



SEA: Lessons Learned from Australia?

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10 years of SEA in Australia = EIANZ has started to reflect SEA working group

- ▶ EIANZ 2017 Conference Roundtable
- ▶ 2 Day seminar in 2018 on Strategic Approaches to Impact Assessment
- ▶ Drafting of Good Practice Guidance for SEA in Australia
- ▶ EIANZ 2018 Conference Panel Session on: Imagine A national environment Act focused on landscape scale approaches
- ▶ IAIA19 Lessons Learned from SEA in Australia
- ▶ Post IAIA19 Conference Workshop with international experts to explore how to increase uptake and effectiveness of SEA in Australia

Principles for effective SEA

- ▶ **Sustainability-led** - strategically influencing policy, plans, and programs towards more sustainable outcomes
- ▶ **Practical** - resulting in sufficient, reliable and usable information to influence decision-making.
- ▶ **Evidence based** -incorporating an interdisciplinary approach and the use of Traditional knowledge where relevant.
- ▶ **Outcomes focused** -delivers effective protection of TBL values.

Principles for effective SEA

- ▶ **Fit for purpose** - achieves objectives of the PPP within available time, resources and information.
- ▶ **Adaptive** -to lessons learned throughout the process.
- ▶ **Participatory** - being open to the views of stakeholders and the wider community with regular communication
- ▶ **Transparent** - facilitating ease of access to information for the public, and a clear identification of factors taken into consideration during decision-making.

What could we do better?

- ▶ What are the ingredients for success in an SEA?
- ▶ How do we embed SEA within strategic land use and infrastructure planning to properly inform plan development?
- ▶ What are the defining features of good practice SEA ?
- ▶ Is there something special about effective SEA that is more than quality cumulative impact assessment and/or regional landscape-scale planning?

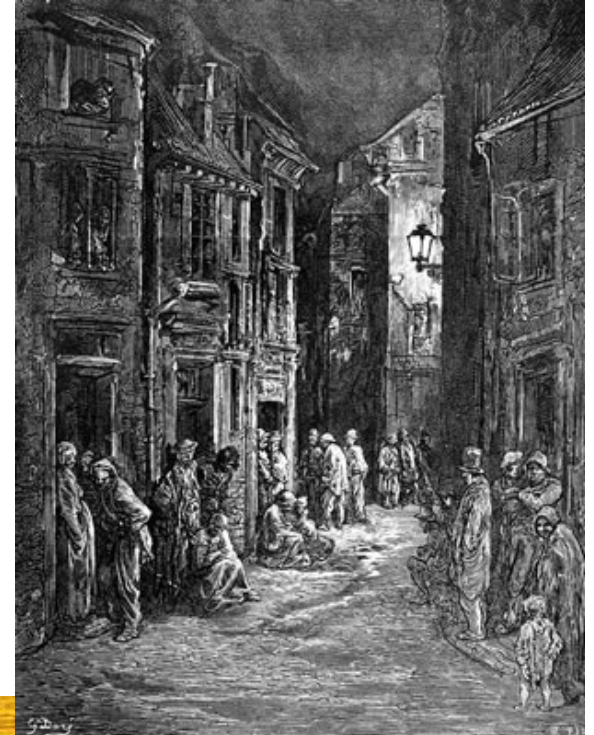
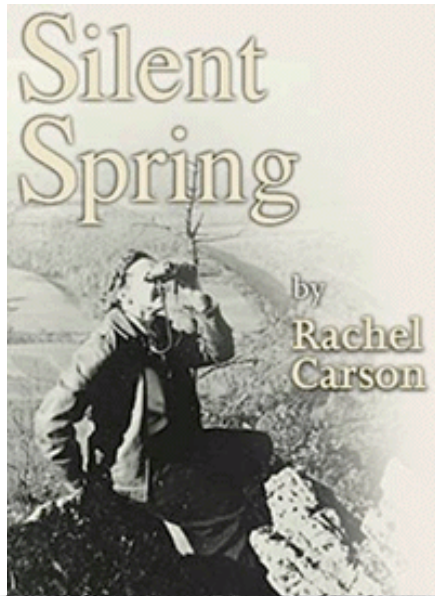
SEA using landscape as a driving concept

