

Australian Water Information Advisory Council

The importance of water information to national water reform

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water *information*

Data ↪ Information ↪ Insight

Overall Objective of the National Water Initiative

- *“Full implementation of this Agreement will result in a nationally-compatible, market, regulatory and planning based system of managing surface and groundwater resources for rural and urban use that optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes...”*

(NWI paragraph 23)

Eight Key Elements of the NWI

- Water Access Entitlements and Planning Framework;
- Water Markets and Trading;
- Best Practice Water Pricing;
- Integrated Management of Water for Environmental and Other Public Benefit Outcomes;
- Water Resource Accounting;
- Urban Water Reform;
- Knowledge and Capacity Building; and
- Community Partnerships and Adjustment.

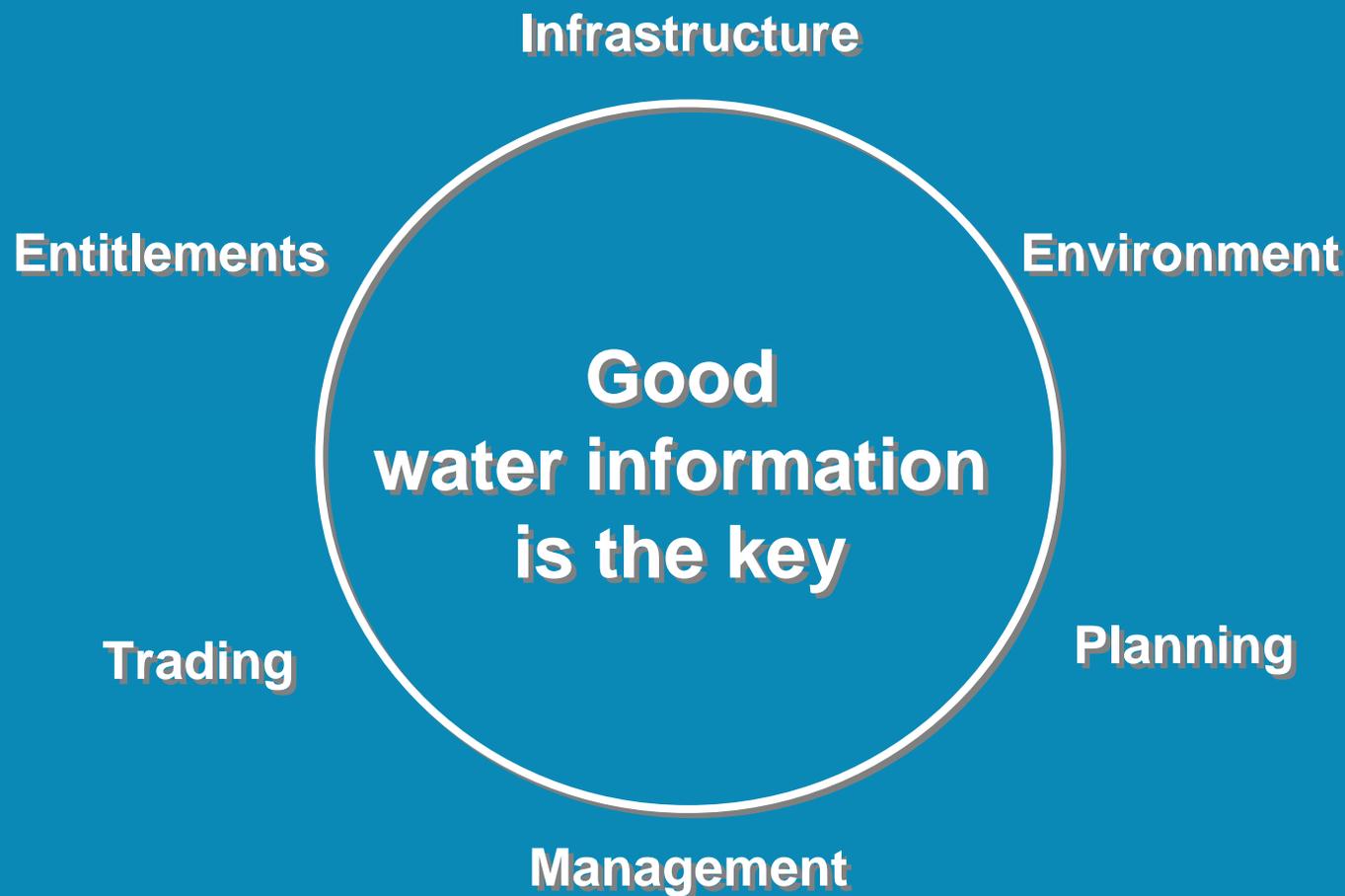
Why do we need water information?

