

Published: 9 March 2011

More reliable streamflow forecasts months ahead

Water managers and planners have a new tool to help them understand how much water is likely to flow into rivers and catchments up to three months in advance.



Credit: CSIRO

The Seasonal Streamflow Forecast Service has been developed by CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology in collaboration with water managers.

Dr Rob Vertessy, Bureau of Meteorology Deputy Director (Climate and Water), says the service should help water managers make decisions about seasonal water allocation outlooks, reservoir operations, environmental flow management and water markets.

'Although there is a lot of water in some areas of Australia at the moment, water availability will continue to vary in the future as demand continues to grow and climate inevitably varies,' he says. 'This poses major challenges for water resource management, so the need to accurately monitor, assess and forecast the availability of water resources is more vital than ever.'

The service will initially focus on 13 river sites and eight storages in the south-east Murray–Darling Basin, extending to other locations over the next 12–24 months.

The forecasting tool, which has been verified against observed streamflows, incorporates information on current catchment conditions, and how climate patterns such as El Niño cycles influence catchment runoff.

The free monthly Seasonal Streamflow forecasts will be posted on the Bureau's website at www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC10060>