

## Values Mapping: A flexible tool for building sustainability partnerships

**Authors:** Dr Judy Lambert<sup>1</sup>, Ms Jane Elix<sup>1</sup> & Bianca Priest<sup>2</sup>  
**Position:** <sup>1</sup>Co-Directors; <sup>2</sup>National Coordinator Shorebird Conservation Project  
**Organisation:** <sup>1</sup>Community Solutions; <sup>2</sup>WWF Australia  
**Contact:** ph & fax<sup>1</sup> 02-9948 7862, email: [judy@communitysolutions.com.au](mailto:judy@communitysolutions.com.au)  
<sup>2</sup> 03-6225 1399, email: [bpriest@wwf.org.au](mailto:bpriest@wwf.org.au)

### Key words:

### Key learning outcomes:

- Partnerships for sustainability often require a catalyst and an experienced facilitator to bring them to a point of sufficient strength to persist
- Putting aside values differences, and focusing on areas for potential shared outcome can often assist in building the trust needed to sustain a partnership
- Retaining flexibility in the process is an important aspect of building successful partnerships for sustainability

### Abstract:

Tensions between economic development and protection of the environment often exist between different sectors within a local community. However, it is frequently the case that these differences are far outweighed by what people value in common about their local area.

In this paper the authors will demonstrate how the use of Values Mapping combined with consensus-building strategies adopted from Alternative Dispute Resolution, can assist a community to overcome its differences and work together for shared sustainability outcomes.

Using case study examples from both north-western Tasmania and Roebuck Bay near Broome in north-western Australia, the authors will illustrate the building of partnerships for the sustainable future management of areas of outstanding natural value.

Each of the case study areas has outstanding natural values in which the habitat of migratory shorebirds was seen as a threat to existing economic development activities.

The National Shorebird Conservation Project funded by the Natural Heritage Trust and managed WWF Australia worked in both areas with professional facilitators from Community Solutions. The work involved bringing together Local, State and Federal Government agencies, scientists, environmental non-government organisations, farmers and aquaculturists, Aboriginal people and others with an interest in each of these areas. As a result, in north-west Tasmania previously serious adversaries are now working together to conserve shorebird habitat. In Broome, all the key players are now working together to progress a Management Plan for the Ramsar-listed international wetland on the shores of one of north-western Australia's key commercial ports.



## Introduction

Social values are a fundamental driver of many of the decisions we make. As long ago as the 1970s American psychologist Milton Rokeach<sup>1</sup> defined 'values' as

- Beliefs (such as honesty);
- Conceptions of, preferences for and prescriptions about desirable modes of conduct or established orientations towards living and existence (such as hard work);
- Conceptions of, preferences for and prescriptions about desirable end-states of existence and social ideals (such as status, health, peace etc)

Values are both determined by and reflective of our experiences in and responses to, the world in which we live. As Watson<sup>2</sup> identifies, values "capture the deeper motivations behind human behaviour, tendencies of thought and feelings – unconscious as well as conscious – and the intra-personal and interpersonal dynamics related to them".

While values are largely developed in response to our experiences in our younger years, they are not immutable, and can be shaped both by significant personal experiences and by external events.

Increasingly, governments at both state and national level are expecting and requiring people from different sectors of the community to come together to plan and implement natural resource and environmental management strategies. Project funding is frequently dependent on demonstrating 'partnerships' and 'collaboration'. Regional planning that underpins the distribution of Natural Heritage Trust funding requires a regional approach in which interested parties come together to plan for reversal of land degradation, conservation of biodiversity, improved water quality and river flows, and protection of coastal areas and their catchments.

The people who must come together to address these often complex and difficult issues come to the task with a diversity of backgrounds, life experiences, training and, perhaps most importantly value sets.

The National NRM Capacity Building Framework captures what is now a well-known aspect of achieving behavioural change. "To obtain on-ground improvement in our environment, those who live and work directly with it have a major role to play along with government and industry. ... in order to achieve long-term environmental outcomes, investments in people are as critical as investments in on-ground works. ... In essence, long-term sustainable NRM depends largely on building human and social capital."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Rokeach M. (1973). *The Nature of Human Values*. Free Press, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Watson B. What are Social Values. <http://erg.vironics.net/> Accessed Jan 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2002). National Natural Resource Management Capacity Building Framework. In: *The Future of Facilitation and Coordination Networks under Natural Resource Management Planning and Implementation*. Discussion Paper prepared by Environment Australia and Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry Australia, Canberra. [www.nht.gov.au/publications/nrm/attachment-c.html](http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/nrm/attachment-c.html) (Accessed August 2003).

