility aligns with

defensive response strategies (Einwiller & Steilen, 2015) and the avoidance strategy (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009), while showing an understanding of stakeholders' grievances reflects a negotiating approach (Nguyen et al., 2023). For complex and unresolved issues or conflicts, avoidance and responsibility-shifting are relatively passive strategies; attempting to communicate and show understanding offers a more constructive path forward, increasing the likelihood of continued stakeholder dialogue under current constraints.

The strategy of shifting responsibility may be employed to avoid legal, financial, or reputational risks (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) or to preserve stakeholder relationships by avoiding direct confrontation (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009). However, while shifting responsibility may protect the project in the short term, it can also undermine stakeholder trust and reduce engagement. Stakeholders may perceive it as avoidance or deflection, leading to disappointment, frustration, and opposition to the project. For example, in this study, when the project uses this strategy to respond to concerns about flight paths, some stakeholders express dissatisfaction and disengage from further dialogue.

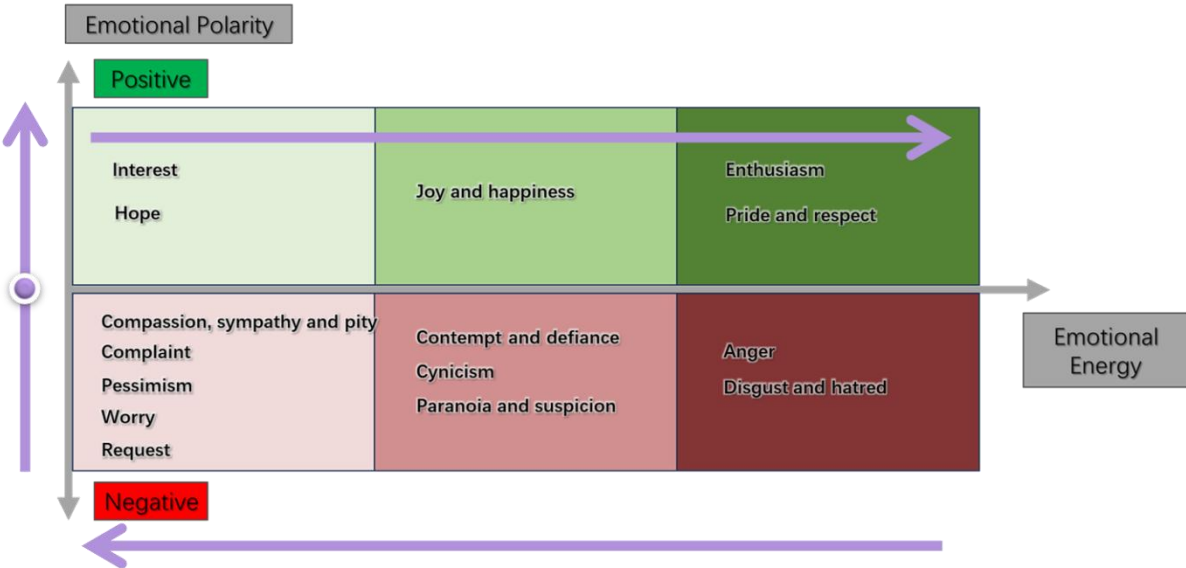
In contrast, showing an understanding of stakeholders' grievances represents a more constructive and empathetic approach. By acknowledging concerns and inviting dialogue, the project team signals a willingness to collaborate and seek solutions (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Dineva et al., 2020). This can ease tensions, foster mutual understanding, and create space for negotiation. When stakeholders feel heard and respected, they are more likely to remain engaged and open to compromise, giving the project time and opportunity to address the issue collaboratively.

#### *5.5.2 Stakeholder Response Strategies for Emotions*

Sustaining the energy of positive emotions is crucial in project management, especially in communication and interaction with stakeholders; Choi and Lin (2009) found a significant negative correlation between alertness, anger, and organisational reputation. Sloan and Oliver (2013) stated that adaptive handling of critical issues can transform negative emotions into positive emotions. By maintaining positive emotions and effective communication, the willingness and ability of stakeholders to cooperate can be enhanced, making them more willing to support the project and work with the team, thus increasing the likelihood of project success.

Positive emotions help build a relationship of trust, making stakeholders more willing to believe in the capabilities and commitment of the project team and, thus, more likely to engage actively with the project (Bericat, 2016). By maintaining positive interactions and emotions with stakeholders, project teams can build a good reputation, enhance the image and credibility of the organisation, and obtain valuable feedback and support from stakeholders. Figure 5-8 shows the overall aims and influencing trend of stakeholder response strategies for emotions.

**Figure 5-8** *The Primary Influence Trend of Stakeholder Response Strategy for Emotions*



The trend of stakeholder response strategies for emotions is shown in Figure 5-8. The strategies to gain the highest positive emotional energy can only follow the following path: “negative polarity — high energy” to “negative polarity — low energy”, then “negative polarity — low energy” to “positive polarity — low energy”, and finally “positive polarity — low energy” to “positive polarity — high energy”. If a project tries to directly turn an emotion that is “negative polarity — high energy” to “positive polarity — high energy”, the attempt is likely to end in failure.

All the response strategies have one ultimate aim: to turn stakeholders’ emotions into ones with positive polarity and a higher level of energy. Accordingly, three main response types are used

to target the stakeholders' emotional energy level: maintaining positive energy, amplifying positive energy, and maintaining and reducing negative energy.

AL9813: "Looks awesome. Whereabouts on the photo will the new entry be to the airport?" (refer to Table 4-48).

WSIA: "Hi AL9813, it is around where Elizabeth Drive and Badgerys Creek Road meet today. The entrance will go under Elizabeth Drive and be wide enough for a link to the new toll-free M12 and also have the new metro line running next to it" (refer to Table 4-48).

GS916: "WSIA Grand ideas I hope this is a winner and not another 'We should have done this and that' project! Let's be ahead on this one with no regrets later please!!!" (refer to Table 4-48).

GH9744: "Noice, it looks like a David Jones clothing shop 😊" (refer to Table 4-49).

WSIA: "Only better!" (refer to Table 4-49).

GH9744: "WSIA there's no other store like David Jones 😊" (refer to Table 4-49).

GG9634: "Better line haul connectivity for air freight. Why would WS residents' priority be with better connection to an airport that they may use once a year?" (refer to Table 4-50).

WSIA: "Hi GG9634, you're quite right, it will help with freight connectivity, but there are many thousands of drivers who use the Northern Road between Campbelltown and Penrith every day who will benefit from the upgrade" (refer to Table 4-50).

For the other dimension of the emotion matrix, the project organisation also uses the strategy of directly changing emotional polarity. Usually, this strategy is used to convert non-positive emotions into positive emotions by using positive language. It includes trying to turn negative or neutral emotions into positive emotions.

GH9921: “They’re working too slow 😞” (refer to Table 4-51).

WSIA: “It was built in two minutes! I think that’s pretty quick 😊” (refer to Table 4-51).

In the context of exploring emotional energy response strategies for online stakeholders, the data in this study indicates that the emotional coping strategies proposed by Teoh et al. (2019) are partially applicable. Unlike their research, which mainly focuses on emotional response strategies within project teams, this study focuses on strategies that project teams can adopt when responding to stakeholder emotions. The methods outlined in this chapter, including empathy, diversion of attention, and deflection of attention, play a key role in managing stakeholders’ emotional energy during interactions.

When engaging with online stakeholders, the use of empathy is particularly important. Empathy is like a bridge that enhances the connection and trust between the project team and stakeholders, which is crucial for effective communication in media-related contexts (Ndone, 2025; Ridheta Citrawijaya et al., 2024). Research shows that emotional empathy can promote emotional connection, leading to forgiveness and positive engagement, thereby reducing potential backlash when responding to stakeholders (Ndone, 2025). This principle is not limited to project teams; it is widely applied across various industries. The role of empathy in health communication proves this point—it is essential for maintaining public credibility and trust (Ridheta Citrawijaya et al., 2024). Strategically integrating empathy into response measures fundamentally enhances stakeholders’ perceptions of the organisation. Studies confirm that empathy has a positive impact on an organisation’s reputation (Ndone, 2025).

In addition, diversion and deflection are effective methods for regulating emotional energy. These strategies help shift attention away from negative emotions, thereby easing the tension in discussions. These techniques are crucial for creating an environment where stakeholders feel heard but are not overwhelmed by negative emotions (Ndone, 2025). Empirical studies show that these strategies can stimulate positive emotional energy by shifting the focus of dialogue, promoting more constructive interaction (Ndone, 2025; Steele & Blau, 2023). During times of crisis, combining clear communication with these emotion response strategies can lead

to better outcomes, enhance stakeholder trust, and reduce negative perceptions (Adigwe et al., 2024).

