



Sustainability assessment of the South West Yarragadee Water Supply Development

For the Water Corporation

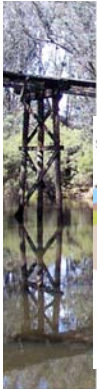
Lisa Crossing



Why a sustainability assessment?

- ❖ Initiative of the State Sustainability Strategy (SSS) that the next major water source for the State's Integrated Water Supply Scheme (IWSS) undergo a sustainability assessment
- ❖ The SSS promoted sustainability assessment for complex or strategic projects as:

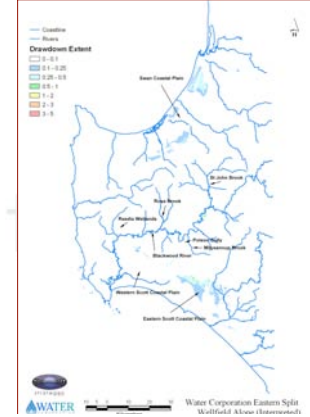
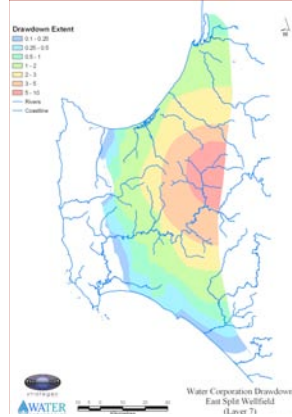
"a new process that provides integrated advice to achieve net benefit outcomes"



The South West Yarragadee aquifer



The proposal



Key features of SWY Sustainability Assessment

- ❖ Establishment of the Sustainability Panel
- ❖ Internal sustainability assessment by proponent prior to submission to decision makers
- ❖ Extensive community engagement
- ❖ Peer review of technical aspects
- ❖ One document for multiple assessment processes



Sustainability Panel

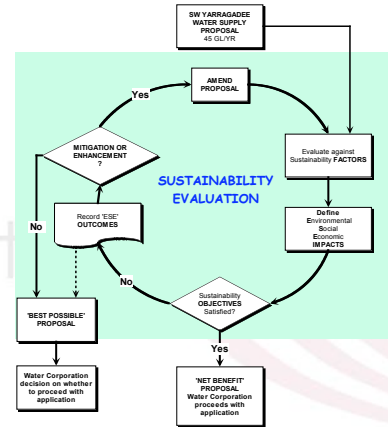
- ❖ Formed to provide transparent and independent advice to Government throughout the assessment process
- ❖ Created in the absence of an existing appropriate body to assess sustainability
- ❖ Similar to the EPA concept but not statutory
- ❖ Provided public advice to Government through the State Water Resources Council and Cabinet
- ❖ Sustainability Panel:
 - Barbara Wiese (Chair)
 - Professor Peter Newman (Sustainability)
 - Dr Geoff Syme (Social researcher)
 - Nicky Cusworth (Economist)
 - David Reid (Community - Busselton Water Board)





Methodology

- ❖ Project based assessment with no distinct alternatives
- ❖ Internal evaluation aimed at developing the best proposal possible
- ❖ Assessed predicted impacts against sustainability principles, factors and objectives
- ❖ Included bottom lines
- ❖ Ended up with sustainability principles in four 'accounts'
 - Environmental
 - Socio-economic
 - Process
 - Strategic
- ❖ Proposal was developed through an iterative process to improve the project until a positive outcome could be found within each account



Principles and Factors

- ❖ Four accounts
- ❖ 13 principles
- ❖ 39 factors!



Cross-checking

- ❖ Compared the project outcomes against the State Sustainability Strategy and the "Gibson Trade off Rules"
- ❖ Reality check to ensure that our project-specific analysis stacked up against more universal principles



Outcome

- ❖ Re-defined the proposal
- ❖ Achieved net benefits in accounts
- ❖ Offset package proposed to address any residual adverse impacts (social and environmental)
- ❖ Uncertainty addressed through an adaptive management process which involved:
 - detailed monitoring
 - contingencies in place
 - monitoring review group
- ❖ Project considered environmentally acceptable by regulators



What went wrong?

- ❖ Politics!
- ❖ Difficult to address broad community concerns:
 - Perceived uncertainty
 - Inequity: Regional resources being taken to Perth
- ❖ No community involvement in examination of alternatives
- ❖ Community engagement – Should we have done more? Should we have done less?

