

Long Term Sustainability: Prospects and Challenges from an Australian Perspective

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Overview

- **Outline of sustainability challenges facing Australia**
- **Success factors, gaps and difficulties in governance for sustainability**
- **Case study: natural resource management**
- **Conclusions and areas for further study**



Policy integration and implementation

- **Long-term policy integration**
 - Cross- scale
 - Inter-sectoral
 - Inter-temporal
- **Policy implementation**
 - Weakness of environmental policy constituency
 - Path dependence and resistance to change (vested interests)
- **Many, many real time experiments**
 - But, how strongly is sustainability being pursued in Australia?

Success factors, gaps and difficulties

- **Progress in definition of long-term objectives roles and responsibilities**
- **National intervention has increased in response to policy challenges**
 - inter- jurisdictional coordination and scaling issues
- **Weakness in sustainability strategies for economic sectors**
- **Weakness in mechanisms to embed sustainability in policy and administration**
 - **Constitution and legislation**
 - **Sustainable development assessment methodology including integration in budgets**
 - **Evaluation and feedback**
- **Imbalance between influence of environmental and sectoral policy constituencies**
- **Generally limited Ministerial and executive support**
 - **Short termism, vested interests**

Example: natural resource management 1

- **Theoretical arguments for decentralised polycentric NRM**
- **Regional planning approach**
- **Large national funding programs**
 - National and state funding
 - State and regional implementation

Murray-Darling Basin

14% of Australia

1 Million Square Kilometers

Over 2 Million People

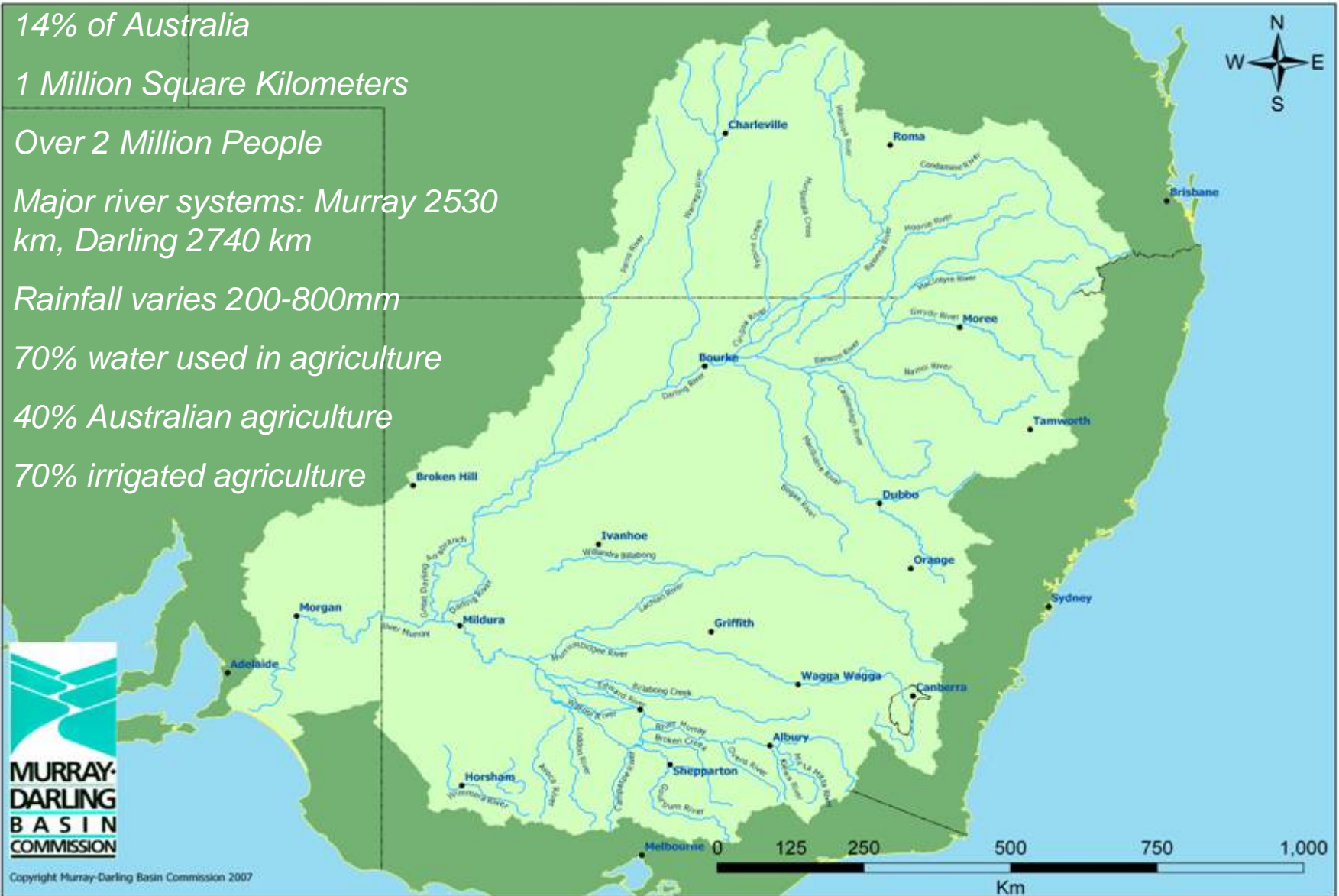
Major river systems: Murray 2530 km, Darling 2740 km

Rainfall varies 200-800mm

70% water used in agriculture

40% Australian agriculture

70% irrigated agriculture



NSWn catchments



Example: natural resource management 2

- **Regional planning approach to NRM**
 - Many good initiatives but overall outcomes unclear
- **Conflict between policy goals**
- **Competing interests and claims on resources**
- **Quality of plans and effectiveness of catchment management bodies varies widely**
- **Complexity of metrics to handle land and water management**
- **Moving forward in the face of uncertainty**
- **Challenge of “bridging the gap” between higher and lower levels and getting all parties to work effectively together**
- **Capacity of regional bodies**
 - Participation and human resources

Closing observations

- **Need for truly inclusive process to set directions**
- **Importance of robust mechanisms to embed sustainability**
- **Effective leadership is vital**
 - **political, officials, resource users, stakeholders**
- **Areas for study**
 - **moving forward in the face of uncertainty - coproduction of knowledge and policy**
 - **cross scale coordination and participation**

Thanks for your attention

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