

**CATCHMENT SCALE MODELLING OF WATER
QUALITY AND QUANTITY**

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December 2002

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University

This thesis is my own work. Some of the work presented in Chapter 4 has been published in Newham *et al.* (2000) and Croke *et al.* (2001b). Parts of Chapter 5 have been published in Croke *et al.* (2000) and Newham *et al.* (2001b). The research presented in Chapter 6 is based on the publication of Newham *et al.* (2001c). Part of the research presented in Chapter 8 has been published in Croke *et al.* (2002). The contributions made by the various co-authors are indicated in the text.

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December 2002

Acknowledgments

I am sincerely grateful for the assistance provided by all members of my supervisory panel. The panel consisted of Professor Anthony Jakeman (Chair), Dr Barry Croke, Dr Ian Prosser, Professor John Norton and Professor Bob Wasson. I am particularly grateful to Barry Croke who provided me with much valued technical assistance, always showing considerable patience. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent guidance, encouragement and advice provided by Professor Anthony Jakeman.

I was fortunate to have assistance and guidance from several other advisers who were particularly helpful early in the project. They include Dr Mark Littleboy, Greg Keen, Bill Watson and Chris Buller. Andrew Hughes also assisted greatly with application of the SedNet model.

This research was supported by an ARC Linkage Grant. I am most grateful for the support of both the industry partners - New South Wales Department of Land and Water Conservation and Environment ACT.

I would like to thank the staff and students of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies and the Integrated Catchment Assessment and Management Centre for their assistance over the course of the project. In particular I would like to thank fellow students Rebecca Letcher, Wendy Merritt and Juliet Gilmour and staff members Susan Kelo and Susan Cuddy whom assisted greatly by providing much valued guidance and encouragement.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the boundless support of Jenny and my family.

Abstract

Appropriately constructed pollutant export models can help set management priorities for catchments, identify critical pollutant source areas, and are important tools for developing and evaluating economically viable ways of minimising surface water pollution.

This thesis presents a comparison, an evaluation and an integration of models for predicting the export of environmental pollutants, in particular sediment, through river systems. A review of the capabilities and limitations of current water quality modelling approaches is made. Several water quality and quantity modelling approaches are applied and evaluated in the catchment of the upper Murrumbidgee River.

The IHACRES rainfall-runoff model and a simple hydrologic routing model are applied with the aim of developing a capacity to predict streamflow at various catchment scales and to enable integration with other pollutant load estimation techniques. Methods for calculating pollutant loads from observed pollutant concentration and modelled streamflow data are also investigated. Sediment export is estimated using these methods over a 10-year period for two case study subcatchments. Approaches for water quality sampling are discussed and a novel monitoring program using rising stage siphon samplers is presented.

Results from a refinement of the Sediment River Network model in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment (SedNet-UM) are presented. The model provides a capacity to quantify sediment source, transport and to simulate the effects of management change in the catchment. The investigation of the model includes rigorous examination of the behaviour of the model through sensitivity assessment and comparison with other sediment modelling studies. The major conclusion reached through sensitivity assessment was that the outputs of the model are most sensitive to perturbation of the hydrologic parameters of the model.

The SedNet-UM application demonstrates that it is possible to construct stream pollutant models that assist in prioritising management across catchment scales. It can be concluded that SedNet and similar variants have much potential to address common resource management issues requiring the identification of the source, propagation and fate of environmental pollutants. In addition, incorporating the strengths of a conceptual rainfall-runoff model and the semi-distributed SedNet model has been identified as very useful for the future prediction of environmental pollutant export.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Outline of the problem	1
1.2 Aim of the Research.....	1
1.3 Thesis Outline	2
CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND	4
2.1 Introduction.....	4
2.1.1 <i>Models</i>	4
2.2 Research Challenge.....	5
2.3 Research Scope	6
2.4 Current Understanding.....	7
2.5 Model Categorisation and Examples.....	7
2.5.1 <i>Empirical Models</i>	8
2.5.2 <i>Conceptual Models</i>	10
2.5.3 <i>Physics Derived Models</i>	10
2.5.4 <i>Lumped Semi-Distributed Models</i>	12
2.6 Model Selection	12
2.7 Chapter Discussion.....	13
CHAPTER 3 UPPER MURRUMBIDGEE CATCHMENT.....	15
3.1.1 <i>Study Catchment Selection</i>	15
3.2 Physical Environment	16
3.2.1 <i>Location</i>	16
3.2.2 <i>Climate</i>	18
3.2.3 <i>Geology and Topography</i>	20
3.2.4 <i>Soils</i>	20
3.2.5 <i>Land Use and Vegetation</i>	23
3.2.6 <i>Stream Condition</i>	24
3.2.7 <i>Water Quality</i>	25
3.2.8 <i>Social and Economic Influences</i>	27
3.3 Previous Hydrologic Modelling Studies	28
3.4 Chapter Discussion.....	30
CHAPTER 4 HYDROLOGIC MODEL CONSTRUCTION	31
4.1 Introduction.....	31
4.1.1 <i>Hydrologic Model Applications</i>	32
4.1.2 <i>Chapter Outline</i>	32
4.2 Rainfall-Runoff Model Selection	33
4.3 IHACRES Model Description.....	33

