

Professor James Macnae

Salinity Inquiry  
Submission No. 37.....

**Comment:**

I am a research scientist who has recently changed research focus from mineral exploration to environmental geophysics. I have had considerable recent success in raising research funds through the Australian Research Council (ARC) for salinity-related problems, and am starting to produce results that may be of relevance to addressing salinity problems. The areas I have chosen to research have been targeted towards the National 'Priority Areas' as identified by the ARC. Specific topics have been related to problems identified in the published literature and through listening to presentations at scientific conferences and workshops. Research topic examples are improved conductivity and salinity estimation in the root zone, and methodology for the remote measurement of underground fresh waters. However, it is largely unclear (at least to me) as to how the results of active University research can be communicated to those responsible for the management and implementation of salinity and water problems.

The traditional methods of disseminating University scientific research are at scientific conferences, and (more slowly) through publication in the peer-reviewed literature. However, it is unclear to me which (if any) conferences and which (if any) literature would be appropriate for presentation/publication to reach a target audience of 'managers' as opposed to other research scientists. The expressed interest in salinity of a great many federal, state and catchment authorities further means that there is no obvious single point of contact for a research scientist to make any direct approach to discuss problems and possible solutions.

Thus, my impression is that, from a University scientist's perspective, there is no existing linkage mechanism that allows me to communicate results of active research to those responsible for management and implementation of salinity mapping or salinity solutions. In addition, other than through the scientific literature, popular press and web searches, there is no obvious way by which problems identified by the myriad governments and agencies can be directly and rapidly communicated to the University research community.

Thus, the inquiry is addressing a very real problem. Providing the required linkages at reasonable cost will be difficult, considering the number of interested parties, but I would submit that there would be significant University interest in a forum to discuss linkage mechanisms through which research might be made particularly relevant, or through which Universities might be able to identify and undertake 'commercial' research to meet specific needs.

James Macnae