

# *Australian Water Information Advisory Council*

## *The importance of water information to national water reform*

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**water** *information*

*Data ↪ Information ↪ Insight*

# *The Water Agenda*

## **Nationally**

- National Water Initiative
- National Plan for Water Security

## **Murray-Darling**

- The Living Murray Initiative
- Risks to the Shared Water Resource Program

# *The Water Agenda (contd)*

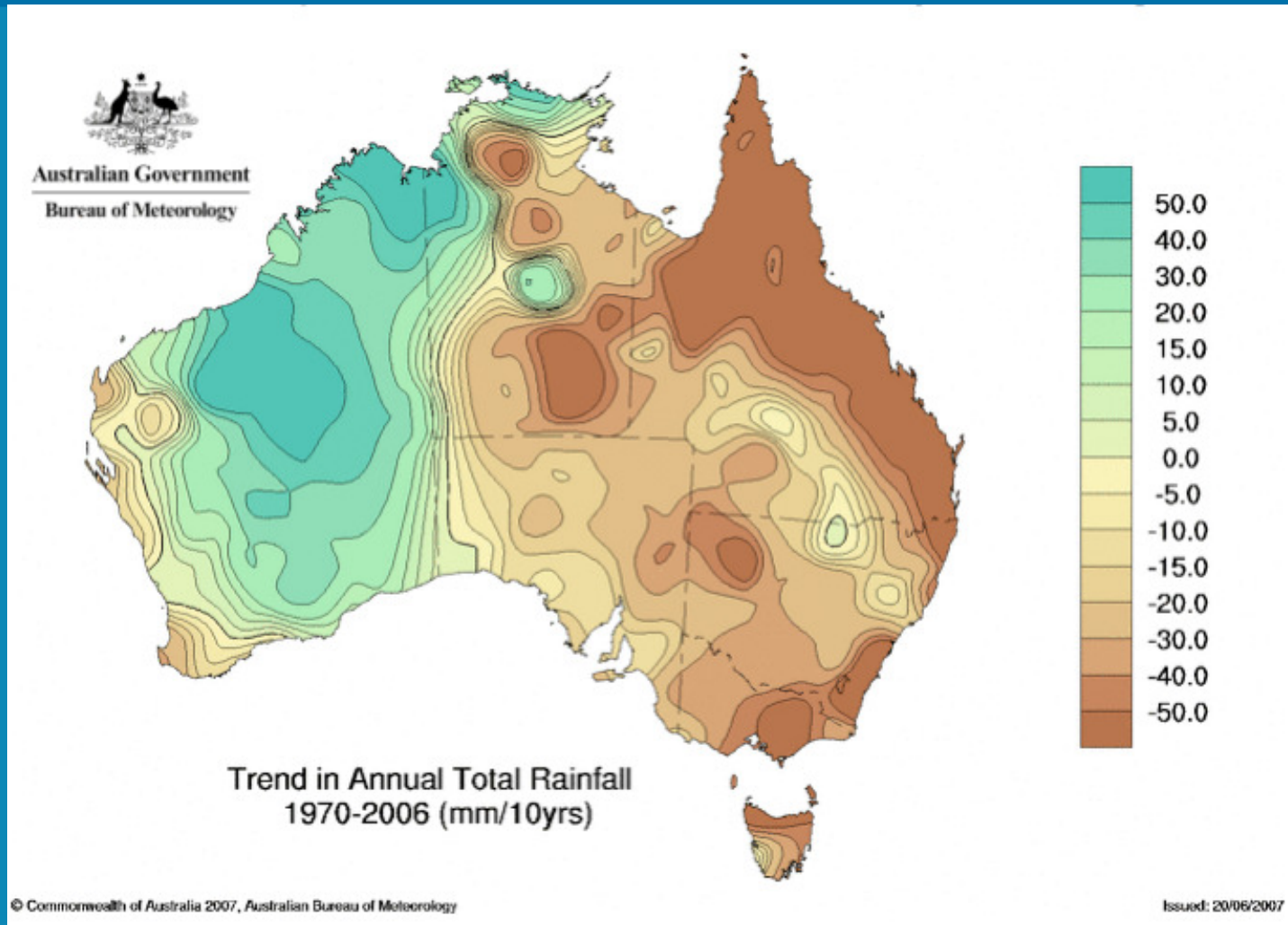
## **South Australia**

- **South Australia's Strategic Plan**
  - T3.9 Sustainable water supply
  - T3.10 River Murray flows
  - T3.11 River Murray salinity
- **State NRM Plan**
  - 4 x specific water targets
- **Regional NRM Plans**
- **Water Allocation Plans**