4.3.1	<i>Unit Hydrograph</i>	35
4.3.2	<i>Linear Module</i>	36
4.4	Data	37
4.4.1	<i>Rainfall</i>	38
4.4.2	<i>Temperature</i>	39
4.4.3	<i>Catchment Attributes</i>	40
4.5	Rainfall-Runoff Modelling.....	46
4.5.1	<i>IHACRES Calibration</i>	46
4.5.2	<i>Calibration Results</i>	48
4.5.3	<i>IHACRES Simulation</i>	55
4.5.4	<i>IHACRES Rainfall-Runoff Modelling Discussion</i>	58
4.6	Streamflow Routing	59
4.6.1	<i>Model Description</i>	60
4.6.2	<i>Routing Parameter Selection</i>	61
4.6.3	<i>Streamflow Routing Results</i>	61
4.6.4	<i>Estimation of Routing Parameters Based on Reach Characteristics</i>	63
4.6.5	<i>Streamflow Routing Discussion</i>	70
4.7	Murrumbidgee Integrated Catchment Management System (ICMS).....	71
4.7.1	<i>Integrated Catchment Management System</i>	71
4.7.2	<i>System Development</i>	71
4.7.3	<i>Results</i>	73
4.7.4	<i>Murrumbidgee ICMS Discussion</i>	78
4.8	Rainfall-Runoff Model Comparison.....	79
4.8.1	<i>SIMHYD Description</i>	79
4.8.2	<i>Model Comparison</i>	80
4.9	Chapter Discussion.....	81
CHAPTER 5 SUBCATCHMENT POLLUTANT LOAD ESTIMATION.....		83
5.1	Introduction	83
5.1.1	<i>Load Estimation Techniques</i>	83
5.2	Upper Murrumbidgee Water Quality Monitoring	86
5.3	An Improved Water Quality Monitoring Program	87
5.3.2	<i>Sampling Results</i>	94
5.3.3	<i>Sampling Program Discussion</i>	95
5.4	Sediment Load Calculations.....	96
5.4.1	<i>Subcatchment Selection Process</i>	96
5.4.2	<i>Data</i>	98
5.4.3	<i>Methods</i>	98
5.4.4	<i>Results</i>	100
5.4.5	<i>Load Calculation Discussion</i>	104
5.5	Chapter Discussion.....	104

CHAPTER 6 LANDSCAPE BASED MODELLING	107
6.1 Sediment River Network Model.....	107
6.1.2 <i>Model Description</i>	108
6.1.3 <i>Sub-Model Description</i>	111
6.2 Upper Murrumbidgee Application	118
6.2.1 <i>Results</i>	119
6.3 Sensitivity Analysis.....	124
6.3.1 <i>Background</i>	124
6.3.2 <i>Methods</i>	128
6.3.3 <i>Results</i>	131
6.3.4 <i>Sensitivity Analysis Summary</i>	144
6.4 Chapter Discussion.....	146
CHAPTER 7 COMPARISON OF ESTIMATED POLLUTANT LOADS	149
7.1 Introduction.....	149
7.2 Load Comparisons.....	150
7.2.1 <i>Southern Upland Sediment Yield Comparison</i>	150
7.2.2 <i>Radionuclide and Magnetic Sediment Tracing Comparison</i>	151
7.2.3 <i>Detailed Small Scale Sediment Budget Comparison</i>	152
7.2.4 <i>Dam Sedimentation Comparison</i>	155
7.2.5 <i>Suspended Load Estimates</i>	156
7.3 Chapter Discussion.....	157
CHAPTER 8 ELEMENTS OF AN IMPROVED POLLUTANT EXPORT MODEL	158
8.1 Introduction.....	158
8.2 SedNet Hydrologic Modelling	159
8.2.1 <i>Improving Hydrologic Parameterisation</i>	160
8.2.2 <i>Influence of Data Inputs on Model Parameterisation</i>	162
8.3 Improving Model Testing.....	164
8.4 Chapter Discussion.....	165
CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSIONS	167
9.1.1 <i>Summary of Contributions</i>	169
9.1.2 <i>Further Research</i>	169
REFERENCES	171

