

# Towards a CSU-SEGRA Strategic Partnership

## *Setting the scene*

In 2013 the SEGRA National Steering Committee decided that the annual conference was to go beyond talk and be a catalyst for collaborative action. The Steering Committee recognised that every day people in regional Australia are faced with challenges and ask: How might we respond to--? How might we deal with--? How might we get better---? Equally we all have solutions, by way of: Why don't we--, Let's--. I know what might work.

Based on crowd sourcing, since 2013 the 'SEGRA challenge' has provided an opportunity for delegates to tackle some of these challenges, to connect with like-minded others and to grow their ideas into masterful projects. CSU supported challenge based projects have been delivered in a range of regional situations and settings and the learnings make a pivotal contributions in moving towards a CSU-SEGRA strategic partnership. And one that builds on the collaboration with ILWS on *Adapting to Changing Climatic Conditions*, dating back to the 2008 SEGRA Conference in Albury.

**Attachment 1** synthesises the ILWS and SEGRA Challenge Linkages from 2013 to 2018. This sees the 2013 Murry Darling Basin (MDB) Challenge as a geographic core for catchment scale integrated management and ecosystem services. A set of focused collaborative activities emerged that could be delivered in relation to the challenge of implementing the 'Basin Plan' from the bottom-up in other regional contexts. As challenges, these encompass

- Sustaining remote regional towns and communities
- Secure safe domestic water from non-scheme supplies
- Regional knowledge hubs and linking education, training and workplaces

The *Regional Solutions Framework* provides a specific approach for ensuring that regional economic initiatives are 'funding ready'.

## *Setting a longer term strategic focus*

Post the 2015 conference, ILWS-CSU and SEGRA collaborated to produce a broad strategic framework for possible joint endeavours titled: *Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia: the next 10 years*. This document picked up on key topics raised in conferences presentations, workshops, round tables and challenges that were or could be worked on cooperatively. Directions for research informed policy actions were grouped in three themes

### 1. Regions as places for people

- 'Place' in the perceptions, realities and importance of regional Australia
- Regional landscapes as a reflection of the interplay of biophysical, social, economic, cultural attributes of the environment and the need to integrate them adaptively
- Maximising the opportunities of the Murray Darling Basin Plan
- Network activation and local leadership as change agents

## 2. Regions as places for people's endeavours

- Governance alignment, compliance and collaboration within and between jurisdictions as key stones of sustainable regional development
- Regional collaborative investment platforms to design, fund and sustain investable infrastructure projects in peri-urban, rural and remote regions
- Technologies for the future from personal devices and how they might provide transformative opportunities for regional health care to disinfecting water in rural and remote regions
- Education, training and professional development that is tailored for regional purposes

## 3. Regions as places for resource optimisation and commercial innovation

- Carbon in the real world as the supporter of all life forms and driver of a new generation of regional industrial and infrastructure innovation
- Secure and safe domestic water for rural and remote Australia as an essential part of the infrastructure for rural and remote regions
- Murray Darling Basin (MDB) as lens through which to view sustainable regional development in Northern Australia at basin and catchment scales
- Northern Australia's land, water, ecosystem, renewable energy and mineral resources as catalysts for integrating and adapting new commercial enterprises to regional biophysical and socio-economic realities

SEGRA 2016 and 2017 provided more input towards addressing regional challenges. Two specific examples are calls for action from:

- researcher's day deliberations on informing strategies for education through to employment
- workshop activities on applying integrated adaptation strategies and actions for sustaining vulnerable coastal regions

### ***Setting priorities for collaborative action***

**Attachment 2** is a schematic synthesis of identified areas for possible priority collaborative project activity. Conceptually, this links key research areas from the three themes outlined above with the coastal workshops and the education and training pathway work from the researcher's day. Building on strength, learnings and experience with collaborative regional engagement work are a core foundation for the framework.

Adapting to changing climatic conditions was the underpinning theme of a workshop held at the CSU Albury campus during SEGRA 2008. And it follows that climate change is a focusing topic of societal concern when supporting 'Basin Plan' optimisation, sustaining productive catchments and coastal regions, supporting rural and remote regional cities and towns, and the delivering the secure safe domestic water initiative.

