

Australian Water Information Advisory Council

The importance of water information to national water reform

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Australian Water Information Advisory Council

water *information*

Data ↪ Information ↪ Insight



Irrigation Australia Limited

formed from:

Australian National Committee
on irrigation & Drainage



Irrigation Association of
Australia





Membership

Policy developers and regulators

Education and training organisations

Water service providers

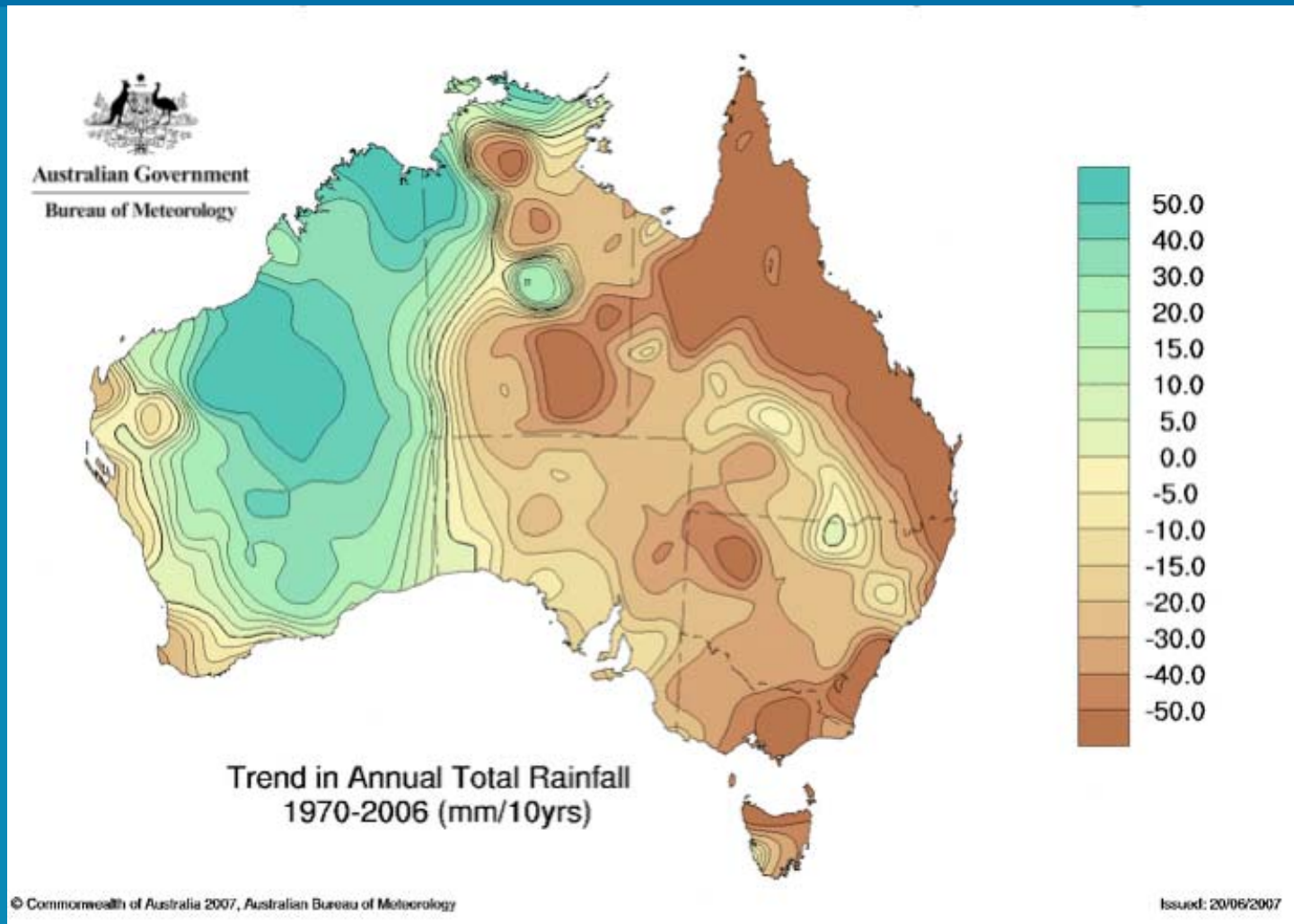
Equipment and service sector
businesses

Irrigators – urban and rural

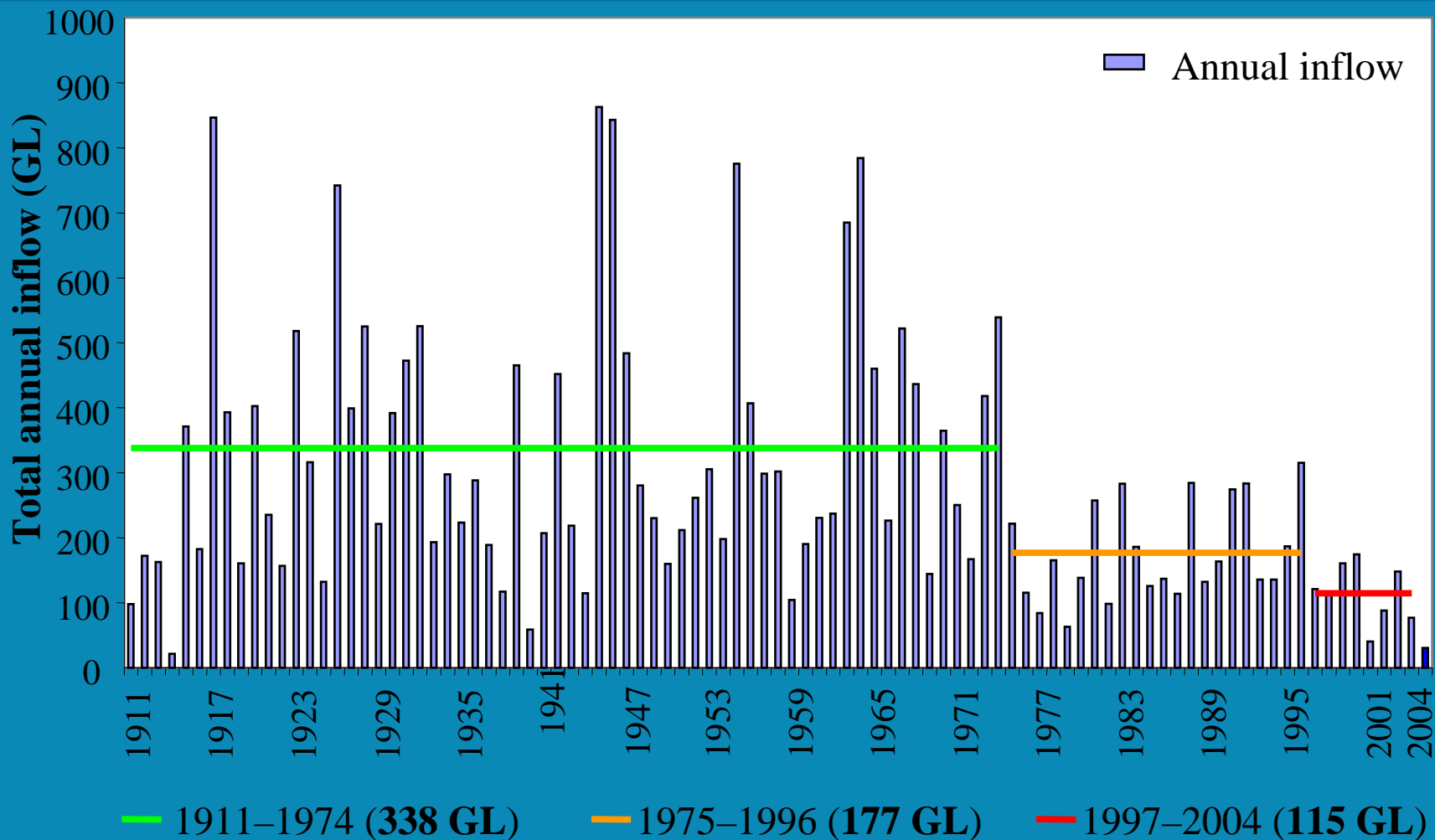
End users – processors, marketers and
consumers

Researchers

Trend in annual rainfall across Australia.



Declining annual inflows to Perth's dams.



