



# The contribution of improved water information management to the management of water resources in South Australia.

Dr Fraser MacLeod  
A/g Executive Director, NRM  
Department of Water, Land &  
Biodiversity Conservation



Government of South Australia  
Department of Water, Land and  
Biodiversity Conservation

**FLOODING AHEAD**

**TURN AROUND**

**DON'T DROWN**



# Outline

- Look at the drivers
- Consider the current situation
- What does this tell us about focus
- Potential pitfalls
- Some practical suggestions





# Some Questions.....

1. Is improved water information desirable in SA?
2. Does improved water information improve water resource management?
3. Are water resource management and water information management objectives identical?
4. Are there water information elements which would serve both State and Commonwealth purposes?
5. Is all the required skill, infrastructure and data actually available in SA?





# Current Situation

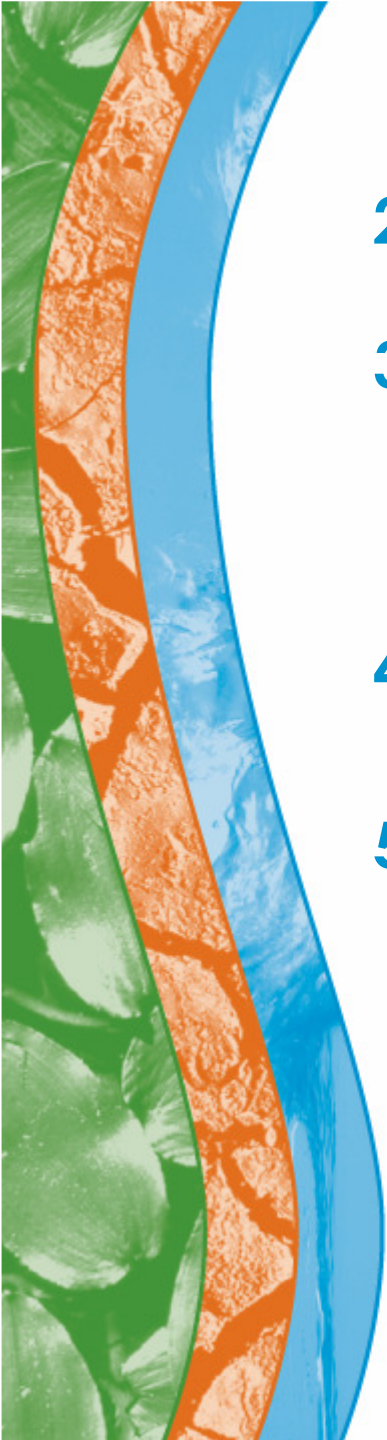
## 1. SIGNIFICANT FRAGMENTATION IN SA

- Many dimensions (and reasons)
  - \* Governance
  - \* Users & Regions
  - \* Water regimes
  - \* Standards & Data Structures
  - \* Infrastructure & Skills
  - \* etc, etc
  - \* Business
  - \* Drivers
  - \* Legacies
  - \* Budgets
  - \* Priorities
  - \* NRM Arrangements

**Fragmentation results in high transaction costs but is a fact of life – and no single actor has a monopoly on information or solutions**



Government of South Australia  
Department of Water, Land and  
Biodiversity Conservation

- 
- 2. MARKET FOR SKILLS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE**
  - 3. SIGNIFICANT AND INCREASING INFORMATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN SECTORS, LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**
  - 4. WATER IS INCREASINGLY EVERYONE'S BUSINESS**
  - 5. WATER ISSUES HAVE POLITICAL ATTENTION**
    1. Reform agenda
    2. Drought
    3. ... and information





## 7. NRM IS FRAMEWORK FOR WATER MANAGEMENT IN SA

- Not water management *per se*: Legislation specifically requires integration across resources and regions.
- State information investment priorities therefore potentially different to those of other Jurisdictions

## 8. SUBSTANTIAL INFORMATION PROJECTS CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS IN SA

- Primary focus is:
  - Interoperability:
  - Discovery and access.





# What Needs Attention?

- Fragmentation
- Skills
- Information mobility
  - Reciprocity
- Revenue derived from data
- ‘Ownership’ cultures
- Ways of working together (at all levels)
- Value testing information investment







# An Opportunity Exists

- Have political attention and new (substantial) funding
  - Targeting investment?
- Work with multiple interested parties to reduce the burdens.
- Move along water information ‘value ladder’





## Potential Pitfalls

- Continuation of arrangements which result in high transaction costs
- Key limitations are NOT technical
  - Rather they are institutional/personal.
  - Well targeted investment can address
- Will only deliver true value to state's water management efforts if the institutional issues are tackled.