Garry Middle

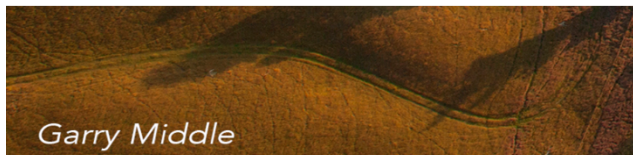
VisionEnvironment and Curtin University



Australian IA and planning

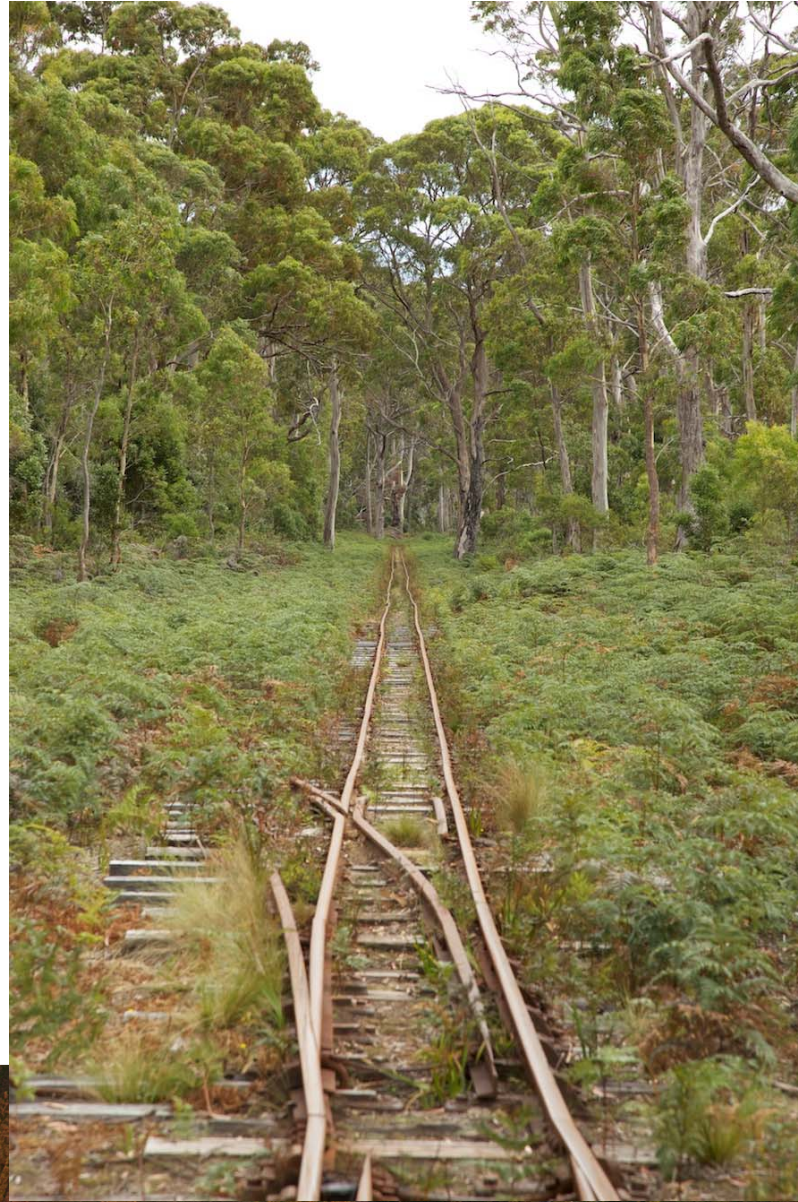


IA is - $1+1+1+1+1=5$



Garry Middle

Our unique Oz context never embraced



Garry Middle



Defining 'landscape' in an Oz context





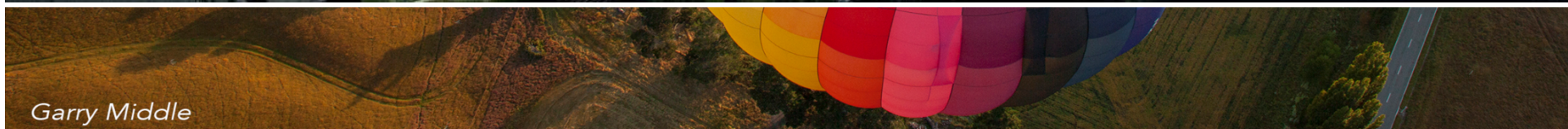
Its meaning

- “...an understanding of landscape moves from being a more or less visible and tangible entity to being inclusive of the subjective matter of the mind. In such light the importance of the perceptions of those who experience the landscape is drawn into focus. Comprehending the perceptions, meanings and values of a landscape is based on the knowledge and its articulations by those who encounter the landscape.”
 - Butler and Åkerskog 2014,

In an Australian context? "Country"


- People talk about Country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to Country, sing to Country, visit Country, worry about Country, grieve for Country and long for Country. People say that Country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, and feels sorry or happy. Country is a living entity with a yesterday, a today and tomorrow, with consciousness, action, and a will toward life. Because of this richness of meaning, Country is home and peace: nourishment for body, mind and spirit; and heart's ease.
 - Rose (1986: 7)





