

Australian Water Information Advisory Council

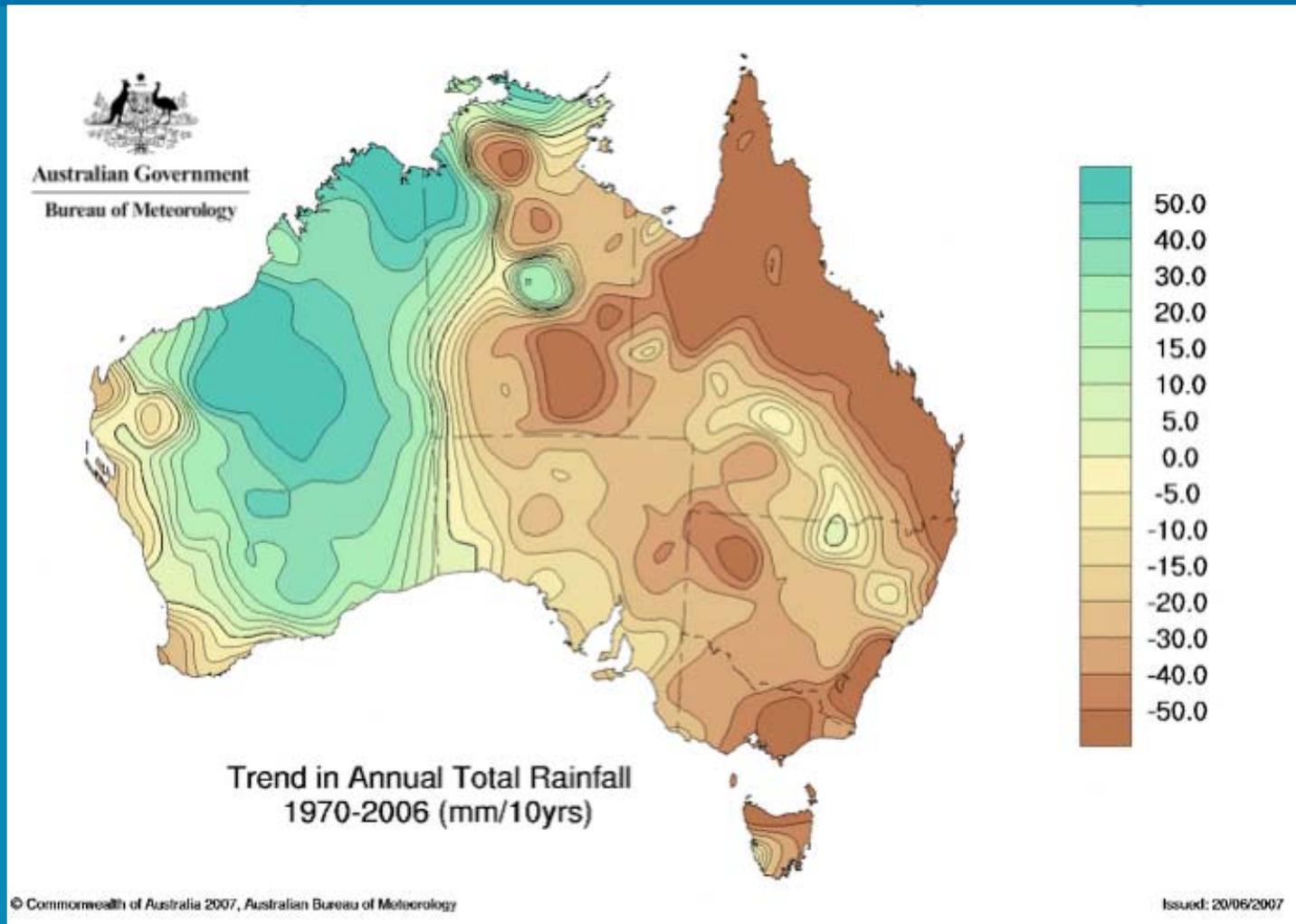
The importance of water information to national water reform

