Drought - Past and Future
November 14th – 15th 2008
Hedley Bull Centre ANU

The Drought Past and Future conference is the first stage of an Australian National University Water Initiative project that will compare drought management and planning for climate change in the world’s southern and northern temperate zones – southern Australia, southern Africa, south-west USA, the Mediterranean rim (Portugal, Spain and Turkey) northern China and South America. This conference will present work relevant to the Australian region and discuss the themes to be investigated in the larger project.

Friday 14th

8.30 AM  Registration. Tea/Coffee

9 AM  Bruce Campbell, River Murray Water, Murray-Darling Basin Commission
The Murray-Darling Basin Agreement is the product of nearly a century of water sharing experience. How robust has it been as a framework for the management of the recent severe drought?

Dr Tony McLeod, Murray-Darling Basin Authority
A new master plan is being prepared for the Murray-Darling Basin. Will it be able to take account of climate variability and droughts?

Dr Daniel Connell, ANUWI & Crawford School ANU
What would the MDB Basin Plan look like if it did not have to take account of state borders?

Professor Jun Xia, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing
Drought and predictions of increased climate variability are serious issues for north China, How is the Chinese government preparing for the future?

11 AM  Tea/coffee

11.30 AM  Professor Quentin Grafton, ANUWI & Crawford School ANU

How does Australia manage the risks to urban water supplies caused by droughts? What should we do differently?

Professor Brian Head, Institute of Social Science Research University of Queensland
The urban water crisis in Australia and the governance of uncertainty – a challenge for the policy process.

Dr Jeff Connor, Water for a Healthy Country CSIRO
Water Scarcity and salinity impacts of climate change on irrigated food supply in arid and semi-arid climates.

1 PM  Lunch

2 PM  Professor Douglas Fisher, Dept of Law, Queensland University of Technology
Australian water law has long taken account of climatic risks such as droughts. Is this an adequate foundation for the policies and laws needed to manage the predicted impacts of climate change on water resources and water based environments?

Dr Nicole Graham – Dept. of Law, Macquarie University
Is current Australian property law an appropriate tool for water resource management given its purpose and the history of its operation and contribution to environmental law so far?
3 PM Tea/coffee

3.15 PM Dr Jane Doolan, Office of Water, Victorian Dept of Sustainability and the Environment
The current drought has been devastating for riverine environments in Victoria. How are choices being made about what to save and what to let go? What are the implications for climate change?

Dr Sue Jackson, Tropical Ecosystem Research Centre, CSIRO
What happens to indigenous interests during times of drought? The National Water Initiative emphasizes the need to give comprehensive recognition to Indigenous interests in water. To what extent is this being realized in practice?

4.15 PM Tea/coffee

4.30 PM Professor Tony McMichael, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health ANU
Climate change is predicted to have a number of serious implications for human health in Australia. What are the policy implications both in the field of health itself and more generally?

Dr Linda Botterill, Research School of Social Sciences ANU
Reflections on the recent review of Australian Government drought policy.

5.30 PM Drinks
John Reid, Fenner School, Art School, ANU
Drought, what has been and what could be the contribution of the visual arts?

6 PM Dr Roger Pulwarty, Director National Integrated Drought Information System Colorado USA.
Lessons learned and not learned in the south-western USA

Saturday 15th

8.30 AM Tea/coffee

9 AM Dr John Williams, Commissioner Natural Resources Commission NSW
Since early in the twentieth century the CSIRO has been Australia’s leading research organization for natural resource management issues such as adaptation to climate variability. What does its history show about the responses of Australian researchers to drought and climate variability? Where to from here?

Dr Rosalind Bark, Arizona Water Institute
Water supply reliability, management and drought adaption in the Colorado River Basin USA. Rosalind Bark will also discuss dry year options, water transfers, intra and interstate water banking and the new guidelines for managing the Colorado system.

Dr Jeff Loux, University of California, Davis
Southern California has a profusion of different and often conflicting systems of water management and water rights so how do decisions get made about competing demands?

10.30 AM Coffee/tea

11 AM Dr Karen Hussey, ANUWI, ANU (based in Brussels)
Drought policy in the European Union.

Professor Rodrigo Maia, University of Porto, Portugal
Drought management in Portugal and Spain

Professor Stephen Dovers, Fenner School, ANU
Reflections on the conference proceedings and the implications for the research agenda of the international Climate Risk comparative project.

12.30 PM Conference conclusion