List of Figures

Figure 3-1 Location of the upper Murrumbidgee Catchment.	16
Figure 3-2 Physiographic features of the upper Murrumbidgee River catchment. Source: Baker <i>et al.</i>	17
Figure 3-3 Annual average rainfall surface for upper Murrumbidgee catchment. The data used to produce this figure are sourced from Croke <i>et al.</i> (2001b). The unbroken black line represents the catchment boundary.	19
Figure 3-4 Geology of the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. The data used to produce this figure are sourced from the Murray-Darling Basin Commission.	21
Figure 3-5 Digital elevation data representing the topography of the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. The unbroken black line represents the catchment boundary.	22
Figure 4-1 Conceptual diagram of the IHACRES rainfall-runoff model showing components.	34
Figure 4-2 Simplified data transfer and process framework of the program used to generate catchment attributes.	41
Figure 4-3 Observed and fitted mean event unit hydrograph for Yass River at Yass subcatchment (gauge number 410090).	50
Figure 4-4 Observed and fitted mean event unit hydrograph for Gudgenby River at Tennent subcatchment (gauge number 410731).	50
Figure 4-5 Observed and modelled flow duration curves for model calibration period at gauge number 410075. Calibration $R^2 = 0.635$	52
Figure 4-6 Observed and modelled flow duration curves for model calibration period at gauge number 410713. Calibration $R^2 = 0.684$	52
Figure 4-7 IHACRES calibration result for site 410063. Modelled, observed and residual streamflow is plotted. Calibration $R^2 = 0.682$	53
Figure 4-8 IHACRES calibration result for site 410077. Modelled, observed and residual streamflow is plotted. Calibration $R^2 = 0.863$	54
Figure 4-9 IHACRES calibration results for site 410088. Modelled, observed and residual streamflow is plotted. Calibration $R^2 = 0.614$	54
Figure 4-10 IHACRES calibration results for site 410790. Modelled, observed and residual streamflow is plotted. Calibration $R^2 = 0.607$	55
Figure 4-11 Observed and modelled flow duration curves for model simulation period at gauge number 410067. Simulation $R^2 = 0.615$	57
Figure 4-12 Observed and modelled flow duration curves for model simulation period at gauge number 410107. Simulation $R^2 = 0.556$	57
Figure 4-13 Observed and modelled flow duration curves for model simulation period at gauge number 410711. Simulation $R^2 = 0.448$	58
Figure 4-14 Routing parameter α plotted against stream length for sites in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. The linear regression line fitted to this data is also shown.	64

