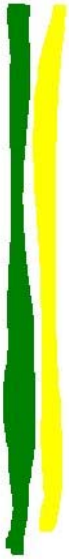




Water Governance in Australia

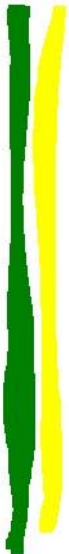
Gemma Van Halderen
Head, Environment Statistics Program
Australian Bureau of Statistics

May 2006

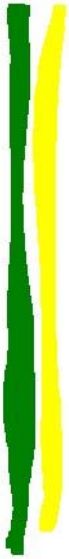


Presentation outline

- Brief outline of institutional and legal frameworks in Australia
- What impact do the frameworks have on water resource management and integrated information systems in Australia?

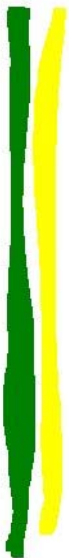


Roles in Australia

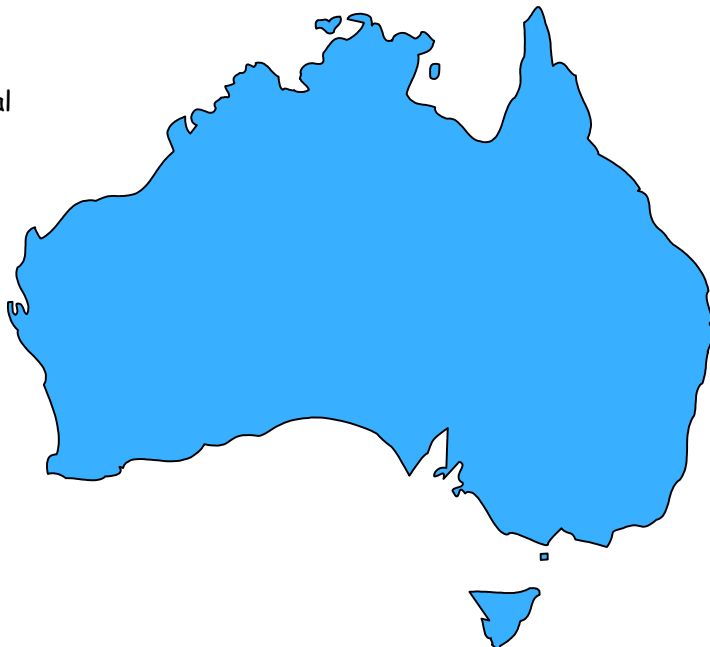


As far as possible, the roles of water resource management, standard setting and regulatory enforcement and service provision are institutionally separated in Australia

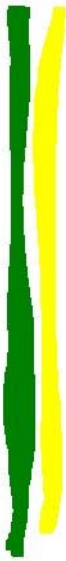
Australian Government



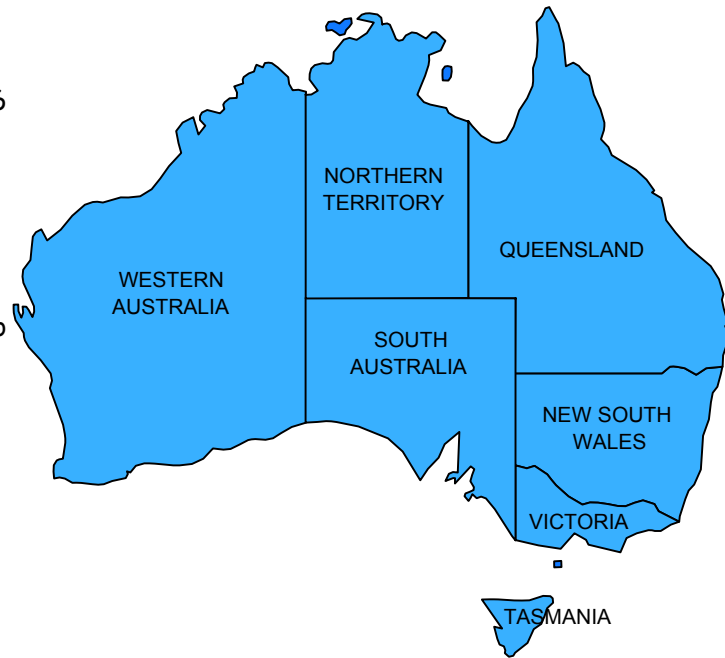
- Policy development
- Matters of National Significance



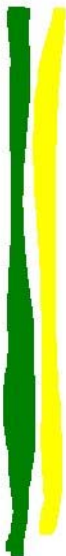
State Governments



- Rights to control and use water is vested in 6 State and 2 Territory Governments who determine the conditions on which water is made available to others eg licences to irrigators