Applying these emotion response strategies not only helps alleviate immediate tension but also contributes to building long-term relationships with stakeholders. Research emphasises that understanding and addressing stakeholder emotions is essential for effective and sustained stakeholder engagement (Adigwe et al., 2024; Ndone, 2025). Therefore, the combination of empathetic communication and strategic emotion management forms the cornerstone of successful interaction between project teams and stakeholders, especially in challenging environments.

## **5.6 Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model Establishment**

Based on the online stakeholder dialogue model's three main steps, this section combines stakeholder engagement theory and establishes a social media stakeholder dialogue model.

### *5.6.1 Social Media Stakeholder Engagement Dimensions in Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model*

Based on R. Freeman et al.'s (2017) theory, the use of stakeholder dialogue to promote stakeholder engagement has four aspects: 1) examining stakeholder relationships, 2) communicating with stakeholders, 3) learning with and from stakeholders, and 4) integrative engagement of stakeholders (Kujala & Sachs, 2019; Sachs & Kujala, 2021). In this study, due to the limited access to the identities and relationships of stakeholders on social media, examining stakeholder relationships in the original theory is replaced by examining stakeholder issues, as shown in Figure 5-9. Thus, each dimension of the framework is adapted for the context of social media engagement.

**Figure 5-9 Stakeholder Engagement Dimensions on Social Media**

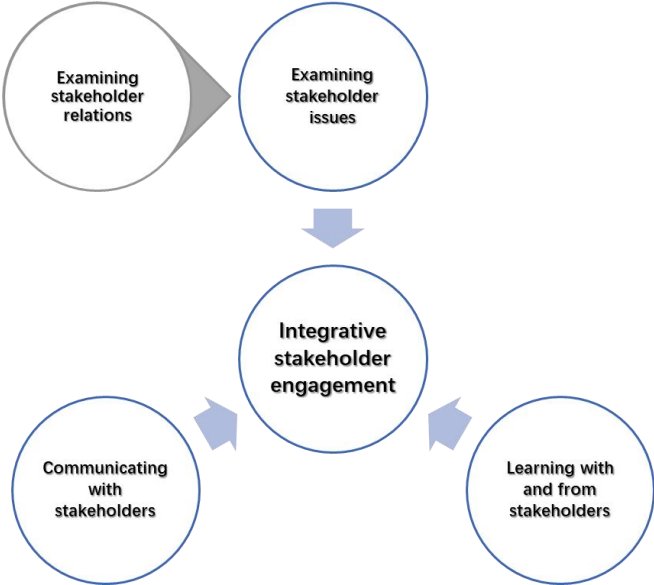
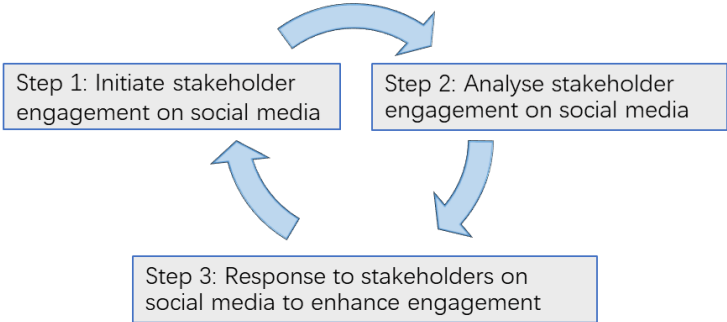


Figure 5-10 shows the three basic steps of the social media dialogue model, an agile process that includes initiating, analysing, and responding to stakeholders on social media to enhance engagement. Based on these stakeholder engagement dimensions on social media (refer to Figure 5-9), three dimensions (examining stakeholder issues, communicating with stakeholders, and learning with and from stakeholders) will be discussed for each step in the following session.

**Figure 5-10 The Basic Three Steps of the Social Media Dialogue Model**



5.6.1.1 Examining Stakeholder Issues

In the age of social media, stakeholder communication is undergoing a fundamental transformation that challenges traditional project management paradigms. Historically, projects have prioritised core stakeholders, aiming to maintain stable, goal-oriented relationships (Beringer et al., 2013; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017). This approach, while effective in

controlled environments, often overlooks the dynamic and decentralised nature of modern stakeholder ecosystems. With the rise of social media, stakeholder dialogue is no longer confined to formal channels or predefined groups. Instead, it is increasingly shaped by a broader and more vocal set of external actors who engage in real-time, issue-driven discourse. This shift marks a critical move away from the conventional focus on examining stakeholder relations towards a more nuanced emphasis on examining stakeholder issues. In this model, the locus of engagement moves from who the stakeholders are to what they care about, highlighting the growing importance of responsiveness to stakeholder concerns, values, and narratives.

R. Freeman et al. (2017) identify key elements of stakeholder value creation—including historical relationships, shared goals, trust, and learning—as foundational to traditional engagement. However, in the context of social media, these elements are being redefined. Trust, for instance, is now influenced by transparency and responsiveness in digital interactions rather than long-standing affiliations. Similarly, learning and information sharing are no longer top-down processes but are shaped by participatory and sometimes unpredictable online dialogues. Moreover, conducting stakeholder analysis in this environment presents significant methodological and practical challenges (K. Chung et al., 2023). These include the scarcity of verifiable stakeholder information, low or inconsistent engagement levels, and the difficulty of identifying stakeholder characteristics in anonymised or fragmented digital spaces. These limitations call for a more critical and adaptive approach to stakeholder analysis—one that acknowledges the fluidity of online engagement and the need for continuous recalibration of stakeholder strategies.

According to the data in Chapter 4, even without considering the complex and hard-to-verify background identities of stakeholders, shifting the analysis from stakeholder relationships to stakeholder issues can enhance and deepen the understanding of stakeholders. Social media platforms provide an open and dynamic communication space that allows stakeholders to express their views, needs and concerns more directly. Therefore, establishing stakeholder relationships is no longer based solely on history and interaction but focuses more on topics and problems of common interest. Because of social media's openness and interactivity, projects and researchers have the opportunity to understand stakeholders' perspectives and

needs more fully. Therefore, transforming the focus on stakeholder relationships to stakeholder issues and topics can help projects leverage social media platforms for stakeholder dialogue and engagement. As the stakeholder issues cannot reflect the identities of the online stakeholders, emotion analysis can be a supplemental dimension when examining the stakeholders' issues. Emotion plays a vital role in dialogue and debate (Forester, 2009), and the emotions related to the issues can provide a specific understanding of stakeholder issues, what issues cause specific types of emotions, and why stakeholders have those feelings.

This dimension is present in Step 2 of the social media dialogue model. The level of stakeholder engagement and attitudes showed great diversity in the data. The classification and analysis of online comments by stakeholders allowed this project to identify different categories of stakeholder engagement, ranging from dormant to active engagement (refer to 5.4.1). Using this type of classification can help project teams better understand the concerns and interests of stakeholders and respond to problems and solve challenges with suitable strategies.

Classifying online stakeholders into different levels of engagement can help projects to understand the cognitive and behavioural responses of various stakeholders. Categorising the comments of online stakeholders helps projects learn how much stakeholders know about the project and their intention to have a dialogue with the project, which also helps the project team identify and focus on stakeholders who have a high level of knowledge about the project and are willing to actively engage in the dialogue to communicate and learn more effectively.

At the same time, combined with the emotion matrix model, the project can further analyse the emotions expressed by stakeholders on social media (refer to Section 5.4.2). The expression of emotion not only reflects the attitude of stakeholders towards the project but can also influence their behaviour and level of engagement. By analysing the polarity and energy level of emotions, projects can gain a deeper understanding of stakeholder attitudes and emotional dynamics. This can provide more targeted communication and learning strategies for project teams and help them better understand stakeholders' emotional needs and develop strategies to enhance positive emotions and resolve negative emotions.

### 5.6.1.2 Communicating with Stakeholders

Using the new stakeholder dialogue model for social media, social media platforms can become more efficient in achieving the goals of project management and stakeholder engagement. R. Freeman et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of stakeholder dialogue in their study. They pointed out that stakeholder dialogue is not just communication but a structured, interactive and proactive process to develop sustainable strategies. Such dialogue not only helps teams to understand and respond to stakeholder concerns but also helps to co-create mutual understanding and value alignment. The attributes of social media thus have a positive impact on project delivery (Amade, 2017), especially in real-time online communication and information transmission. Social media provides new and innovative channels for project managers to offer project information to stakeholders and improves the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of communication. The main task of external communication is to establish integrity and long-term relationships (Argyris & Monu, 2015), and social media can help projects achieve long-term online stakeholder dialogues.