Accounting for water use in a transparent and comparable manner across jurisdictions is fundamental to:

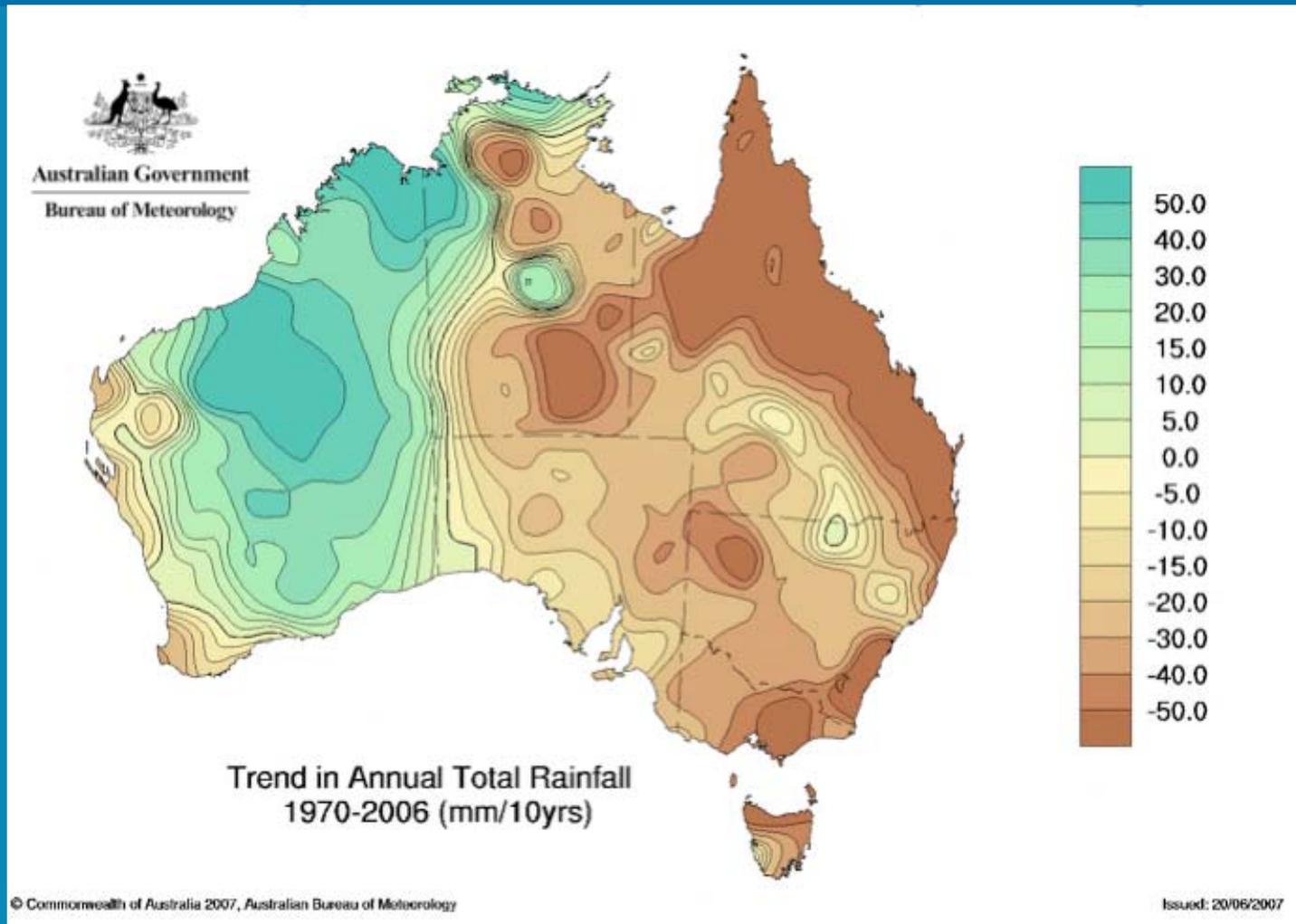
- improving the hydrological models that underpin water allocation decisions,*
- ensuring there is confidence in the water market, and*
- in the achievement of environmental and resource-use outcomes.*