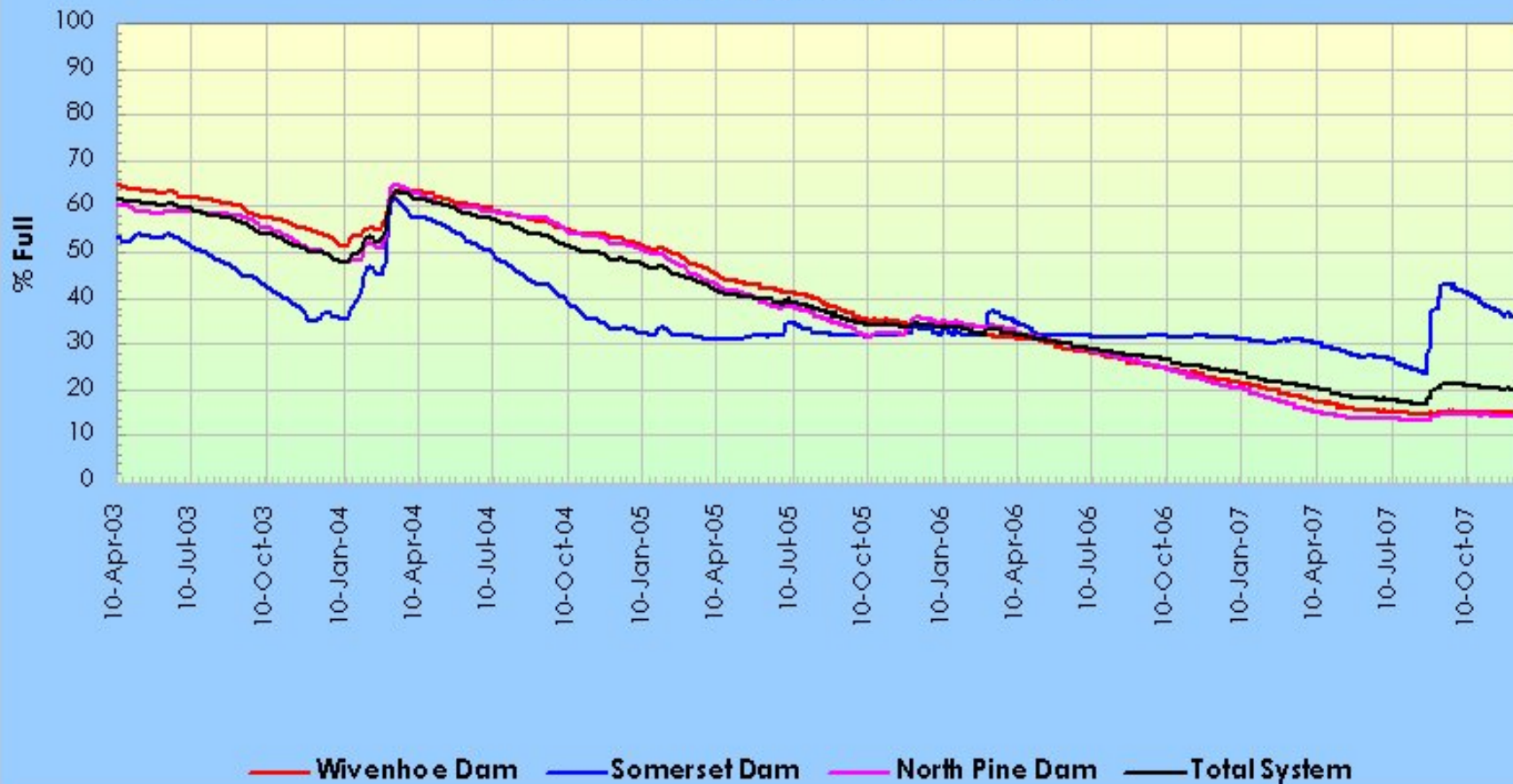
1911–1974 (338 GL)

1975–1996 (177 GL)

