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Understanding Project Participants:
Adding value through stakeholder analysis

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- Social research undertaken by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Landscape Protection portfolio
- Focus on engaging community to detect and respond to weeds and pests in Victoria
- Approach applied across all Landscape Protection projects involving new participants

Project

- Improving Provincial Victoria's Biosecurity (IPVB)

Objectives

- To drive behaviour change relating to weed management

- Reduce the risk of introduction and spread of high risk category of weeds (Victorian Alert Weeds - VAW)

- Mobilise network of community 'Weed Spotter' volunteers to detect and report VAW sightings in Victoria to DPI

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Purpose of research

• Traditional focus on achieving change through working with 'community' or 'industry' to accomplish assumed *shared outcomes*

• Community groups and industry types diverse-thinking groups of individuals motivated by a range of parameters

• Stakeholder analysis used to analyse community groups

Stakeholder analysis process used to:

- Add value to program logic

- Identify key stakeholder groups

- Influence approach to on-ground implementation

- Inform evaluation

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The Stakeholder Analysis was conducted in three phases:

1. Scoping study

2. Network mapping

3. Attitudinal research

Epilobium hirsutum.
Image:Steve Smithyman

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Scoping study

- Data gathered via desktop research

- Searching local government and community directory websites

- Existence and location of each group type recorded

- Community group research overlayed with demographic information, target weed distribution data and research relating to location of 'high risk' industries for weed introduction

Scoping study information:

- Influenced selection of highest priority local government areas (LGA's) for project implementation

- Provided understanding of size of community group sector & different types of environment and general groups worthy of engagement

- Guided next two phases of research

Buddleja madagascariensis.
Image: Richard Plant

Network Mapping

- Built from the information gathered in the Scoping study

- Combined desktop research and one-on-one interviews

- In-depth understanding of linkages and exchanges within and between community groups and networks

Cereus hildmannianus. Monstrose form. Image: Stuart Roberton

Data gathered to identify:

- Particularly active and influential groups

- Methods used by groups to communicate and exchange information/knowledge

- Most suitable means of contacting and engaging with groups

- Organisational structure of networks and peak body organisations

- Means of distributing project information

To guide data collection, each group assessed against prioritisation criteria:

- *Good Communication channels* – the existence of established communication channels

- *Degree of Influence* – the level of influence that a group may have

- *Activities relevant to IPVB* – the extent to which group may undertake weed management related activities.

- *Interest in IPVB* – the level of interest shown in the IPVB project

- *Active group* – current level of group activity

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Based on the criteria:

- Research and interview questions were developed

- Telephone interviews undertaken with peak body associations, network coordinators and some agency contacts

- A 'birds eye' view of linkages and interactions within and between groups types was created

Information was translated into a 'mind-map' to provide visual representation of group:

- *Communication channels*

- *Degree of Influence*

- *Activity*

- *Potential Interest in IPVB*

Of key groups and networks for each local government area.

- Information used by project teams and managers to guide engagement strategies
- Use of Mind Manager ® program since adapted across other projects in the Landscape Protection
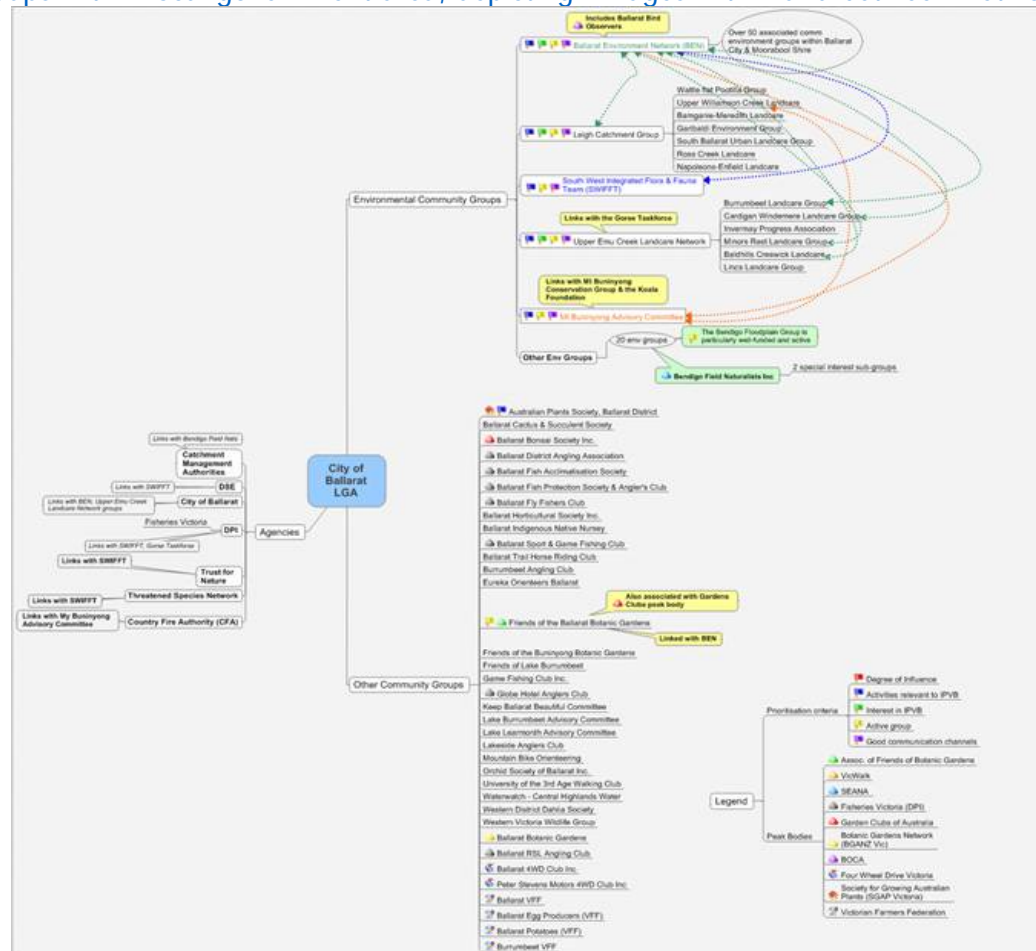- Maps can be developed as simple or complex representation of network relationships

