Cross-Connections Fellowship Research Workshop 2: Building collaborative capacity in urban water: challenges and prospects

**March 24-25, 2011**
University of Western Sydney

This is an open call to attend a one and half day workshop at the University of Western Sydney from **March 24-25, 2011** on building collaborative capacity in urban water. *Please circulate to relevant colleagues within your organisation.*

This workshop is being held as part of the National Water Commission Fellowship project *Cross-Connections: linking urban water managers with humanities, arts and social sciences researchers (HASS)* conducted by Dr Zoë Sofoulis (Fellow) and Dr Justine Humphry (Research Associate) from the Centre for Cultural Research, UWS from March 2010 – April 2011.

**Workshop Overview**

This workshop aims to both investigate and help build collaborative capacity between urban water managers and those who research the social and cultural dimensions of urban water. Social questions are often positioned as marginal to the core business of water management, though this may be changing. Bringing together participants from the government, business, and university sectors, including early career researchers and water professionals, this workshop invites people interested in urban water to exchange and develop ideas at a venue where the social and cultural aspects of urban water are centre stage. The main goals of this workshop are to:

- outline interest in social and cultural research from an industry perspective
- explore HASS researchers’ interests in, and potential contributions to, urban water management
- exchange knowledge and tips about collaborations and issues of translation between different types of knowledges
- develop research questions and policy agendas of shared concern that could be pursued in cross-sectoral partnerships

These goals will be pursued through focused discussions, hypothetical project design, and planning for ways to continue encouraging better integration of social knowledge into sustainable urban water management.

The first day of the workshop will involve a combination of plenary sessions with short presentations and a roundtable exchange of ideas and experiences on past collaborations and partnerships plus smaller group discussions on the prospects and challenges of collaboration and knowledge translation in particular areas, such as:

- what institutional barriers are encountered and overcome when developing research agendas and implementing social research within and/or across organisations?
what challenges face those within water organisations who conduct social research on customs and communities and try to apply the findings?
what kinds of social and cultural research methods are under-used or over-used in urban water management or planning?
what is the value of social research beyond marketing or behavioural change campaigns?
how can social and cultural expertise more effectively contribute to creating water-sensitive cities with a range of decentralised and alternative water facilities?

On the second half-day, groups formed around clusters of interests and problems identified on the first day will be facilitated to work on designing hypothetical projects, exploring and documenting research questions and/or sketching policy agendas of shared concern.

Workshop Details

When: Thursday, March 24 (10am – 4.30 pm) and Friday, March 25, 2011 (9.30am – 1pm)
Where: The workshop will be held at the Centre for Cultural Research, Parramatta Campus, University of Western Sydney. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. A group dinner booking will be made at a modestly priced restaurant on the night of March 24.

Cost: There are no fees charged for the workshop. Attendees (or their institutions) will be expected to arrange and fund their own travel and accommodation. However some subsidies are available, especially for HASS researchers, thanks to a grant from Australian Academy of Humanities. Please contact Zoë Sofoulis if you require a subsidy to attend the workshop.

Attendance: We would appreciate receiving expressions of interest or intention to attend at your earliest convenience. Please send a formal RSVP confirming your attendance no later than February 22. Places are limited to 35 participants so book in soon!

If you do require assistance to attend or if you have any special needs please reply as soon as possible with details in your confirmation email.

Please circulate to relevant colleagues within your organisation.

Zoë Sofoulis and Justine Humphry

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