



Water Information Seminar

presented by the Bureau of Meteorology

Water Use in the United States

Dr David Maidment

*Director, Center for Research
in Water Resources,
University of Texas*

3.30 – 5.00pm

Thursday 24 July 2008

CSIRO Discovery Centre, Canberra

Guest presenter

Dr David Maidment

Dr Maidment is the Director, Center for Research in Water Resources, University of Texas at Austin and Chairman of the National Academies Report on 'Estimating Water Use in the United States'.

When President Bush was Governor of Texas in 1997, the state experienced a short but severe drought. Applying the MBA approach to water management, he asked – “How much water do we have? How much are we using? How much do we need?”

These simple questions had no simple answers and the resulting uncertainty prompted Texas to initiate an overhaul of its infrastructure for water planning and management during droughts. This effort continues today, more than 10 years after its initial impetus.

The US Geological Survey is responsible each five years for preparing a report on Water Use in the United States, which they do by using an accounting approach, water sector by water sector, county by county, across the whole nation. This is a very resource intensive and somewhat uncertain procedure because much of the information is based on estimates not measurements.

The USGS requested the National Academies of Science and Engineering to undertake a study of this water use program and make recommendations as to future functioning. During this study, a survey was made of the

condition of water use data collection in all 50 states of the Union, and a particular analysis was made of water use data in Arkansas, which has a comprehensive state-wide program for water use estimation that has been operating for more than 20 years. It was shown that some classes of water use, such as groundwater use by irrigation are so uniform in operation from one well to the next that a random sample of about 100 wells of the 36,000 wells in Arkansas supplying irrigation water is sufficient to estimate the total annual groundwater use for irrigation in the state within 10%. Surface water withdrawals vary much more from one withdrawal point to the next than do groundwater withdrawals, which means that a complete inventory of the largest users is needed, coupled with a random sampling of the smaller users.

Seminar details

Chaired by

Dr Rob Vertessy,
Deputy Director (Water),
Bureau of Meteorology

Venue

CSIRO Discovery Centre
Black Mountain Laboratories
Acton ACT 2601

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RSVP

Please RSVP to
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Light refreshments
will be served.

There is no charge for
attending this seminar.

water information

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