



## Media Releases

### World first to tackle water security

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The world's first UNESCO Chair in Water Economics and Transboundary Water Governance will be announced tomorrow at The Australian National University.

The establishment of the first UNESCO Water Chair in Australia recognises the achievements of Professor Quentin Grafton, Director of the Centre for Water Economics, Environment and Policy at the ANU.

The UNESCO Chair will be officially launched by the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development, the Hon. Bob McMullan MP. It represents an important step by ANU, the Australian Government and the United Nations to address the challenges of water security in Africa, which has the largest disparities in water availability and least coverage in potable water supply and sanitation in the world.

During his initial four-year appointment, Professor Grafton and his ANU team will work with UNESCO to help achieve one of the key Millennium Development Goals – environmental sustainability in relation to water resources.

"We'll aim to tackle the challenges of water security in a world where there are over billion people with inadequate access to water, over two billion who lack basic sanitation and where every day 3,800 children die as a direct result of unsafe drinking water and poor sanitation," said Professor Grafton.

"The coming decades demand a fundamental shift in how water is managed. Business as usual will simply not be good enough. Water and food scarcity problems will become much worse without immediate action due to a growing world population. Climate change will also increase the frequency and severity of droughts in arid regions making a desperate situation even worse".

Global partners who will work with the ANU and UNESCO to tackle the challenges of water security in Africa include: University of Pretoria (South Africa), Wuhan University (China), University of Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique), the University of London (UK), the International Water Management Institute (Sri Lanka), Global Development Learning Network (World Bank Institute), the Global Water Partnership (Sweden) and WaterNet (Zimbabwe).

The launch will take place tomorrow (Thursday) at 10:15 am in the Canberra Room (ground floor) at the New Crawford Building (Bldg 132), Lennox Crossing.

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