

In response to your request for comments on the inquiry into Catchment Management we profer the following comments

We agree with your committee findings that the handling of investigations, data, and actions related to Australian catchments is disjointed and not co-ordinated.

We believe that this outcome is the result of a lack of co-ordination of the various activities related to catchments. In our contact with catchment survey research, there is work performed by Environment Protection Authorities, Coastal Boards, CSIRO, Agriculture, Forestry and Land Management groups and departments and by town councils and shires and water boards, where rivers and streams run in their areas.

The Victorian Government approach to placing each catchment under a separate body - "Catchment Management Authority" is an excellent move to change the co-ordination of catchment research and remedial action. A similar approach is already in place for the Murray Darling catchment

The Catchment is a clearly defined land area and, as such, can be managed independently of adjacent catchments. In general, other boundaries coincide with parts of catchment boundaries so that interested parties can be identified and marshaled. This leads to a specific focus on the problems related to the catchment itself.

It is therefore logical that a single body be delegated the task of managing the catchment including all work on surveys for water, land use and atmospheric interactions, research, collating and reporting and archiving data.

The same logic implies that all development and remedial actions that occur in a catchment should be planned and co-ordinated by the single Catchment Management Authority.

We strongly urge your inquiry to encourage and support the formation of Catchment management Authorities throughout Australia, and urge State Governments to place control of catchments in their hands by channeling Federal and State funds through these bodies.

At RMIT we would welcome this action as it would give us a single points of contact and funding for our work in each catchment.

RMIT recognises the vital importance of Catchment Management to Australia's economy and sustainable environment and has set up a Catchment Research Initiative across its faculties of Applied Science,

Engineering and Biomedical Research. This initiative is already placing post-graduate students and their supervisors in projects related to two Victorian catchments (East Gippsland and Western Port) and intends to expand this activity elsewhere. We believe that we will play a major part in developing catchment research techniques for use across a wide range of catchments, whilst testing them on individual catchments.

RMIT is vitally interested in your efforts to resolve and improve catchment management in Australia

We would be very pleased to provide further comment to your inquiry. We can be contacted at the following address, or via email / phone indicated in the signature details.

Professor Allan Bremner,  
Dr Robin Greenwood-Smith,

Faculty of Applied Science  
RMIT University  
LaTrobe St  
Melbourne  
3000

Dr Robin Greenwood-Smith,  
Director - Special Projects  
Faculty of Applied Science  
RMIT University  
GPO Box 2476V  
Melbourne, Victoria 3001  
Australia  
Phone +61 3 9925 1059  
Fax +61 3 9663 2518  
Mobile +61 (0)407 364 508  
email [robin.g\\_smith@rmit.edu.au](mailto:robin.g_smith@rmit.edu.au)