The real-time nature and diversity of social media platforms enable project management teams to interact with stakeholders promptly. The push strategy and pull strategy both focus on using social media to transmit information, but with less interaction (Meijer & Thaens, 2010). Network strategies and transactional strategies involve more interaction, which is essential for establishing an effective stakeholder dialogue (Meijer & Thaens, 2010). Through social media, project managers can instantly post project updates, answer stakeholders' questions, and collect feedback. This instant interaction not only improves the efficiency of communication but also enhances stakeholders' sense of engagement and satisfaction. In addition, the interactive and participatory nature of social media provides a broader platform for stakeholder dialogue (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2015). Stakeholders can engage in project management through comments, sharing, and discussion and offer constructive opinions and suggestions. This broad engagement not only helps the project management team better understand stakeholders' needs and expectations but can also provide a channel for stakeholders to voice their attitudes and opinions. By establishing two-way communication and interaction with stakeholders, the project management team can better engage with the complex and changeable

external stakeholder environment and adjust the project strategy and plan in good time. This dimension is illustrated throughout the whole process in the social media stakeholder dialogue model.

In Step 1, vivid and celebratory posts can strengthen stakeholder relationships (e.g. Denктаş-Şakar & Sürücü, 2020), as shown in this study. The type of message significantly impacts engagement, especially posts related to corporate social responsibility (Kucukusta et al., 2019). Seo et al. (2019) emphasised the importance of the ways in which stakeholders interact with brands, suggesting that compelling content on social media can attract more stakeholder engagement, thereby driving communication with stakeholders. An official social media account for the project and organisation is therefore essential. Projects can facilitate communication with stakeholders by frequently and actively posting on social media. This requires lively content, interaction with stakeholders, and an understanding of the different types of information and how stakeholders interact.

In Step 2, communicating with stakeholders is one key to an effective relationship between a project and its stakeholders. On social media, stakeholders can communicate through commenting on the project's posts. This communication method is real-time and interactive, and stakeholders can quickly respond to the dialogue initiated by the project to express their demands and views to the project and other stakeholders. The project can quickly acquire stakeholder concerns and feedback by sharing and analysing stakeholder comments.

In Step 3, projects continue the dialogue with stakeholders based on the results of examining the stakeholder issues in Step 2. The two types of response strategies can help the project to keep communication open with stakeholders, have a specific conversation with an individual stakeholder about their issues, and consider stakeholders' emotions during the communication process. In this step, the project team may reply to only one online stakeholder, but at the same time, they are also presenting the dialogue publicly and showing an openness to other online stakeholders joining the conversation, which can encourage their further engagement.

### 5.6.1.3 Learning with and from Stakeholders

A social media based model of stakeholder dialogue can facilitate the project's activities, advance learning with and from stakeholders, and further promote dialogue between the project and community stakeholders. R. Freeman et al. (2017) proposed the importance of stakeholder engagement and emphasised the value of learning with and from stakeholders.

Learning *with* stakeholders and learning *from* stakeholders are different. The project can learn with stakeholders on social media by sharing information and knowledge and holding conversations with them. In contrast, learning from stakeholders should be based on stakeholders' comments. Online stakeholder's criticism and feedback are opportunities to create value in this process. Stakeholder dialogue promotes new understandings and forms a new basis for thinking and acting (Burchell & Cook, 2006). The stakeholder dialogue helps the project expand and absorb stakeholders' individual knowledge about the project. In this process, the dialogue helps the project organisation find new ways of creating joint value, expanding the body of knowledge, and integrating different currents of stakeholder opinions into stakeholder engagement. This dimension also reflects in the whole dialogue model but has some differences at each step.

In Step 1, using social media tools in stakeholder interactions can facilitate deeper learning processes. This learning process includes learning *with* stakeholders. Projects can support learning processes with stakeholders by fostering two-way communication and encouraging comments from stakeholders. At this step, stakeholder still not input any information or knowledge, so the progress of learning from stakeholder cannot start.

In Step 2, stakeholder dialogue is a process through after the stakeholders provides comments after Step 1 By analysing the comments and feedback of stakeholders, the project team can understand and learn *from* the views and expectations of stakeholders to continuously improve the project implementation plan and decision-making process and enhance the success and sustainability of the project. However, this step only focuses on analysing stakeholders' comments. Without response actions, the learning with stakeholder process is not included.

In Step 3, the project can have a long conversation to learn *with* and *from* the stakeholders. By responding to the online stakeholders, projects can hold a more in-depth discussion with them. Projects have the chance to continue to learn with stakeholders about the project's aims and value, and further online stakeholders can join the conversation to generate organisational learning. During this process, the project can learn from stakeholders to gain knowledge and understandings that will benefit the project.

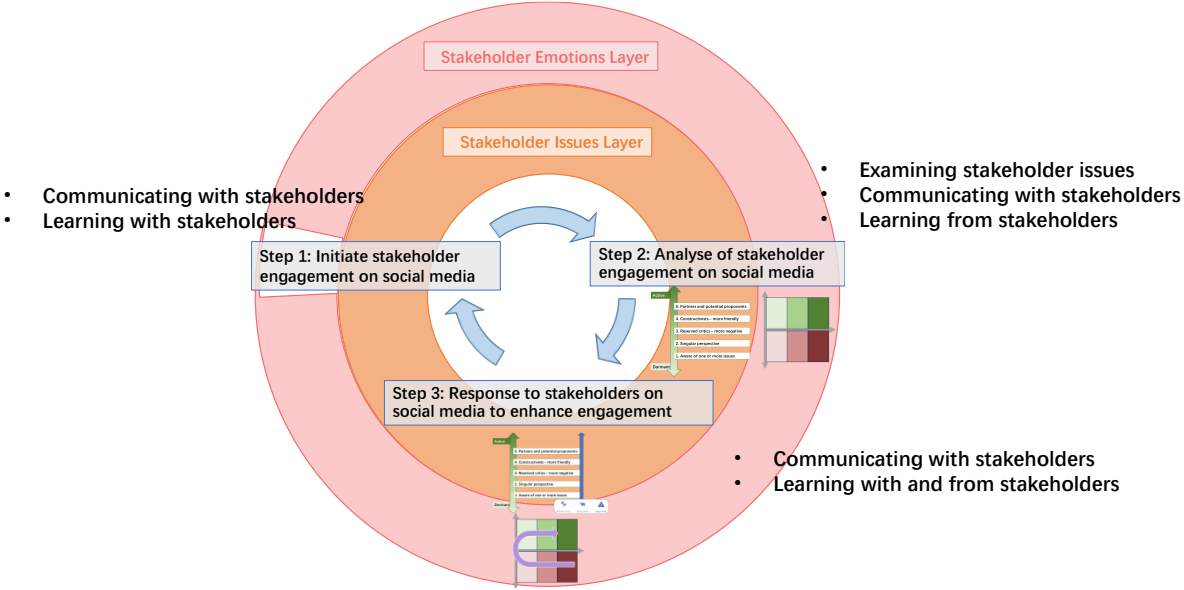
#### 5.6.1.4 Integrative Stakeholder Engagement

The above three elements of stakeholder dialogue all help the project to organise integrative stakeholder engagement, so the last dimension of stakeholder dialogue is also the primary goal of stakeholder dialogue (Johnston & Taylor, 2018; Kujala et al., 2022; Kujala & Sachs, 2019; Sachs & Kujala, 2022).

This study focuses on providing a stakeholder engagement framework for social media. The online stakeholder dialogue model illustrates the online stakeholder engagement activities by including the different engagement phases and the views of both the project and the stakeholders. If the project can successfully conduct online stakeholder dialogue, it can promote online stakeholder engagement activities and encourage online stakeholders to participate in offline engagement activities.

The final social media stakeholder dialogue model is presented in Figure 5-11. It combines the social media stakeholder engagement dimensions, the main steps of the online stakeholder dialogue model, and the tools and theories created for each step.

**Figure 5-11** *Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model*



**5.6.2** *General Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model*

The data in this study is from Facebook, and the social media communication methods outlined above are based on the functions that Facebook provides to users. To improve the generality of the model, this section will discuss the types and characteristics of different social media platforms and supplement the model of the previous section.

Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and other social media platforms are all essential in promoting effective communication and project delivery (Amade, 2017). These platforms provide features such as instant messaging and video chat, which facilitate real-time communication and stakeholder collaboration. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) created a classification of social media based on some functions of social media platforms that provide various forms of social interaction and information sharing, providing rich scenarios and tools for stakeholder dialogue.

Based on the work by Kietzmann et al. (2011), social media functional attributes can be divided into identity, dialogue, sharing, existence, relationship, reputation, and group. These functional building blocks represent the role of social media platforms in supporting and facilitating interactions between stakeholders at different levels. However, not all functional modules are necessary for dialogue with online stakeholders. Voorveld et al. (2018) proposed a social media typology based on the differences between social media platforms regarding connection and

the level of message customisation. Different platforms offer different levels of personalised services and social interactions, providing various options and possibilities for dialogue and interaction among stakeholders (Seo et al., 2019). The different designs and uses of social media platforms should meet different stakeholders' needs and expectations, facilitating dialogue and interaction among them.