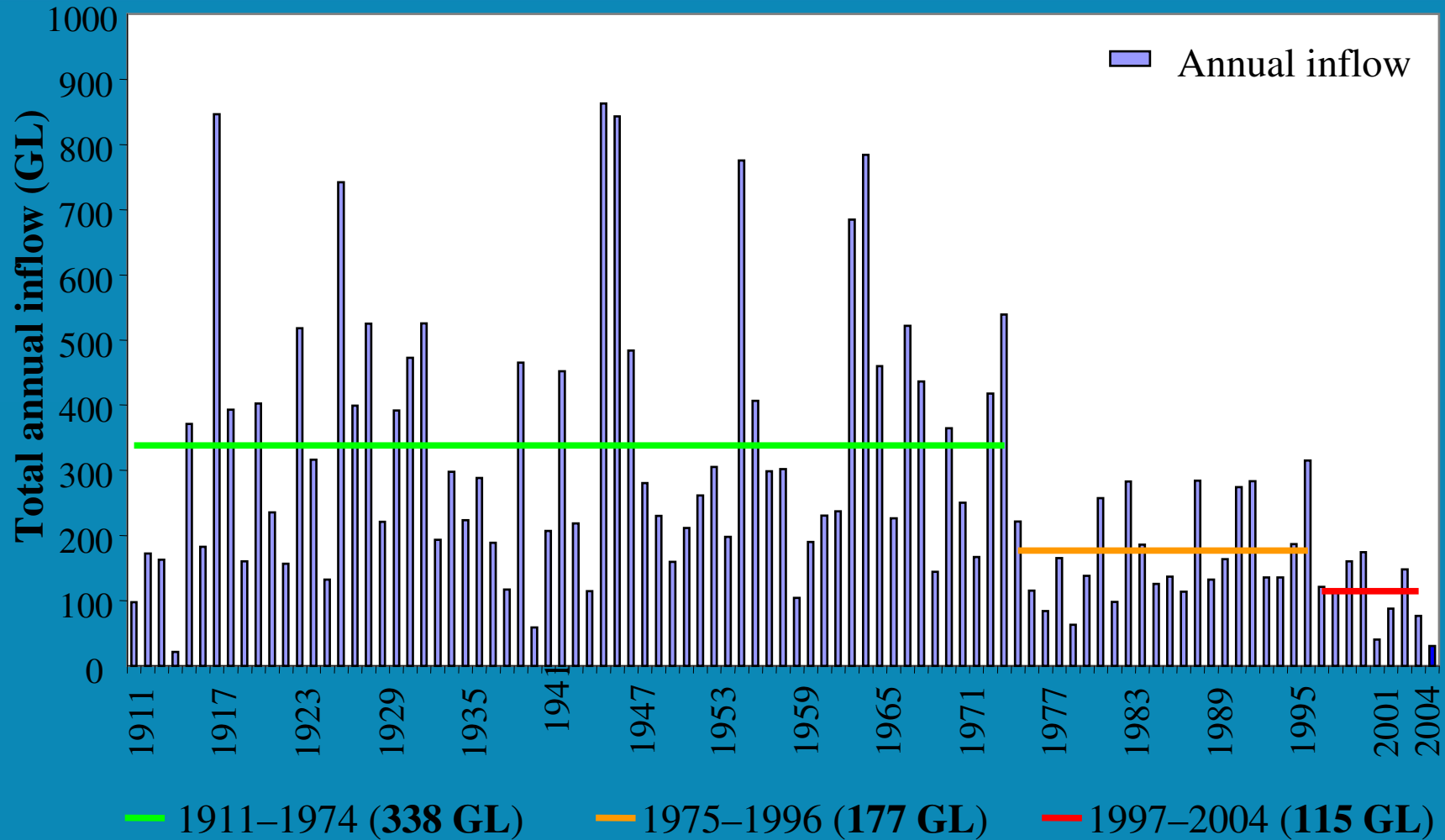
# *The Value of Water*

- **Economic**
- **Social**
