

13th International Riversymposium



Feature Sessions

POLICY, GOVERNANCE, REGULATION - A KEY FEATURE AT THE 13th INTERNATIONAL RIVERSYMPIOSIUM

Establishing the correct policies, implementing a good governance framework and instituting water plans and regulations are key to bringing about better water management.

Managing transboundary water always raises difficult governance issues. Within Australia, the federal government can provide authority and funding to help but there is no overarching governance structure for most international transboundary waters. Australian examples of transboundary water management will be described in a feature session C3B and elsewhere throughout the program. Two of the case studies – the Drim River in eastern Europe and the Senegal River in West Africa – cover international transboundary rivers while a special feature session (C2B) hosted by the International Commission of the Danube River and Avara Institute for Environmental Studies, Israel will focus on sharing experiences in managing transboundary waters.

While there is no specific session on regulations, many of the papers discuss the design and application of these controls over permissible activities. Thus, the session on water in the mining industry (A3B) includes papers on efforts to bring this industry within the water planning and allocation framework.

This year's *Riversymposium* program has a strong emphasis on water planning. In the past, much of the planning emphasis has been on instituting plans for the heavily regulated systems such as those in the Murray Darling Basin. Session A2A will provide an opportunity to examine planning in the unregulated systems of Western Australia and elsewhere. Session B4B will describe the development of a new generation of tools to assist water planners, including methods to better understand the tradeoffs involved in allocating water.



RICHARD DAVIS
Chief Science Officer
National Water Commission

Moving water through cities

Most of the world's population now lives in urban areas, and for good reason most of those urban areas are located on rivers. We initially build our settlements on rivers for access to clean, freshwater, and then inadvertently yet systematically pollute and degrade those urban waterways. It's a common story across the world. Many communities are now addressing the degradation of urban rivers and stressed water resources, and seeking more sustainable and holistic approaches to urban water management.

At this year's *Riversymposium*, a special stream 'Moving Water Through Cities' brings together the stories of cities where positive change is occurring, and from researchers seeking to better understand the physical and social science of urban water management.

A highlight of this stream will be the international stories, including the London Rivers Action Plan and the inspirational 'waterscapes' being created in Singapore. In the Moving Water Through Cities program you can also hear other international case studies from India, Japan, and the United States.

It is also fitting that the *Riversymposium* is being held in Perth, where the Australian water sensitive urban design movement started some 20 years ago. We'll hear stories of the host cities' journey over this time and of some of the novel projects that are helping Perth on its journey towards becoming a water sensitive city.

Alan Hoban
Program Manager - Water by Design
SEQ Healthy Waterways Partnership



Impacts of climate change on rivers

The trends in climate over Australia vary from north to south, with some northern areas possibly expecting more rainfall under a changing climate, while southern areas can expect substantial declines. Coupled with uncertain trends in potential evaporation, the consequences of these trends are worrying, given that the majority of Australians live in the south, (and in particular the south-east), where fresh water resources are declining and Australia's major food production areas are increasingly subject to a drying climate. .

These climate trends and increased variability are likely to have major impact on river systems, both as water resources for humans and for aquatic ecosystems. Inflow to dams and recharge to aquifers has been noted to be in decline. The south-west of Western Australia has been living under this changed, drying regime for four decades. The impacts observed on catchments, rivers and ecosystems may provide a model for similar changes just becoming apparent in other parts of Australia and the world.

This session will present the latest knowledge on climate trends for Australia, the impact these trends are likely to have on runoff generation and streamflow, and discuss how this may be affected by catchment conditions. Further, in this session we will discuss the ecological consequences of these changes, and how we may build a monitoring system to help track the impacts of these on river systems that may assist better management for a more robust future.

For further information including speakers and topics, visit our website - www.riversymposium.com

Presented by CSIRO

Environmental flows - throughout the program within *Rivers & Catchments* focus

As usual, environmental flows will be an important and predominant theme in the International Riversymposium program this year. Many aspects of environmental flows will be discussed including of course, the science. One hot topic this year is how flows affect survival of wetlands and will be discussed for the Murray River, the Yanga National Park and the Yellow River in China amongst others.

How much water do fishes need and how do we measure their responses? The session on environmental flows and fish will follow the feature on demonstration reaches and be a good precursor for the feature on preventing freshwater extinctions.

Speakers will also concentrate on environmental flows in water planning and policy and this session will complement a feature session on water planning. The role of environmental flows in restoration projects across many continents should inspire considerable discussion. Environmental flow enthusiasts will be interested in the sessions on '*watching water move*' for some innovative monitoring techniques.

In the closing plenary, the Great River Debate will consider whether the oceans hold the future solutions for water. If we turn to more desalination for our water supplies, can we then have more water available for environmental flows? Be there to have your say.



MEDIA SHOULD REPORT TO THE REGISTRATION AREA ON ARRIVAL AT BURSWOOD CONVENTION CENTRE FOR INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

For information regarding these themes and the program, please visit – www.riversymposium.com

For further information and interview opportunities contact –

Carla Mathisen

Riversymposium Producer

T +61 7 3123 7766 ext 202

M 0416 342 101

E carla@waterforum.org.au

Riversymposium is being held at the **BURSWOOD ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX, Convention Complex**