

# Clever irrigation could save dying river red gums

April 14 2008

---

Dying river red gums along the River Murray in South Australia could be saved with clever irrigation technology, according to University of Adelaide researcher Anne Jensen.

Recent research suggests that a watering regime of just 5mm per week or 10mm per fortnight could be sufficient to keep germinating red gum seedlings alive through summer.

Mrs Jensen, a PhD candidate in the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences and Facilitator of the University's Water Research Cluster, said that the chances of river red gums getting flood flows had diminished. But already more than 75% of the majestic red gums were stressed or dying.

"In the absence of floods to water the seedlings, precision irrigation techniques could be used to deliver water to priority areas, as an interim measure," said Mrs Jensen.

"These relatively low watering rates would be sufficient to keep seedlings alive through their first summer after germination."

These results will be presented in a paper 'Smart Environmental Watering' at the international conference Water Down Under 2008 in Adelaide this week. The paper discusses how the application of limited water can be timed to best effect for the Murray floodplain environment.

The Water Down Under 2008 conference is being held at the Adelaide Convention Centre from Tuesday to Thursday, 15-17 April with more than 450 delegates registered from 20 countries.

The University of Adelaide's Professor Graeme Dandy, Co-Leader of the Water Research Cluster, is chair of the conference organising committee.

"The importance of water issues both in Australia and internationally is reflected in the wide range of topics covered and number of people attending this event," said Professor Dandy. "The University of Adelaide is a key participant of this event with more than 20 papers being contributed by University researchers, showing the depth and range of water research at the University."

Source: University of Adelaide

Citation: Clever irrigation could save dying river red gums (2008, April 14) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-04-clever-irrigation-dying-river-red.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.