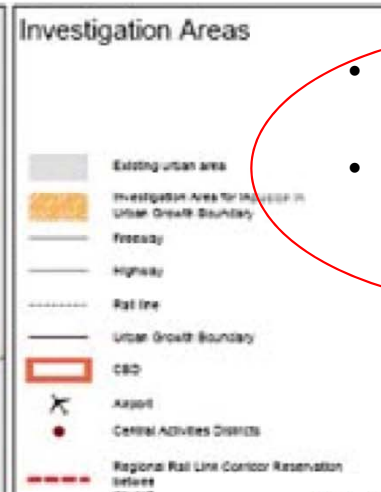
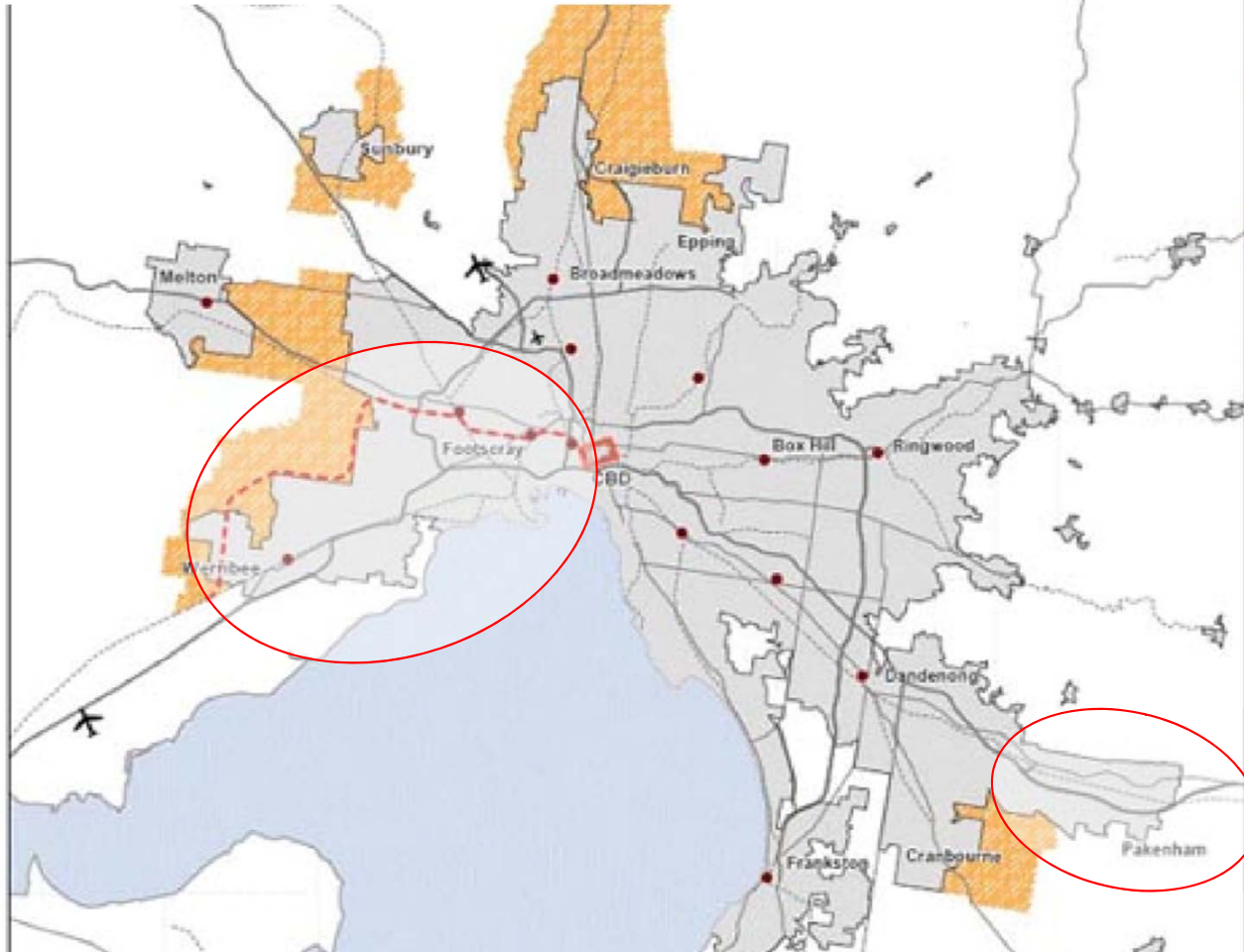
Tanya Burdett

Registered Planner, Planning Institute of Australia
IAP2 Foundations Trainer (public participation)
IEMA EIA Quality Mark Panel member
PhD research graduate (University of Melbourne)


ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION ACT 1999
Part 10 Strategic Assessments
Section 146 (1) Agreement

Attachment A: Areas included within the Program

Relating to the assessment of impacts of the Program to revise Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary



- RRL – construction phase;
- Pakenham East Precinct Structure Plan Panel

Attachment C

Strategic Assessment Endorsement Criteria

When deciding whether to endorse a policy, plan, or program the Minister must be satisfied that the assessment report adequately addresses the impacts to which the agreement relates and that any recommendations to modify the policy, plan or program have been responded to appropriately.