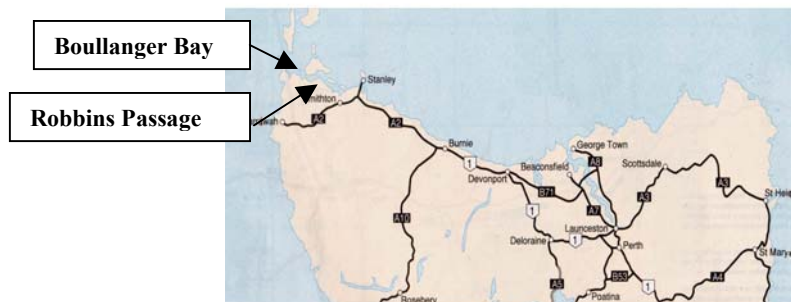
In this paper, our experiences in facilitating the bringing together of a diversity of stakeholders with an interest in the future management of areas having high value and significance for migratory shorebirds will be used to illustrate how Values Mapping can be used as a consensus-building tool to overcome pre-existing conflict or the apathy that arises from an issue being 'too hard'.

### The case study areas

Shorebirds, or waders, are a familiar part of our coastline and of the life on inland freshwater wetlands. Many of these birds, some of them as tiny as the Red-neck Stint which weighs no more than 30 grams, fly thousands of kilometres each year from their breeding grounds in Siberia and Alaska, to warmer, more food-abundant areas in Australia.

This paper focuses on Community Solutions' use of Values Mapping to assist WWF Australia in bringing together those who have a role to play in protecting the habitat of these international migratory shorebirds.

The first of these is the **Boullanger Bay/Robbins Passage area in the far north-west of Tasmania.**



Stretching north and westward from Smithton on Tasmania's far north-west coast, the area contains over 100km<sup>2</sup> of tidal mudflats rich in organisms that are the food of around 20 different shorebird species. Sandy beaches, rocky outcrops and offshore islands provide important roosting places for both resident and migratory species, with up to 19,350 birds counted in the area at peak season. This is recognised as Tasmania's most important shorebird site, and is regarded as nationally and internationally important for shorebirds.

The Circular Head Shire, with Smithton as its business centre, is dominated by plantation and native forest-based forestry and agricultural production. It is also home to a highly successful and growing aquaculture industry, and has for a long time been one of the key dairy and beef producing areas in Tasmania. Exposed as they are to the winds that blow across the Southern Ocean, Tasmania's north-west corner and the offshore islands in Boullanger Bay are also a focus for the development of windfarms. Tourism, based on the northern beaches, The Nut at Stanley and abundant recreational fishing in the area, are a growing part of the area's economy.

This mix of potentially competing uses has, in the recent past, seen hostile clashes between shorebird scientists and environmentalists seeking to have the Boullanger Bay/Robbins Passage area listed as a Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance and landholders and aquaculture leaseholders who saw such an action as taking away their production rights.

The second area, **Roebuck Bay near Broome in north-western Australia**, is culturally and environmentally a very different place from the north-west of Tasmania.



Lying to the south and east of the Kimberley coastal tourist town of Broome, the azure waters of Roebuck Bay cover approximately 50,000 hectares, about one-third of which are mudflats exposed twice daily by the huge tidal movements that occur in the region. Extensive seagrass beds, which serve as important nursery areas for fish and other marine species occur in these shallow coastal areas. The grey sandy silt of the mudflats contrasts sharply with the surrounding red pindan sandy cliffs and the green hues of the abundant mangrove species lining the shores of the Bay. Beyond these coastline areas are saline grasslands which are important both as shorebird roosting areas and for the pastoral industry that, together with tourism, is one of the economic drivers of the area.

With as many as 170,000 shorebirds from at least 19 species found in the area at peak season, Roebuck Bay is regarded as one of the top 10 shorebird sites in Australia. As is the case in north-western Tasmania, mudflats rich in tubeworms, molluscs and other food species are the drawcard for migratory birds, recorded as coming from Hong Kong, northern China, Taiwan, Russian Siberia and Alaska.

The natural heritage values of Roebuck Bay are recognised through its listing on the Register of the National Estate. A Ramsar-listed Wetland of International Importance covers the eastern part of the Bay. The WA Department of Conservation and Land Management has indicated a desire for the area to become a Marine Park.

