



Environment Institute of
Australia and New Zealand Inc.

ABSTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

Title: Evolution in strategic assessments

Authors: Peter Hemphill and Heather Tolley

Organisation: Open Lines Consulting

Country: Australia

Email: peter@openlines.com.au, heather@openlines.com.au

Abstract:

Strategic assessments under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) came into operation in 2007. Since that time 19 assessments have commenced and eight of those have reached their conclusion.

In many ways strategic assessments are hugely challenging and aspirational. They are often seeking to turn the equivalent of hundreds of individual assessments into one large project. They need to:

- achieve good environmental outcomes over substantial spatial and temporal scales;
- provide both certainty and flexibility; and
- enable a program to be implemented over 30+ years.

We look at how the process has evolved from the early days of the Melbourne and Sydney urban assessments, to the more recent assessments like the Great Barrier Reef and Perth-Peel projects.

We examine the lessons learnt. What has worked well and what have been the main challenges. We also look at what has changed over the eight years that strategic assessments have been running and where they go from here.

The presentation is based on:

- Interviews with key players involved in the process. This includes personnel from the Commonwealth and State Governments, as well as the private sector.

- Personal recollections from having:
 - worked on strategic assessments in the Commonwealth environment department;
 - managed three of the large urban assessments;
 - worked on three of the other assessments; and
 - prepared the Commonwealth's guide to strategic assessments.