Warwick Watkins, member
Australian Water Information Advisory Council

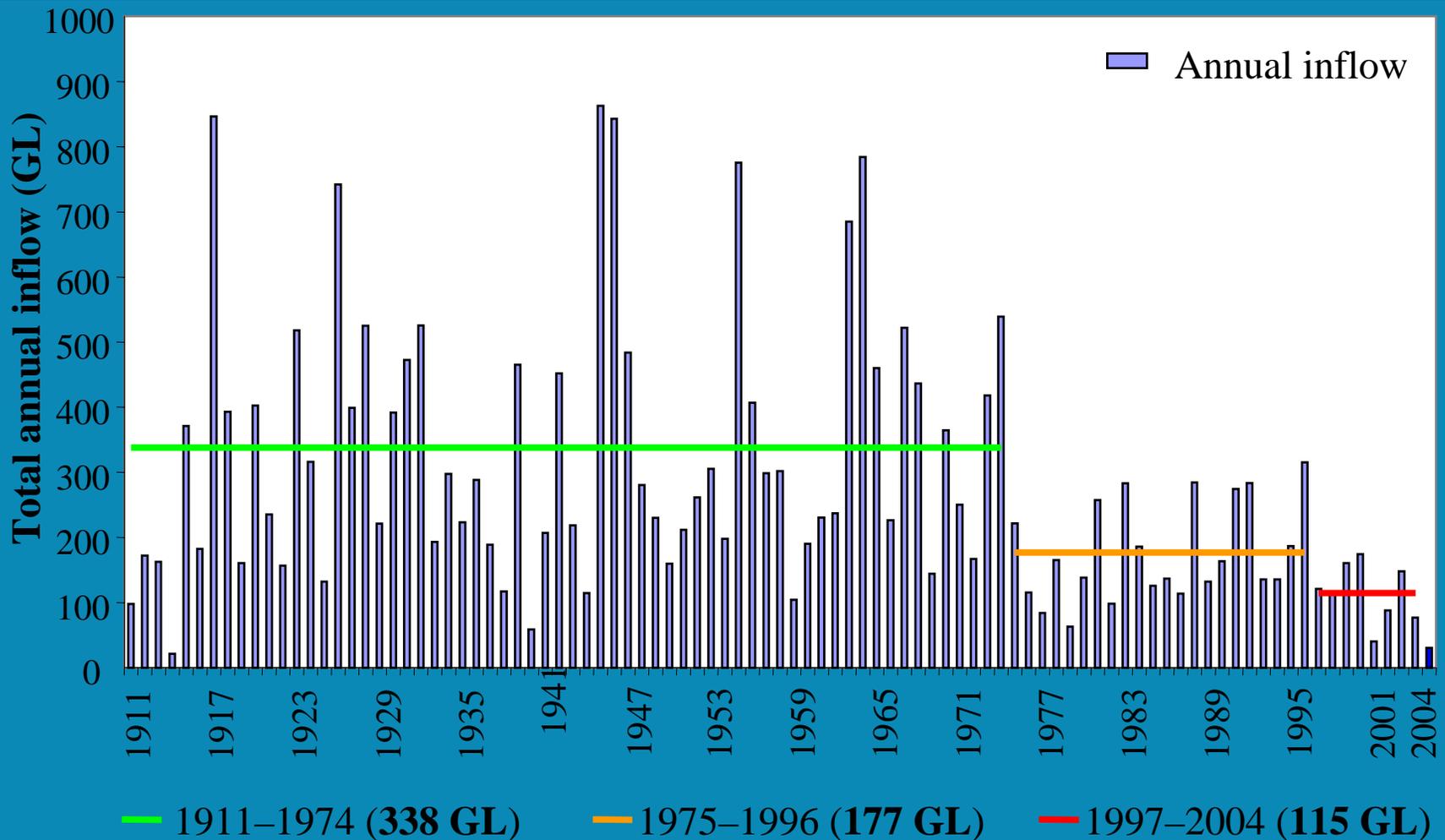
water *information*

Data ↪ Information ↪ Insight

Trend in annual rainfall across Australia.



