

PUBLIC BENEFIT OUTCOMES: DEVELOPING POLICY FOR ADAPTIVE WATER PLANNING IN THE RIVER MURRAY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

Water planning for the South Australian River Murray, at the end of the Murray-Darling system, is constrained by complex arrangements determined by state legislation and a Basin Agreement. River regulation and over-extraction of water have had significant impacts on the river-dependent environment, including 'icon' sites, Ramsar listed wetlands, and locally significant wetlands and floodplains. The current drying cycle has exacerbated these effects, and climate change predictions indicate that there will be less water available. Within this planning context, challenging decisions about the sharing of available water have to be made. This paper reports on how innovative planning tools trialled in South Australia have advanced the understanding of the range of public benefit outcomes in water, particularly in a context of water scarcity.

PALAVRA-CHAVE: adaptive, planning, water, Australia, public, benefits,