Long title – 21 words

From GMS to BRI:

Lots of acronyms!

Continuities and discontinuities in transboundary water governance in the Lancang-Mekong basin

Journal paper?

Short title – 5 words ☺

Water Governance
- recent Mekong history

Better?

Outline

1. Why and how is Australia engaged?

2. Continuities and discontinuities
(or some recent history)

3. Key messages

1. Why and how is Australia engaged?

Australia – water partners for development

Multiple rationales for bilateral & regional water partnerships

- ✓Risk reduction - contributing to peace/security, addressing water crises
- ✓Aid - ODA
- ✓Mutual gain - something to offer, something to learn
- ✓Modest constructive contribution – via partnerships
- ✓Creating economic opportunity – for Australia, for neighbours
- ✓Diplomacy – augmenting; positive ballast in bilateral relationships
- ✓Embedded in our foreign policy – 2017 White Paper

Entwined predicaments….

"climate change, environmental degradation and the demand for sustainable sources of food, water and energy will be political, economic and security disruptors over the longer term"
p33

- *In Australia's interest to partner with governments and organisations across the Indo-Pacific region to address these 'disruptors'.*

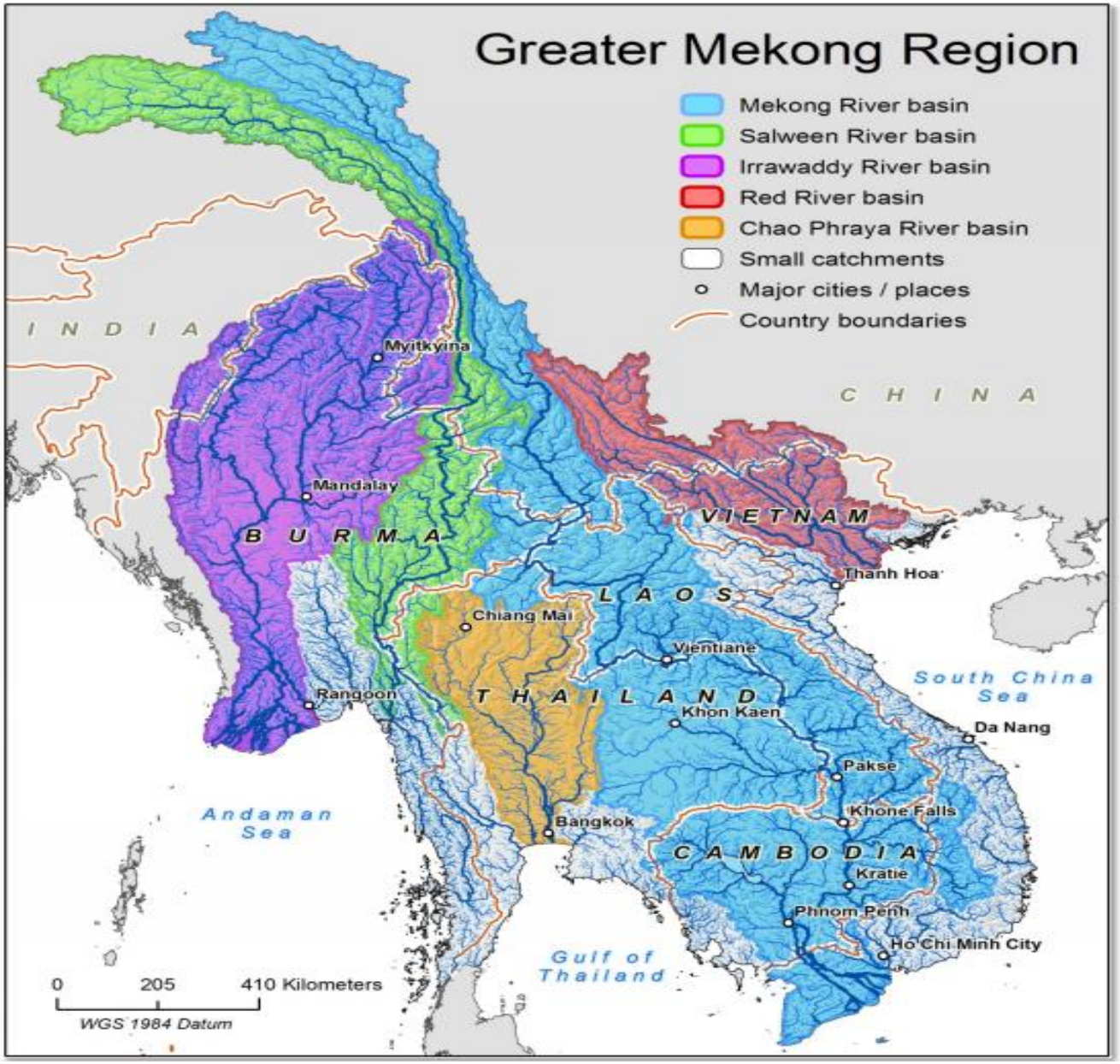
We will share….

