

## Spring 2002 Inaugural Seminar Program

4.00 pm, Tuesday 29 October

**Wendy Proctor**  
CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems

*Aiding decisions about land-use change: combining multi-criteria evaluation with a deliberative approach*

**Venue:** Seminar Room 1, National Centre for Development Studies, 2nd floor of J.G. Crawford Building (13), Ellery Crescent, Australian National University, Canberra.

**Abstract:** Multi-criteria evaluation is a well-tried and effective procedure for structuring and aiding complex decision-making processes - especially those involving environmental considerations. Formal deliberative processes have also been successful in aiding understanding and meeting consensus in complex and difficult decision problems which involve more than one decision-maker. Here, both approaches are combined to assist a group of natural resource managers decide on a suitable option for recreation and tourism in the upper Goulburn Broken Catchment of Victoria. The analysis forms part of a larger study looking at the nature and value of ecosystem services in the region. First, a set of options and decision criteria are identified by the decision-makers. Next, the criteria are ranked to identify disparities in priorities for the decision makers. A 'stakeholder jury' process is then carried out with the decision-makers given the charge of coming to consensus on a set of weights for the criteria. Experts are called in to provide information on those criteria with wide disparities in priorities and a facilitated deliberative process is carried out including the requirement of decision-makers to support and defend their positions. A probabilistic Multi-criteria Decision Analysis software tool called ProDecX is used interactively to aid the decision-makers in their deliberations. A preferred option is eventually agreed upon. The main outcome of the process was the discovery of some important aspects of the decision problem that require deeper understanding and assessment if that preferred strategy is to have the desired results. Some suggestions for improving the process were provided, but, in general, the Deliberative Multi-criteria Evaluation was regarded as a helpful and useful procedure by the decision-makers that aided them in their understanding of the issues of a complex decision-making problem.

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