- **Environmental**

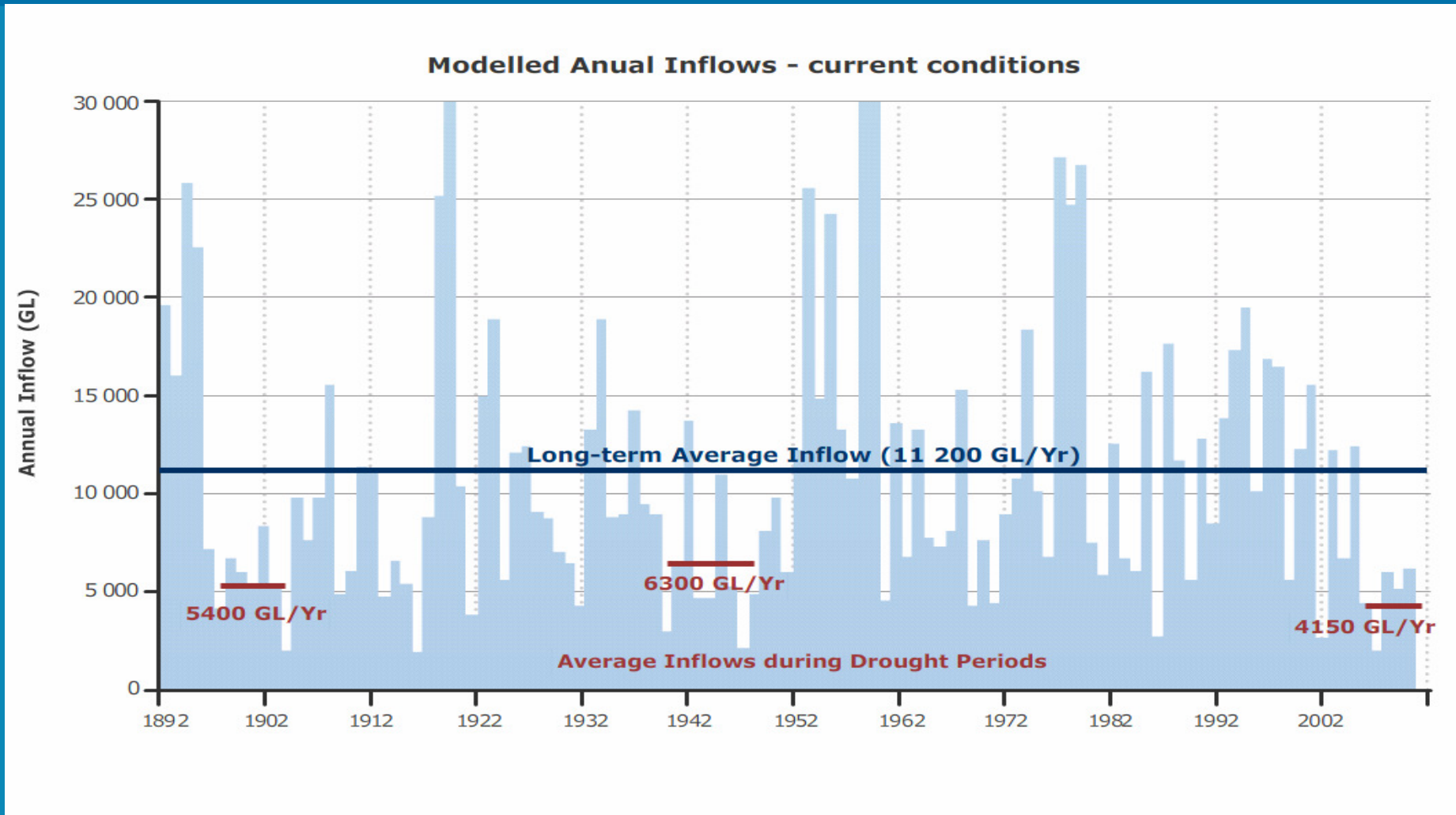
# Trend in annual rainfall across Australia.