"Australia is a leader in water management. We will share our water management expertise to help enhance agricultural productivity, improve health outcomes, strengthen economies and reduce poverty"
p94

Mekong-Australia water partnerships
- 6 bilateral + 1 regional

Australia's
GREATER
MEKONG
water resources program
IRRAWADDY ● SALWEEN ● CHAO PHRAYA ● MEKONG ● RED

Irrawaddy, Salween, Chao Phraya, Mekong, Red



2. Continuities & discontinuities

Track 1

GMS
MRC
JCCCN
RPTCC
LMC

Example Track 1:

Mekong River Commission

Example Track 1:

Commercial Navigation

Inter-Government Agreement signed 2001 – China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand

Development Plan Lancang-Mekong International Navigation 2015-2025

The Sixteenth Meeting of Joint Commitee on Coordination of Commercial Navigation on Lancang-Mekong River (JCCCN) among China, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand on 27-28 February 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

- Port information
- List of ship fleet
- Contact point
- Navigational channel
- Project (DP, PW, ESIA, FS)
- JCCCN Meeting information
- Public reletion
- Basic information of international navigation vessels

Example Track 1:

Greater Mekong Subregion

Economic Cooperation facilitated by ADB

GMS Strategic Framework 2012-2022

GMS Hanoi Action Plan 2018-2022

GMS Investment Framework 2022

- 227 projects worth USD 66 billion

Example Track 1:

GMS Regional Power Trading Coordination Committee

- 24th meeting Nay Pyi Taw, June 2018
- GMS generation & transmission master plan 2022-2035

Highly relevant to water resources development trajectories & transboundary water governance

Example Track 1:

LMC Water – 2018 agenda

1. strengthen policy dialogue
2. regularly hold LM Water Resources Cooperation Forum
3. advance building of LM Water Resources Cooperation Center
4. promote technical cooperation and exchanges
5. enhance and promote capacity building
6. develop and improve water quality monitoring system,
7. strengthen data and information sharing
8. deepen LM river flood, drought, disaster emergency mgt
9. formulate Five-Year Action Plan….

Obviously, huge overlap or complementarity with MRC agenda

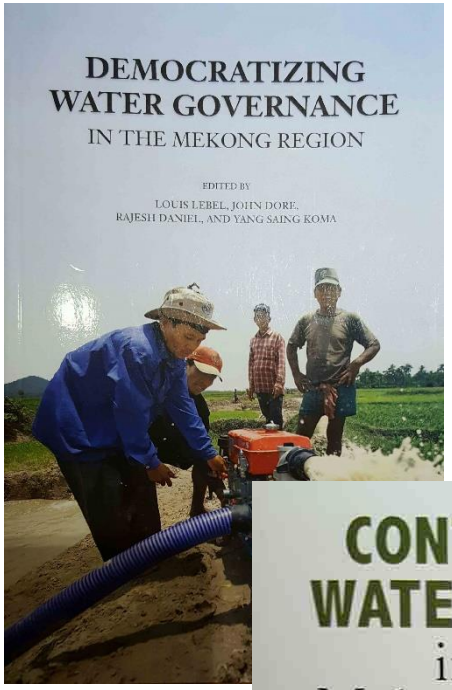
2. Continuities & discontinuities

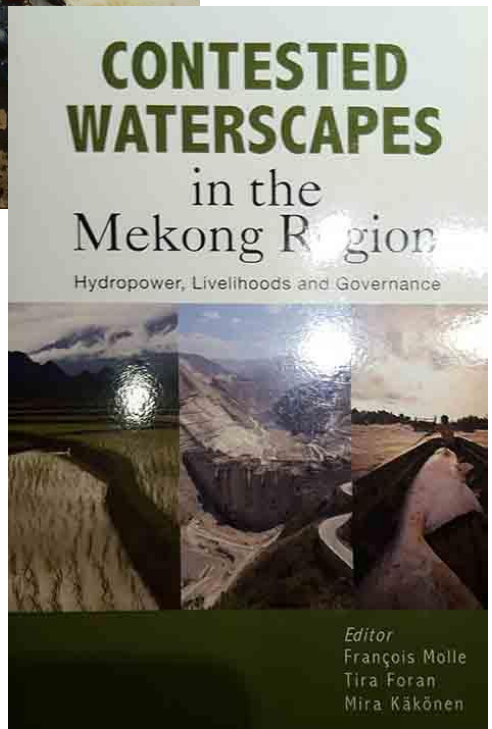
Other tracks….

