



# Social and Institutional Research Program

## Current projects, 2006–07

Australia's natural resources are all managed by people. Understanding how people and their systems interact with the environment is essential for sustainable natural resource management.

Land & Water Australia's Social and Institutional Research Program (SIRP) manages research about the social and institutional dimensions of natural resource management. The program presently has a focus on integrating socio-economic issues with biophysical and industry research to inform natural resource management policy analysis and formulation.

This brochure outlines current social and institutional research projects and updates the table of projects in the publication *Making the connections that build sustainability in natural resource management*.

The Social and Institutional Research Program has three themes:

- institutions and governance arrangements for sustainable natural resource management
- policy instrument choice
- landscapes, lifestyles and livelihoods.

### Institutions and governance arrangements for sustainable natural resource management

Research and development under this theme aims to inform policy development and implementation, particularly through social learning approaches to assessment and evaluation.

Objectives of this theme are to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of institutional arrangements for regional natural resource management through learning models that facilitate practice change
- fund research and development to generate an understanding of the costs and benefits of institutional arrangements for sustainable natural resource management and changes needed to improve their effectiveness
- provide targeted knowledge support for policy makers and resource managers.

### Policy instrument choice

A wide range of market-based and non-market-based policy instruments are available to natural resource management decision makers. A number of issues remain unresolved, however, in relation to policy instrument choice.

Objectives of this theme are to:

- investigate the effectiveness of different policy instruments in achieving desirable outcomes or changed practices in a range of landscape and social contexts
- develop strategies and instruments to increase affordable, sustainable solutions to natural resource management problems that can be applied in a wide range of natural resource management contexts to ensure highest net benefit outcomes
- develop flexible instruments that enable responsive and adaptive management of natural resources.

### Landscapes, lifestyles and livelihoods

This theme explores potential implications of plausible future changes for the way landscapes are used, and for the lifestyles and livelihoods of people in those landscapes.

Objectives of this theme are to:

- assess social, cultural, economic and institutional values and aspirations in relation to current practices and future plans for using and managing natural resources
- investigate what conditions will enable effective arrangements for natural resource management program delivery in Indigenous areas of Australia
- identify the factors that could influence how rural and peri-urban lands are used in the future and the impact of different trajectories for natural resource management.



Current projects of the Social and Institutional Research Program (SIRP) are listed here and sorted by their project code. A quick search by topic guide is provided over the page.

Project code and title	Objectives	Researcher	Completion date
ABH2 Building an 'InCreMent'-al research base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop tools for assessing the effectiveness of investment in the private nature conservation sector</li> <li>Project research integration will provide a linkage between best science knowledge systems and operational biodiversity conservation management in a rapidly growing sector</li> </ul>	Australian Bush Heritage Foundation Stuart Cowell	Sep 2008
ACF1 Investigation of a conservation economy model for Indigenous northern Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prove the relevance of the concept of Ecotrust Canada's 'conservation economy' model for Indigenous and rural sustainable community development in northern Australia</li> <li>Examine the opportunities and limitations within the current Australian institutional settings that would affect the application of the principles and components of Ecotrust Canada's model</li> </ul>	Australian Conservation Foundation Dr Rosemary Hill	Dec 2006
ACI10 Soil information — building a business case for investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an institutional framework and criteria for investment in soils NRM data that best matches emerging patterns of demand and supply, incorporating new technologies, and propose a pathway to adoption change that recognises realistic institutional incentives impediments to adjustment in the market.</li> </ul>	ACIL Tasman Mark Barber	Dec 2006
ANU37 Indigenous kinship with country: intercultural values of natural resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine sustainable ecological management of Indigenous lands</li> <li>Provide bi-cultural models for ecologically sustainable tourism on Indigenous lands</li> <li>Provide new knowledge on Indigenous land, water and other resource management</li> </ul>	Australian National University Diana James	Aug 2006
ANU39 The regulation of Indigenous rights through environmental legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the regulation of Indigenous rights through environmental legislation and policy including the development of natural resource management theory</li> <li>Investigate how law and policy are responding to the recognition of Indigenous rights to land and waters in NSW, and how these can be improved</li> </ul>	Australian National University Jessica Weir	Mar 2007
ANU40 Improving natural resource management program and project design, implementation and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This PhD study will synthesise research and practice in program/project evaluation</li> <li>Identify critical variables affecting the impact of programs/projects</li> <li>Develop a framework to improve project/program design</li> </ul>	Australian National University Arianne Lowe	Mar 2007
ANU43 Extending audit outcomes to enhance rural local government environmental capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing on the findings of the National Land and Water Resources Audit, develop and apply models and strategies to enhance capacity for rural and Indigenous local government to deliver beneficial natural resource management outcomes</li> </ul>	Australian National University Dr Su Wild River	Mar 2007
ANU59 The sustainability of sustainable limits to extraction — informing the National Water Initiative (NWI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a practical approach to defining environmental sustainability in modified hydrological systems</li> <li>Help develop a robust environmental bottom line for planning and management, and contribute to the refinement process envisaged for water plans and the wider discourse about how best to achieve sustainability in society at large</li> </ul>	Australian National University Dr Daniel Connell	Apr 2007
CLW73 Volunteerism, democracy, administration and the evolution of future landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the resilience of current natural resource management in political economic, public administration and community contexts in the light of current social change factors</li> <li>Create alternative integrated models of democratic process, public administration and volunteerism which will underpin a more robust natural resource management system with clear values at a regional level for implementation thirty years from now</li> <li>Create awareness of major change factors to promote resilience in future administrative arrangements, and to provide specific recommendations that could be considered for public administration in this area</li> </ul>	CSIRO Land and Water Geoffrey Syme	Apr 2008

