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Issues and Trends in Water Resource Management in Brazil

CSIRO Land and Water (Northern Australia Irrigation Futures project), CRC for Irrigation Futures, and RiverSymposium, are proud to present Dr Henrique Chaves from the University of Brasilia. Dr Chaves is Brazilian Coordinator for the UNESCO-IHP Hydrology, Environment, Life & Policy (HELP) Program and the International Sedimentation Initiative, and a member of the Brazilian Committee of International Hydrologic Programs. Formerly from the National Water Agency, Dr Chaves has extensive experience in water resource management in Brazil and internationally and is author & co-author of more than 50 papers & book chapters in the areas of watershed hydrology, water management & conservation.

Abstract:
Water use and management in Brazil have been an increasing issue in the last 50 years. Before that, since the resource was enough for most uses, conflicts were rare. An exception is the frequent droughts in the country's Northeastern region, which caused severe economic and social problems. With the increasing utilization of rivers for hydropower and sewage disposal, conflicts started. Navigation, irrigation, hydropower, industrial and, more recently, fishermen and environmentalists, became more involved in water issues, and the conflicts became more and more important. More recently, after the democratization period, in the nineties, the promulgation of advanced water legislation, such as Federal Law 9433 in 1997, and the stronger involvement of different sectors and stakeholders in the water resources management process, allowed for a more effective water management, at the basin level. However, several important and unresolved issues remain. Among them are the river pollution be untreated sewage (80% of the collected sewage are still untreated), and water-use conflicts, particularly in upstream regions of river basins of sub-humid and semi-arid regions. The fast growth of large cities is also requiring more and more water, which is being brought from distant basins. Furthermore, many medium and large-sized dams are experiencing severe silting problems, due to erosion in upstream areas. Climate variability/change processes tend to put even more stress to the water sector. The recent energy crisis of 2001, where the reservoir volumes dropped to a historical low, is a lesson to be remembered. However, the trend is that, in the medium and long run, with the stronger involvement of different levels of society, and with the advancements in science and technology, Brazil will be able to tackle its water problems more effectively in the future.

When: Tuesday 29 August, 11.00am

Where: Christian Laboratory Conference Room
CSIRO Land and Water, Clunies Ross Street, Black Mountain

COST: *FREE OF CHARGE*