The Roebuck Bay area is also of considerable cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance to Aboriginal people who have always lived in the area. There are at present two Native Title claims over parts of the Bay and surrounding areas.

Until recently efforts to manage the Bay for its outstanding environmental values have been limited, and with substantial growth in tourism, residential development combined with increased use of the deepwater Port at the entrance to the Bay by petroleum interests, the oyster pearl-growing industry, and a local fishing industry, the risks to environmental values are of concern to residents and visitors.

In seeking to move from a state of hostile opposition in far north-western Tasmania, or of relative indifference in the Kimberley, WWF Australia contracted Community Solutions to undertake a Values Mapping process involving all of the key stakeholders whose participation was important to the future conservation management of the shorebird habitat in these areas.

The approach adopted was based on building recognition of shared values, while at the same time respecting differences between the various groups and individuals involved. It had a strong focus on consensus-building.

### **Respecting difference & valuing different ways of knowing**

Natural resource management issues almost inevitably involve a diverse range of interests, including community-based environmentalists, scientists, land owners, and one or more of the three levels of government. As Irons identifies in his work<sup>4</sup>, the issues range across different spatial and temporal scales, and encompass environmental, legislative, socio-political and economic considerations, all of which need to be recognised and taken into account.

That participants from the different sectors will bring to the process different ways of knowing is well documented, yet these differences are often overlooked. As Adler and his colleagues highlight “By itself, scientific and technical knowledge is neither a ‘be-all’ nor ‘end-all’ in environmental conflicts”<sup>5</sup>. Adler goes on to say that “Many lay people think science is conducted wholly in the realm of testable knowledge. Scientific methodology stresses experimentation and quantifiable conclusions: observation, hypothesis, experiment, and conclusions. Subjective knowledge, however, plays a larger role than many people know or than scientists will often admit to. Past experiences, intuition, hunches, values about what is important to know, and even bidding/betting processes like ‘Monte Carlo’ analysis often enter into the scientific process, particularly in framing questions for research and data collection.”

And, as Schein<sup>6</sup> points out in his article on cultures of management, even within a single organisation executives, engineers and operators do not really understand each other very well. Furthermore, scientific and technical research in the life, engineering and social sciences rarely provides definitive and unequivocal answers. What we are striving for in

---

<sup>4</sup> Irons CD (1999). Assessing community values and priorities. In: Bureau of Rural Sciences. Proceedings of the ‘Country Matters’ conference, Canberra, 20-21 May, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Adler P, Barrett RC, Bean MC, Birkhoff JE, Ozawa CP & Rudin EB. Managing scientific and technical information in environmental cases: Principles and practices for mediators and facilitators. RESOLVE Inc, US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution & Western Justice Center Foundation. [www.resolve.org/pdfs/envir\\_wjc.pdf](http://www.resolve.org/pdfs/envir_wjc.pdf) (accessed 2001)

<sup>6</sup> Schein EH (1996). Three cultures of management: The key to organizational learning. Sloan Management Review 38(1), 9-20.

sustainable environment and natural resource management is a 'best bet' direction that can be revisited and shaped over time.

Adler and his colleagues identify among the different types of knowledge brought to the table 'traditional' knowledge, 'cultural' knowledge, 'local' knowledge, and 'remembered' knowledge, and they see each as having a legitimate place in the process.

Professor Val Brown<sup>7</sup>, in her work on linking knowledge cultures to sustainability and health, captures the different ways of knowing as 'local community' 'specialised', and 'organisational/strategic' knowledges, which she describes as "constructed in different social systems with different languages and different interpretations of the same reality", and "bookended" by 'individual' and 'holistic' knowledge. Brown looks to strategies for bringing these different forms of knowledge together, with the participants equally empowered to negotiate collaborative outcomes, as an essential step towards sustainability.

Beilin & Boxelaar<sup>8</sup> in their paper rethinking action research, bring to the fore the importance of 'giving voice' to the various forms of knowledge, and highlight the fact "that 'giving voice' to others implies a power relationship and a dependence of the 'other'." They go on to stress that "Merely including others does not necessarily empower them, especially when their views are assimilated within the dominant view to achieve cohesion within a group".

The task in complex land use and natural resource management issues such as those involved in the shorebird habitat projects at Robbins Passage and Roebuck Bay is therefore to use methods which recognise and value the different forms of knowledge and to bring them together for shared outcomes.