Based on the above ideas, this section classifies and discusses existing common social media platforms. The study considers the functional characteristics of social media platforms and divides them into four categories: social network platforms, visual information-sharing platforms, information co-creation platforms, and limited information-sharing platforms. In each social media dialogue step, all types of social media platforms will be discussed based on their capabilities.

#### 5.6.2.1 Social Network Platforms

Social networking platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, etc., provide an interactive space that enables stakeholders to build and maintain interpersonal relationships (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These platforms facilitate user communication through functional blocks such as identity, dialogue, relationships, and groups (Kietzmann et al., 2011). For example, users can express their opinions and emotions by posting status updates, comments, and likes, triggering responses and interactions from other users. The characteristics of social networks make the dialogue between stakeholders more frequent and closer, thus facilitating the dissemination and sharing of information.

**Facebook.** As a social media platform, Facebook has many features and services that can facilitate stakeholder dialogue and interaction. Facebook allows users to create profiles, connect with friends and colleagues, and interact by posting comments and sending instant messages (Amade, 2017). Users can share messages, photos, and other files with user-defined visibility. It allows businesses to showcase carefully collated images through the project organisation pages and monitor customer reactions to new products and investor sentiment (Amade, 2017). External stakeholders can use Facebook to express their opinions, translating the voice of stakeholders into word-of-mouth communication of the project, thus facilitating the

implementation of the project (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2015). In addition, Facebook supports group features that enable stakeholders to discuss common issues or events on a members-only platform and allows project managers to use Facebook to develop project-specific pages for marketing purposes and to highlight important activities (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Facebook's superiority is due to its ability to promote content delivery in a conversational way, create two-way collaborative conversations with stakeholders, and play an essential role in project management (Manetti et al., 2017). Therefore, Facebook, as a social media platform, encourages dialogue and interaction among stakeholders through its diverse functions and services, creating a good communication environment for projects and enterprises.

**LinkedIn.** LinkedIn allows users to create professional profiles for business use (Amade, 2017), invite others to make connections and communicate through the messaging system (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This linkage mechanism facilitates group discussion around issues, projects, or other associations among stakeholders, enabling information exchange and cooperation. However, despite the potential of LinkedIn to facilitate dialogue between projects and community stakeholders, there are some limitations. First, LinkedIn's user base is primarily concentrated in the business sector, which may limit its use in non-business projects and communities (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Further, as a business-related social networking site, LinkedIn may be influenced by business interests, resulting in an inability to attract different types of community stakeholders (Voorveld et al., 2018). Therefore, when using LinkedIn to facilitate dialogue between projects and community stakeholders, it is necessary to be aware of the platform's limitations and consider using the platform as a supplementary one.

**X/Twitter.** X has significant characteristics regarding basic situations, functions, and services (Amade, 2017). It allows users to send and read short messages, each limited to 140 characters. Users can follow the tweets of other users and link tweets to other posts on similar topics through hashtags, resulting in a very effective aggregation of information (Amade, 2017). From a project management perspective, X provides a platform for project managers to share short messages, breaking news, meeting highlights, or project milestone information. It also supports simple forms of threaded discussion through hashtags (Voorveld et al., 2018). However, while X provides a powerful platform for stakeholder dialogue, some limitations should be considered.

Due to the character limit of tweets, the expression of information is limited, which may lead to less detailed sharing of information (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This can limit the discussion of complex issues and make it challenging to develop a complete understanding and solution.

#### 5.6.2.2 Visual Information Sharing Platforms

Visual information sharing platforms (such as YouTube and Instagram) communicate information to stakeholders through visual content, such as pictures and videos (Voorveld et al., 2018). This form of information dissemination is vivid and intuitive and can attract more attention and engagement from stakeholders than text-based platforms. Users can show their personality and values by uploading and sharing their creative works and details of their lives to catch the attention and interaction of other users (Voorveld et al., 2018). The characteristics of visual information sharing make the dialogue between stakeholders more intuitive and engaging, enhancing the effect and influence of information dissemination.

**Instagram.** As an image and video-based social media platform, Instagram allows users to share posts with hashtags and comments. Instagram puts more emphasis on visual content than platforms like Facebook, emphasising images and videos over text (Amade, 2017). The platform mainly appeals to young people, with more female users than male (Gruzd et al., 2018). Instagram is used as an informal narrative platform that facilitates clicktivist-type responses from the audience (Gruzd et al., 2018), and it is possible to have a dialogue with online stakeholders. Projects and organisations can also use Instagram to interact with stakeholders and understand their feedback and needs to better meet stakeholder expectations (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Compared with other social networking platforms, Instagram has an advantage in terms of conveying visual information. The comments on Instagram posts are often relatively brief, making it difficult to engage in in-depth discussion (Kietzmann et al., 2011). In addition, due to the nature of the platform, some content may be more likely to attract superficial attention from stakeholders rather than in-depth thinking and dialogue. Therefore, achieving deeper conversations and interactions may require a combination of other social media platforms that complement Instagram's shortcomings.

**YouTube.** YouTube provides new opportunities and challenges for project management and community interaction while providing video-sharing services. YouTube receives more than 3 billion viewers per day, providing a broad access channel for project managers and stakeholders (Amade, 2017). Project managers can use YouTube to upload videos to showcase project achievements, milestones, and critical features, provide training to stakeholders, and ask for feedback. As a communication platform, YouTube is an accessible way to engage stakeholders and is more attractive than traditional formats, such as email- or website-based project reports. However, there are some limitations to YouTube. It suffers from information overload and conversation fragmentation (Kietzmann et al., 2011), which may become a barrier to the project conducting in-depth stakeholder dialogue. Like Instagram, YouTube can become a supplemental platform that can be cross-referenced with other types of platforms.

#### 5.6.2.3 Information Co-creation Platforms

Information co-creation platforms like Wikipedia provide a collaborative space where stakeholders can co-edit and refine information. This form of information dissemination is open and democratic and can attract engagement and contributions. Users can co-create and share knowledge by editing, modifying, and updating to form an open and shared knowledge base (Amade, 2017; Voorveld et al., 2018). The feature of co-creating information makes the dialogue among stakeholders more equal and cooperative, facilitating knowledge sharing and innovation.

**Wikipedia.** Wikipedia has many functions and services, enabling users to express themselves, and to engage with, connect to, and utilise content. It has been shown that the collaborative editing function of Wikipedia facilitates the formation of voluntary contributions by allowing users to bypass the learning of complex software programs (Amade, 2017). Such voluntary contributions interact with the work of other people by editing, building, and tagging their content, attracting good stakeholder engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In addition, Wikipedia, a web document management system with advanced search functions and multimedia support, provides stakeholders with convenient recordability and usability support (Argyris & Monu, 2015). However, there are also some limitations to using Wikipedia. While Wikipedia's collaborative editing feature encourages stakeholders to create and modify content,

this can also lead to inaccurate or misleading information (Voorveld et al., 2018). Due to the open nature of Wikipedia, the quality of content may be affected by the level and subjective opinions of contributors, thus affecting the objectivity and credibility of the dialogue (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, this information co-creation platform can help stakeholders to gain information about the project and is less likely to directly contribute to online stakeholder dialogue; instead, it is used to provide certain information to online stakeholders.

#### 5.6.2.4 Limited Information Sharing Platforms

Limited information sharing platforms (such as blogs) mainly transmit information to stakeholders through text and links. This form of information dissemination is concise and efficient and can quickly convey the main content and points. Users can share their insights and opinions by posting short articles and forwarding links to catch attention and stimulate discussion from other users.

**Blogs.** Blogs display date-marked entries in reverse chronological order, usually managed by individuals or organisations, offering the possibility of interacting with others if they choose to add comments (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Blogs are information-sharing and exchange sites that can take many forms, from personal diaries to summaries of specific content areas (Argyris & Monu, 2015). By cross-posting to other social media platforms, especially social networking platforms, blog posts can spread widely, attract readers and engage people (Amade, 2017). In addition, blogs can be used as a simple mechanism for progress reporting, helping project managers share the project's latest developments with the community in a timely manner.

