



5th Western Australian State

COASTAL CONFERENCE 2009

*Whose Coast Is It?
adapting for the future*

3B:
Climate Change:
1.30–2.00pm
Thursday 8th
October 2009
Orion Room

Enabling Science Implementation in Australia's Coastal Zone

PRESENTER:

Professor David Wood

CO-PRESENTERS:

Associate Professor Laura Stocker

Curtin University of Technology

Dr Beverley Clarke

Flinders University

Professor Nick Harvey

University of Adelaide

Associate Professor Marcus Haward

University of Tasmania

Associate Professor Kevin O'Toole

Deakin University

Professor Tim Smith

University of Sunshine Coast

Professor Lee Cordner

University of Wollongong

Abstract

There are profound policy and planning implications for Australian coastal communities caused by climate change for a range of reasons: low-lying and erosion-prone coastal areas have differential capacities and willingness to respond to sea-level rise; social disadvantage can exacerbate coastal vulnerability in regional areas; 'sea change' phenomena are interacting with climate change to create new social impacts and pressures on local governments; and new sea-level policies tend to relate to new developments, leaving existing ecosystems and old infrastructure without adaptive plans.

The challenge for coastal governance is to: enrol stakeholders in a cultural model of the coast that reflects the realities of climate change; engage relevant stakeholders in a shared, dynamic analysis of the implications of climate change knowledge; and to enable broad, meaningful participation in effecting knowledge-based governance of the coast in a rapidly changing context.

Part of a new CSIRO Coastal Cluster, our research project focusing on coastal governance is in the southwest of Western Australia. Here, we investigate how governance and planning systems can better learn from,

and respond to, existing scientific, traditional and lay knowledge about coastal vulnerability. The aim of the project is to collaboratively visualise coastal values, uses, climate change impacts and adaptive pathways using Google Earth; and to build more reflexive and adaptive transition processes so that regional communities can be as resilient and sustainable as possible in a climate-challenged world.