



Recreation and Tourism

Identifying and prioritising ecosystem services supporting tourism and recreation in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

Summary

The upper Goulburn Broken catchment is renowned for the opportunity for the nearby population of Melbourne to enjoy the magnificent scenery and tourism activities that are offered there including skiing, four wheel driving, bushwalking, camping, horseriding or just sightseeing. The influx of tourists each year however has caused serious environmental problems for the area which need to be addressed quickly. What are the potential impacts on ecosystem services of resource managers decisions? Can a method be devised that recommends policies and practices that maintain the natural values of areas utilised for recreation and tourism activities? To answer these questions a technique called Deliberative Multi-criteria Evaluation was developed which combined the deliberative and facilitating qualities of the Citizens' Jury process with the structuring and complexity unravelling qualities of Multi-criteria Evaluation.

Background

A Citizens' Jury is based on the model that is used in western-style criminal proceedings and often involves a public decision-making process (such as the allocation of health funds or the identification of protected natural resource areas).

Multi-criteria Evaluation is an effective technique in which to identify trade-offs in the decision-making process with the ultimate goal of achieving compromise. It is also an important means by which structure and transparency can be imposed upon the decision-making.

In this project the "jurors" consisted of six natural resource managers from the catchment. They were asked to deliberate over five different recreation and tourism options and ultimately come to a consensus for a set of social, economic and environmental decision criteria weightings that reflected the group's priorities.

Project Components

The key components to the process were:

- The deliberative process following the method of the 'Citizens' Jury' to achieve consensus on a set of weights for the key decision criteria;
- A structured decision making aid based on Multi-criteria Evaluation to evaluate different options.

Project outputs include:

- An impact matrix showing a list of decision criteria, relevant indicators for the criteria and the values of these indicators under different scenarios for future management of recreation and tourism in the upper catchment;
- A list of priorities of the main decision criteria for recreation and tourism management provided by the key natural resource managers;
- Information on the most important Ecosystem Services identified as being crucial in the decision-making process for recreation and tourism in the catchment: Water Quality, Water Quantity, Biodiversity and Aesthetics; and

- A deliberative decision-making process developed and successfully tested to aid in the process of resource use planning and management.

Key observations from workshops and analyses are:

- Ecosystem Services are high priority considerations in recreation and tourism management;
- More research is needed on
 - public access issues and ways to limit access effectively;
 - the effects of education on tourism and environmental damage and whether or not education of tourists would be effective in maintaining Ecosystem Services;
 - effective methods for recovery of management costs and whether or not user pays and access charge schemes would be effective;
 - the role of market and other instruments in limiting damage
 - the effects of introducing a code of practice for tour operators and whether this will benefit Ecosystem Services; and
 - the need to reduce the number of public managers of natural resources with jurisdiction in any one area.

Key considerations are:

- In group decision-making processes involving complex issues such as Ecosystem Services, it is crucial to clearly identify and define the decision criteria involved;
- A deliberative process, where learning is enhanced by expert presentations and decision-makers are asked to declare and defend their priorities, can aid in achieving consensus; and
- The Ecosystem Services framework is robust - it provides sufficient detail to allow focus but is capable of lumping or aggregation of services and allows for communication of key issues even where high uncertainty exists.

Contact us

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Ranking of criteria for each juror where a value of 1 represents the highest rank and a value of 13 represents the lowest.