Figure 4-15 Routing parameter γ plotted against stream length for sites in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. The linear regression line fitted to this data is also shown.	64
Figure 4-16 A contour plot of the R^2 surface in routing parameter space. The example is for a 68.5 km reach of the Yass River (410090 - 410026).	66
Figure 4-17 A contour plot of the R_{sqrt}^2 surface in routing parameter space. The example is for a 68.5 km reach of the Yass River (410090 - 410026).	67
Figure 4-18 A contour plot of the R_{inv}^2 surface in routing parameter space. The example is for a 68.5 km reach of the Yass River (410090 - 410026).	67
Figure 4-19 A contour plot of the R^2 surface in routing parameter space. The example is for a reach of the Murrumbidgee River (410101 - 410035).	68
Figure 4-20 A contour plot of the R^2 surface in routing parameter space. The example is for reaches of both the Numeralla and Murrumbidgee Rivers (410067 - 410050).	69
Figure 4-21 A contour plot of the R^2 surface in routing parameter space. The example is for a reach of the Numeralla River (410100 - 410062).	69
Figure 4-22: System view of the Murrumbidgee ICMS. Nodes of the system are displayed as square icons labelled with stream gauge numbers (prefixed by 410). A legend is shown on the right hand side of the figure.	72
Figure 4-23: Upland subcatchments of the Murrumbidgee ICMS. Routing nodes are indicated by triangles. All subcatchments and routing nodes are labelled with their respective gauge numbers. The locations of major centres in the catchment are also shown.	73
Figure 4-24 Example stream hydrograph for the Murrumbidgee River at Cotter Crossing (410035).	76
Figure 4-25 Example stream hydrograph for the Yass River at Yass (410026).	76
Figure 4-26 Flow duration curve for the Murrumbidgee River at Cotter Crossing (410035).	77
Figure 4-27 Flow duration curve for the Numeralla River at Numeralla (410100).	77
Figure 4-28 Structure of the SIMHYD model (source Peel <i>et al.</i> , unpublished).	80
Figure 5-1 Map of water quality sampling sites including label name and number of gauge.	88
Figure 5-2 Schematic design of a rising stage automatic water quality sampler (source: modified from Graczyk <i>et al.</i> , 2000).	90
Figure 5-3 Stage height recurrence interval plots. The height of individual samplers are marked on the plots and labelled with their corresponding individual sampler number.	92
Figure 5-4 A siphon sampler (with modifications) secured in-stream adjacent to stream gauge marking (site 410711 - Gudgenby River at Nass).	93
Figure 5-5 A comparison between the daily streamflow duration curve(a) and streamflow at the time of event based sampling (b) for the Burra Creek site.	99
Figure 5-6 Observed concentration data and model fits to observed data for Burra Creek catchment.	101
Figure 5-7 Observed concentration data and model fits to observed data for Jerrabomberra Creek catchment.	101

Figure 6-1 Elements of the SedNet model - river links, stream magnitude and internal catchment areas. Diagram modified from Prosser <i>et al.</i> (2001a).	109
Figure 6-2 Diagram of the sub-programs and data inputs to the SedNet model.	110
Figure 6-3 Modelled annual average bedload sediment budget from application of SedNet-UM in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment.	121
Figure 6-4 Modelled annual average suspended load sediment budget from application of SedNet-UM in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment.	122
Figure 6-5 Modelled depth of in-channel sediment deposition from application of the SedNet-UM model in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment.	123
Figure 6-6 Non-linear behaviour in total sediment output. Results are shown for reach number 153 (large scale).	135
Figure 6-7 Parameter interactions for the bedload sediment output at a large scale (reach number 153).	138
Figure 6-8 Parameter interactions for the suspended sediment output at a large scale (reach number 153).	138
Figure 6-9 Parameter interactions for bedload sediment output at a median scale (reach number 395)	139
Figure 6-10 Parameter interactions for the suspended sediment output at a median scale reach (reach number 395).	139
Figure 6-11 Parameter interactions for the bedload sediment output for a small scale reach (reach number 511).	140
Figure 6-12 Parameter interactions for the suspended sediment fraction at a small scale reach (reach number 511).	140
Figure 6-13 Parameter interactions for the bedload sediment output for a high hillslope input reach (reach number 424).	141
Figure 6-14 Parameter interactions for the suspended fraction for a high hillslope input reach (reach number 424).	141
Figure 6-15 Parameter interactions for the bedload sediment output at a high gully erosion reach (reach number 184).	142
Figure 6-16 Parameter interactions for suspended sediment output for a high gully erosion reach (reach number 184).	142
Figure 7-1 Mean annual sediment yield versus catchment area for the southern upland areas of Australia. Source: Wasson (1994). Also shown are the SedNet-UM load estimates for reaches of the upper Murrumbidgee catchment.	151
Figure 7-2 The sediment budget constructed by Wasson <i>et al.</i> (1998) for the Jerrabomberra Creek catchment post European settlement (source Wasson <i>et al.</i> , 1998).	153