(COAG Communiqué, June 2004)

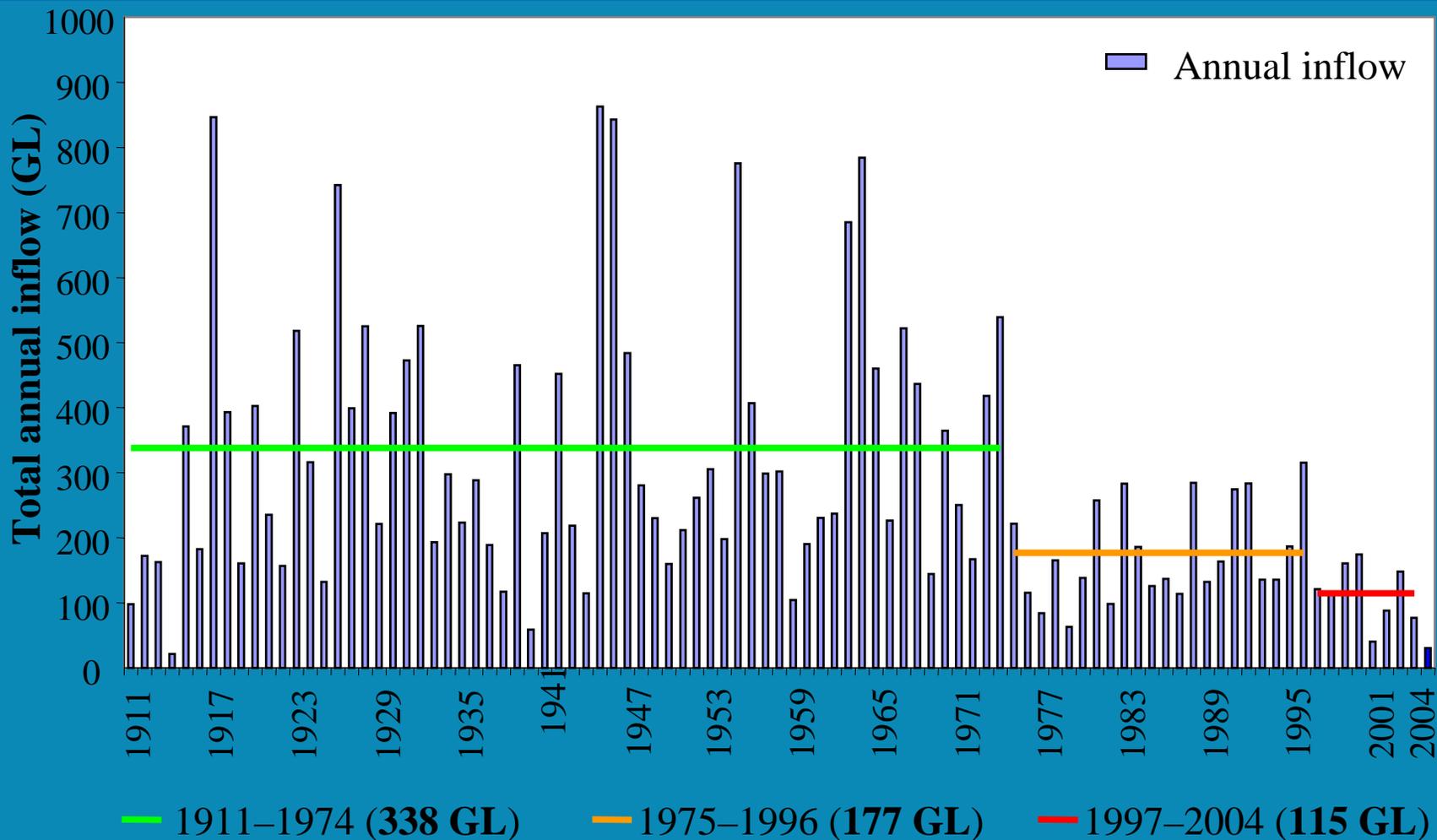
Sustainable water resources management



Trend in annual rainfall across Australia.



Declining annual inflows to Perth's dams.