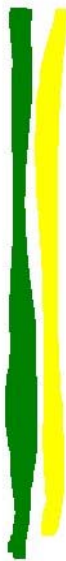


Other features

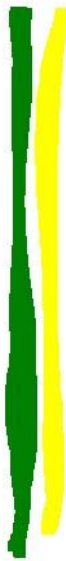


- Australian Water Supply Industry is primarily in public ownership
- Various bodies administer a vast array of regulation eg water resource management, water quality, pricing, and environmental impacts

National Water Initiative

- 
- Intergovernmental Agreement in recognition of continuing national imperative to increase the productivity and efficiency of Australia's water use, the need to service rural and urban communities, and to ensure the health of river and groundwater systems by establishing clear pathways to return all systems to environmentally sustainable levels of extraction.
 - Signed in December 2004, but builds on a 1994 strategic framework for efficient and sustainable reform of the Australian water industry

Objectives of the National Water Initiative

- 
- 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 by.....

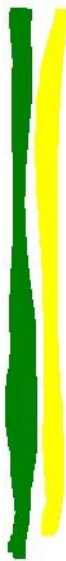
Objectives of the National Water Initiative

- 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 by.....
 - (vii) water accounting which is able to meet the information needs of different water systems in respect to planning, monitoring, trading, environmental management and off-farm management

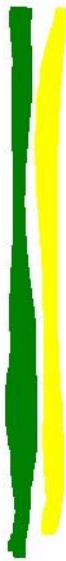
Objectives of the National Water Initiative

- Clauses 80-89 relate to Water Resource Accounting
 - 82 (iii) calls for the development and implementation of water resource accounts that can be reconciled annually and aggregated to produce a national water balance
- Clause 104-108 relate to monitoring and review
 - 105 (i) says the Water Commission will undertake a baseline assessment of the water resource and governance arrangements
 - 106 then calls for biennial assessments thereafter

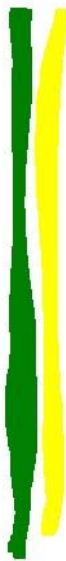
Intergovernmental Forums

- 
- The NWI is a project of the Council of Australian Governments.
 - COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia comprising the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers, and President of the Australian Local Government Association.

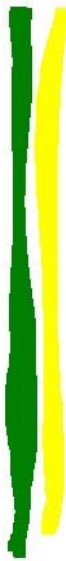
Ministerial Councils

- 
- Ministerial Councils
 - facilitate national implementation of plans and proposals which would not otherwise be possible because of the limitations imposed by the division of constitutional powers between Aust, State and Territory governments.
 - Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council
 - responsible for primary industries, natural resources, environment and water policy
 - Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council
 - responsible for providing the policy and direction needed to implement the Murray-Darling Basin Initiative