Declining annual inflows to Perth's dams.

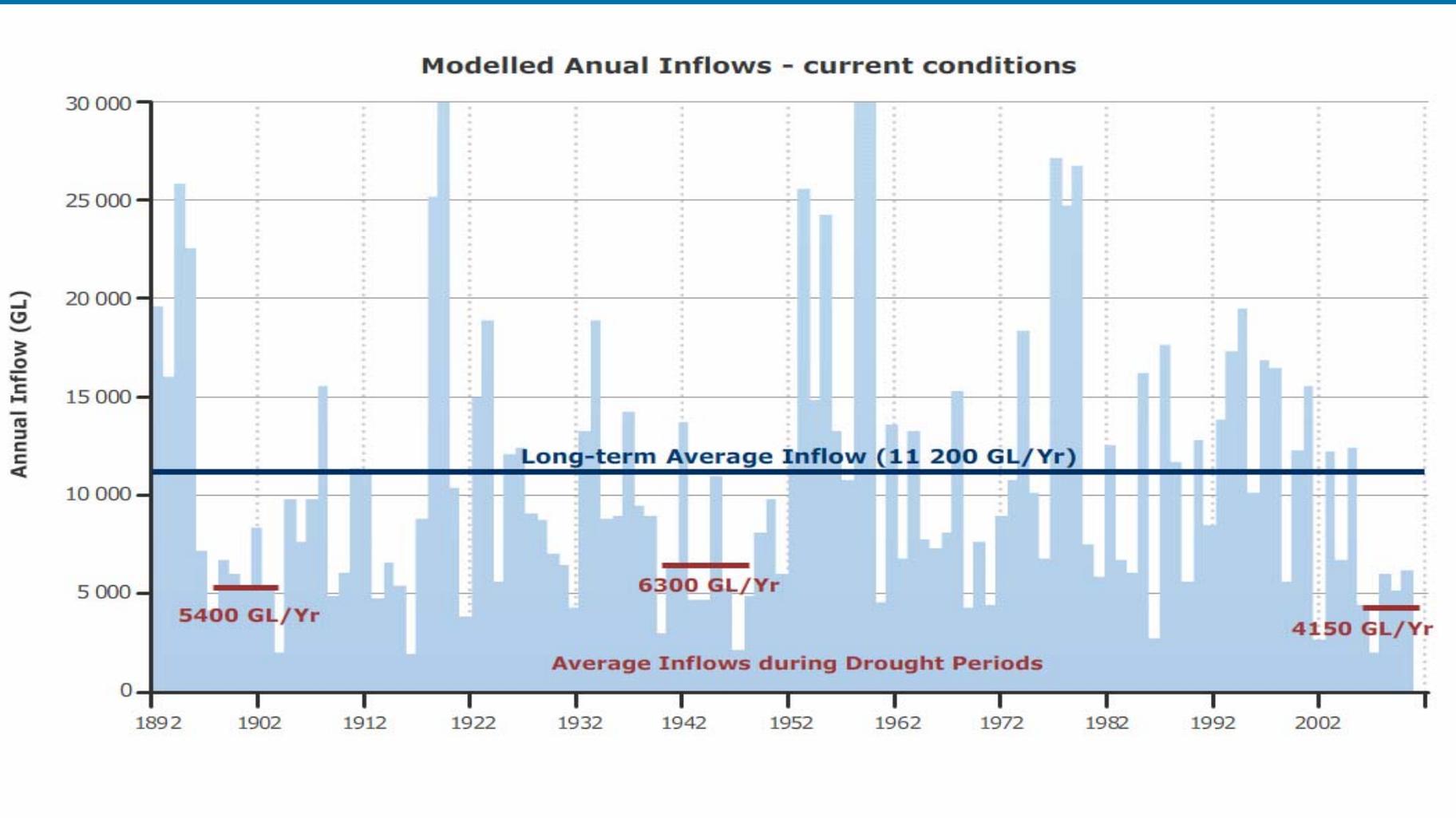


1911–1974 (338 GL)

