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International experts to highlight why salinity remains a threat for Australia

Growing concerns about the impact of climate change in recent years have created the perception that salinity has become less of an environmental issue for Australia.

However, some of the world's leading environmental experts will converge on Adelaide in late March to share their latest salinity research findings at the Second International Salinity Forum in Adelaide, South Australia – findings that suggest we can't be complacent when it comes to salinity.

Forum Convener Dr Richard Price said drought has provided much of Australia with a recent respite from rising water tables and salinisation.

“But all we need is a few high-rainfall events in Australia's key catchments, which is what has been happening in the last few months, and the water tables downstream might begin rising again, mobilising salt back into the environment,” Dr Price said.

“The good news is that we are not alone in the battle against salinity and many scientists from around the world are working hard to reduce the social, economic and environmental impacts caused by it.”

The Second International Salinity Forum provides Australian researchers, policy advisers, catchment managers and farmers with an opportunity to hear the latest research from these scientists in understanding salinity and to learn from case studies that have successfully managed it.

“It will feature a wide selection of guest speakers who are international salinity science leaders, as well as community-based experts who are applying their knowledge to better understand the environmental, social, economic, and political dimensions of salinity,” Dr Price said.

“The latest results from Australian-based researchers will also be a key feature of the forum.”

Key presentations at the Forum will be given by:

- Dr Karen Villholth (International Water Management Institute) will speak about how communities on the east coast of Sri Lanka are coping with increased salinity caused by the 2004 Sumatran Tsunami
- Tom Pankatz, editor of the international publication, the Water Desalination Report, will provide insights into world's largest and most technically-advanced desalination and water reuse projects
- Professor Will Steffen (Australian National University) will put Australian salinity in a global context with specific reference to climate change.

The Second International Salinity Forum will be held from 30 March to 3 April at the Adelaide Convention Centre, South Australia.

To find out more information about the conference or to register your attendance, visit:

<http://www.internationalsalinityforum.org>

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