

# Freshwater Cooperative Research Partnership

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# Background



## ➔ 'Review of Freshwater ecology'.

- ➔ Significant decline in freshwater ecology research publications.
  - ➔ Significant decline in the numbers of freshwater ecologists working in academia and research Institutes.
  - ➔ Reduction of capacity within UK Agencies
  - ➔ Reduced support for freshwater ecology from NERC.
  - ➔ Reduced influence on science spending.
- ## ➔ Significant investment in water improvements - £70bn since water privatisation
- ## ➔ Annual freshwater ecology research investment is relatively small ~£2.7m pa

# Cooperative Research Partnership

- ➔ **The review recommended that a Cooperative Research Partnership be set up to:**
    - ➔ facilitate better use of resources and provide better fundamental understanding of freshwater ecosystems
    - ➔ develop more effective tools and techniques to underpin water management decisions
    - ➔ to rejuvenate the teaching and training of freshwater ecology and biology
    - ➔ Increase the capacity of the UK regulators, conservation agencies and consultants to help us deliver
  - ➔ **CRP base on Australian CRC model**
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# Australian CRC model

- ➔ Brings together wider community of researchers with practitioners and water managers

eWater CRC “value proposition”

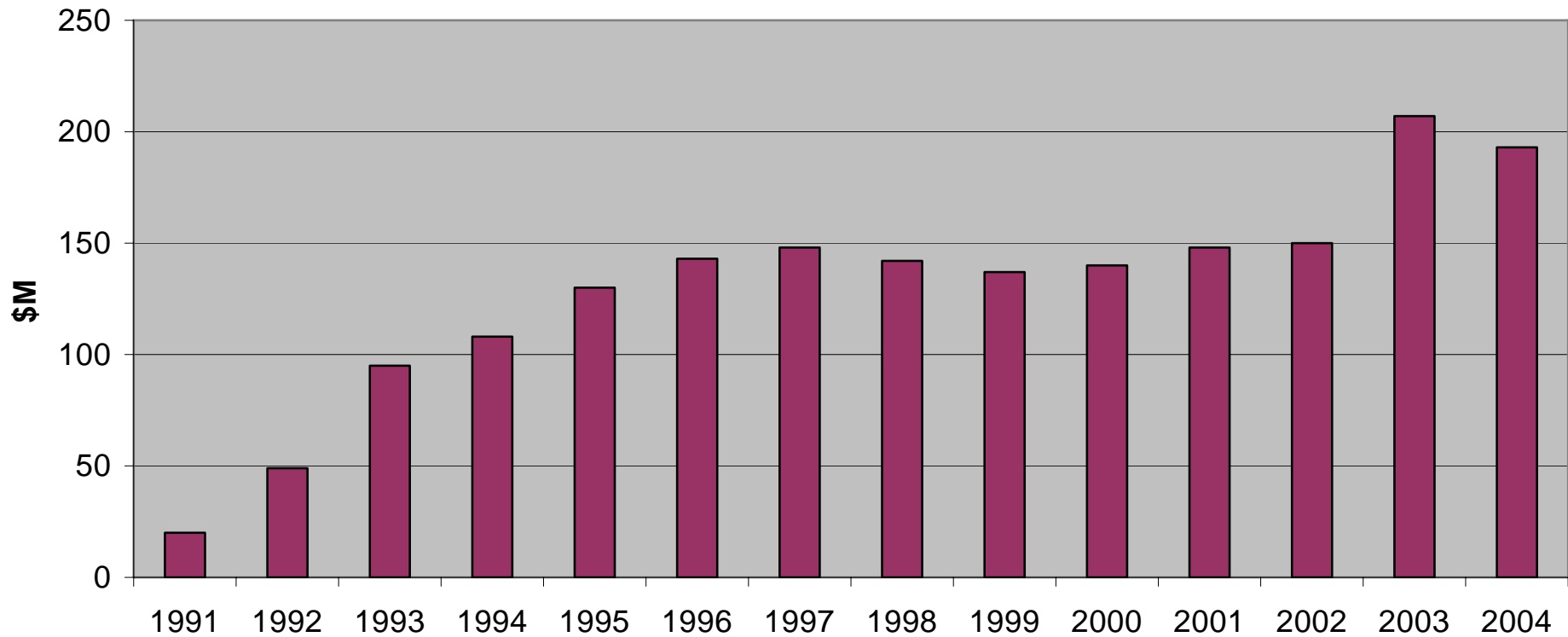
manager's £'s → researchers



managers ← application of science

# Aus. Government expenditure on CRCs

Federal Govt funding to CRCs



Conservative & Labour governments!