In determining whether or not to endorse the Program the Minister will have regard to the extent to which the Program meets the objectives of the Act. In particular that it:

- protects the environment, especially matters of national environmental significance
- promotes ecologically sustainable development
- promotes the conservation of biodiversity
- provides for the protection and conservation of heritage.

Accordingly, the Program and Final Report should:

- incorporate mechanisms which avoid the taking of actions in any location that will have an impact to matters of national environmental significance or are of high biodiversity or heritage value; or
- provide that where impacts can not be avoided, then the impacts should be reduced to an acceptable level
- provide for effective management, mitigation or offset of the likely impacts
- contain an effective system of adaptive management that is independently audited and publicly reported.

The Minister will also consider the extent to which the Program and its associated Final Report adequately incorporates:

- the precautionary principle
- the other principles of ecologically sustainable development
- intergenerational equity
- matters the Minister considers to have a high likelihood of being potentially eligible for listing as matters of national environmental significance.

Other SEA experience...



A Practical Guide to
the Strategic Environmental
Assessment

Draft Guidance on Health
in Strategic Environmental
Assessment

HS2 London to the West Midlands Appraisal of Sustainability

Main Report Volume 1
A Report for HS2 Ltd



mer
25 YEARS
Netherlands Commission for
Environmental Assessment

Process advice on SEA for the Manila Bay
Sustainable Development Master Plan

PHILIPPINES

This advisory report presents the NCEA's conclusions on whether, and how, to apply SEA to the MBSDMP. In sum, the NCEA notes that the MBSDMP already contains elements that are also specific to SEA. In particular: the MBSDMP aims to integrate selected sustainable development concerns, and to consult stakeholders throughout its preparation. Nonetheless, an SEA could add value to the process. SEA can play an important role in rendering decision-making more transparent and accountable. SEA can help to ensure that environmental and social impacts are carefully considered and debated, before decision options are chosen. Also, SEA methodologies can be usefully applied when designing decision alternatives, when engaging stakeholders, and when developing mechanism for plan implementation and monitoring. Consequently, the NCEA recommends commencing with an SEA for the MBSDMP. This SEA should not be undertaken in parallel to the MBSDMP process but be carefully integrated into it. The SEA should build on the work that is already ongoing and start as soon as possible to avoid missing opportunities.

4th December 2018
Ref: 7233

www.defra.gov.uk

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on Statement

But does it make a difference?

Levett-Therivel



Towards a more efficient and effective use of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal in spatial planning
Final report

Recommendations:
 - Integration with plan-making process
 - Spatial emphasis
 - Scope focus
 - Clear alternatives
 - Impacts against baseline
 - Better engagement and monitoring

Q: How can SA be made more effective?

(6) Get real about what sustainability entails

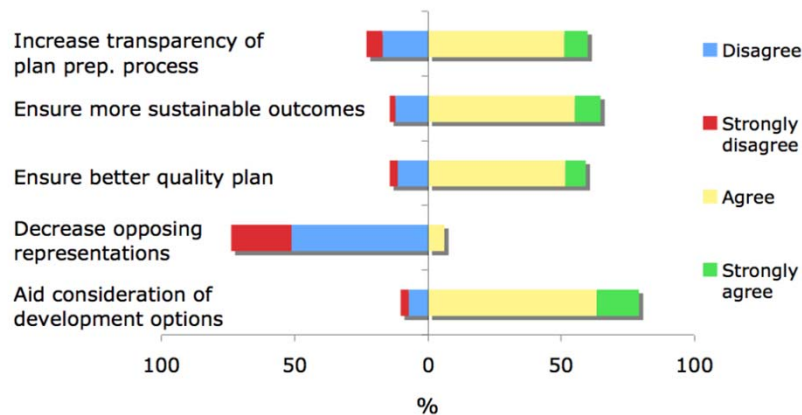
Need to cut GHGs radically as soon as possible.

Any plan, programme, decision or development that increases emissions overall is unsustainable.

Almost all current plans, projects are unsustainable.

SAs should say this loud and clear, and state the conditions/constraints to make them sustainable.

If these exceed plan powers, that's a problem for planning—and human survival—not a defect of SA!



Local authority views on SEA in the UK

Integration is essential

Separate environmental appraisal casts environment as negative barrier to development ... which will almost always prevail.

