

Why? WISE!

1. WISE (Water Information System for the Environment)

- WISE is a software database available on the web or as a CD-ROM that allows you to find every publication on water and the environment for a whole catchment.

2. Planning and Management

- WISE manages information at a catchment scale.
- The success of meeting catchment management objectives depends on access to the best available information. WISE rapidly finds this information for an entire catchment for informed decision-making.
- WISE provides an accurate basis for monitoring of natural resource management issues across catchments (e.g. benchmarks).
- WISE leads directly to information on natural resources relevant to economic, social and environmental issues related to water.
- WISE is a rigorous and flexible database, providing a continual information resource for natural resource management. Its modular structure is easily updated and modified.

3. Auditing

- WISE identifies gaps in knowledge, so that new research is well focused and doesn't duplicate past efforts.
- WISE allows you to compare new and past information.

4. Issues Management

- WISE identifies and provides key primary source material on local or regional issues in catchments (see Key Issues facility). Issues include such things as water quality and salinity.
- WISE provides site specific information on rivers, creeks and wetlands in a catchment. The database identifies the full extent of knowledge for a river from water quality, salinity, flora and fauna to cultural resources.
- Users can identify all material available for a catchment on a specific subject. For example, "*blue-green algae*" has 111 references in the Barwon-Darling WISE database; "*salinity*" has 90 references in the Namoi WISE database; "*economics of water use*" has 32 references in the Macquarie WISE database; and "*heavy metals*" has 32 references in the Hacking WISE database. These unique functions of WISE enable catchment management authorities to ensure that decisions about natural resources are informed by the best available information for rivers and wetlands.

5. Investment

- WISE can specifically identify what gaps require investment in new information for issues, wetlands, river & creeks and catchments.
- WISE can be used to strategically direct investment in, and interpretation of, old and new information for management and monitoring.

6. Advice

- WISE identifies crucial information of the "who, what, where and when" of water science for entire catchments. WISE can also be used to identify 'experts' who have studied water resources in catchments. These may help Catchment Management Authorities to quickly access scientific advice.

7. Capacity Building

- Environmental sustainability is difficult without the involvement of the local community. WISE can break down some of the barriers to knowledge and promote community participation.
- WISE can help Catchment Management Authorities involve communities in decision making and make best use of catchment knowledge and expertise.
- WISE is an extremely powerful database of information for communities and Governments. It can also assist students and research scientists.
- WISE draws together and provides access to natural resource management information for all of the community.
- WISE is user friendly and can be used by any landholder, communities or governments. It is readily accessible to the community on CD-ROM or the internet:
www.wiserivers.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

8. Where is the Science?

- Communities are increasingly concerned about the 'science' that underpins policy and management, and WISE offers a gateway to that science.
- WISE provides scientific knowledge and enables Catchment Management Authorities to apply this to their management.
- WISE identifies articles and books that have been peer reviewed to an international standard, as well as all other science done in a catchment.

9. Local Information Informing Decision Making

- WISE is a community product. The support, opinions and contributions of the local community groups shapes the databases.
- Community participation and contribution comes through oral histories and photographs. WISE also identifies localised reports such as council publications.

10. Indigenous Information

- WISE documents and makes available interpretations of the landscape from an Aboriginal perspective with oral histories and publically available stories.
- WISE aims to increase the community's knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture.
- WISE uses traditional owner names for rivers and wetlands where appropriately available.

11. Education

- A wealth of information is provided in WISE for everyone to learn about a catchment.
- The WISE software is an invaluable education tool that can be used at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
- It raises community awareness and provides educational opportunities of the social, environmental and economic benefits of natural resource management and stewardship.

12. Legislative Relevance

- Most natural resource management legislation requires access to scientific information. This includes environmental assessment, water quality conservation (including threatened species), fisheries and water management. In addition, new legislation in NSW reinforces the importance of good information (Natural Resources Commission and Catchment Management Authorities).