

Reviews

The formidable challenge of managing our water

***Managing Water for Australia* looks at the emerging social and community challenges that stand in the way of implementing the National Water Initiative (NWI) – Australia's 10-year plan to improve water management.**

The foreword gets straight to the point: 'The challenges we face to manage our water resources on a truly sustainable basis are formidable.'

Ten expert authors, including political scientists, economists, sociologists and legal scholars, are brought together to write a chapter each on social and community issues that will affect the success of the NWI.

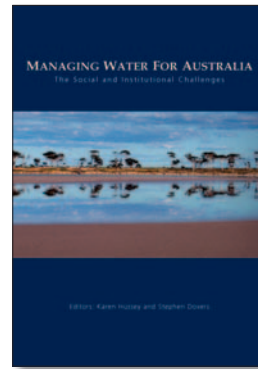
Water reform in Australia; communications and attitudes; water trading and pricing;

indigenous perspectives; linking urban and rural water supplies; legal structures; and dealing with policy across social, economic and environmental dimensions, are all covered.

Editors Karen Hussey and Stephen Dovers, both from the Australian National University, say in their introduction that NWI's reform agenda 'is indeed an ambitious and difficult one, and the magnitude of the task is only now being realised.'

'Having agreed to the policies outlined in the NWI, can these policies be achieved based on existing knowledge and capacity?'

The premise of the book is that the social sciences can help bridge the gap between the lofty targets of the NWI



Managing Water for Australia
The Social and Institutional Challenges
Karen Hussey and Stephen Dovers
CSIRO PUBLISHING
2007, Paperback
ISBN: 9780643093928 – AU\$49.95
Available from CSIRO Publishing:
www.publish.csiro.au
Local call: 1300 788 000

and its successful practical implementation.

Each chapter outlines the issue in question, what we already know about it and, importantly, what we need to know to help achieve the NWI goals.

A theme of a truly national approach amidst different jurisdictions is felt across the book and in the final chapter an international perspective is given.

Essential reading for anyone involved in water policy, planning or research, *Managing Water for Australia* offers a substantial, rigorous and highly topical contribution of knowledge to Australia's water resource management capacities.

Taking a stand on deep-sea conservation

If you're looking for a cause, now is the time to stand up for the deep ocean. This cold and dark world of continental slopes, mid-basin ridges and ocean floor plains is in need of advocates – more people, scientists and governments willing to show their hand for 'the silent deep', as Tony Koslow describes it, and support the precautionary principle of conservation.

In *The Silent Deep*, Koslow – a former CSIRO marine scientist – provides his readers with a full account of the deep ocean, including the history of exploration, the chemical and physical forces that generate life, and the ecology of seamounts and the species-rich (possibly the richest) ecosystems that are the abyssal and bathyal plains. He also discusses our human 'footprint' on the ocean.

The south-west Pacific is a region rich in seamounts and extinct undersea volcanoes that stand 1000 metres and more above the seafloor. Koslow estimates that there are probably 30 000–50 000 such seamounts across the Pacific, with the greatest concentration around the island chains of the western and South Pacific.

The orange roughy story is an important lesson in deep-sea conservation that Koslow

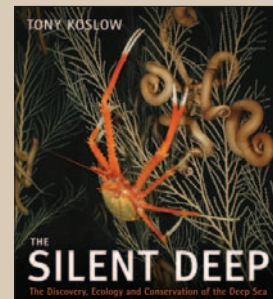
recounts in the book. The species, which lives on seamounts off New Zealand and near Tasmania, lives to the incredible age of 100–150 years.

By the end of the 1980s, the success of Australia's orange roughy export industry had made it the largest, deepest and most valuable deepwater fishery in the world. Boats queued at the Hobart wharves, holds full of orange roughy, ready to be taken away for processing in a seemingly endless succession of semi-trailers.

But by 2006, the Australian Threatened Species Scientific Committee had recommended that orange roughy be listed as endangered. Some protection was offered to the seamounts, with the Australian Government establishing the 370 km² Tasmanian Seamounts Reserve.

Koslow's studies of seafloor habitats around Macquarie Island, the Norfolk Ridge and Lord Howe Rise in the Tasman Sea led to a milestone paper in *Nature* on the diversity of seamount fauna in the south-west Pacific. More than 850 faunal species from the Tasman Sea and south-east Coral Sea were documented, one-third of which were new to science.

A former member of the Census of



The Silent Deep
The Discovery, Ecology and Conservation of the Deep Sea
Tony Koslow
UNSW Press
2007, Hardback
ISBN: 9780868404158 – AU\$49.95

Marine Life Seamounts scientific committee, Koslow has long been a voice for global stewardship of the high seas, and has been instrumental in drawing attention to the need for conservation of seamounts and deepwater corals.

In *The Silent Deep* his message is that: 'The deep sea may be out of sight but it is no longer out of mind. Discovery of the deep interior of our watery planet is one of humankind's more exciting journeys of scientific exploration.'

● Craig Macauley