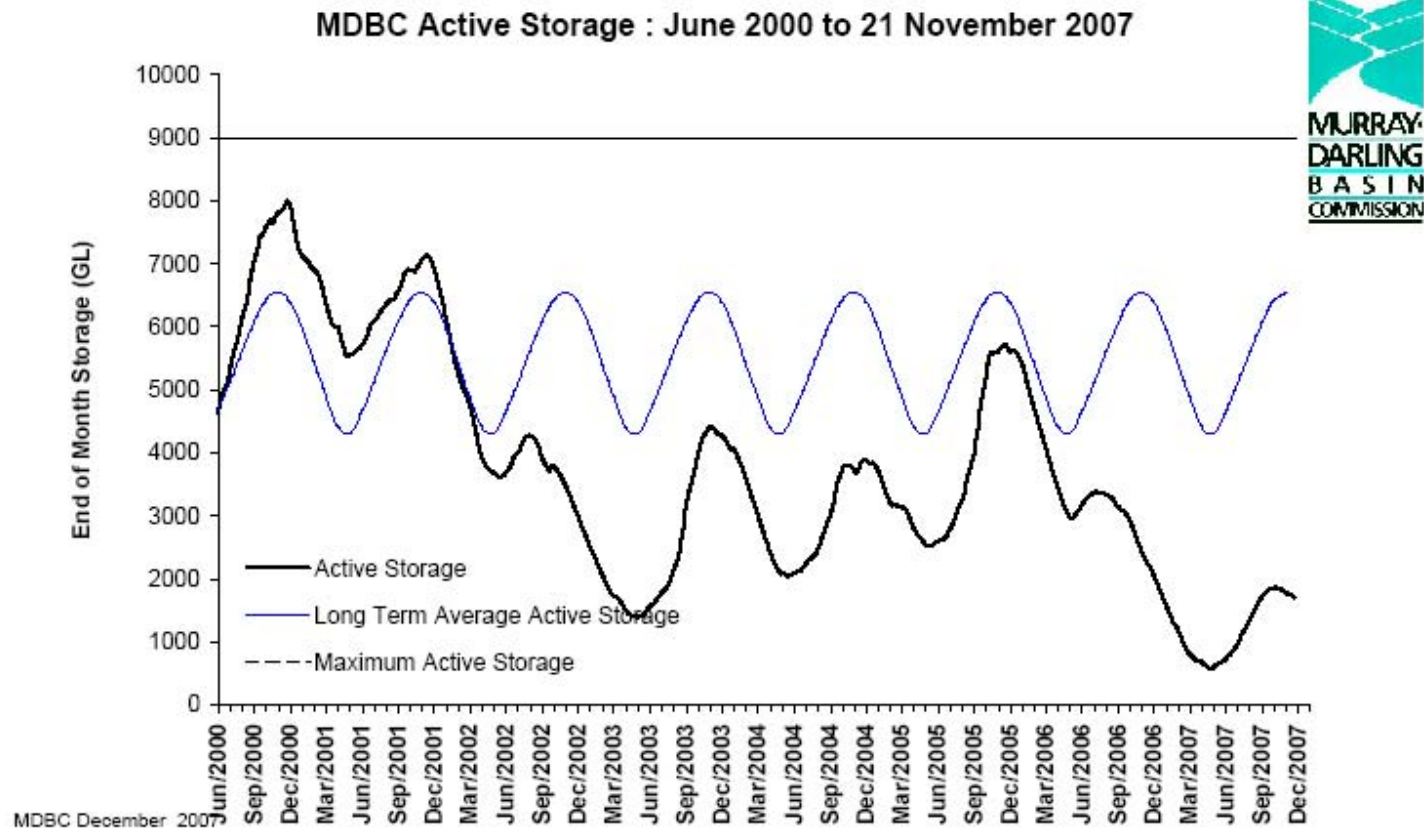
# Declining annual inflows to Perth's dams.