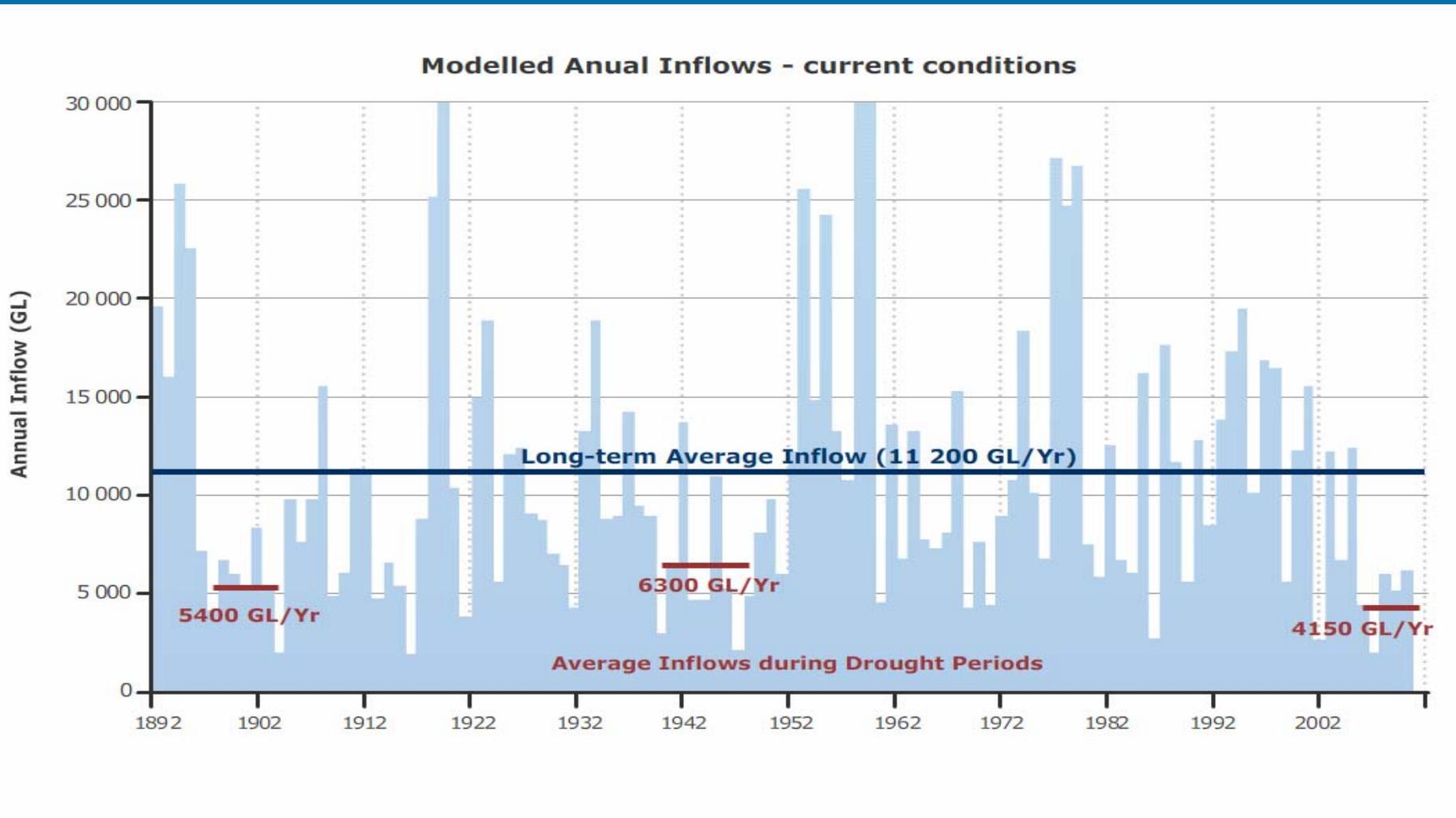


1911–1974 (338 GL)