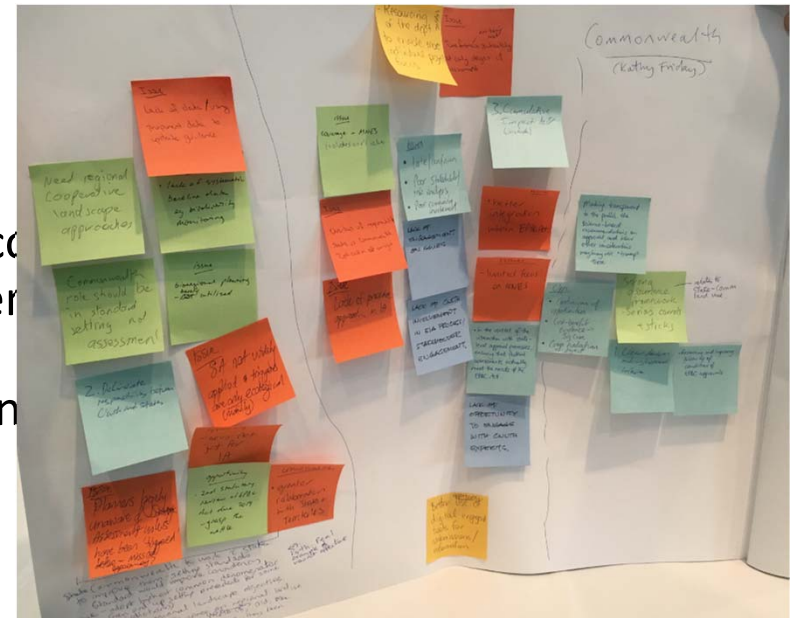
Integrated appraisal can challenge development's claimed / assumed economic *benefits* on same footing as its environmental *disbenefits*.

Easier to argue against *environmentally* bad development if it's bad for *people* too.

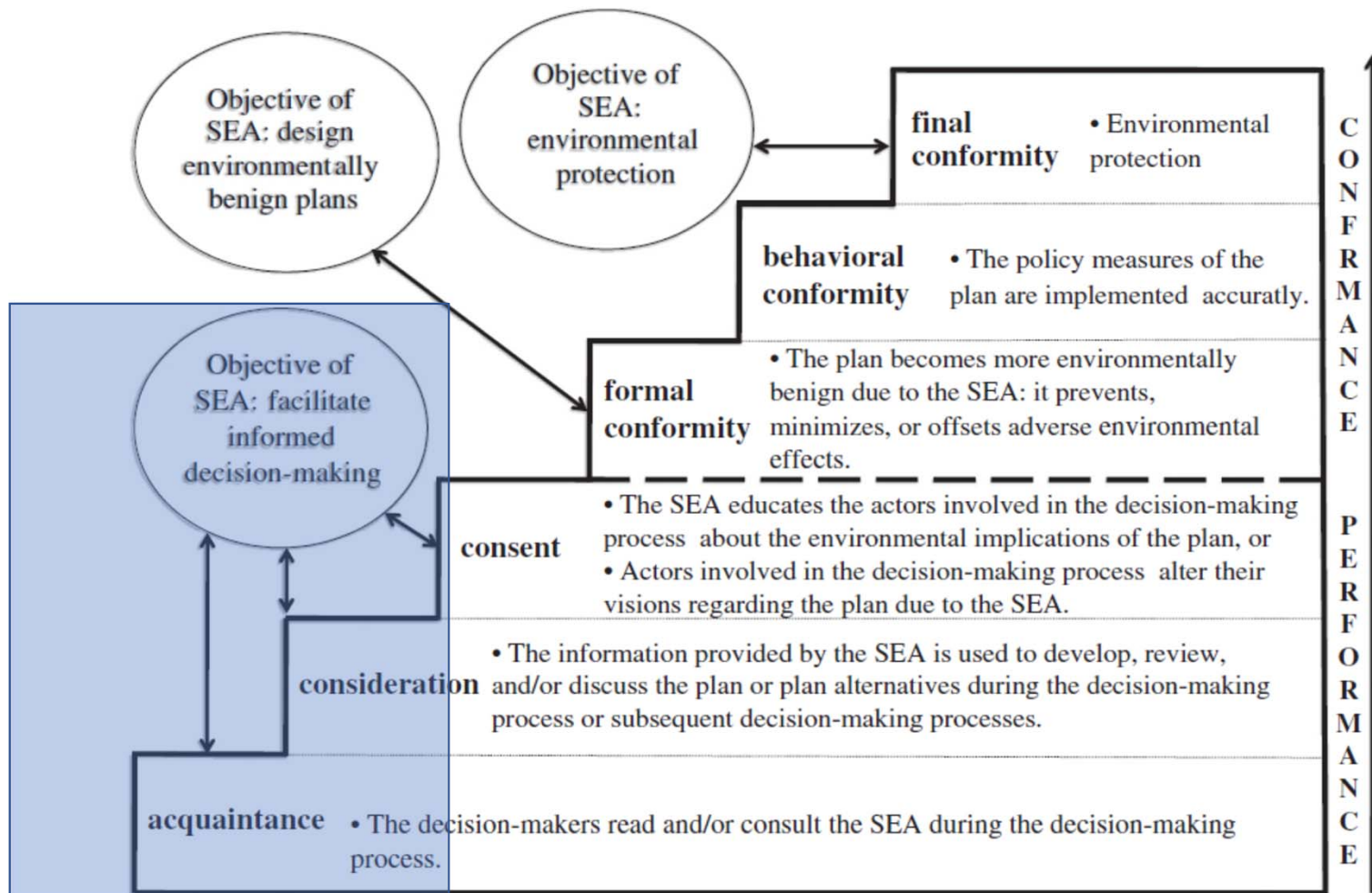
SEA in Australia?