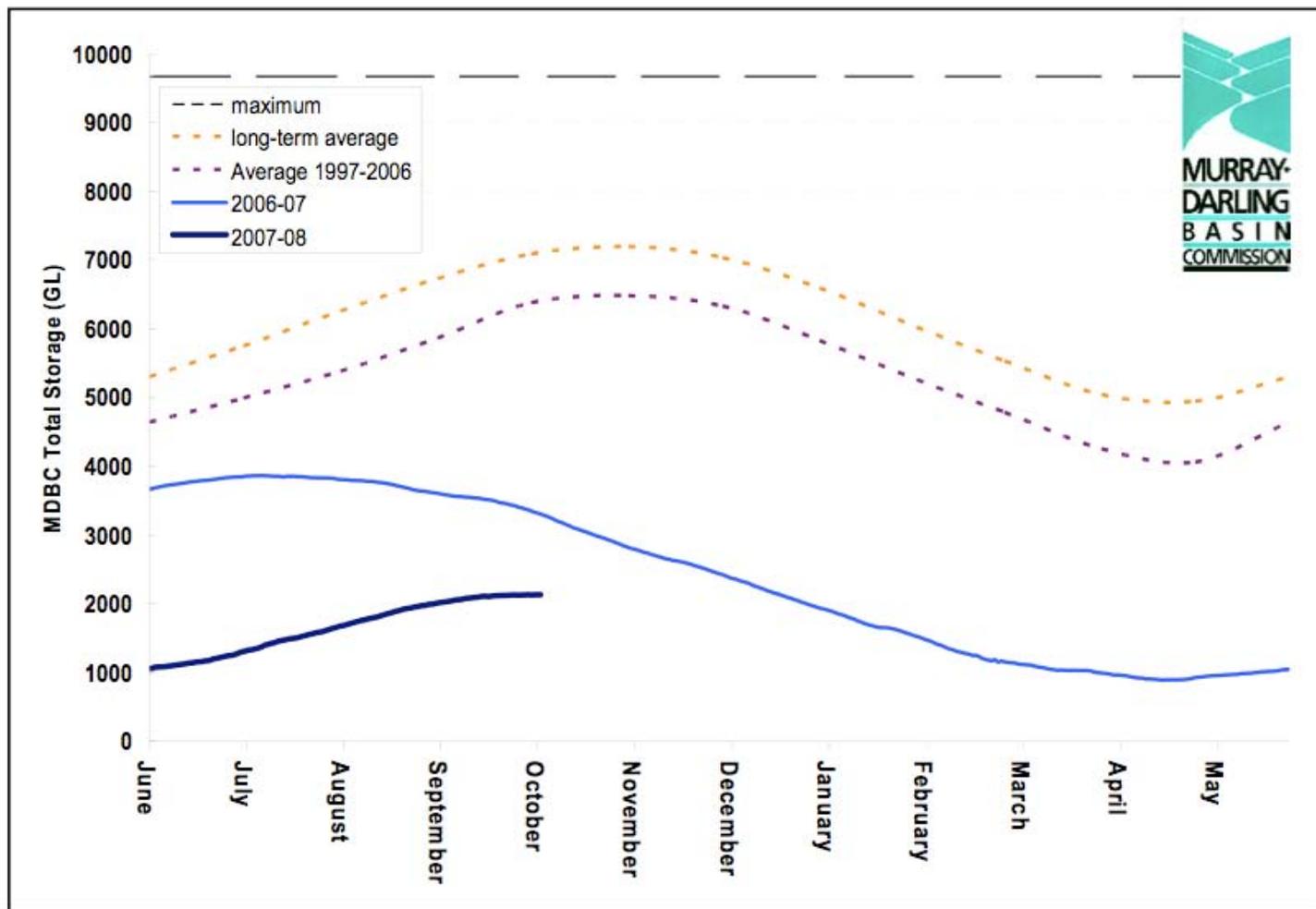
1975–1996 (177 GL)

1997–2004 (115 GL)