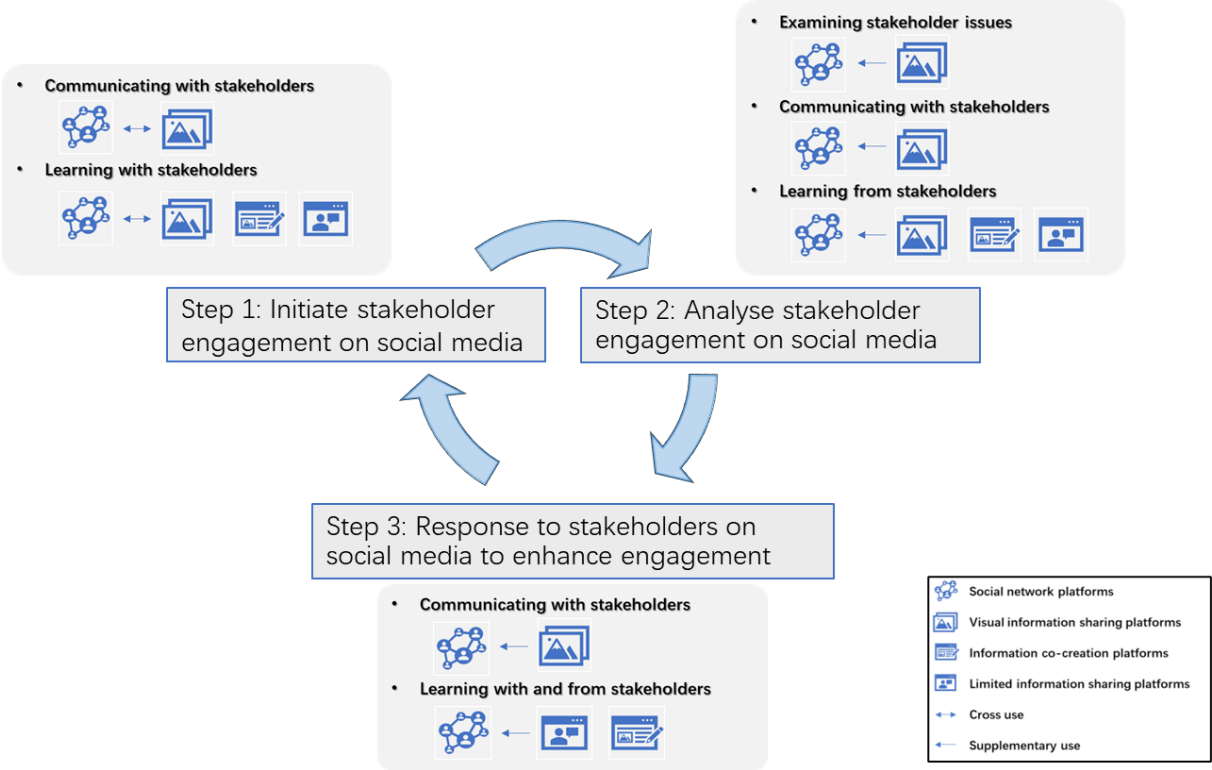
**Other Social Media with Usage Restrictions.** There are some social media platforms that are not designed for public conversations, such as instant messaging tools. These provide fast and real-time communication (Amade, 2017), and include Windows, Messenger, Microsoft Lync, WhatsApp, WeChat, and many others. Users of these tools communicate by texting, sending links, sharing files, and holding voice and video calls (Amade, 2017). However, despite the potentially important role of instant messaging tools in project management, it is challenging to achieve dialogue with stakeholders in the broader community due to their one-to-one or small group nature (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This limitation may lead to localised and isolated

information, making it challenging to communicate effectively between the project and the community.

5.6.2.5 General Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model

Based on the above social media classification, in Figure 5-12, different social media categories are assigned to the steps of the social media stakeholder dialogue. Among them, social network platforms are the leading platforms for stakeholder dialogue. Visual information-sharing platforms can assist social network platforms in communicating with stakeholders, and stakeholders can express their views through comments on visual information-sharing platforms. Therefore, they can also assist social network platforms in examining stakeholder issues during Step 2. Information co-creation platforms and limited information-sharing platforms can assist social network platforms in almost all the steps of learning with and from stakeholders.

Figure 5-12 The Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model for Multiple Platforms



When applying the Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model to multiple platform use, the characteristics of the different platforms must be considered. In Step 1 of the Social Media

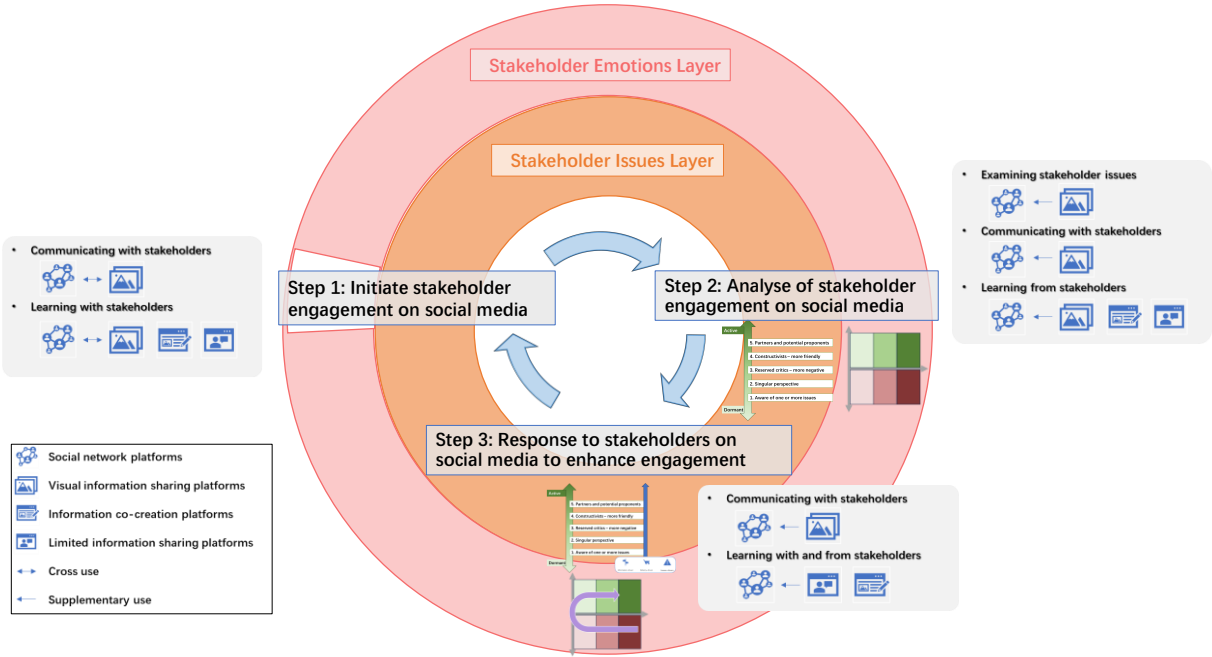
Stakeholder Dialogue Model, social networking platforms are used to initiate dialogue, serving the function of communicating with stakeholders. Given that visual information-sharing platforms also possess certain networking features, projects can use these platforms to support social networking platforms (e.g., through content sharing or cross-platform use). At the same time, in the “learning with stakeholders” dimension of Step 1, visual information sharing platforms, information co-creation platforms, and limited information sharing platforms can also be leveraged by social networking platforms to support the project’s collaborative learning process with stakeholders.

In Step 2 of the model, social networking platforms remain the core dialogue channel. Visual information sharing platforms can serve as optional tools to assist or supplement the stakeholder analysis process, in terms of examining stakeholder issues, communicating with stakeholders, and learning from stakeholders. In this phase, the selection of both core social networking platforms and visual information sharing platforms should depend on the level of stakeholder activity on each platform. Due to functional limitations in stakeholder interaction, information co-creation platforms and limited information sharing platforms can only serve as auxiliary tools, contributing to the “learning from stakeholders” dimension, based on project needs.

Step 3 focuses on responding to stakeholders and advancing the dialogue, which can occur on any platform with networking capabilities, including both social networking and visual information sharing platforms. However, due to the greater efficiency of dialogue functions on social networking platforms, they remain the primary channels for communication and learning, while visual information sharing platforms serve as supplementary options. During this step, information co-creation platforms and limited information sharing platforms can support learning with and from stakeholders. Both the project and stakeholders can share knowledge and information generated on these platforms across channels, thereby facilitating mutual learning between the project and its stakeholders.

Based on the discussion of tools and engagement dimensions of the stakeholder dialogue model, we can combine Figure 5-11 and Figure 5-12 to create the final multi-platform social media stakeholder dialogue model with tools and methods (Figure 5-13).

**Figure 5-13** Multi-platform Social Media Stakeholder Dialogue Model with Tools and Methods



**5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has combined the results of this research with existing theories to establish a new social media stakeholder dialogue model. Of the four research questions outlined in the introduction of this chapter, the social media stakeholder engagement framework (Section 5.2) and social media stakeholder dialogue model (Section 5.6) addressed Research Question 1. The categorical groups of online community stakeholders given in Step 2 (Section 5.4.1) of the model answer Research Question 2. The stakeholder response strategies for issues in Step 3 of the model (Section 5.5.1) answer Research Question 3 and provide the main strategies for the project organisation to respond to stakeholders. Finally, the stakeholder emotion matrix on social media in Step 2 (Section 5.4.2) and stakeholder response strategies for emotions in Step 3 (Section 5.5.1) show how the project organisation uses emotions as a theoretical layer to analyse and influence stakeholder emotions and help the project promote stakeholder dialogue, which answers Research Question 4.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **6.1 Overall Summary and Key Findings**

This research outlines the primary stakeholder engagement framework on social media, paving a new model for project and stakeholder dialogue in the social media context. In summary, the key findings of this research provide a solid foundation for understanding and implementing stakeholder engagement on social media.

