Summary

Water markets are maturing significantly in Australia’s Murray-Darling Basin and are beginning to spread to other parts of the country. Yet, very little research has examined the implications of water markets for Aboriginal peoples. There is a real need to examine the opportunities and challenges water resources markets may present for our Aboriginal people and organisations, and to understand the current state of Aboriginal water market. The overarching aim of my PhD research is to explore and understand matters relating to, and factors that influence, Aboriginal peoples’ participation in water markets in Australia, using a case study of New South Wales (NSW).

With the knowledge generated through this research project, it is hoped that several outcomes can be achieved. First, that awareness about Aboriginal interests, views and perspectives about water markets may be raised, and may come to be understood among other water traders, and State and Federal water agencies and policy makers. Second, that Aboriginal organisations can more effectively engage in policy discussion about, or actual involvement in, water trading (where desired). And third, unveiled knowledge can contribute to scholarly debates about water governance, Indigenous water rights, and market-based instruments. Overall, this study is proposed to contribute to the gap in the literature and wider understandings about Aboriginal engagement in Australian water markets. It is envisaged that this research may also contribute to scholarship on Indigenous engagement in water trading in other countries, as well as engagement in natural resource markets more generally.

Research Expertise

- Indigenous peoples and water governance
- Water markets and water trading
- Indigenous peoples and extractive industries
- Social impact assessment