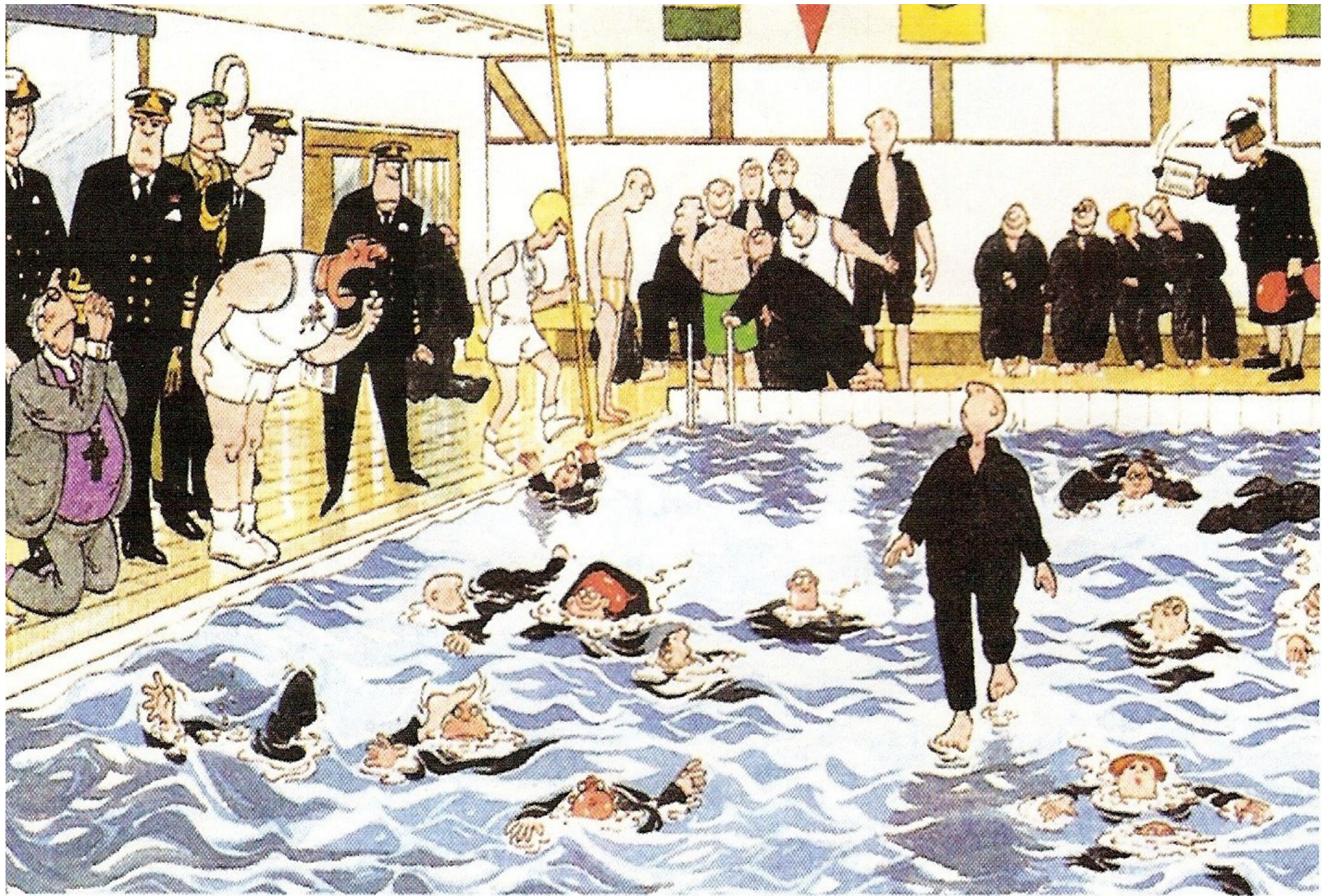




# Some Practical Suggestions

- State establish mechanisms for effective engagement of ALL interested parties
- Establish a single point of contact within state
  - to facilitate intra-state coordination and feedback
  - to facilitate Commonwealth connection with the state.
- Work with all actors to target total water information investment





**'ONE AND A QUARTER LENGTHS - THEN TREAD WATER, CLOTH EARS!!'**