### **Mapping Values - a tool for building dialogue & trust**

Values Mapping is a technique developed in business marketing to assist a company to define its own direction and to position itself in the marketplace. As McCracken<sup>9</sup> identifies in her work, shared values are important in "gaining and maintaining a common focus and developing and implementing work systems that maintain high involvement, balance the chaos often created by perpetual change, and apply appropriate technology." McCracken goes on to discuss two types of values – those that "define the principles that guide ethical behaviour", helping to establish culture and create shared expectations, and those that provide guidelines for evaluation of alternatives that impact on organisational

---

<sup>7</sup> Brown VA (2004). Knowing: Linking the knowledge cultures of sustainability and health. In: Brown VA, Grootjans J, Ritchie J, Townsend M & Verrinder G (2004). Sustainability and Health: Supporting global integrity n public health. Griffith University Press, Nathan Queensland, pp.1326-174.

<sup>8</sup> Beilin R & Boxelaar L (2001). Rethinking action research: Theory and extension practice. In: Australasia-Pacific Extension Network. Proceedings of International Conference, Toowoomba, Queensland, 3-5 October 2001. [www.regional.org.au/au/apen/2001//BeilinR.htm](http://www.regional.org.au/au/apen/2001//BeilinR.htm) (Accessed 2003).

<sup>9</sup> McCracken J (1999). Value Strategies help to unite business goals. Austin Business Journal. [www.thoughtspaceinc.com/pubs/value.html](http://www.thoughtspaceinc.com/pubs/value.html) (Accessed 2003).

performance. McCracken asserts that “When well defined, values act as a point of definition that guides the focus of a fluid and/or distributed workforce and enables high involvement and rapid response” and goes on to discuss the importance of investing time and effort in identifying shared values among members of the workforce from different disciplines.

Kambil and his associates<sup>10</sup> at New York University, describe value positioning in terms of a three-step process of diagnosing, identifying and repositioning.

Community Solutions has adapted the business approach to Values Mapping as a tool to enable dialogue between stakeholders from different sectors. Beginning with maps of the area in which environmental, land use or natural resource planning is required, the Values Mapping process allows interested group representatives and key individuals to identify visually what they value about the place, without reliance on language specific to that sector.

### **Using consensus-building strategies**

This values identification process is combined with a strategic approach adopted from mediation and consensus-building. Background research, telephone networking within the local community, surveys, an Issues Paper, values mapping focus groups, and a facilitated workshop directed to achieving shared outcomes and commitments to implementation are all used in varying combinations tailored to the needs of the people involved.

As Adler et al<sup>5</sup> make clear, a degree of flexibility is an important aspect of consensus-building. However, these authors provide a useful template from which to begin.

- A. Gain substantive knowledge – of the issues, language and terminology
- B. Undertake pre-case consultation – of the key layers, groups and interests, and the resources available to complete the work
- C. Scoping and conflict analysis – using observation, secondary sources and interviews with the parties involved.
- D. Designing the process – helping the parties to assess financial and time investment needed and the information needed.
- E. Conducting initial meetings – with clear ground rules, definition of topics involved and learning about each other’s interests.
- F. Structuring and managing discussions – managing complex issues discussions and assisting the various parties to contribute equitably, identifying risk and precautions as the process progresses
- G. Assisting experts to clarify scientific and technical inputs – bridging the gap between different types of knowledge and helping each to understand the other’s perspective.

---

<sup>10</sup> Kambil A, Ginsberg A & Bloch M (1996). Re-inventing Value Propositions. New York University Center for Research on Information Systems, Working Paper IS-96-21. <http://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~akambil/publications/valu1/val.htm> (Accessed 2003).

- H. Negotiate and facilitate problem-solving – let the natural mediators’ in a group do what they do best and avoid traditional ‘trade-offs’ in favour of ‘livable solutions’
- I. Working towards agreement-making and implementation – helping parties to understand when they have sufficient agreement to go ahead and negotiate solutions, recognising the importance of flexible and adaptive agreements.

As Elix<sup>11</sup> highlights in her work on public policy dispute resolution, several researchers have identified a clash of values as one of the underpinning reasons for intractable conflict. The aim of the Values Mapping processes used in the WWF shorebird habitat conservation projects was to

- make the range of values held by the various stakeholders transparent
- improve communication between the various stakeholders, avoiding entrenched positions that might arise because of differing use of language and the values that attach to it
- change participants’ perceptions of the available alternatives and the transactional costs of them, avoiding ‘win-lose’ trade-offs and restoring some balance into the discussion
- change individual perceptions of self within the community, and the personal values that attach to that perception.