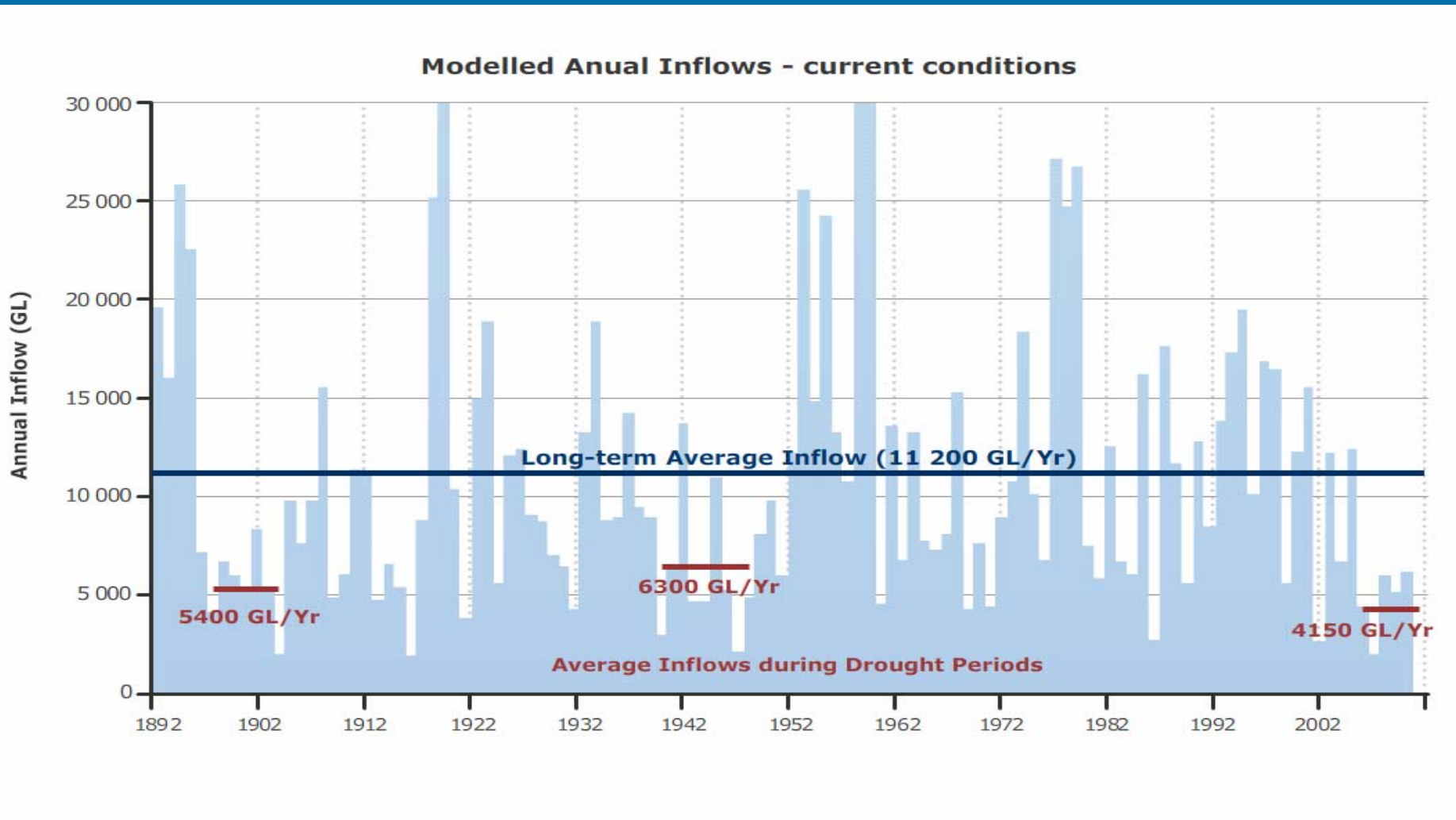
1997–2004 (115 GL)