Project code and title	Objectives	Researcher	Completion date
CSE29 Assessment of social and economic values of Australia's tropical rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a social and economic profiling and scoping study of northern Australian rivers, floodplains, wetlands and estuaries focusing on the collation and reporting of data relevant to rivers and their management</li> <li>Explain significant processes and pressure points that will impact on future management of tropical rivers</li> </ul>	CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems Daniel Walker	Jul 2006
CSE43 Valuing and managing the ecosystem services of tropical river systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult and collaborate with community, Indigenous, industry and government groups to develop an understanding of tropical river systems, their ecosystem services and their values and to define issues and develop and evaluate options for management</li> <li>Develop a framework for integrating social, cultural, environmental and economic values into tropical river decision-support systems</li> </ul>	CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems Dr Anna Straton	May 2009
CSU29 Understanding landholder constraints to the uptake of market-based instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the impediments to landholders participating in market-based instrument programs that encourage better land management</li> </ul>	Charles Sturt University Raymond Baker	Jun 2007
CSU32 Exploring business process improvements for quality regional natural resource management service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a desktop review of business models and associated processes for quality service delivery and continuous improvement in a range of sectors, public and private, especially at a regional scale</li> </ul>	Charles Sturt University Professor Allan Curtis	Oct 2006
DSE3 Mechanism design approach to environmental policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This senior fellowship will analyse information from pilot studies and the literature to enhance the application of the mechanism approach with particular reference to:</li> <li>influence on environmental policy generally and non-point source problems specifically</li> <li>evaluating economic performance of bush tender-like auctions</li> <li>identifying and scoping unresolved design issues</li> <li>reviewing the role of science for market-based environmental instruments.</li> </ul>	Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria Gary Stoneham	Dec 2006
HAS13 Investing in natural resource management practice change Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is the second stage of a longer-term project that commenced in early 2005. It aims to:</li> <li>provide regional natural resource management bodies and policy makers with better knowledge of the most effective kinds of stakeholder engagement and associated investment needed to achieve natural resource management practice change</li> <li>provide regional bodies with improved ability to utilise monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and the targeting of investment for practice change</li> </ul>	Hassall and Associates Sue Salvin	May 2010
NTU7 Sustainable northern landscapes and the nexus with Indigenous health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine if landscape health, using a number of simple measures, is different under contrasting Aboriginal land management regimes</li> <li>Compare the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal participants in land management compared with non-participants</li> <li>Initiate critical evaluation of policy options for land management contributing to the development of Indigenous sustainable futures</li> </ul>	Charles Darwin University Dr David Bowman	Mar 2007
NTU23 An agreement-based approach to customary law governance in water resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiate a governance of water agreement for N'gul (Anna's Reservoir).</li> <li>Identify and demonstrate Indigenous livelihoods in land and water management from agreements about research and management, and benefit-sharing approaches (i.e. rangers, researchers, linguists, negotiators, project managers)</li> <li>Demonstrate and communicate approaches for forming agreements and best practice examples for research, protocols, traditional knowledge management and recognition of customary law that will significantly improve effective governance arrangements for water resource management</li> </ul>	Charles Darwin University Professor Donna Craig	Jun 2007
RM113 Change and continuity in peri-urban Australia: scenarios and strategies for sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the extent and character of peri-urban landscapes, including their socio-economic, cultural and natural resource dimensions</li> <li>Identify the cultural, political and institutional drivers of change in peri-urban landscapes and trends in the use or condition of natural resources, environmental values and threats</li> </ul>	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Associate Professor Michael Buxton	Jun 2007
SWR2 Monitoring and evaluating Land & Water Australia's Social and Institutional Research Program (SIRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with SIRP staff to evaluate program processes and outcomes</li> <li>Support SIRP management in effective decision making to improve responsiveness to program stakeholders</li> </ul>	Consultancy Dr Su Wild River	Nov 2009

