



Reflections on travelling with the hydrology community and the virtues of collectivism

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Some key water research collectives

- AWRAC Centres of Concentration
- Water CRCs
- NERP/NESP Hubs
- WIRADA
- Various other specialist centres

- *Note: Not talking about single institution 'shop-fronts'*

An incomplete list...

- Australian Centre for Catchment Hydrology
- Australian Centre for Freshwater Ecology
- Centre for Environmental Applied Hydrology
- Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research
- Centre for Groundwater Studies
- CRC for Catchment Hydrology
- CRC for Freshwater Ecology
- eWater CRC
- CRC Irrigation Futures
- CRC for Water Quality and Treatment
- CRC for Water Sensitive Cities
- Murray Darling Basin Freshwater Research Centre
- National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training
- Water Information Research and Development Alliance
- Goyder Institute
- Water Research Australia
- National Centre of Excellence in Desalination
- Australian Water Recycling Centre of Excellence
- Urban Water Security Research Alliance
- International Water Centre
- International Centre of Excellence in Water Resources Management
- NERP Tropical Ecosystem Hub
- NESP Tropical Water Quality Hub

Some high level observations

- Many collectives!
- Many of us would have been involved in one or more of these
- Some terrific output
- Good continuity in a few cases
- Some have fallen on hard times and limped along
- Mostly ephemeral
- Ambition and funding have declined in recent times

Some virtues of collectives

- Funding stability
- Creating scale to tackle big problems
- Linking up researchers and skill sets
- Bridges to end users
- Discipline around planning and review
- Structure and skills training for young scientists
- Accent on communication and adoption
- Gravitas, aiding adoption and impact

Some (possible) negatives too

- Rarely inclusive enough
- Too directed towards immediate needs
- Not always well conceived
- Require a lot of energy to pitch and run
- (Again) Almost always ephemeral
- Can create conflict with parent institutions

Enduring Institutions

- The building blocks of our research community
- The managers of considerable resources
- The stewards of diverse skill sets
- The capability to maintain infrastructure
- Key parts of a supply chain

But also (sometimes):

- Inward looking and self interested
- Think broadly, not deeply or 'Telescoped'
- Slow to move

What of the future?

- These are bear times
- Competition for resources is more intense than ever
- But the science potential and need (in our field) are greater than ever
- **All the more reason to get organized**

That means:

- Having sharp ideas
- Having eloquent spokespeople
- Having strong alliances



Merits of a *science community* collective

- Provide an intellectual framework for our science
- Helps the field advance much faster
- Identify shared science infrastructure needs
- Catalyse bidding blocs for specific goals

And ideally:

- Bring coherence to our capacity – differentiate and consolidate

OzEWEX - A great fit for the times

- Science-led at a time when end-users are struggling to articulate need
- Can and should be enduring
- Earth System Science is where it's at
- Linked to an international effort
- Advocacy for community modelling systems
- Stimulating young new entrants to our field
- 'Lite' in terms of cost and complexity

Thanks for listening