This research underscores the potential of using social media to guide stakeholder dialogue, demonstrating its ability to enhance engagement across various dimensions. It shows how social media can be a practical platform for a project to conduct external stakeholder dialogue, instilling confidence in its practical application. Using R. Freeman et al.'s (2017) four dimensions of stakeholder engagement, this study offers a comprehensive exploration of how different stakeholder dialogue tools can be practically harnessed to promote stakeholder engagement, thereby extending the practical application model of stakeholder dialogue theory on social media.

Online naturalistic inquiry was used as the research methodology. The data for this study consisted of secondary data collected from social media. This data collection method did not involve any interaction with stakeholders, ensuring the original data's natural integrity. Online naturalistic inquiry was a naturalistic inquiry of stakeholder behaviours in the original online environment. The study used qualitative research methods to summarise the views and emotions of stakeholders on social media and the project's response strategies to stakeholder issues.

This study moves the focus away from the traditional identification of different stakeholders towards a focus on broader stakeholder issues, and blurs the identity of individual or single-class stakeholders. On social media, information about the identity of stakeholders is not critical. The project can identify the main topics concerning stakeholders and their attitudes and emotional reactions to their comments and opinions. The project can understand and respond to stakeholder issues on social media in real time and provide information and feedback to stakeholders.

This chapter addresses the main contributions of this research to theory, method and practice. This research provides a new stakeholder dialogue model to enhance stakeholder engagement on social media, extending the stakeholder engagement aspects of the model to the social media environment and introducing emotion theory into the stakeholder engagement framework. Moreover, this research provides a new methodology for conducting stakeholder engagement research on social media and provides practical tools and evidence for engaging stakeholders via social media. Based on these contributions, this chapter will discuss the implications of this research, followed by its limitations and directions for future study.

## **6.2 Contributions of the Study**

### *6.2.1 Theory*

This research focuses on stakeholder dialogue theory and explores the ability of stakeholder dialogue theory to help projects engage stakeholders on social media. One of the main obstacles to the use of social media for stakeholder engagement is the lack of systematic theory among both stakeholders and project organisations. In this study, based on the 6C theory of social media marketing (Bickhoff et al., 2014), three steps for stakeholder dialogue on social media were proposed. The study also compared these steps of stakeholder dialogue with the four main dimensions of stakeholder engagement proposed by R. Freeman et al. (2017), showing how stakeholder dialogue on social media can enhance stakeholder engagement activities from different dimensions. In addition, this study contributes to the management of stakeholder emotions, highlighting the importance of managing stakeholder emotions on social media. Finally, this research offers a social media stakeholder engagement framework (Figure 5-1) to guide online stakeholder engagement activities.

#### **6.2.1.1 A New Stakeholder Dialogue Model for Stakeholder Engagement on Social Media**

This study has developed a model for projects to use stakeholder dialogue theory on social media to guide stakeholders' engagement with projects. This improves on the 6C social media marketing model (Bickhoff et al., 2014) from the perspective of project stakeholders. In Chapter 2, the 6C model was modified according to the theory of stakeholder engagement, and the original model was transformed into a social media stakeholder engagement framework. In

this new model, “company” in the 6C Model is replaced with “project”, and “customers” is replaced with “online stakeholder”. In addition, the new model emphasises that “community” is an online community, and active “market mavens” in the community represent “influential stakeholders” in the online community (Figure 2-2) The new model demonstrates the patterns of project stakeholder engagement on social media.

This study focuses on the expansion of communication between online stakeholders and projects in the online community of the stakeholder engagement framework on social media. It emphasises the role of the official social media accounts of projects and provides a model of the dialogue between the project’s official account and the online stakeholders. The model is an agile model and consists of three steps: 1) initiate stakeholder engagement on social media, 2) analyse stakeholder engagement on social media, and 3) respond to stakeholders on social media to enhance engagement.

#### 6.2.1.2 Initiating Stakeholder Engagement through Official Social Media Accounts

The research highlights the theoretical significance of establishing official project social media accounts as a foundational mechanism for initiating stakeholder engagement. This contributes to stakeholder theory by identifying the official account as not merely a communication tool, but also a strategic platform for shaping dialogue, maintaining stakeholder attention, and managing engagement over time. It also addresses the challenge of stakeholder mobility and information asymmetry in environments, offering a theoretical basis for understanding how organisations can centralise and control engagement flows in decentralised media spaces.

#### 6.2.1.3 Analysing Stakeholder Engagement through Issues and Emotions

This study expands the analytical dimension of stakeholder engagement by proposing a dual-focus framework that examines both the issues raised and the emotions expressed by stakeholders in online interactions. This approach moves beyond traditional content analysis by integrating affective and thematic dimensions, thereby enriching the theoretical understanding of how stakeholder concerns and sentiments co-evolve in online dialogues. The study also introduces a set of analytical tools that operationalise this dual analysis, offering a methodological contribution to stakeholder engagement research.

#### 6.2.1.4 Classifying Response Strategies Based on Issue and Emotion

The research contributes a new typology of response strategies that considers both the nature of stakeholder issues (e.g., publishable, provable, or conflictual) and the emotional tone of stakeholder interactions. This classification provides a theoretical framework for understanding how organisations can tailor their responses to enhance engagement, build trust, and manage conflict in online settings. By linking response strategies to stakeholder expectations and emotional cues, the study deepens the theoretical discourse on responsive engagement and strategic communication in stakeholder theory.

Together, these contributions offer a model of stakeholder engagement on social media, extending existing theories to better account for the complexities of online interaction, emotional dynamics, and strategic responsiveness.

#### 6.2.1.5 Supplemented Stakeholder Engagement Dimensions Theory

Based on the four dimensions of stakeholder engagement identified by R. Freeman et al. (2017), examining stakeholder relations, learning with and from stakeholders, and communicating with stakeholders ultimately act on the ultimate dimension, integrative stakeholder engagement, stakeholder dialogue mainly functions in communicating with stakeholders (Sachs & Kujala, 2022). However, the results of this study show that stakeholder conversations conducted on social media can facilitate multiple stakeholder dimensions.

Given the difficulty of accurately identifying stakeholder relationships on social media, this research proposes a conceptual shift from analysing stakeholder relations to analysing stakeholder issues. This reframing advances stakeholder theory by introducing a macro-level perspective that focuses on the topics and concerns raised by stakeholders, rather than the relational ties among them. The study develops a structured approach for identifying and classifying stakeholder issues through online dialogue, thereby offering a new analytical lens for understanding stakeholder engagement in online environments.

The research further contributes to stakeholder learning theory by distinguishing between learning *with* and learning *from* stakeholders. It conceptualises stakeholder engagement as a two-phase learning process: initially, project organisations engage in mutual learning by

sharing knowledge with stakeholders, and subsequently, they extract insights from stakeholder feedback and responses. This dual model enriches existing theories by highlighting the bidirectional and iterative nature of learning in stakeholder dialogue, particularly within the fast-paced and participatory context of social media.

Building on existing classifications of stakeholder dialogue, this study deepens the theoretical understanding of communication as a core dimension of engagement. It demonstrates how social media facilitates immediate, topic-specific interactions between project organisations and stakeholders, enabling more responsive and targeted communication. By tracing the process from intentional communication to stakeholder response and subsequent dialogue, the study provides a refined model of how communication unfolds in online stakeholder engagement, thereby extending the theoretical framework of stakeholder dialogue.

By synthesising the dimensions of issue analysis, learning, and communication, this study proposes an integrative model of stakeholder engagement tailored to the social media environment. The model highlights how stakeholder dialogue fosters mutual understanding, builds trust, and enhances participation. It positions social media not merely as a communication tool, but as a strategic platform for deepening engagement and co-creating value. This integrative perspective contributes to stakeholder theory by offering a holistic framework that captures the complexity and dynamism of engagement in online contexts.

#### 6.2.1.6 Stakeholder Emotion Management on Social Media

A key theoretical contribution of this study lies in the integration of emotion theory into the domain of stakeholder engagement, particularly within the context of social media. While traditional stakeholder theories have acknowledged emotional dynamics primarily as part of the topics of communication skills or managerial tactics, this research elevates emotion to a central analytical dimension. It reconceptualises stakeholder engagement by positioning emotion management not as a peripheral concern, but as a core mechanism influencing stakeholder behaviour and interaction in online environments.