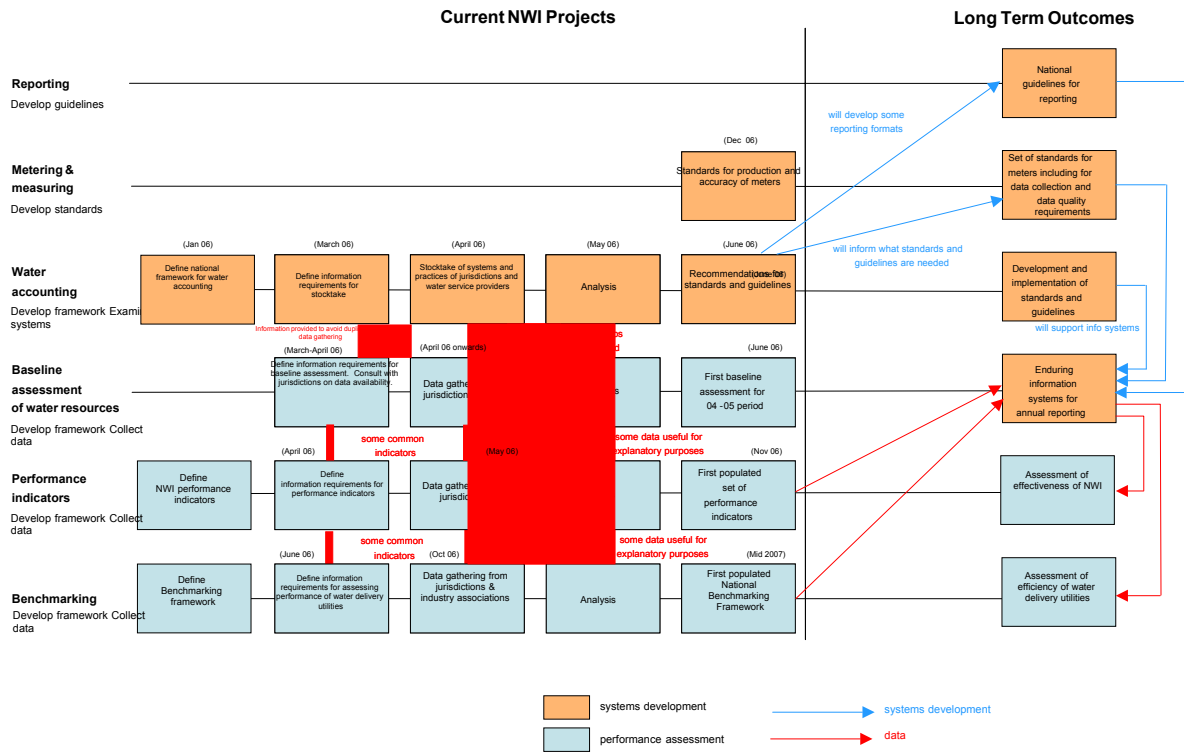
Institutional Bodies

- 
- National Water Commission
 - responsible for driving national water reform and assisting the states and territories to implement the National Water Initiative
 - Department for the Environment and Heritage
 - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
 - Prime Ministers Department
 - Murray Darling Basin Commission
 - National Land and Water Resource Audit
 - State and Territory bodies

Programs

- 
- National Water Initiative
 - Australia's highly variable and often scarce water resources are crucial for our economic, social and environmental well-being. We need to improve the productivity and efficiency of our water use, while maintaining healthy river and ground-water systems. The NWI addresses the vital importance of such questions to Australia. "

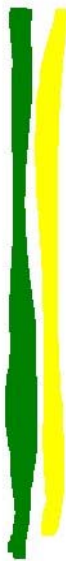
National Water Initiative Project Linkages



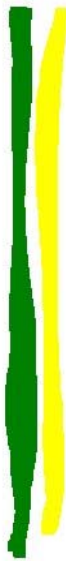
Programs (continued)

- Murray Darling Basin Initiative
 - The MDBI is the largest integrated catchment management program in the world, covering the watersheds of the Murray and Darling Rivers, an area of over one million square kms.
 - Program designed to rescue the level of water overallocation and to achieve specific environmental outcomes in the Murray-Darling Basin

Programs (*continued*)

- 
- Water Fund
 - investment in water infrastructure, improved knowledge and water management, and better practices in the stewardship of Australia's scarce water resources. The investments are made consistent with and help to achieve the objectives, outcomes and actions of the NWI.
 - Water Accounting has been identified as a priority area
 - National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality
 - includes targets and standards for natural resource management, particularly salinity and water quality

Programs (*continued*)

- 
- Natural Heritage Trust
 - designed to help restore and conserve Australia's environment and natural resources.
 - provides funding for environmental activities at a community , regional, and National/State level.
 - National Land and Water Resources Audit
 - particular initiative of the NHT
 - mission is to provide data, information and nationwide assessments of Australia's land, water and biological resources to support sustainable development
 - data coordination and information role



Impact on Water Resource Management (from an NSO perspective)

- There is a complex, interwoven, set of institutional and legal frameworks within Australia to manage water resources
- The different perspectives that need to be brought together are diverse
 - engineering, financial accounting, macro-economic policy, water policy, statistics, hydrologists, climatologists
- Many of Australia's programs are administered from a regional (non-national) perspective



Impact on Water Resource Management (from an NSO perspective)

- Integration can be helped but not ensured by having basic building blocks such as statistical standards, geographical standards, environmental accounting frameworks, etc
- National Statistical Offices can aid integration by being a trusted advisor to all players.
 - We are also an organisation that can offer many roles in an integrated information system.
 - trust, reliability, credibility, enduring, relevance, transparency,



Impact on Water Resource Management (from an NSO perspective)

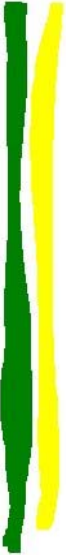
- Impacts on collection
 - proliferation of collectors of information
 - not all information collected on a national basis, or using nationally consistent approaches
 - information is both scientific measurement data as well as statistical observation data
 - collection can be one-off
 - in general, informed by case-studies and research, rather than comprehensive statistical information bases
 - when a national data collection exercise is undertaken (eg by the ABS), some duplication of effort can occur with implications on respondent burden



Impact on Water Resource Management (from an NSO perspective)

- Impacts on compilation
 - lack of consistent collection standards makes it difficult to aggregate or compile
 - lack of consistent geographical standards can also make aggregation difficult
 - many programs are funded regionally which makes top-down consistency difficult
 - however there are coordination/standardisation bodies such as an Expert Advisory Panel on Water Accounting, NWI Baseline Assessment Project and the NLWRA and supporting jurisdiction bodies

Concluding Remarks

- 
- The complex, interwoven, set of institutional and legal frameworks within Australia to manage water resources does work
 - An integrated information system is being developed through collaboration and a strong commitment to addressing the need for information to monitor and assess Australia's Water Resources