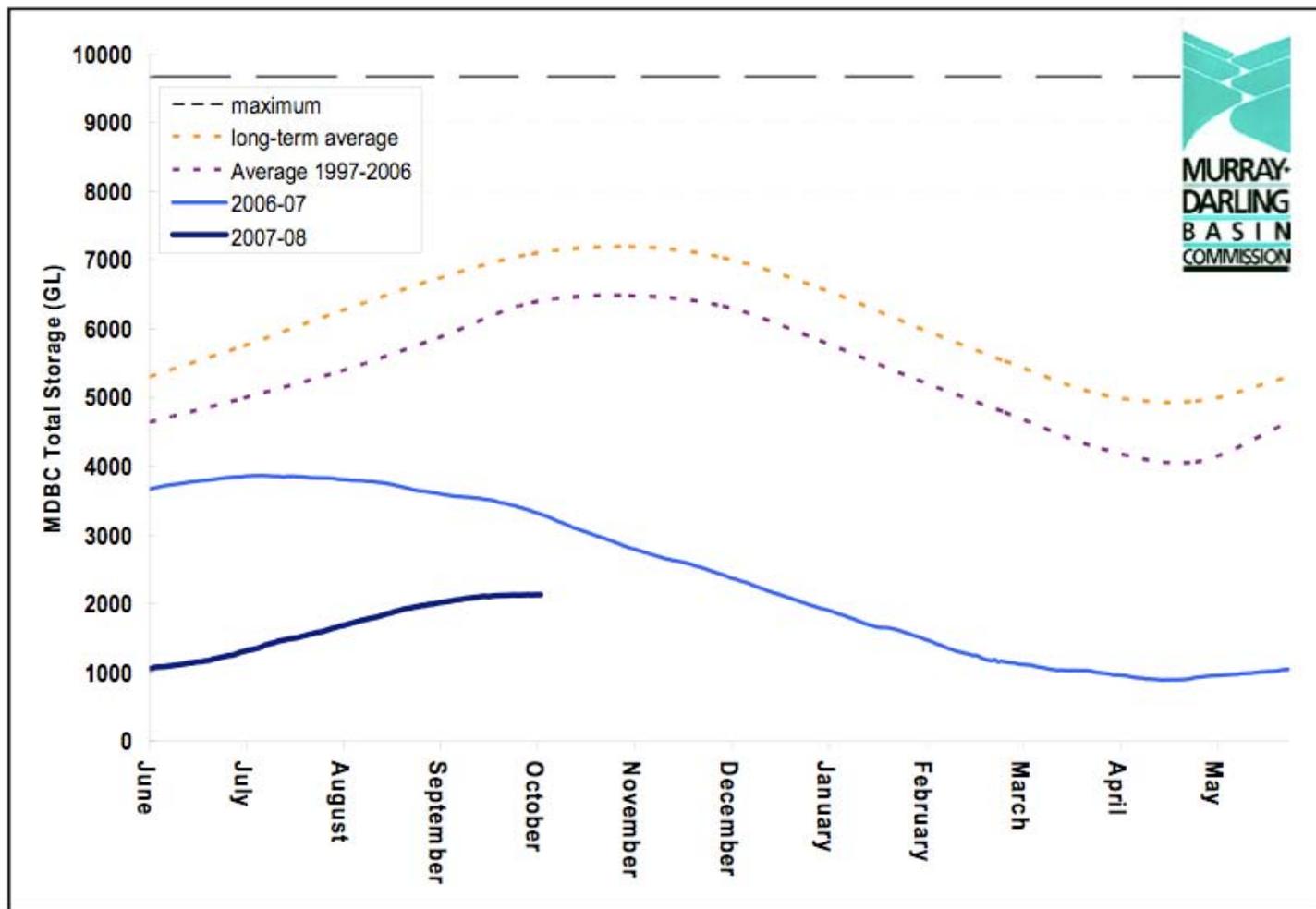
1975–1996 (177 GL)

1997–2004 (115 GL)

Historic sequence of MDB system inflows.



Water storage volumes in the MDB system.