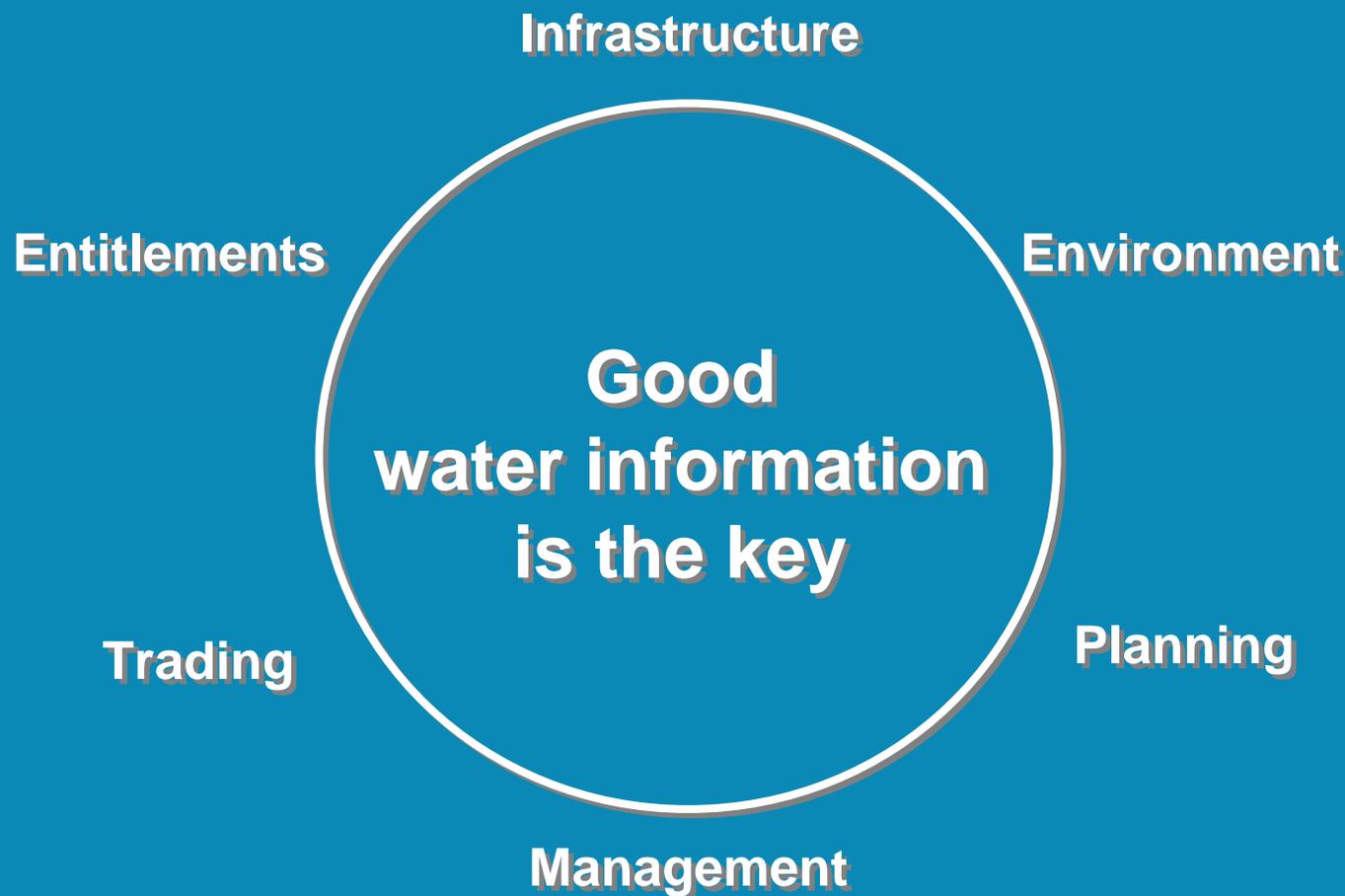
Historic sequence of MDB system inflows.