SEQ WATER

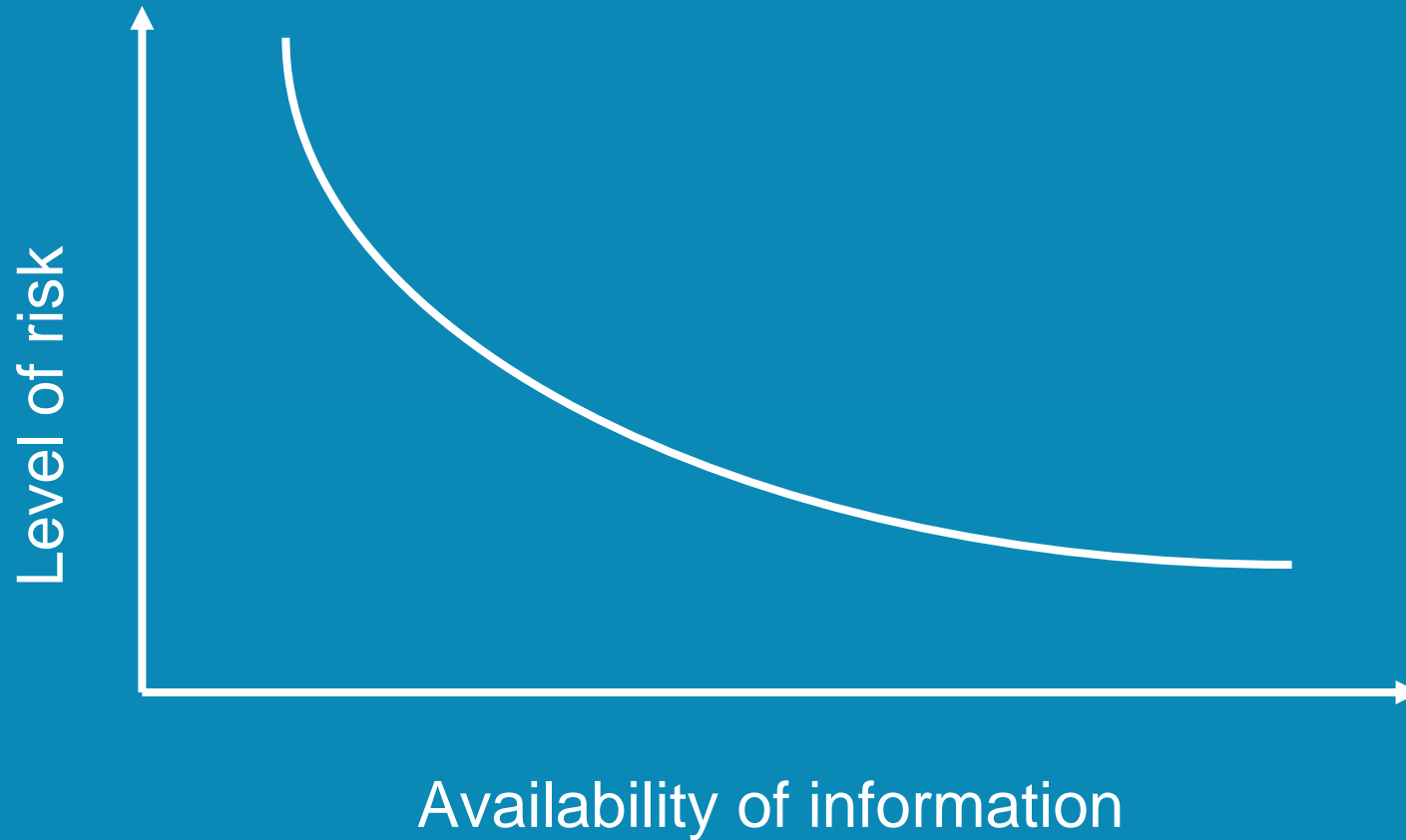
Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine Dams