# CRC program – Australia

➔ ~200\$M Federal Gov't funding/year

➔ Source of cash & in-kind:

➔ 23% Federal Government

➔ 25% Universities

➔ 19% Industry: management agencies, water authorities, water authorities etc.

➔ 10% CSIRO

➔ 13% Other

➔ 72 CRCs

➔ eWater: \$150M over 7 years

# eWater producing the next generation of scientists, managers

- ➔ Record: 5<sup>th</sup> year reviews, round 2 CRCFE, CRCCH:
  - ➔ 59 completed PhD theses
  - ➔ 74 current PhD theses
- ➔ 60 PhD scholars planned for 7y eWater CRC
  - ➔ Partial funding
  - ➔ Training
  - ➔ Foster links to researchers, agencies
  - ➔ Mentoring by managers
- ➔ A smaller number of post-docs



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# Ecological Management tools product development

" eWater development teams have designed and assembled five major **new** software tools, or sets of tools, for use in the ecological management of rivers and floodplains. "

- **Eco Modeller:** allows you to build and store quantitative models of ecological response to physical and biological factors (such as river flow), for use in exploring various solutions to problems.
- **eFlow Predictor:** the eFlow Predictor tool helps identify the most beneficial

### Projects

- Ecological Management project

### Tools

- Ecological management
- Catchments & Climate

# Cooperative Research Partnership (CRP) proposal

- ➔ Discussed at the FBA meeting in October 2006 and proposed as a way forward for UK
- ➔ Consultation Summer 2008 - 'A UK CRP in Freshwater Ecology – turning concept into reality'
  - ➔ Targeted at freshwater research community, industry, NGOs consultancies and Government
  - ➔ Questions included:
    - Is the CRP a good idea?
    - What would the scope be?
    - How would it be resourced?
    - What are the main obstacles?
    - Would you join?

# Consultation response:

## ➔ Does the CRP have wide support?

➔ 96% supported development of a CRP

➔ there were some yes buts....

- must be linked to business needs
- depends on scope
- must work with other disciplines

## ➔ Key messages:

➔ Significant opportunities to play a central role in improving the current arrangements which are fragmented and steeped in cultural problems.

➔ Huge opportunity to bring the wider community of researchers and practitioners together to identify common needs and a detailed strategy for freshwater research.

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- It would be a mistake to attempt to replace any of the existing research funding mechanisms.
- It is important to promote a CRP which would be in a position to make better use of existing resources.
- Obstacles identified should not be underestimated, particularly in a climate of tightening financial support for research and the elements of competition for these resources.
- Most consultees agreed that the objective of improving the position of research and education/training in freshwater ecology is essential and that the time is right to set up the CRP to play a significant part in helping to achieve this.

# Consultation Report



- ➔ The consultation report details the basis for:
  - ➔ setting up the CRP.
  - ➔ future negotiations on what it looks like.
  - ➔ how it will improve support for freshwater ecology.
  - ➔ how it will help deliver effective freshwater ecology science outputs.
- ➔ Report accepted by “steering” group
- ➔ FBA to lead the development of the CRP - can act as independent, informed, honest broker and has the aims of CRP at the core of it’s own mission

# What now ?

- ➔ Meeting with Government's Chief Scientist and Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor to discuss the initiative
- ➔ Develop the research agenda – “Top 10 freshwater ecological questions relevant to policy”

Information on Freshwater CRP available on the FBA website along with other background documents.

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# Your thoughts.....

Type of Organisation	number
University department s	16
Government Department s (Eng., Scot & N. Ireland )	4
Agencies	15
Consultancies	5
NGOs	7
Water Industry	2
Others	2
TOTAL	51