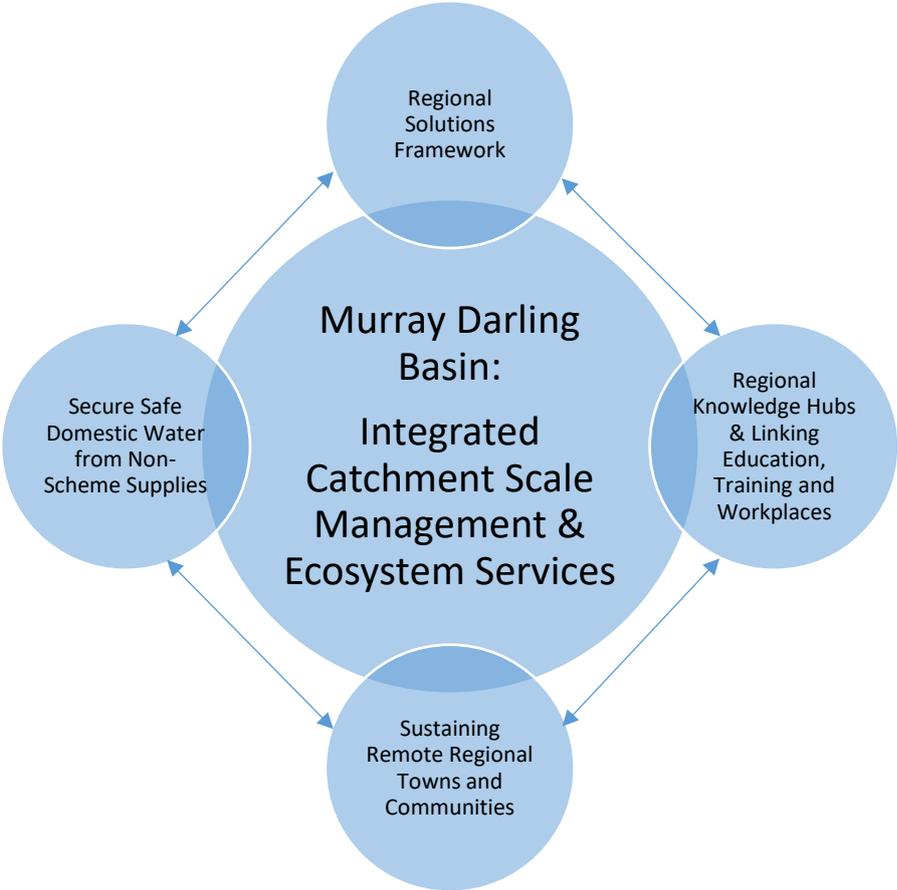
In this context, CSU could continue to:

1. Use the MDB as geographic framework for focusing engagement and research. Specifically, CSU-ILWS should prepare and lobby a proposal to MDBA to provide integrated catchment management and ecosystems services research input to Basin Plan assessment and implementation. Experience through the SSDW initiative in seeing how the statutory requirement of Section 86A of the Water Act 2007 and Chapter 11 of the Basin Plan to meet critical human water needs is being addressed provides a niche area for high impact research that has biophysical and socio-economic dimensions.
2. Roll-out the SSDW initiative in order to engage with 'basin' communities and seek funds from governmental and philanthropic sources to support research on the water science and social science dimensions of health risks and place based solutions to risk reduction. This would strategically optimise the \$75 000 ILWS-CSU investment made in SSDW and related project work from 2015 to 2018 and the major in-kind contribution made by SEGRA in this initiative.
3. Foster university-industry collaboration in sustainability technologies for the water sector for water quality screening, filtration and disinfection. Scientists and engineers from USC are particularly interested in collaborating in ARC Linkage applications on these topics. An industry partner has developed an in-situ chlorine generator that is used to demonstrate to stakeholders (at engagement activities in the MDB and beyond) how private domestic water supplies can be disinfected and health risks reduced.
4. Optimise community engagement and societal attitudes research learnings from the SSDW and sustainability technology take up of property scale water treatment equipment to reduce health risks.
5. Link sustaining productive catchments and coastal regions as a research area to develop and demonstrate excellence in holistically applying integrated adaptive assessment and management approaches, from headwaters to the sea.

A strategic CSU-SEGRA partnership could continue to promote and submit proposals for the establishment of physical and virtual regional knowledge hubs and pathways to employment through workplace based skills acquisition and professional development programs. This could build on learnings from: the 2017 project undertaken by ILWS for the development of a high quality training hub in the Maranoa in Queensland; and consultations with stakeholders in regional centres where there are underutilised and stranded education and training infrastructure

CSU has been supportive of the development and utilisation of the regional solutions framework and this should be taken to a project delivery level in collaboration with research, governmental, business and community stakeholders. This will optimise funding made by the university and build on the success of 'Challenge' collaboration projects to support strategic regional investments.

**ILWS-CSU & SEGRA  
Challenge Linkage Framework 2013-2018**



# ILWS-CSU Strategic Partnership Framework

## Proposed Key Areas for Collaborative Activities