Commonwealth EPBC level:

- “strategic thinking” research (Ross), sustainability a core concept including cumulative/alternatives. Varies by proponent
- IA in Australasia session, and recent EPBC 20 years on regional, strategic approaches
- Various issues remain:
 - consideration of alternatives
 - follow-up monitoring
 - Ministerial powers and discretion, political acceptability of the tool
 - lack of transparency
 - institutional capacity including resources and funding
 - policy makers and planners’ indifference?
 - role of positivist, scientifically rational, evidence-based approaches vs complex and politically-charged environment of policy, plan and programme generation, and deliberative approaches



Substantive effectiveness of SEA and effects on plans and decision-making



Source: Doren et al, 2013, 'Evaluating the substantive effectiveness of SEA: Towards a better understanding' in *EIA Review* 38 (2013)

Normative values for strategic planning and decision-making

(based on review of planning literature)

- Social change, social justice and socio-political considerations
- Dialogue, collaboration, democratic and community-based/driven solutions
- Different ways of knowing or experiencing problems and crafting solutions
- Contextualising approaches, aware of political reality (including scale)
- Transformative practices, bringing new things into being, and drawing on holistic thinking using the mind, heart and spirit – challenging the status quo
- Focussing on matters of equality and/or equity, and diversity
- Place-focussed, as well as on the ‘here and now’
- Structural change, exploring opportunities for enterprise, creativity, and dealing with uncertainty.

Moving SEA practice along in Oz....

- More case studies to:
 - highlight need for improvements
 - replicate what is working
 - explore in depth:
 - what was it about the Melbourne UGB example that contributed to being seen as a success?
 - what happened in Perth after strong start with legislative support?
- Contrast with international examples? London Integrated IA? Others?

In context of World Bank ESF renewed focus on outcomes-based approaches, and strong engagement throughout – **how about applying that in the local market?**

Doing the right things (strategic decisions), then doing things right...





Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

Strategic Environmental Assessments: a regulator's perspective

**Bruce Edwards – Assistant Secretary,
Environment Standards Division**

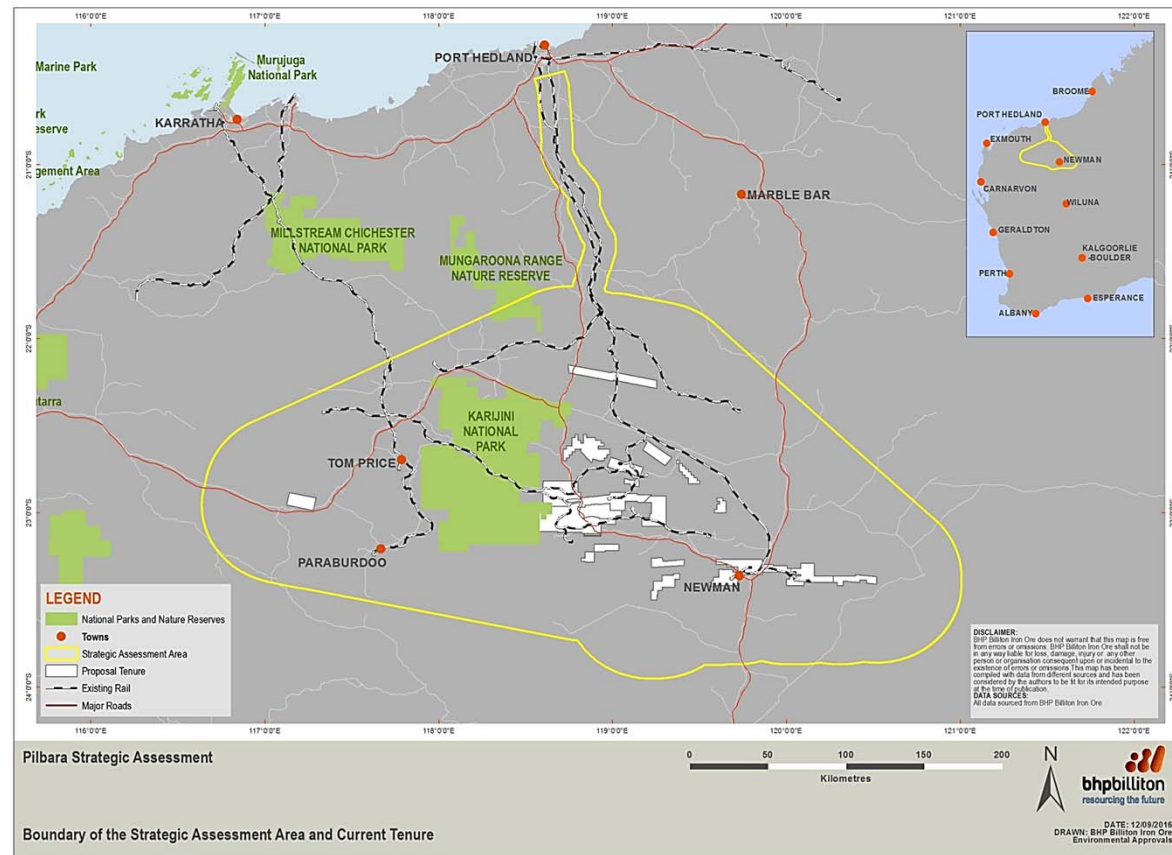


Advantages of a successful SEA

- Planning at the landscape scale and over long timeframes:
 - Achieve better triple bottom line outcomes
 - Opportunities for cumulative benefits for both parties
- Connected actions and strategic investment
- Clarity for environment and industry from the start
- Offers regulatory simplicity as project progresses
- Offers flexibility if the right approach is chosen:
 - Plan Versus Program



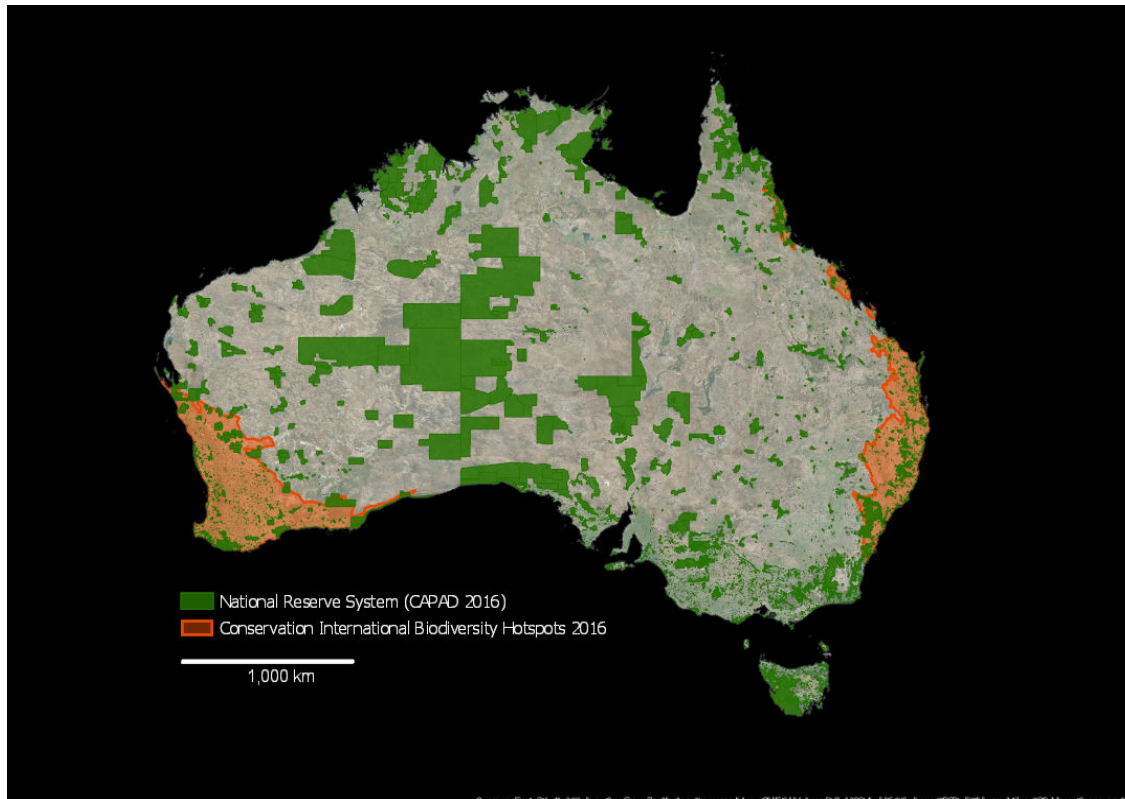
Scale of Strategic Environmental Assessments



Example: BHP Billiton – Iron Ore – Pilbara Strategic Assessment

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Biodiversity hotspots - challenge to opportunity



Map showing Australia's protected areas in green, overlaid with biodiversity hotspots in orange.