Project code and title	Objectives	Researcher	Completion date
TRC2 East Kimberley pastoral and cultural development project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify options for implementing environmentally, culturally, and economically sustainable natural resource management outcomes at the property scale in the East Kimberley, with a particular emphasis on Indigenous pastoral lands</li> <li>Identify institutional and policy impediments to, and opportunities for, developing sustainable natural resource management pastoral management practices in the East Kimberley, and more generally in northern Australia</li> </ul>	Tropical Savannas Management Cooperative Centre Professor Gordon Duff	Jun 2006
TRC3 Development of Indigenous knowledge capacity across northern Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a workable strategy for the systematic conservation and application of Indigenous knowledge to integrated natural resource management at the local, regional and northern Australia levels</li> </ul>	Tropical Savannas Management Cooperative Centre Joe Morrison	Jul 2006
TRC13 Developing institutional arrangements for Indigenous participation in the National Water Initiative (NWI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Indigenous water policies, management models and economic opportunities arising from water use</li> <li>Provide sound information and knowledge to Indigenous organisations and communities, and dialogue within and between Indigenous organisations and state water resource managers, the National Water Commission and researchers</li> <li>Generate and recommend policy options for government, industry, research and non-government sectors on a range of issues including best practice in Indigenous participation in water resource planning</li> </ul>	Tropical Savannas Management Cooperative Centre Joe Morrison	May 2007
UAD17 Institutional change enabling kangaroo harvest to promote sustainable rangeland landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This PhD examines social, cultural and economic parameters affecting kangaroo harvest decisions and develop policy frameworks and stakeholder support mechanisms that will result in a more sustainable commercial kangaroo industry</li> </ul>	University of Adelaide Dana Thomson	May 2007
UCW5 Assessing impacts and learnings from large-scale collaborative R&D initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the Ord-Bonaparte Program as a case study, this PhD will examine the regional impacts of large-scale integrated research, and how local communities can be involved to adapt to research findings</li> </ul>	Curtin University Alison Browne	Aug 2006
UNE44 Creating inspiration – how visual and performing arts shape environmental behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the role that visual arts and performing arts play in people's attitudes and behaviour towards the environment</li> </ul>	University of New England Ian Reeve	Jul 2006
UNE60 Developing a good regulatory practice model for environmental regulations impacting on farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide positive, actionable approaches to improving the processes of rural regulation, particularly environmental regulation, within an overall social benefit-cost framework</li> <li>Develop specific 'good practice' models for improving the processes through which government regulations are created and implemented</li> </ul>	University of New England Professor Paul Martin	Oct 2006
UTA16 Pathways to good practice in regional natural resource management governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a baseline of current regional natural resource management practice in relation to governance and 'triple bottom line' sustainability performance</li> <li>Identify correlations between particular regional governance arrangements and sustainability outcomes in relation to natural resource management</li> <li>Undertake a systematic assessment of the claimed benefits of regional natural resource management governance, with a focus on representation, authority, consultation and decision making</li> <li>Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for natural resource management regions using sustainability and governance indicators.</li> <li>Develop principles and guidelines for 'good practice' regional natural resource management governance</li> </ul>	University of Tasmania Dr Michael Lockwood	Apr 2008
UWA51 A bio-economic analysis of the duration of conservation contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop tools to determine most efficient and effective conservation contract length for landholders</li> </ul>	University of Western Australia Dr Benedict White	May 2007

## Search projects by research theme

Project code	Institutions and governance			Policy instrument choice and mix		Landscapes, lifestyles and livelihoods		
	Regional natural resource management	Water management and reform	Capacity building	Instruments	Regulation	Peri-urban	Indigenous	Landholders
ABH2				●				●
ACF1				●			●	
ACI10			●	●				●
ANU37							●	
ANU39		●			●		●	
ANU40			●					●
ANU43			●					●
ANU59		●			●			●
CLW73	●		●					●
CSE29		●					●	●
CSE43		●		●			●	●
CSU29				●				●
CSU32	●		●					●
DSE3				●				●
HAS13	●		●					●
NTU7							●	
NTU23		●			●		●	
RMI13						●		●
SWR2			●					
TRC2			●				●	●
TRC3	●		●				●	
TRC13		●	●				●	
UAD17							●	●
UCW5	●		●		●			●
UNE44	●		●					●
UNE60			●		●			●
UTA16	●		●					●
UWA51				●	●			●





The results of these research projects will be communicated as they become available through new project summary fact sheets and other publications. Regular updates will also be available through SIRP's Up, the Social and Institutional Research Program email bulletin. These are made available through the Land & Water Australia website [www.lwa.gov.au](http://www.lwa.gov.au)

Project information will also be available on [www.aanro.net](http://www.aanro.net)

Further program information can be obtained from:

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Land & Water Australia is a statutory corporation of the Australian Government within the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, established under the Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development (PIERD) Act 1989. We invest in knowledge partnerships, innovation and adoption to underpin sustainable natural resource management in Australia.

Photos courtesy of

Land & Water Australia (Top) and

Su Wild River (Bottom)



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