To the teacher

Out of the Blue the teacher’s kit comprises three elements:

1. This booklet: Desalination in Australia, environmental impacts and urban water issues.
2. The video documentary ‘Out of the Blue’

The booklet: Desalination in Australia

This booklet is made up of 12 topics that are divided into three sections:

Section 1 topics 1-3: Introduction. This section introduces basic concepts and sets the context within which the subsequent case study occurs.

Section 2 topics 4 – 8: Changes to land use. This section introduces the Victorian Desalination Project as a case study. It explains the way the land has been used in the past, is currently being used, and the kinds of changes that are likely once the VDP is completed.

Section 3: topics 9 – 12: Conflict and resolution. This section considers the basis of conflicts over land use from the perspective of stakeholders. It then compares the vested interests of the main parties and the processes used to resolve differences. The final topic ‘measuring sustainability’ integrates the content of the preceding 11 topics into a single context.

The video: Out of the Blue

The video tells the story of the planning for the VDP. It uses a number of perspectives, principally those of affected communities. The video illustrates the way the planning process was managed and the problems parties had communicating and resolving differences. The end point of the documentary is the summer of 2008/09. At that stage the Minister for Planning had received the report of the EES panel but had not made public the report or his response.

The website

From time to time student activities require further resources in order to complete activities set out in this booklet. These can be found on the website


Topics that use web resources have their own webpage linked to the above address. Resources found on the site include video clips, pdf files, hyperlinks and images.

We suggest that you familiarise yourself with the resources stored on the site, and devise a strategy for using them before getting started.