

# ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

<b>Key lessons learnt</b>	The consideration of long-term impacts associated with all projects is critical to ensure that environmental and sustainability needs are adequately understood, met, managed and tracked.
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## Introduction

This practitioner note outlines considerations in addressing environmental and sustainability requirements in preparation for strategic and final business cases. In undertaking a business case, industry stakeholders should consider a project's social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. This requires environmental risks to be assessed alongside the financial and economic performance of a project. Wider community effects should also be considered. The project's planning pathway, will define the mechanisms, timeframes and costs associated with making a development application and undertaking an environmental assessment.

## Key considerations

When preparing a business case, consideration and assessment should be given to the relevant social, economic and environmental risks and opportunities in each phase of the project lifecycle. Mitigation and adaptation measures should align with the principles of ecologically sustainable development, legislative and regulatory compliance.

Environmental and sustainability issues should be monitored and reported throughout the delivery and operational phase.

## Source materials

The following sets out key environmental and sustainability policies, strategies and reference material for consideration within a strategic business case review:

- ▶ *State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 – 2038* is the NSW Government's 20-year investment plan, outlining advice about infrastructure policy and priorities across all sectors. Industry stakeholders should consider how any project responds to the vision of this Strategy.
- ▶ The *Infrastructure Sustainability (IS)* rating tool, administered by Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA), is a comprehensive rating system for evaluating sustainability across an asset's lifecycle. An appropriate rating system or equivalent can help facilitate integration of sustainability thinking into the design and assessment of a project, and provide external verification.
- ▶ The *NSW Climate Change Policy Framework (2016)* outlines steps to embed climate change emissions savings and adaptation measures to be more resilient to a changing climate including risks and damage to public and private assets, climate change impacts on natural resources, ecosystems and communities, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.
- ▶ The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)* governs development in NSW through defining the mechanisms for environmental assessment and protection.

- ▶ State environmental planning policies (SEPPs) are made under the EP&A Act. The SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007, SEPP (State and Regional Development) 2011, SEPP (Major Projects) 2005 and Standard Instrument (Principal Local Environmental Plan) would determine the relevant planning pathway and subsequent level of environmental assessment required for the project.
- ▶ The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* defines how environmental planning instruments are made, development application procedures and the relevant process for environmental assessment.

\*Note that the above list is not exhaustive. It is expected that additional resources, environmental planning instruments and planning policy will be required to support the strategic and final business case. This document provides guidance and minimum requirements to consider in influencing a project's environmental and sustainable outcome and design principles.

### ▶ **About the authors:**

Stephen Thompson is an Infrastructure and Energy professional who has long term experience across all aspects of the infrastructure market in the Asia Pacific region. Stephen has over two decades of experience in development and delivery of power, water, transport and waste infrastructure projects.