



RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Climate Change Adaptation in the Coorong

Climate Change Adaptation in the Coorong, Murray Mouth and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert (2010-2011)

Funding: National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility

Investigators/researchers: Dr Catherine Gross & Dr James Pittock (ANU), and Prof Max Finlayson

Description

This research project investigated adaptation to climate change in the Coorong and Lakes Region. It is one part of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) program of seven Australian geographically-based projects exploring the "limits to adaptation" and adaptation options in ecologically sensitive areas, such as wetlands, alpine areas and coastal areas.

In this context adaptation included social adaptation to changing climatic conditions as well as ecological adaptation. Climate change adaptation was investigated from a wholistic perspective that examined connections between the social, institutional and ecological elements of this complex system. The research explored limits to adaptation, adaptation options, vulnerability, resilience and environmental health from an historical perspective and by examining the current situation to assess future adaptation options. The project delivered findings in two main areas. First, at a localised regional level, the project answered specific climate change research questions related to the Coorong and Lakes Region and offered conclusions and recommendations to enhance adaptation. Second, at a broader level, delivered findings for the research community in relation to notions of adaptation and limits to adaptation.

Outputs

A report has been submitted to NCCARF for peer review. This covered key findings and conclusions, the latter based on a set of questions posed by the funder. Key findings covered the following:

- 1) Local adaptations and adaptation options which to a greater or lesser extent concerned water availability, national water policy, water sharing arrangements, and impacts due to climate change.
- 2) The extent of community engagement and the influence of multiple planning initiatives, institutional arrangements and capacity to effectively engage with local communities and develop a long-term perspective. The complexity of these arrangements and learning from past adaptations were also covered.
- 3) Institutional arrangements that can accommodate unknowns and ensure adequate stakeholder engagement, including by the Ngarrindjeri Nation, and how these can support an adaptive and long-term approach to addressing climate change adaptation.

Outcomes

Recommendations have been included in the draft report and covered the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation; the integration of non-climate and climate induced reforms into water management; reallocations for environmental flows; a long-term approach to management of the Region; institutional arrangements; relationships with the community; and the consolidation of planning and scientific research. The specifics of these recommendations will be available after peer review.



Albury-Wodonga Campus
PO Box 789
Elizabeth Mitchell Drive, Thurgoona
ALBURY NSW 2640
Australia

TEL +61 2 6051 9992
FAX +61 2 6051 9797
EMAIL ilws@csu.edu.au

CONTACT:
Professor Max Finlayson
CSU Albury
mfinlayson@csu.edu.au

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