

Research Directions

Office of Research Services

Harmonising Water Management

Associate Professor Basant Maheshwari will lead a multi-disciplinary research team through the Co-operative Research Centre Irrigation Futures (CRC IF) to identify business opportunities for improving management of effluent, stormwater and ground water resources to satisfy environmental and irrigation demands in the South Creek Catchment, Western Sydney.



'Irrigation and environmental sustainability have, to date, been managed as competing enterprises under separate and divergent control' says Associate Professor Maheshwari. 'There is increasing support for a "harmonised" business approach to sustainable use of our land and water resources, particularly in the South Creek Catchment. This project seeks to identify business opportunities for irrigators, both urban and peri-urban, to become part of an expanding environmental service industry and in so doing support a truly sustainable and diversified irrigation business environment'

The four year project is part of the CRC IF's 'System Harmonisation' research program which aims to 'develop strategies to improve cross-organisational communication and system-wide management while improving production and environmental outcomes'¹. This project has an explicit and directed emphasis on reuse of effluent for irrigation, thereby reducing the use for potable water supplies for irrigation and improving river water quality and environmental flows.

The project team will seek to evaluate the current degree of system harmonisation, and identify opportunities that will improve productivity of water through a systematic analysis of relevant variables that affect irrigation water use. They will also assess the economic, environmental and social impact of changed management practices and develop a framework for reporting improvements in water productivity, and strategies for improving profitability, risk management and strengthening of regional irrigation and other related businesses.

The project is expected to improve policies and institutional settings that support integrated water resource management in the Western Sydney region.

Project Title: *UWS System Harmonisation Research – SHARP Program*

Partners: Regional Irrigation Business Partnerships (RIBP)

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<http://www.irrigationfutures.org.au/>

¹ CRC IF Project Agreement Summary documentation, Project No. 2.55.