List of Tables

Table 3-1 Average climate data from centres throughout the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (http://www.bom.gov.au/).	18
Table 3-2 RDI results for the upper Murrumbidgee catchment.	25
Table 4-1 Summary of the IHACRES rainfall-runoff model parameters.	37
Table 4-2 Sources of temperature data in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment.	40
Table 4-3 Catchment attributes calculated using the catchment attribute program. The Kokkonen <i>et al.</i> (in press) category is also listed.	42
Table 4-4 A summary of attributes for the 28 subcatchments investigated in the thesis.	43
Table 4-5 Parameters of the fitted mean event unit hydrograph for gauges of the upper Murrumbidgee.	49
Table 4-6 IHACRES model parameters and calibration performance measures.	51
Table 4-7 IHACRES model simulation performance measures.	56
Table 4-8 Routing model results for upper Murrumbidgee River reaches. Routing parameters, reach lengths and measures of model fit are presented for each reach.	62
Table 4-9 Linear regression model fits for reach length - routing parameter relationships.	63
Table 4-10 Observed and modelled routing parameters and comparison of R^2 values.	65
Table 4-11 Measures of model performance of the upstream nodes of the Murrumbidgee ICMS for the 20 year period of streamflow simulation.	74
Table 4-12 Measures of model performance for downstream nodes of the Murrumbidgee ICMS.	75
Table 4-13 Comparison of rainfall-runoff model performance at commonly modelled sites - IHACRES and SIMHYD models.	81
Table 5-1 Upper Murrumbidgee subcatchments chosen for investigation.	88
Table 5-2 Summary of hydrologic attributes of water quality sample sites.	93
Table 5-3 Water quality data collected from water quality sampling sites.	94
Table 5-4 Parameter values (with standard errors) for each parameter estimation method in the Burra Creek catchment. The R^2 value indicates the ability of each model to fit the observed data.	100
Table 5-5 Parameter values (with standard errors) for each parameter estimation method in the Jerrabomberra Creek catchment. The R^2 value indicates the ability of each model to fit the observed data.	100
Table 5-6 Calculated suspended sediment loads for Burra and Jerrabomberra Creek subcatchments.	102
Table 5-7 Comparison of the influence of the temporal resolution of data inputs on the suspended sediment load for the Burra Creek subcatchment. Streamflow inputs are observed data.	103
Table 5-8 Comparison of the influence of modelled versus observed data inputs on the suspended sediment load for the Burra Creek subcatchment.	104
Table 6-1 Summary of SedNet parameters and probable ranges.	117
Table 6-2 SedNet-UM model outputs from the upper Murrumbidgee application.	120
Table 6-3 River links used in the sensitivity analysis of SedNet-UM.	130

Table 6-4 Sensitivity analysis results for bedload sediment output from one at a time parameter perturbations. Results are shown for reach number 153 (large scale). The reference (control) bedload output is 133.82 kty ⁻¹	132
Table 6-5 Sensitivity analysis results for suspended load sediment output from one at a time parameter perturbations. Results are shown for reach number 153 (large scale). The reference (control) bedload output is 311.09 kty ⁻¹ . SS - suspended sediment.	133
Table 6-6 Sensitivity analysis results for the total sediment output from one at a time parameter perturbations. Results are shown for reach number 153 (large scale). The reference (control) sediment output is 444.92 kty ⁻¹	134
Table 6-7 Calculated overall agreement (%) for comparison of perturbed model outputs against a reference output (control). Results for comparison of depositing and non depositing reaches....	136
Table 6-8 Ratio of second to first order terms for the suspended and bedload sediment fractions for reach number 153.....	144
Table 7-1 Comparison of relative contribution of stream confluences: Wallbrink and Fogarty (1998) tracing and SedNet-UM modelling comparison. The application and parameterisation of the SedNet-UM model used for comparison is discussed in Section 6.2.....	152
Table 7-2 Comparison of SedNet-UM and Wasson <i>et al.</i> (1998) sediment budgeting for the Jerrabomberra Creek catchment. Note that the SedNet-UM results are multiplied by 100 years to enable comparison with the post-European sediment budget of Wasson <i>et al.</i> (1998). All measurements are in tones.	154
Table 8-1 A comparison between observed and modelled data inputs on the hydrologic parameterisation of the SedNet model. Modelled data is sourced from Chapter 1.....	163
Table 8-2 A comparison between hourly and daily data inputs on the hydrologic parameterisation of the SedNet model. The ratio columns represent the ratio of hourly to daily data.....	163