

Ecosystem Services as a Tool for Natural Resource Management: Some Lessons from Australia



Panel Session: Do ecosystem Services Provide a Common Language to Facilitate Participation in Water Management?

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Background

- Australian Ecosystem Services Project (1998-2003)
<http://www.ecosystemservicesproject.org/>
- Identified three future challenges:
 - Institutional analysis – what institutions required to maintain and match scale ecosystem processes?
 - Explore the feasibility of markets for ES
 - Explore the decision-making behavior of resource users under controlled conditions

State of Play in 2011

- Has there been an effective path from ES research to adoption and utilization by natural resource managers?
- Which factors have enabled or prevented the path to adoption?

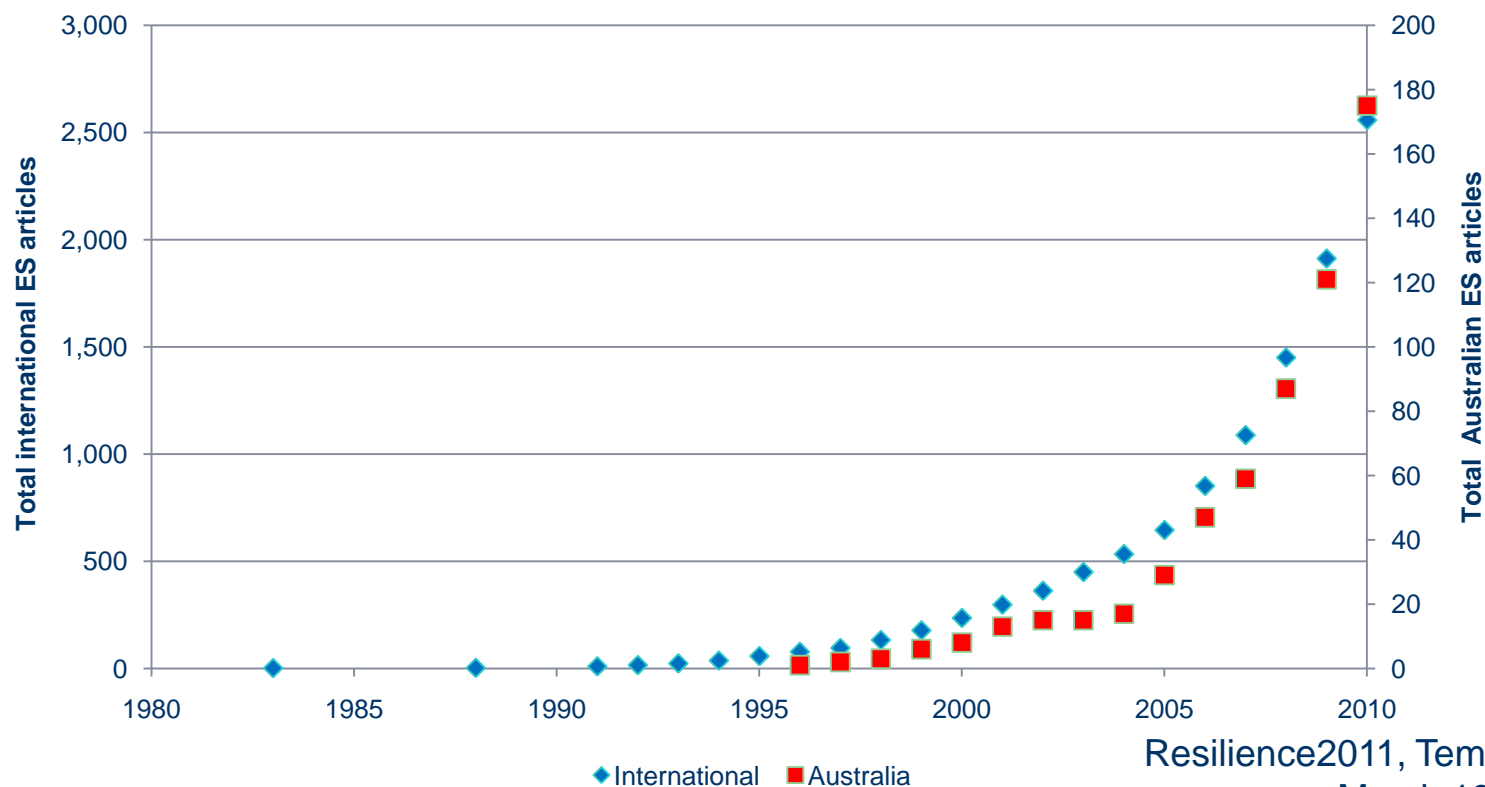
Approach and Rationale

- Analysis of publication trends
- Interviews with regional managers in Victoria and New South Wales:
 - ‘*Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) have been established across NSW to ensure that regional communities have a say in how natural resources are managed in their catchments*’
 - CMAs in VIC and NSW are institutionally the most developed

Publication Trends

Australian and international ES publications

Source: ISI Web of Science



Results - Interviews

- ES language no longer used (particularly not with land managers) but idea behind it still seen as valuable
- Several regional initiatives based on ES thinking but not labeled as such – mostly land stewardship programs
- No incentive for managers to use ES concept in planning and reporting on targets – ‘*why bother*’?

Conclusions

- Publication rate for ES suggests enthusiasm amongst researchers
- Partial adoption by regional managers (e.g. stewardship payments) but narrow focus
- Institutional framework lacking

Key Message

- The lack of adoption of the ES concept in Australia is not due to a *failure of language* but rather to a *lack of an institutional framework* to drive the next steps

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