



Communicating science is not a one-way street: how science helps communicate science

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Worldwide, calls for improving the communication of science and its methods, results, and benefits, ring loud and clear with investors and stakeholders engaged with the scientific process. Whether these cries emanate from boards of collaborative research institutions, policy agents from within government, public advocates of NGOs, users of research across industries and other fields of endeavour, or simply concerned tax-paying members of rural and urban communities, the general message is the same: “What is going on, what does it mean, and what do we do?” Papers addressing better communication of science litter the super-highways and networks of research communities, and entire journals are dedicated to it like pantheons of scientific enlightenment.

But is it all a one-way street, where improvements in extension, communication, technology, and participatory research herald the major breakthroughs in the way science is explained and its findings exchanged? In Australia, the communication of the results of groundwater and salinity research was revolutionised at the turn of the 21st century by the development of scientific frameworks rather than by new tools in communication. This paper discusses the Groundwater Flow System (GFS) framework that was developed for the management of dryland salinity. The unintended but most significant consequence of this work has not been the conceptual framework for understanding biophysical processes at play, but rather the conceptual framework for simply *explaining the implications* of different groundwater and salinity systems, and the potential value of different on-ground response options.

In discussing the implications of the GFS, the authors discuss how the system has helped communicate salinity science and hydrogeology in different ways to different audiences, including farmer, catchment management, policy and, even, scientific peers.