Social media platforms amplify the speed, reach, and intensity of emotional expression, making the identification and management of stakeholder emotions both more complex and more

critical. This study addresses this gap by developing a systematic framework for recognising, analysing, and responding to stakeholder emotions in online dialogues. Specifically, it introduces:

- an emotion pool (Table 3-6) as a foundational tool for identifying emotional expressions in stakeholder discourse,
- analytical tools (Figure 5-5) for interpreting emotional patterns and sentiment trends, and
- response strategies tailored to emotional cues, enabling more empathetic and effective engagement.

### 6.2.2 *Method*

This study establishes a new methodology for stakeholder research. The data source of this study is social media, and as secondary data, it was manually converted into a database. The online data consisted of posts made by the projects and the comments posted below them. Social media facilitates natural online communication and is the mode of interaction between the online world and the offline society. This study used data from social media to conduct online naturalistic inquiry research, analysing stakeholder engagement at different levels and reflecting on the possibilities of using social media data for social science research.

The study collected data on social media following the rules of naturalistic inquiry, reducing the influence of the researcher on the activities of the stakeholders and maintaining the natural integrity of the data (Athens, 2010). The study demonstrates that manually collected social media data can retain much information about stakeholder interactions, including direct dialogue between stakeholders and the project and dialogue among stakeholders. This study demonstrates the richness of social media data, the interaction processes of online stakeholders uninterrupted by researchers, and of the ways in which the project communicates with stakeholders.

This study collected visible data released since the project's official account was created, illustrating the possibilities for long-term non-participant observation methods. Researchers can make non-participant observations and collect data about projects or companies on social media. Observational data from social media can provide copious data points for research and provide

a variety of possibilities for researchers to collect data. Online data sources are independent of time and geography, saving researchers time and cost. Traditional observation and interviews take a long time and require researchers to have sophisticated interviewing and recording skills. Social media data is published and recorded by social media platforms, which show actual communication in real-time, and researchers can browse the data months or years afterwards. Researchers can call on historical data at any time to observe and study all the online behaviour of a company or project.

This study used the method provided by Gioia et al. (2013) to conduct a thematic analysis. First, it used thematic analysis to discover and identify stakeholders' concerns and attitudes towards the project. Then, it used thematic analysis to complete the sentiment and emotion analysis of stakeholders, identify the primary emotions in their comments, and classify them into positive, negative, or neutral emotions. In addition to analysing the behaviour of stakeholders, this study also conducted a thematic analysis of the responses to stakeholders from the project.

This study also addressed the ethical issues of online naturalistic inquiry. The ethical issues to be considered when using social media data mainly lie in protecting user account information. Since this study does not pay attention to the personal information of the stakeholders behind the account, the user information collected only included the username. Therefore, the primary information from the data source that needs to be protected in this study was the social media username.

### *6.2.3 Practice*

The practical contributions of this research are centred on social media stakeholder response strategies, the application of emotion in stakeholder dialogue, and geographically specific evidence.

#### 6.2.3.1 Social Media Stakeholder Analysis Tools

**A Practical Framework for Assessing Stakeholder Engagement Levels.** By analysing stakeholder comments, a stakeholder engagement classification group (see Figure 5-2) is proposed, allowing project teams to assess engagement levels based on stakeholders' expressed understanding, trust, and willingness to cooperate. This tool enables more precise segmentation

of stakeholders and supports the development of differentiated engagement strategies that reflect varying levels of interest and engagement.

Since engagement on social media is primarily reflected through textual interactions, the model categorises stakeholders as either dormant or active, depending on their understanding of project information and their expressed trust in or willingness to collaborate with the project. This framework offers a practical tool for segmenting stakeholders and tailoring communication strategies to different engagement levels.

#### 6.2.3.2 Stakeholder Engagement Assessment Tool

**Emotion Analysis Tools for Stakeholder Management.** The study introduces a set of tools for identifying and managing stakeholder emotions in real time. It establishes an ‘emotion pool’ to detect dominant emotional expressions in stakeholder comments and adapts the mood meter theory from the education field to create a stakeholder emotion matrix (see Figure 5-5). This matrix maps stakeholder emotions based on polarity (positive/negative) and energy (low/medium/high), providing project teams with a visual and analytical tool to:

- monitor emotional trends,
- identify emotionally sensitive issues, and
- prioritise responses based on emotional urgency.

**Decision Support for Emotion- and Issue-Driven Response Strategies.** The emotion matrix also serves as a decision-making aid by helping project teams identify which stakeholder topics are associated with high-energy negative emotions. These topics can be flagged as high priority concerns and addressed using targeted, issue-driven strategies. This approach enables more responsive, empathetic, and effective stakeholder communication, particularly in high-stakes or emotionally charged situations.

Together, these contributions offer project organisations a set of practical, data-informed tools to monitor, interpret, and respond to stakeholder engagement on social media, enhancing both the quality of interaction and the effectiveness of stakeholder relationship management.

### 6.2.3.3 Social Media Stakeholder Response Strategies

By synthesising existing stakeholder response models (e.g., Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2023) with social media crisis communication strategies (e.g., Coombs, 2006), this study develops a practical framework for responding to stakeholders in online environments. It identifies three actionable response types—information-driven, delivery-driven, and issue-driven—that project teams can adopt based on the nature of stakeholder concerns. This classification helps practitioners select appropriate strategies depending on whether stakeholders seek factual updates, evidence of progress, or resolution of conflicts. Recognising the growing influence of emotion in online stakeholder interactions, this study incorporates emotional analysis into engagement strategy design. The tool supports more empathetic and targeted communication, especially in response to high-energy negative emotions that may escalate if left unaddressed. Together, these contributions provide project practitioners with a comprehensive, data-informed toolkit for managing stakeholder engagement on social media that can enhance responsiveness, emotional intelligence, and strategic communication in complex project environments.

In addition to issue management, the study introduces emotion as a critical factor in stakeholder engagement. By developing an emotion matrix that maps stakeholder emotions according to polarity and energy, the research equips practitioners with a tool to monitor emotional trends and design responses that are both empathetic and strategic. This allows project teams to detect emotionally charged topics early, prioritise responses to high-energy negative emotions, and foster trust through emotionally intelligent communication.

Importantly, the study emphasises the need to integrate issue and emotion response strategies rather than treating them in isolation. In practice, this means that when stakeholders express dissatisfaction, project teams should not only address the factual basis of the concern but also acknowledge and respond to the emotional dimension. This dual-response approach enhances the effectiveness of stakeholder communication, especially in complex or conflict-prone situations, and supports the development of more resilient and trust-based stakeholder relationships.

#### 6.2.3.4 Geographically Specific Evidence

Another important practical contribution of this study lies in its provision of geographically specific empirical evidence. By focusing on a large-scale infrastructure project, the construction of a second airport in Sydney, Australia, this research addresses the current geographical imbalance in stakeholder engagement studies, which are predominantly based on cases from the United States and Europe. The Australian context offers valuable insights into how stakeholder engagement practices are shaped by local governance structures, regulatory environments, and public expectations, thereby broadening the applicability of stakeholder management strategies across different regions.

In addition, this study offers a detailed account of how the project team utilised social media platforms to communicate and interact with stakeholders throughout the construction process. By analysing real-time interaction data, the research identifies key stakeholder concerns, emotional responses, and feedback patterns. These findings provide actionable insights for project managers on how to leverage social media as a tool for transparent communication, issue resolution, and relationship building. The practical implications extend beyond the Australian context, offering a useful reference for similar infrastructure projects in other countries seeking to enhance stakeholder engagement through online platforms.

### **6.3 Implications of the Study**

#### *6.3.1 Implications for Theory*

This study offers several important theoretical implications that extend and deepen the understanding of stakeholder engagement in the context of social media. First, the development of a stakeholder dialogue model tailored to online platforms highlights a fundamental shift in engagement dynamics—from unidirectional communication to real-time, reciprocal interaction. This model not only reinforces the importance of transparency and responsiveness in building trust but also positions social media as a co-creative space where stakeholders actively shape value and meaning. Future research can build on this model to explore how different forms of dialogue influence stakeholder perceptions and project legitimacy across various online contexts.

Second, the study advances the operationalisation of stakeholder engagement by introducing new tools and metrics for real-time analysis. These tools, which incorporate social media data, behavioural analytics, and AI technologies, offer a more dynamic and granular understanding of stakeholder behaviour. This has important implications for refining stakeholder theory, particularly in terms of how engagement is measured, monitored, and adapted in fast-changing, data-rich environments.

Third, the proposed typology of stakeholder response strategies, comprising information-driven, delivery-driven, and issue-driven approaches, provides a structured framework for analysing organisational responses in online settings. This classification enables future theoretical work to examine the relationship between response types and engagement outcomes such as trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. It also opens new avenues for comparative research across industries and cultural contexts.

