



Media Statement

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Drying climate sparks researchers to further investigate water catchments (*Low runoff in a wet year*)

Runoff to major West Australian dams is only a fraction of what it was 30 years ago, according to the Department of Water's Director General Kim Taylor.

Despite above average rainfall last winter, runoff in some of the catchments was only 50% of the 1976–2007 average inflow, Mr Taylor said.

In order to examine how Western Australia's drying climate is putting extra pressure on the relationship between forests and surface water run-off, the Department of Water will host a one day seminar to scrutinise the crucial link.

"What we're doing is getting some of the State's best water researchers together to look at how climate change and forest management may be influencing the hydrology of the Darling Plateau catchments between Mundaring and Collie," Mr Taylor said.

"The seminar on August 20 is part of our wider approach to ensure WA's water supplies in the future.

"We are also concerned about the impact that reduced runoff is having on the ecology of streams. Streams that used to run all year round now only flow for four months of the year.

"As a result, Western Australia has been looking at alternative sources to surface water such as desalination, recycling and groundwater.

"But despite what many people believe, surface water is not dead – it is still a key water source."

Mr Taylor said Western Australian government agencies and academics have been monitoring key rivers for years to better understand the relationship between climate, vegetation and water yields.

"The results of this research are nationally recognised and being used to inform strategies for adjusting to climate change in Western Australia and elsewhere," he said.

"Climate change is expected to have important consequences for the future management of water supplies for the Perth metropolitan region, and this seminar is to lay the groundwork for us to understand and work out appropriate courses of action."

The seminar will cover:

- ways in which climate change has already affected vegetation and water resources in WA



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- how future changes in climate are likely to affect groundwater, streamflow, stream salinity and water resources, and the
- the roles of various agencies and stakeholders in managing these effects.

For further information on the seminar to be held at the Burswood Convention Centre on August 20, please contact the Department of Water's Dr Mohammed Bari on 6364 7801, or go to the web link: [http://www. water.wa.gov.au](http://www.water.wa.gov.au)

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