BEYOND COMPLIANCE OUTCOMES THROUGH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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*The views and opinions shared in this presentation are of the authors, based on our collected experience, building on the outcomes of a masters research project completed in 2018*
OVERVIEW

• The current scenario in Australia
• Why go beyond compliance?
• Barriers and opportunities
• Proponent / industry led opportunities
• Government/regulator led opportunities
IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN AUSTRALIA

- Compliance based
- Terms of reference for assessments determined by government
- Uses set regulations, policies and guidelines for different types of assessments
- Conditions, self-regulation, compliance reporting, auditing and corporate commitments used to demonstrate compliance
- Focuses on meeting and maintaining an agreed level of compliance
STOP...
LIT REVIEW AND ASSUMPTIONS TIME
But seriously…
IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN AUSTRALIA

COMPLIANCE

- Good PR / media
- Improved reputation (?)
- Social impacts more acceptable (?)
- Good corporate citizen
- CSR kudos (?)
- Continuous improvement and knowledge sharing (?)

- No approval
- Stakeholder outrage
- Delays
- Legal action
- Bad corporate citizen
- Damage to reputation
- Bad PR / media
- Extra costs
- Extra costs (?)

- Value for money (?)
- Share Price
SO, WHAT WHERE THE BARRIERS?

- Cost
- It's not in the contract
- The opportunities weren't identified at the outset
PATHWAYS TO BEYOND COMPLIANCE OUTCOMES

**Industry led**
- Value to their organisation
- Value not just recognised as $$$
- Champions who drive outcomes
- Required outcomes embedded in tender processes and contracts
- Investment can be justified, i.e. Social Return on Investment
- Corporate stakeholders are on board

**Regulator led**
- Not just black and white compliance
- Performance targets and outcomes
- Adaptative management
- Reporting on good performance, not just bad outcomes
- Social/environmental bonds
- Benchmarking and embedding best practice for continuous improvement
ROLE OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

• Re-defining ‘value’

• Establishing targets at the outset (either at a project or regional landscape scale)

• Enabling sufficient flexibility in management actions and conditions for adaptive management (but, who trusts who to do this)
INDUSTRY LED

• Need a champion at the top, and buy-in across all levels
• Examine the social, environmental and economic advantages of going beyond compliance as part of the impact assessment process
• Understand the market value of being recognized as a good corporate citizen
• Put it in the contract
• Encourage good, better best- not just black and white compliance
  – Performance outcomes
  – Adaptative management

• Benchmarking of good practice to drive continual improvement

• Encouraging healthy competition within the industry

• Incentivise – e.g. Social Bonds or Green bonds

• Mandate it- e.g. application of the Infrastructure Sustainability rating tool (ISCA)

• Need strong policy position

…. But who pays?
SO...

WHAT’S IN THE TOOLBOX?
**SOCIAL BONDS**

**Queensland SBB**
The Queensland SBB aims to safely reunify children in out-of-home care with their families, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

**YouthChoices SBB**
The YouthChoices SBB aims to reduce the frequency and severity of offending behaviour of young people who are at risk of detention or remand.

**Youth CONNECT SBB**
The Youth CONNECT SBB aims to develop the resilience of young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

OPPORTUNITY FOR BEYOND COMPLIANCE
SUMMARY

• Impact assessment process doesn’t currently encourage or celebrate going beyond compliance
• Benefits aren’t easy to value economically
• If it’s not enshrined in the contract, forget it

• Set performance or outcome targets early
• Monetise the ‘intangibles’
• Seek inspo from other jurisdictions – knowledge sharing and lessons learned
• Shift the focus from a linear, finite process to a life-cycle approach
• Shift the focus from impact assessment to outcomes management
THANK YOU

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