- Australia is one of 17 countries described as being 'mega diverse'
 - This group of countries has less than 10% of the global surface, but support more than 70% of the biological diversity on earth
 - Australia is one of only two countries in the high income category
- There is opportunity through Strategic Environmental Assessments to better align biodiversity hotspots and our protected areas



Observations

- Greater use of Strategic Environmental Assessments can help to manage multiple overlays of biodiversity and land use demands
- The core elements:
 - A willing and well resourced proponent and a clear approval holder
 - Identifying and communicating mutual benefits with proponents to ensure support throughout the process
 - Good availability of information to underpin environmental assessment
 - Scale can give a strategic advantage – it is at the right scale for the proposal:
 - Achieve better outcomes with cumulative benefits
 - The project and the site need to be right for SEA to be the right approach
- Protecting Matters of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act works best when aligned with assessment processes at each tier of government.
- Best outcomes are achieved when the approach is used with the right intent



Implementing strategic assessments: lessons learnt

IAIA Conference

2nd May 2019

Peter Hemphill – Open Lines Consulting

Strategic assessments only matter
if on-ground outcomes actually
happen

Implementation is important

What do we mean by implementation?

The legislation, processes, rules and governance that will deliver the development and conservation outcomes of a strategic assessment

Elements of implementation

Over-arching elements

- Governance
- Funding
- Monitoring, evaluation, reporting
- Adaptive management
- Compliance
- Stakeholder engagement

Development elements

- Development planning and approval processes

Conservation elements

- Processes for ongoing avoidance and mitigation
- Biodiversity offsets program
- Research

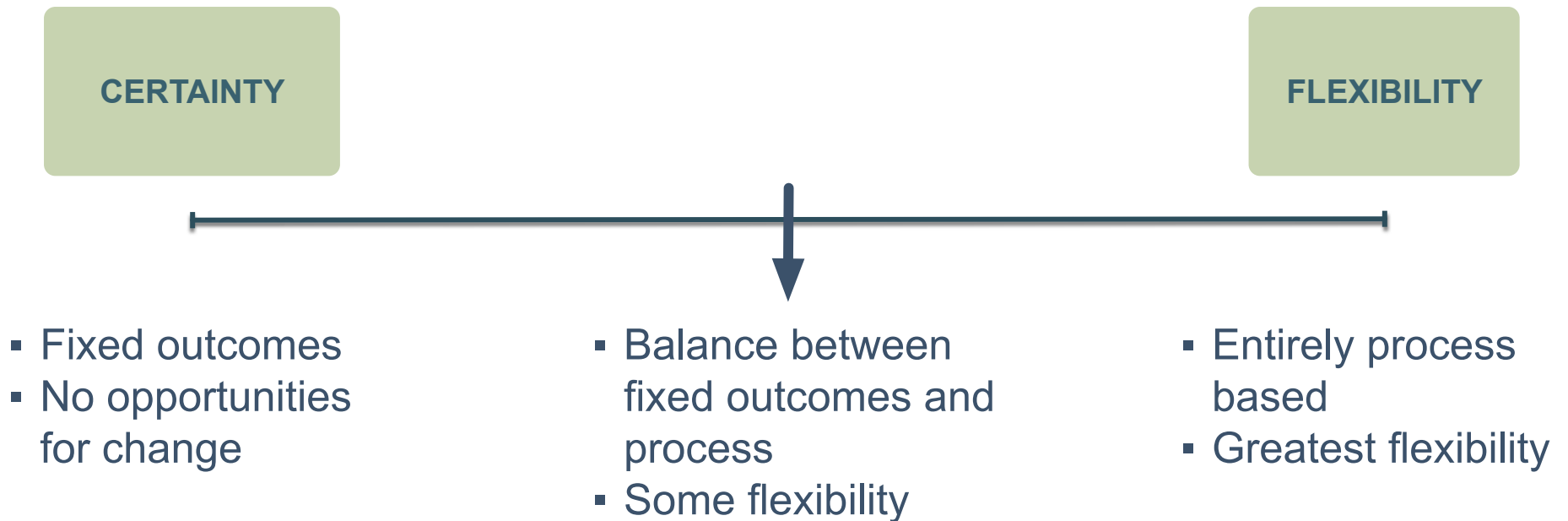
Funding

Issues to consider:

- How much funding is required?
- What funding model is used?
- How is funding managed?

Money isn't the most important thing in life, but it's reasonably close to oxygen on the "gotta have it" scale ~Zig Ziglar

Certainty v flexibility



The demand for certainty is one which is natural to [humans], but is nevertheless an intellectual vice ~Bertrand Russell

Lessons learnt

1. Implementation needs to be prioritised
2. The right people need to work on implementation
3. Implementation needs to be designed using quality decision making processes
4. There needs to be money over the life of the Program
5. The tools for implementation need to work
6. PPPs need to provide the appropriate balance of certainty and flexibility
7. Designing implementation should try to consider various scenarios, and provide mechanisms to deal with unintended consequences during implementation
8. Implementation needs to address environmental trend and the drivers for biodiversity loss