### **What role for the facilitator?**

Facilitation is, as Keating<sup>12</sup> describes it, “about working with people and assisting individuals with their interactions and discussions”. Facilitation aims to empower people to take control and responsibility for their own efforts and achievements. Effective facilitation requires clarity of purpose, a well designed and managed process in which participants provide the content.

Substantial debate exists in academic and other literature, as to whether a facilitator can, or should be value neutral within a process. It is Community Solutions’ view, based on more than a decade of experience, that while neutrality is desirable, it is important that the facilitator can interpret the different values and positions presented and their implications for an outcome, in order to progress any impasse that might arise. This observation is reinforced by Lampe & Kaplan<sup>13</sup> who, in a case study review of land use conflict resolution, found that those involved “expressed strong appreciation for the intervener’s substantive knowledge of the content of the conflict and ability to suggest options and alternative means for overcoming differences.”

---

<sup>11</sup> Elix J (2003). Intractable environmental conflict in Australia. *Rural Society* 15(1), pp.87-94.

<sup>12</sup> Keating C (2003). *Facilitation Toolkit: A practical guide for working more effectively with people and groups*. Department of Environment Protection, Waters and Rivers Commission & Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth.

<sup>13</sup> Lampe D & Kaplan M (1999). *Resolving land-use conflicts through mediation: Challenges and opportunities*. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Working Paper No.3, p.3.

Galvovic, Dukes & Lynott<sup>14</sup> in their work on training and educating environmental mediators, outline six characteristics which they see as indicative of “the consummate environmental mediator”, who is both ethical and effective. These qualities which are either innate or the product of years of development built on both training and experience are:

1. Advocacy for sustainable development.
2. Environmental literacy, that is, familiarity with the language and substance of environmental science and public policy.
3. Significant life experience.
4. Commitment, integrity and trustworthiness.
5. The ability to adopt different dispute resolution styles and behaviours.
6. Superb planning and organizational capacity.

Elix<sup>15</sup> identifies in her consideration of ‘success’ in public policy dispute interventions, that while impartiality (i.e. freedom from favouritism or bias) and neutrality (i.e. not acting to support one party over another) in the facilitator or mediator are expected, these are perhaps less significant than the ability to be flexible, improvisational and reflexive.

In Values Mapping, and other environment and natural resource management issues, the facilitator will often fulfill a role as ‘cultural translator’ – interpreting the different languages used and the value sets that underpin them.

### **What role for Local Government?**

Where Local Government is involved in addressing complex environment and natural resource management issues it can play a key role in ensuring that facilitation processes are put in place to facilitate negotiated outcomes ‘owned’ by all sectors. The position of Local Government in a relatively close relationship to the local community and its place in the hierarchy of government decision-making positions this level of government well to promote this need.

If unable to play the facilitation role itself, Local Government can play a key role in ensuring that independent facilitators with appropriate skills are brought in to assist the process. Local government will also be an important provider of access to several forms of knowledge, and may be well placed to provide supporting resources to enable facilitation processes to occur locally.

Just as local governments are increasingly skilling up staff as mediators in the planning and development context, so they may train staff to fulfill the independent consensus-

---

<sup>14</sup> Galvovic B, Dukes EF & Lynott J (1997). Training and educating environmental mediators: Lessons from experience in the United States. *Mediation Quarterly*, Summer 1997, pp.278-279.

<sup>15</sup> Elix J (2003). The meaning of success in public policy dispute interventions. *Australian Dispute Resolution Journal* 14(2), pp.113-124.

building role in small to medium-scale environment and natural resource management issues.

### **'Partnerships' for the future**

A successful Values Mapping process, built around sound consensus-building strategies can, as the Tasmanian and Kimberley shorebird habitat conservation projects demonstrate, bring several benefits.

Stakeholders previously not even in discussion with each other have reached a point where they have come together in project teams successful in attracting significant project funding for various natural resource management outcomes. As their work together progresses, participants build up trust and understanding which then enables them to discuss other more contentious issues. Ultimately, the whole area, its environment and the industries that rely on that environment for their incomes, also benefit.

Whether born of previous conflict, apathy, disinterest or resolute independence, the building of dialogue and commitment to shared action through a facilitated process has considerable benefits for the whole area and those who come to share its values. Through alliances and partnerships those involved can achieve more effective and sustainable outcomes than can any of the participants acting alone.