Finally, by incorporating the emotional dimension into stakeholder engagement, this study addresses a critical gap in existing theory. The integration of affective theory and the development of an emotion matrix offer a novel lens through which to understand how emotional expression and recognition shape stakeholder relationships. This perspective encourages future researchers to further investigate the role of emotion in stakeholder decision-making, engagement intensity, and long-term relationship building, particularly in the emotionally charged and highly visible environment of social media.

### *6.3.2 Implications for Methodology*

It is crucial to have a repeatable methodology in both research and practice. This ensures the reliability and consistency of the research results and enables other researchers or practitioners to apply the same methods in different contexts and validate and extend the research results. When analysing stakeholder engagement on social media, the repeatable approach of this study consists of the steps outlined in Figure 6-1.

**Figure 6-1** *Methodology of the Research*

Data collection	Collect relevant data from selected social media platforms using manual data collection methods.
Data cleaning and pre-processing	Removing noisy data, standardising formats, and ensuring data quality and consistency.
Stakeholder issue identification	Identifying key issues concerning stakeholders through keywords, hashtags, user interaction patterns, and the principal stakeholder attitudes to which these issues belong.
Stakeholder emotion recognition	Identifying stakeholders’ emotions by referring to the emotion types in the emotion pool and classifying them as positive, negative, or neutral.
Response strategy evaluation	Analysing the project or organisation’s social media response strategy, including timeliness, personalisation, and problem-solving effectiveness.
Theory building	Using the above analysis, researchers can build their research models based on the theory.

Through this systematic and repeatable approach, researchers and practitioners can gain insight into stakeholders’ behavioural patterns and develop more effective research plans and derive new research results.

Another methodological implication regards the use of social media data. As a new data source, online social media has numerous advantages over traditional data in the field of stakeholder engagement. First, real-time social media data can reflect stakeholders’ immediate reactions and emotional changes. Second, the extensiveness and diversity of social media data enable researchers to analyse views from people with different perspectives and levels of engagement. For example, a comprehensive understanding of users’ interests, needs, and attitudes can be obtained by analysing users’ posts, comments, likes, and sharing behaviours.

In addition, social media data is also highly interactive and social, which can reveal the relationship network and influence structure among stakeholders. This has important implications for understanding stakeholder behaviour patterns and information transmission paths. By leveraging social media data, researchers and practitioners can gain more prosperous and dynamic insights to develop better and adapt strategies to enhance stakeholder engagement and satisfaction.

### 6.3.3 *Implications for Practice*

This study proposes a social media stakeholder engagement framework within the field of infrastructure project management and develops a series of practical tools and methods to provide feasible participation pathways for both project teams and community stakeholders. Firstly, the research highlights the unique advantages of social media in enhancing project transparency and building public trust. Through social platforms, project teams can disseminate information in real time and respond to concerns, thereby fostering an open communication environment and improving the project's social legitimacy and public acceptance. More importantly, the interactive nature of social media enables stakeholder participation to move beyond traditional offline channels toward more flexible and widespread digital engagement, significantly increasing the coverage and representativeness of public input. This framework can be widely applied to various types of infrastructure projects, such as transportation infrastructure, energy and environmental projects, and large-scale public service facility developments.

The tools developed in this study can be used to analyse stakeholder interactions on social media, extract their core issues of concern, and identify emotional fluctuations and potential risks through technical means, such as keywords, hashtags, and sentiment analysis. This mechanism not only provides data support for project decision-making and strategy formulation but also establishes an effective early warning system for public opinion, enabling project teams to intervene before issues escalate and reduce negative impacts. In addition, the study identifies two main types of social media response strategies—issue-related and emotion-related—which offer practical guidance for project teams to respond to different scenarios, thereby enhancing stakeholder satisfaction, loyalty, and engagement.

It is worth emphasising that the value of this framework extends beyond the execution phase and applies throughout the entire project lifecycle. In the project identification and planning stages, social media can be used to gather public input on infrastructure needs and assist in prioritising projects. During the feasibility study and design phases, public feedback helps improve the social adaptability of design solutions. In the approval and permitting stages, social media serves as a key channel for explaining environmental and social impact assessments and

addressing public concerns. During the operation and maintenance phases, ongoing social media interaction can be used to collect user experience feedback and optimise service quality and operational strategies. By leveraging multi-platform social media coordination, project teams can maximise the coverage of diverse stakeholder groups and enhance the overall effectiveness of engagement.

Furthermore, the study underscores the critical role of community stakeholders on social media. As groups directly affected by infrastructure projects, they can express opinions, offer suggestions, and influence project decision-making and implementation through social media. These platforms provide a direct communication channel with project teams, enhancing stakeholders' sense of involvement and trust, and thereby promoting the sustainable development and long-term success of the project.

This study thus not only provides a systematic social media engagement framework for infrastructure projects but also offers actionable tools and strategies to help project teams manage stakeholder relationships more effectively and enhance project transparency, responsiveness, and social support. The study offers both theoretical foundations and technical pathways for future public participation practices in infrastructure projects and has broad potential for application and dissemination.

## **6.4 Limitations of the Study**

The following sections discuss the limitations of the research, including the limitations of the data source, data collection methods, and theoretical verification.

### *6.4.1 Limitations of Data Sources*

This study is based on a case study, and all the data concerned WSIA. Due to each project's uniqueness, the collected data cannot represent the situation of all other projects. This means that the findings may have limitations, and it may be difficult to apply them to other types of projects. Moreover, the data was only collected in the project's construction phase, and was limited by the date of the creation of the official Facebook account, resulting in a lack of understanding of social media stakeholder engagement in other phases of the project's entire lifecycle. Therefore, future study should focus on finding more projects with social media and

form different project lifecycle to better solve these two limitations. In addition, Facebook was the only source of data, because, in the selected projects, only the stakeholders on Facebook showed a high level of engagement and thus provided rich research data. However, this meant that the study was unable to delve into some possible differences in stakeholder engagement across different social media platforms. Although this research has discussed the functions of different social media platforms, there is need more future research to address this limitation.

#### Limitations of Data Collection Methods

This study adopted the data collection method of non-participant observation. As a result, the collected data is unable to provide in-depth discussions on individual stakeholders and their perspectives. This means it is difficult for researchers to perform an abductive analysis of stakeholder views or provide a deeper causal analysis. This study can only analyse the views and attitudes of stakeholders from the content visible on social media, so it lacks a more systematic and in-depth exploration of the behavioural motivations of stakeholders. This limitation may affect the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the findings.

#### *6.4.2 Further Theoretical Validation Needed*

This study proposes a new stakeholder engagement framework. However, the model may benefit from further examination and integration of project practice and application, and practical industry feedback. Therefore, further research and validation will be helpful in translating this theoretical framework into robust practice. Future research should consider applying the framework to different types of projects and social media platforms to verify its applicability and effectiveness. In addition, more practical data should be collected to further refine and optimise the model.

These limitations suggest that, although this study has achieved some good results in analysing stakeholder engagement on social media, many aspects still need further exploration and improvement. Future research should be conducted in a broader context to improve the universality and application value of the findings.

## **6.5 Directions for Future Research**

In future research, the theoretical framework of this study can be applied to other practical projects. This will not only help to verify the effectiveness of the model but also provide an empirical basis for its development. By applying the theoretical framework to specific projects and comparing the differences between the theoretical framework and project practice, the theoretical foundation of the framework can be supplemented and improved.

In future research, data from social media can be quantitatively analysed to explore the association between project behaviour and stakeholder discussion. For example, studies can investigate how project behaviour affects stakeholder concerns and discussions by analysing the frequency of, and emotional changes in, the interactions between the content published by the project and the stakeholders. Such an analysis may reveal potential links between project behaviour and stakeholder responses, providing valuable insights to project teams.

Further evaluation of the effect of project response strategies is also an important direction for future research. The impact of response strategies on stakeholders can be analysed to assess how and when (or whether) stakeholders accept the responses given by the project and whether their attitudes and emotions change as a result. This evaluation can help project teams optimise response strategies and improve stakeholder satisfaction and engagement.

Future research could also include other projects for multiple case analyses. While enriching the framework, the differences between different projects can be analysed to explore the framework's generality. Such a multi-case analysis would provide a broader perspective and verify the model's applicability and effectiveness in various contexts.

In addition, traditional data collection methods, such as interviews and surveys, could be used to obtain primary data from project and stakeholder parties to supplement or refine the reasons and motivations for project and stakeholder engagement on social media. For example, future research can focus on understanding how the project makes decisions in response to stakeholder comments and the psychological motivations of stakeholders for engaging in project conversations online. Such data may provide a deeper understanding of the research and help project teams develop more effective engagement strategies. These future research directions

will further deepen our understanding of stakeholder engagement on social media and enhance the theoretical framework's practicality and application value.

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