

MEDIA RELEASE

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International links to help manage waterways

A respected aquatic ecologist from the UTAS School of Zoology has been selected by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to advise the American Government on the management of the quality of its water.

Dr Peter Davies was appointed as an advisor to the EPA in the review of nutrient standards for protecting aquatic ecosystems and managing water quality.

A new US program has been established to seek out expertise from around the world in developing improved water standards for nutrients in that country's rivers, lakes and estuaries.

Dr Davies participated in a two-day session in Washington D.C. to discuss the EPA's activities under the US clean water legislation. He was one of five representing the lead international programs from Europe, the UK, Canada, Holland, Australia and Portugal. The group will be expanded around the world, with online discussion groups and web links.

"Each country at the meeting had similar stories to tell about a big pollution event that kick-started national awareness of nutrient problems in waterways.

"Australia's was the Darling River algal bloom in the early '90s which sparked the formation of a national strategy for water quality," Dr Davies said.

While in the US, Dr Davies was also invited to participate in the Erasmus Mundus program, a European university partnership which enables post-graduate student exchange between Europe and partner countries. As an Erasmus Mundus scholar, Dr Davies will run courses with Masters students in Spain and Portugal and co-ordinate a link between Australia and the Erasmus Mundus program.

"The project that I'm going to run with the students is related to my national research fellowship on links between climate change, water management and the fate of river ecosystems in the Murray Darling Basin.

"Each student does a project examining these issues in their own countries," Dr Davies said.

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