

# Institute for Land, Water and Society

## Who We Are

The Institute for Land, Water and Society (ILWS) is a research centre at Charles Sturt University (CSU), Australia. Formed in 2005, it combines research strengths in biophysical, social and economic research and has well-established partnerships with state and federal government departments, agencies and other tertiary institutions in Australia and overseas. Since inception ILWS has facilitated integration of environmental, social and economic research aims and practices. Our focus on facilitating systematic research has positioned ILWS to address the issues that arise when managing social ecological systems that are characterised by uncertainty and complexity.

## What We Do

Our researchers are involved in individual, collaborative and commissioned work around Australia and the world, providing opportunities to influence local, regional, national, and, academic communities. Research is undertaken within four thematic (not mutually exclusive) areas:

- Biodiversity Conservation
- Environmental Water
- Rural and Regional Communities
- Sustainable Development (International)

Our research is made possible by significant financial and in-kind investment from CSU, funding bodies, government departments and agencies.

## Our Director

The Institute is led by Professor Max Finlayson, a wetland ecologist recognised internationally for his expertise in wetland management.

*"We respect the need for regional communities to be well informed as they address the many issues that need to be considered when seeking sustainable and integrated actions."* Professor Finlayson

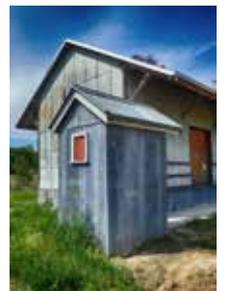
## Our Members

ILWS is a multi and trans-disciplinary research centre, with members working in and across a range of fields including the arts, aquatic science and management, biodiversity, communication, cultural heritage, economics, eco-agriculture, ecology, education, environmental management, modelling, natural resource management, regional entrepreneurship and development, social science, and tourism. Our 'critical mass' comprises around 70 researchers, including post-doctoral fellows, from many schools and all faculties of CSU. As well, there are more than 60 Higher Degree Research (HDR) student members in the Institute whose research topics are congruent with the mission of the Institute. Our adjunct researchers, who may be based at other universities, institutions and government agencies, have specific areas of expertise and research interest that add to our diverse research capacity and productivity.

## How We Engage

We communicate the important findings and messages from our researchers' work and engage with the community and our stakeholders in a variety of ways. These include:

- events (public forums, workshops, conferences and seminars)
- print, radio, TV, webpage, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube
- quarterly newsletter *Connections*
- ILWS Biennial report
- academic publications, technical reports, and conference presentations



**Our mission is to undertake internationally recognised integrated environmental, social and economic research for rural and regional areas.**

## How We Make A Difference

Our researchers work on a diverse range of projects, for example:

### Ecosystem responses to environmental water

- Institute researchers are working with partner organisations on two five-year projects monitoring ecosystem responses to environmental watering in the Edward-Wakool and the Murrumbidgee River Systems, in the southern Murray-Darling Basin. Outcomes of these multi-million dollar projects are contributing to the day-to-day decisions around the management and delivery of environmental water, and to future water management decisions in Australia and else-where in the world. In 2016 there was a massive blue-green algal bloom along the iconic Murray River. In response to a request from the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office, the Edward-Wakool project team monitored the bloom for over 12 weeks. The study has greatly improved knowledge of blue-green algal blooms and will assist in the management of future blooms.

### Improving groundwater management in Pakistan

- This four-year ACIAR funded project is tackling the critical issue of groundwater over-extraction in Pakistan which is threatening the livelihood of millions. A team of ILWS researchers is working with international and Pakistan-based partners to develop groundwater management tools and approaches aimed at enhancing the long-term future livelihoods of farming families while also reducing social and environmental impacts from groundwater over-extraction.

### Benefits of fish passageways in Lao PDR

- The latest fisheries projects in Lao PDR funded by ACIAR, this five year project is examining the biophysical and economic benefits of fish passageways in that country. Development of infrastructure, especially roads and irrigation systems in Lao PDR, has occurred rapidly in recent years, which, while benefiting agriculture, is impacting on fish migration and causing decreased wetland fish production. The ILWS team is investigating whether the construction of suitable fishways may help boost fisheries production and protect livelihoods.

### Ecosystem services in agricultural landscapes

- This three year ARC Discovery project, now in its final year, is examining the activities of birds and insects in apple orchards, and the costs and benefits of these activities; carcass disposal in grazing landscapes, in particular the contribution of raptors to the breakdown of animal carcasses; and the relationships between bird behaviour and fruit damage in vineyards. As a result of this work agriculturalists will have greater capacity to maximise ecosystem benefits and increase economic returns, while also enhancing biodiversity conservation.

### Humanitarian immigrant entrepreneurs

- This three year ARC Discovery project which is led by the University of Technology, Sydney, is filling a critical gap in our knowledge about humanitarian immigrant entrepreneurs in private and social enterprises, and is identifying policies, programs and projects that can assist with expanding humanitarian immigrant entrepreneurship in Australia.

### Better Parks for People

- This year long project, funded by Family and Community Services NSW, is being conducted in partnership with AlburyCity. Using spatial and social data, the project will produce a spatial tool that will assist local councils across Australia plan for urban parks that meet the needs of older Australians.

#### For more information:

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## Our strategic objectives

- To maintain and enhance our profile as an internationally recognised provider of integrated quality research that enhances environmental, social and economic conditions in rural and regional areas, in Australia and overseas
- To sustain our position as a recognised and leading Research Centre in areas relevant to our communities with an annual research income of \$4M by 2020
- To remain a preferred provider for research that integrates environmental, social and economic disciplines with pure and applied research that influences and informs our community of interest, the professions, government and others
- To continue to be recognised for our unique ability to bring environmental, social and economic disciplines together to address issues relating to communities and landscapes

## Our strategic principles

- Research direction - four clearly defined research themes involving researchers across all CSU Faculties
- Research approach - pure and applied research that is, where possible, multi and trans-disciplinary
- Research collaboration - networking with key researchers, government, industry and community partners in our areas of strength
- Research culture - fostering professional development, peer support and recognition
- Research skills - through mentoring and training
- Communication - supporting engagement to increase community input into research and to disseminate research outcomes
- Integration - undertaken within and across research themes and disciplines