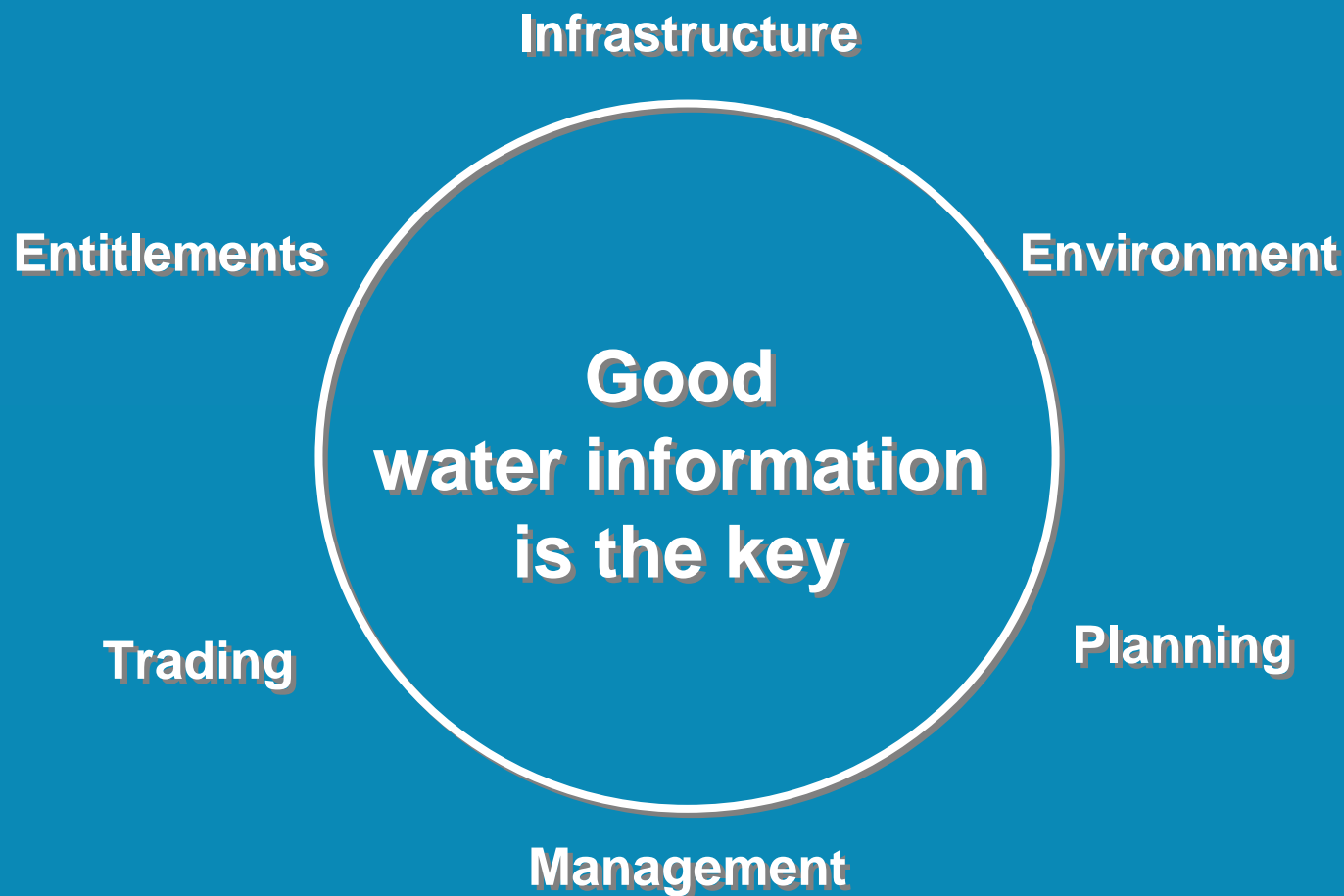
Historic sequence of MDB system inflows.



Risk vs Information



Sustainable water resources management



The national water plan – the opportunity

- **Strong political and financial support**
- **\$10b over 10 years to reform water management**
- **Accelerates the National Water Initiative**
 - Australia's water reform blueprint
- **Supported by enabling legislation**
 - Water Act 2007
 - (passed in Aug 07; to be proclaimed in Mar 08)

Current elements of the national water plan

- A bunch of MDBC stuff
- National irrigation delivery system upgrades
- National on-farm water savings measures
- National water use metering and telemetry
- **National water information program**
- Understanding the potential of Northern Australia
- Reducing groundwater losses in the GAB