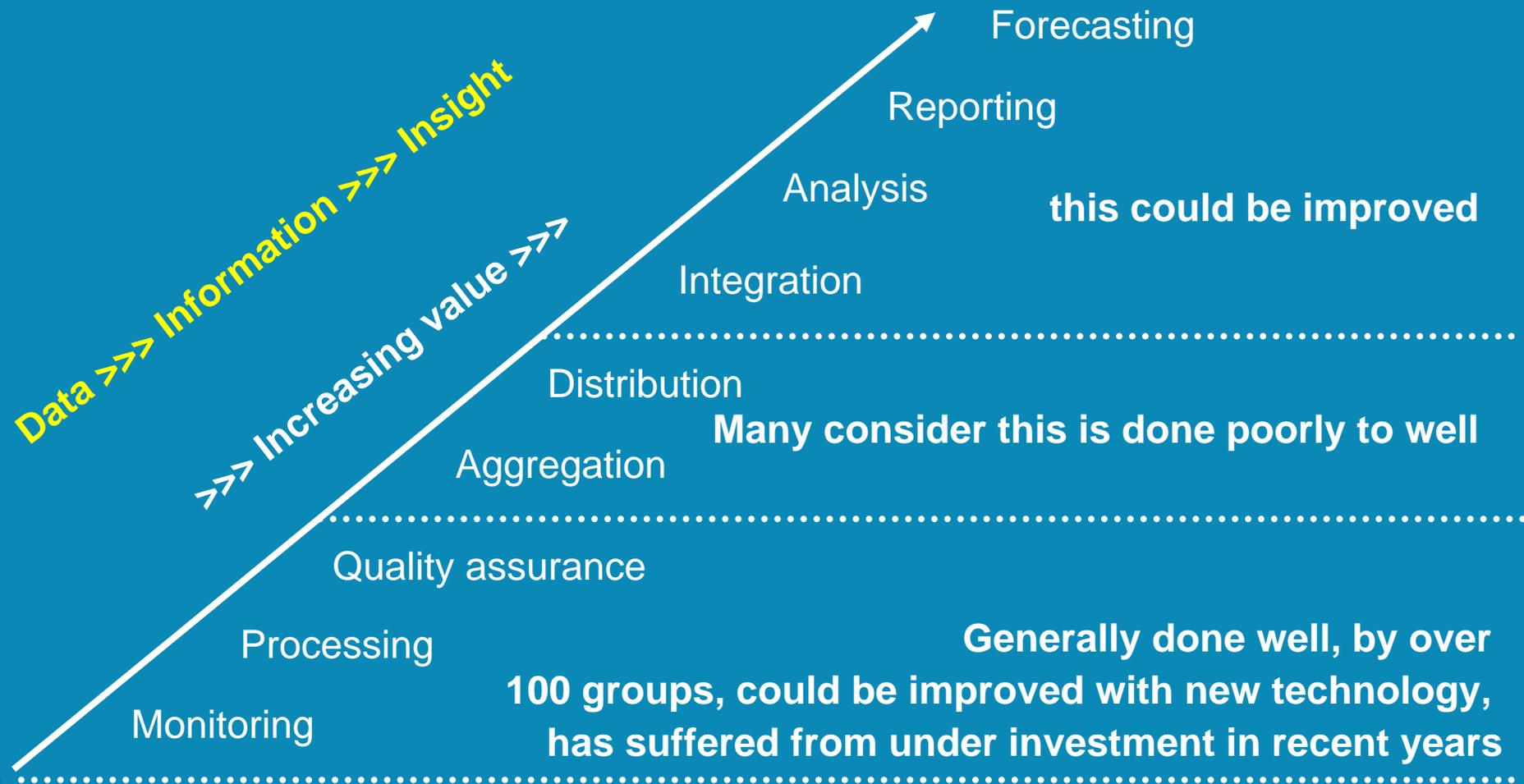
Water storage volumes in the MDB system.



Sustainable water resources management



The water information value ladder



The opportunity

- Drought inspired
- Political support locked in
- 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 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 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, industry and the people 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)