

Department of Planning and Environment

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SEED's customised solution to enabling open access to NSW Water data

A case study on SEED's partnership with DPE Water

January 2023





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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More information

SEED – Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data

Acknowledgements

DPE Water

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SEED has partnered with the Department of Planning and Environment Water to improve water sector transparency and build confidence in water management by providing open access to water data.

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Water needed to publish water data openly to meet NSW Water Strategy commitments and recommendations of the Chief Scientist and Engineer to make improvements in the NSW water sector.

SEED is a central location for NSW environmental data managed by DPE Environment and Heritage. Adding water data to the portal was a mutually beneficial opportunity for SEED to improve the number and types of datasets available and enhance the way its users can search for themed data.

SEED currently has over 5200 datasets, including many user-friendly tools and an interactive spatial map with over 400 layers that users can manipulate to create custom queries. SEED users include researchers, academics, environmental regulators, and the community.

Approach

SEED focused on a user-centred design approach, aiming to provide DPE Water with a customised and unique solution that benefitted all SEED users. Enhancements to the SEED portal were made, including upgrading metadata to comply with the latest standards and introducing themed 'Groups' search functionality. Groups were launched on SEED in June 2022 and a DPE Water 'group' was created so that users can search for and access all DPE Water data easily in one location.

The SEED team was central to the brokering of workflows to get datasets onto the SEED dataset catalogue and the SEED Map.

Value delivered and results

Open access to data

The availability of DPE Water data on this central data portal makes the data easier to find and allows users to explore it alongside other important NSW environmental datasets on SEED. These factors minimise duplication of effort.

Data is open and freely available, and users do not need to create an account or log in to access data. Many DPE Water datasets are also available spatially via the SEED map so users can visually interact with the data. Users also have access to basic statistics of data usage for a particular dataset or group.

Ben Wilson, Manager, Water Data Products DPE says, '*SEED definitely solved our immediate problem of starting to get our data out in the public domain and enabled us to be open and transparent with the data DPE Water had.*'

Well established data governance framework

Trust in the datasets that are accessible on SEED is vital to its success and gives the community confidence in the decisions that are made about the environment.

Data lives with, and is managed by, the data creator and custodian. SEED ensures transparent and equitable access, and adheres to international standards.

Partnerships

Including water data on SEED supported DPE Water in its open access requirements and has opened up future opportunities for further collaboration.

SEED's partnership with the DPE Water group is focused on shared ownership and will continue to support innovation and collaboration to deliver outcomes.

SEED's commitment to customer-focused delivery

SEED's core values focus on users and it is committed to customer-centred delivery and continuous improvement. SEED ensured the solution provided to the DPE Water group was created iteratively with DPE Water and other key stakeholders. The SEED portal was enhanced to develop 'Groups' functionality, which allows datasets with a common theme to be grouped and searchable by theme, which makes it easier to search and find curated sets of data.

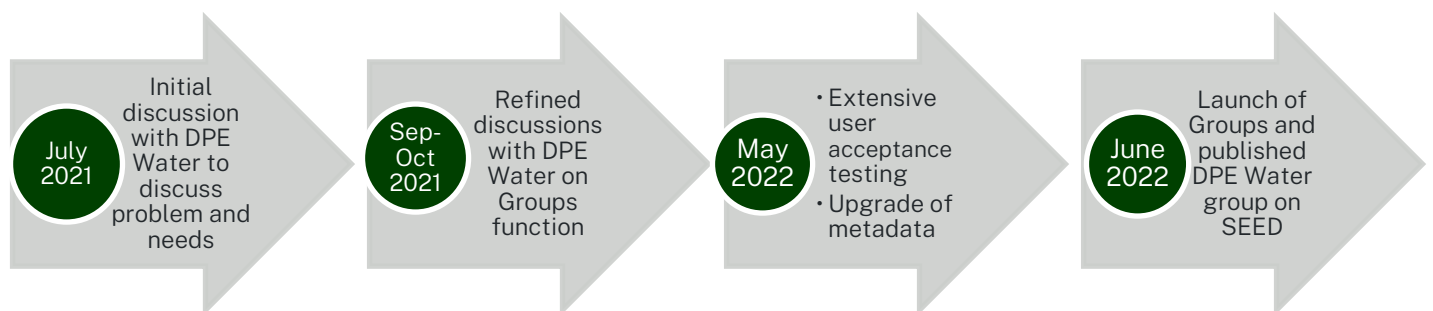
In addition, users can subscribe to the '[DPE Water' group](#) tag, and receive notifications and alerts when new datasets are added.

"Having the Groups functionality was key for us. We wanted to be able to direct our users to a single place where they could see all of our data assets easily, and having the groups created and linked as a tile on the front page has made it really easy for us to direct users to it - all in one spot."

Ben Wilson

Manager, Water Data Products DPE

Key milestones/timeline



Focus on continuous improvement

DPE Water is committed to increasing both the number and variety of datasets published on SEED and has an ongoing program of work underway to prioritise and publish a backlog of datasets and to focus on engaging with the users of the datasets.

Ben Wilson says, *'We've had some discussions about building a community – where we can interact with the people that are using our data, and have direct contact with them on the platform.'*

In addition to the launch of Groups, SEED is continuously working with users to improve the SEED portal through enhancements and new tools.