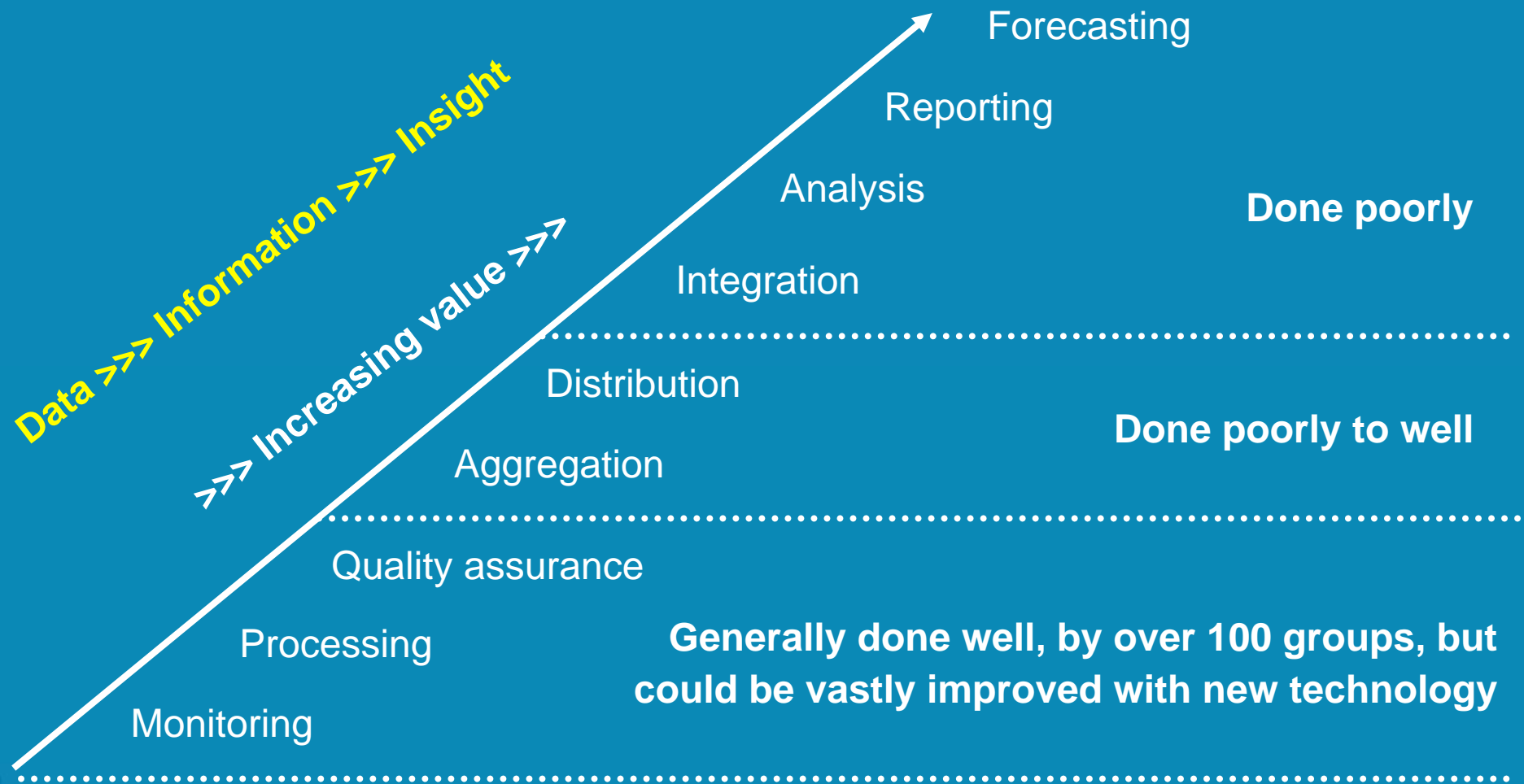
The questions we need to answer

- How much water is available in different parts of the country today (and how does it compare with history)?
- How much water is likely to be available in the coming days, weeks, months and years?
- How much water is the environment getting?
- How is water quality changing?
- How much water is being intercepted by farm dams and various land management changes?

The Water Information Program

- **Water information database held by Bureau of Meteorology**
 - establish national standards
 - high level of data integration
 - impartiality (and authority) of the organisation
- **Investment in new measurement technologies**
- **Investment to fill information gaps**
- **Enhanced information display and analysis**
- **Free access**

The water information value ladder



Benefits of the 'cooperative' model

- major synergies from a collaborative approach to water information (State and other collection agencies, and the Bureau), including:
 - unified investment in new technologies
 - standardised data formats
 - rationalised software for display, analysis, and distribution
 - Reduce parochial bickering
 - More confidence in the information

Australian Water Information Advisory Council (AWIAC)

- Provide strategic advice to the Bureau on emerging water information needs across the water sector.
- Advise the Bureau on how to maximise the value of its water information activities across the water sector.
- Evaluate the Bureau's contribution to NWI and national water plan objectives.
- Assist the Bureau by providing advocacy across the water sector for its new water information mission.

AWIAC members

For specific requests contact David Perry on
03 9669 8152 or 0419 326 533.

Email d.perry@bom.gov.au

- Russell Mein (Chair)
- James Horne
(Dept of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, AG)
- Ken Matthews (National Water Commission, AG)
- Rob Freeman
(Dept of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, SA)
- Warwick Watkins (Department of Lands, NSW)
- Ross Young (Water Services Association of Australia)
- Jolyon Burnett (Irrigation Australia Limited)

Conclusion

- Reliable water information is the key to water management
 - The opportunity is here now for a major improvement in the quality, usefulness, and availability of water information
 - The Water Information initiative can deliver on this
 - A collaborative approach will bring much benefit
- BUT
- Rubbish in – rubbish out; we need your cooperation