# Historic sequence of MDB system inflows.

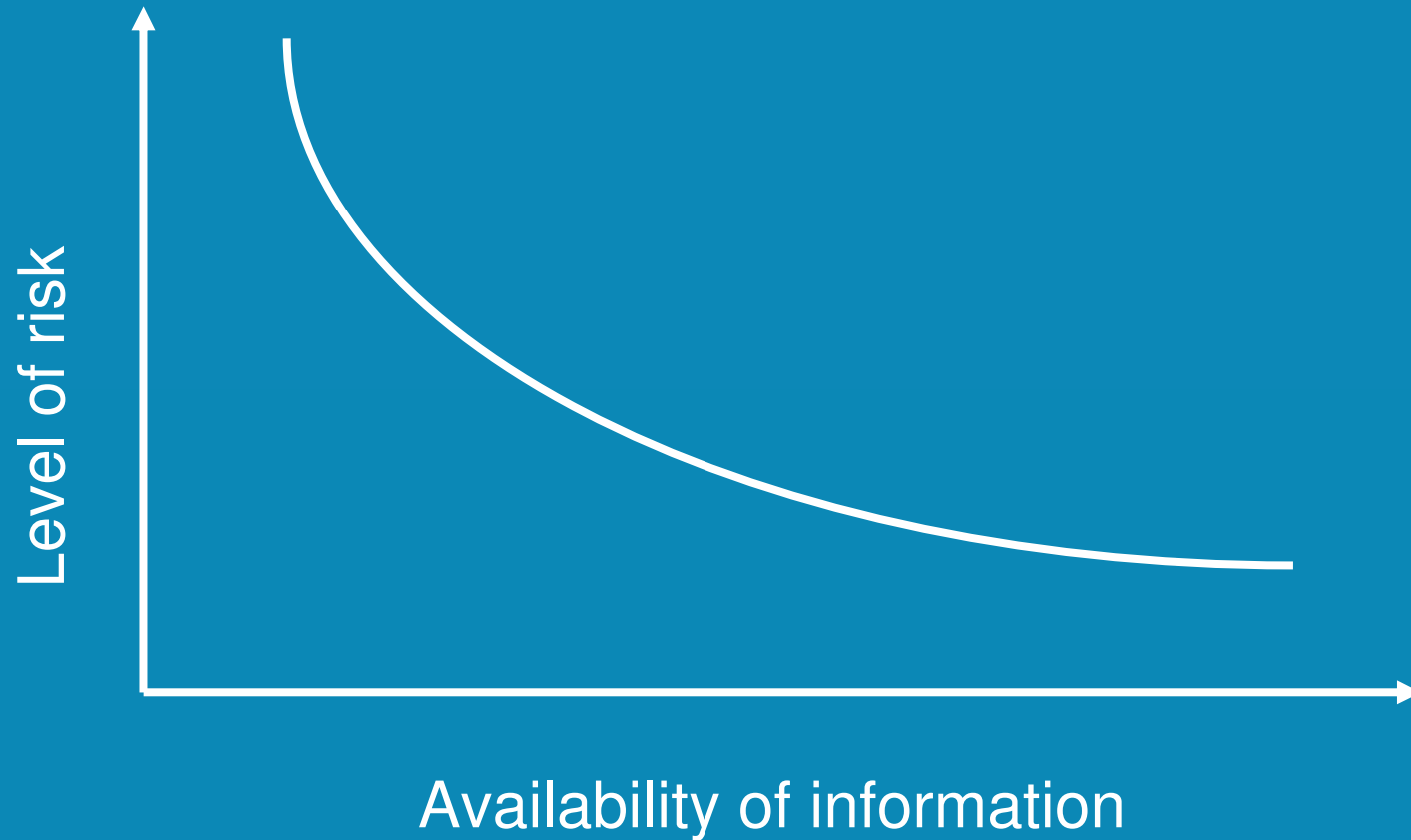


# MDBC Storage and Outlook to 21 November 2007

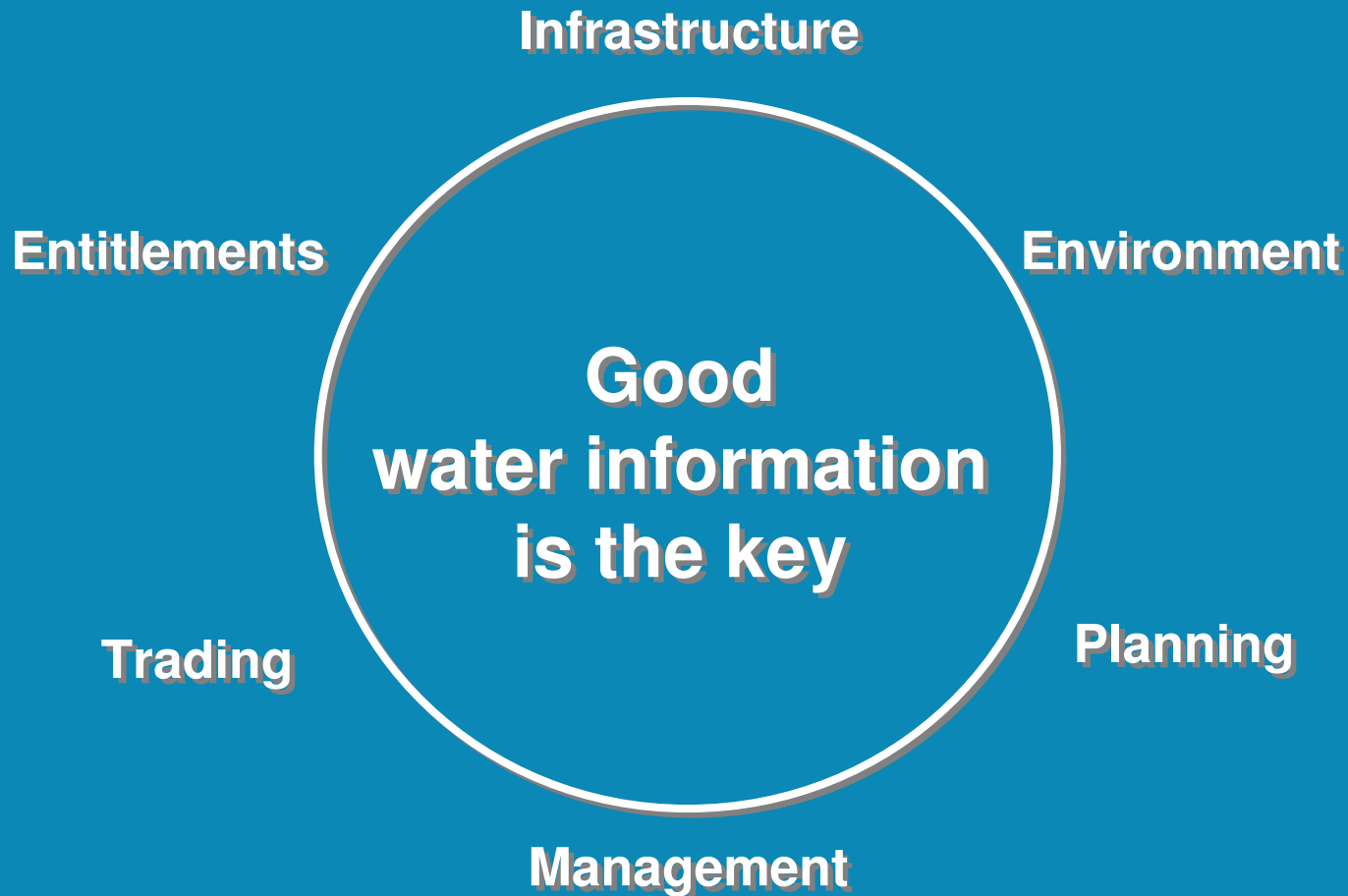




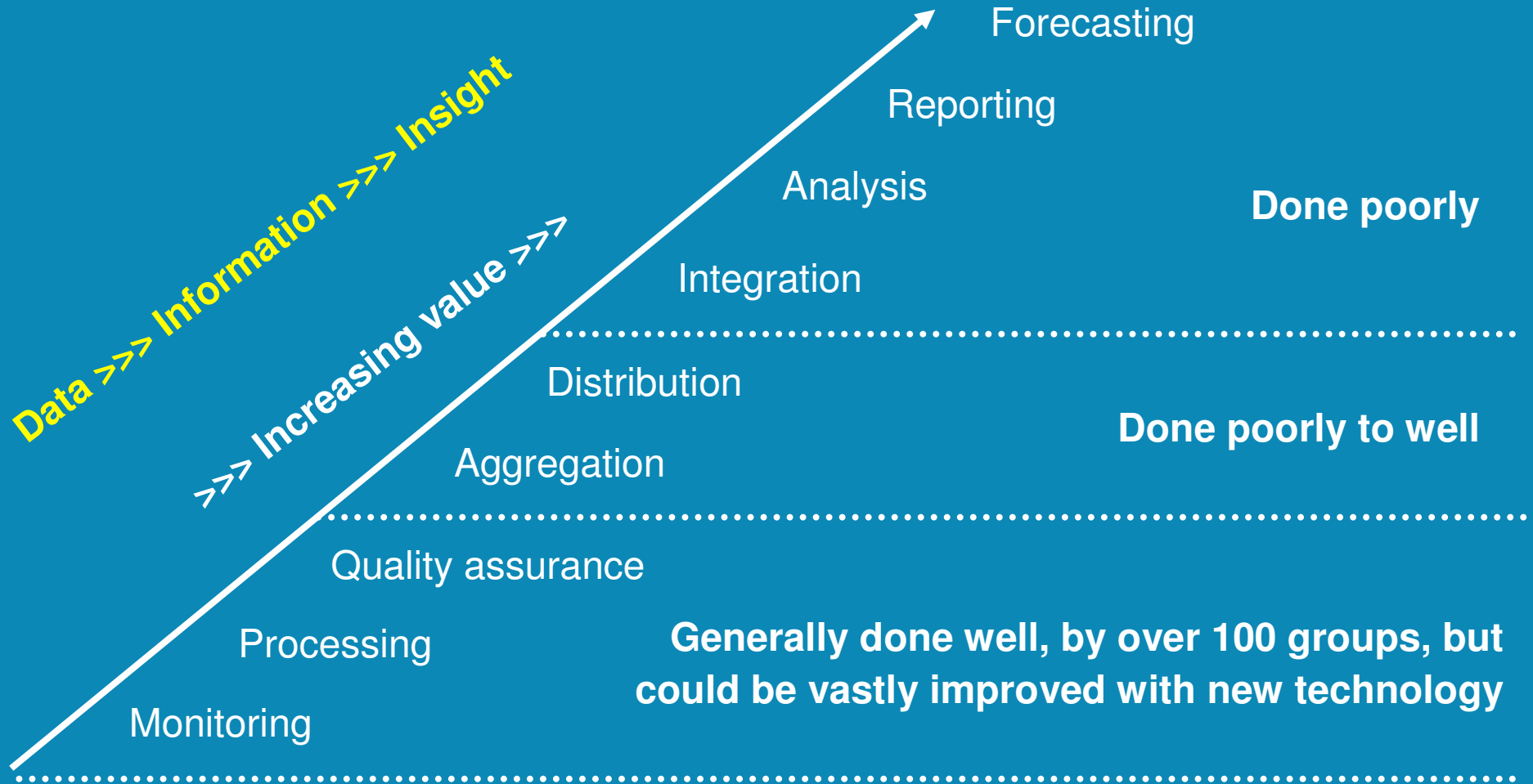
# *Risk vs Information*



# *Sustainable water resources management*



# The water information value ladder



# *The opportunity*

- Drought inspired
- Bi-partisan Political Support
- Dollars on the table

**Chance for a major improvement in  
water information data in Australia**

## *The National Plan for Water Security (NPWS)*

- **Announced by the former Prime Minister in January, 2007**
- **\$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)

# *Elements of the NPWS.*

- A new Murray-Darling Basin Authority
- 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
- National water information program
- Understanding the potential of Northern Australia
- Reducing groundwater losses in the GAB

# *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 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?



# *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 NWI and NPWS objectives.
- Assist the Bureau by providing advocacy across the water sector for its new water information mission.

## *AWIAC members*

- Russell Mein (Chair)
- James Horne (Dept of Environment and Water Resources, 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