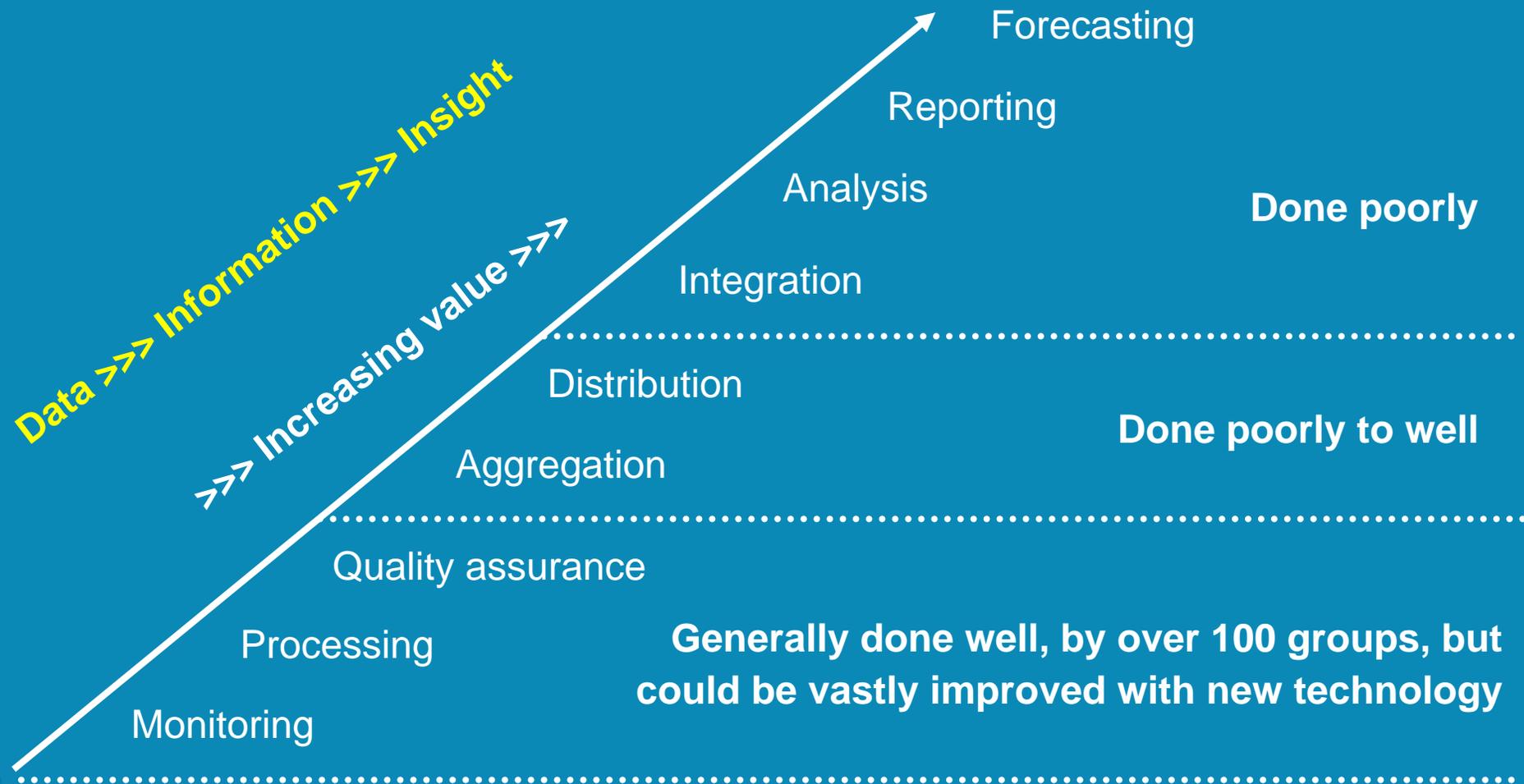
The National Plan for Water Security (NPWS)

- **Announced by the then Prime Minister in January 2007**
- **\$10b over 10 years to facilitate water reform**
- **Accelerates implementation of the National Water Initiative**
- **Supported by Water Act 2007**
- **Supported by the incoming government**

Elements of the reform agenda –reliant on good water information

- A new Murray-Darling Basin Authority (putting together a Basin Plan)
- MDB water purchases and structural adjustments
- National irrigation delivery system upgrades
- National on-farm water savings measures
- MDB river system improvements
- ACCC oversight of MDB water charging and market rules
- National water use metering and telemetry
- Understanding the potential of Northern Australia
- Reducing groundwater losses in the GAB
- **National water information program**

The water information value ladder



Some of 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? Distribution?
- How much water is the environment getting? Where?
- How is water quality changing?
- How much water is being intercepted by farm dams and various land management changes? Where
- How much water is being traded? Where and when is water being traded?

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 maximize the value of its water information activities across the water sector.
- Evaluate the Bureau's contribution to water reform objectives.
- Assist the Bureau by providing advocacy across the water sector for its new water information mission.

AWIAC members

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

Conclusions