Epilobium hirsutum.
Image: Steve Smithyman

Community Groups within local government area, depicting linkages within and between Networks, groups and agencies.

Attitudinal research

- Final step in three-phase approach to Stakeholder Analysis

- Research undertaken by external consultant

- Approach used to profile community group attributes in terms of awareness/knowledge, attitudes, motivators, barriers and skills

- Set of criteria developed to assess groups with respect to above parameters

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Criteria:

- *Awareness/ knowledge* – of the project issue

- *Attitudes* – towards the project "problem"

- *Motivators* - reasons for the development of the community group, purpose of group. Also motivators to be involved in the IPVB project

- *Barriers* - towards engagement in the project

- *Skills* – for adopting required practice change

- Broad research questions and more specific survey questions developed based on above criteria and criteria developed under network mapping (phase 2)

- Data collected by individual semi-structured telephone interviews and one focus group

- Profile of 144 groups was developed to describe each group type

- Matrixes developed based around nine indicators for each group:

•Degree of influence	•Knowledge/awareness
•Relevant activities	•Attitude
•Level of interest	•Skills
•Active group	•Potential to act
•Communication channels	

- Numerical score calculated for each indicator based on answer given to the questionnaire

- Matrixes provided another tool for officers to reference when considering strategies for engagement

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Image: Richard Plant

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Matrix developed for a sample of community groups, based around the indicators of; Degree of influence, relevant activities, level of interest, active group, communication channels, knowledge/ awareness, attitude; skills, and potential to act.

Name of Group	Degree of Influence	Relevant Activities	Level of Interest	Active Group	Communica-tion Channels	Knowledge Awareness	Attitude	Skills	Potential to act	Total (out of 9)
Bellarine Light Game & Sports Fishing Club	0.50	0.11	0.50	0.50						1.61
Geelong Bushwalking Club	0.60	0.42	0.70	0.79	0.53	0.00	0.87	0.38	0.64	4.92
Geelong Gun & Rod	0.70	0.65	0.70	0.79	0.73	0.00	0.93	0.63	0.68	5.81
Geelong Recreational Fishing Alliance	0.50	0.53	0.50	0.67	0.73	0.00	0.73	0.38	0.68	4.71
Geelong Ferret Club	0.50	0.53	0.60	0.67	0.73	0.00	0.87	0.38	0.68	4.95
Bacchus Marsh Track & Trails Committee	0.35	0.40	0.60	0.64	0.40	0.00	0.60	0.38		3.37
Geelong Fly Fishing Club	0.45	0.21	0.30	0.71	0.47	0.00	0.60	0.60		3.34
Community Fireguard (CFA) Melton	0.70	0.80	0.80	0.57	0.47	0.67	0.87	0.88	0.73	6.47

Data from attitudinal research

- Added another layer to information to describe the different attributes of groups

- Helped to ascertain group attitude towards involvement in weed surveillance

- Increased understanding of group types

- Guided strategies for engagement and methods for evaluation

Gunnera tinctoria.
Image: Richard Plant

Conclusions

Three-phase approach added value to the project & developed a better understanding of project participants by:

- Identifying groups most worthwhile for engagement and evaluation
- Identifying issues and concerns raised by groups for incorporation into key evaluation questions
- Enabling project to reduce reliance on assumptions
- Increasing credibility of project decisions and evaluation approaches

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