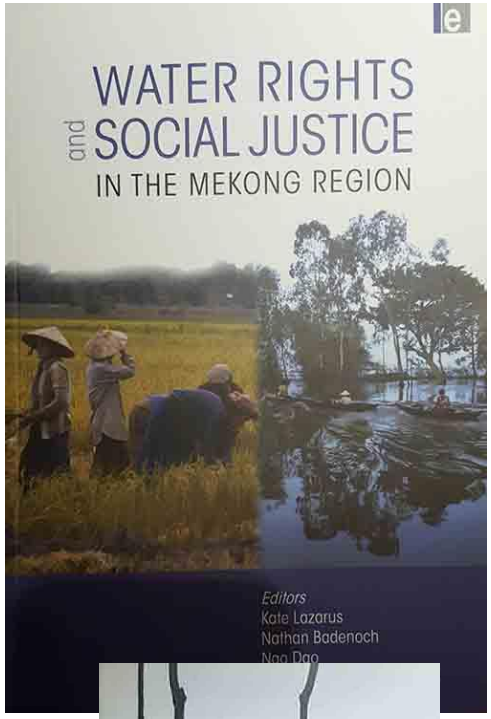
Transboundary scholarship
Transboundary forums
Transboundary advocacy
Transboundary local networks

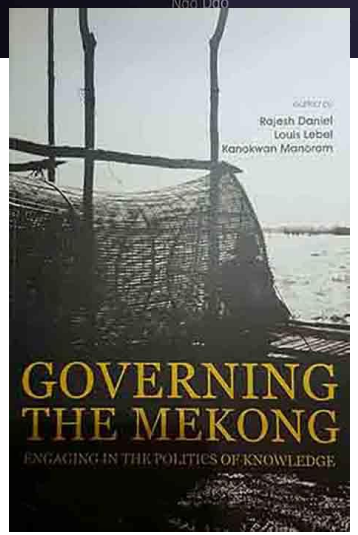
Example:

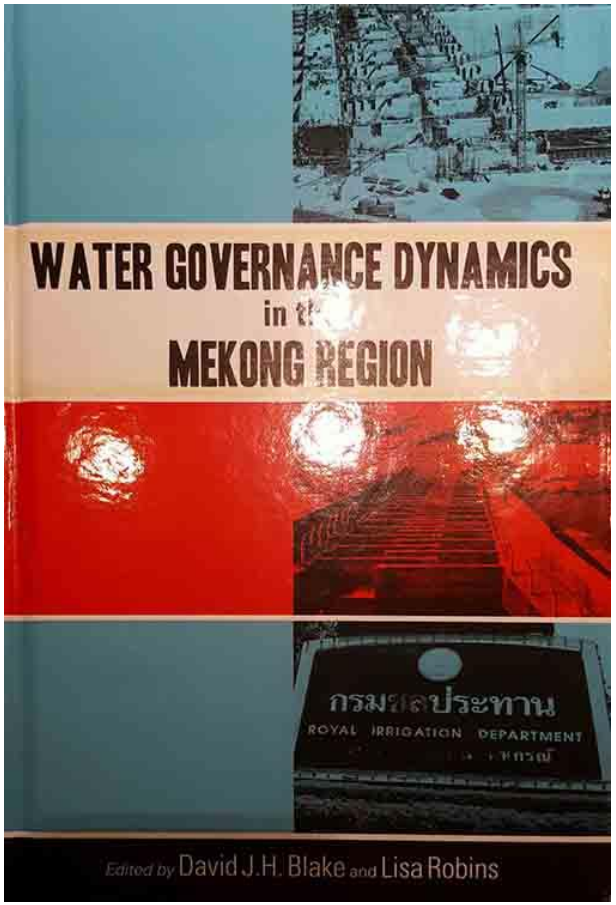
M-POWER governance network (ret'd ☺)











Example:

Greater Mekong Forum Water Food Energy

Example: Save the Mekong

Coalition has succeeded in heightening the **understanding of risks** to ecosystems and livelihoods, and is pressing governments – both in and outside the Mekong Region – to take their responsibilities for project-affected people and nature seriously.

A major achievement of the campaign has been to succeed in **reframing** the perceived dams threats from environmental protection to food security and the potential for economic and livelihood disaster

Example: Oxfam Inclusion Project

3. Key messages

Transboundary water-food-energy initiatives

- **More debate than there has ever been….**
  - ❑ A patchy, systemic, deliberative turn in politics of Mekong Region is happening.
- **Forums [for learning within & between countries] continue to evolve-emerge**
  - ❖ Yunnan University Lancang Mekong Forum 1999
  - ❖ Exploring Mekong Water Futures Together 2006+
  - ❖ Cambodia-Australia-China Irrigation Dialogue 2012-2014 *[MOFCOM, MWR]*
  - ❖ PNPCA processes
  - ❖ **7th Greater Mekong Forum for Water Food Energy 2011-2018** ***[Yangon, 4-6 Dec 2018]***
  - ❖ **1st Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Forum** ***[Kunming, 1-2 Nov 2018]***
- **Strategic Assessments [boundary objects for debate] are under-used**
  - ➢ Lower Mekong mainstream dams SEA 2010
  - ➢ VN Mekong Delta Study 2017
  - ➢ MRC Basin Planning *[various],* Council Study 2018
  - ➢ Ayeyarwady State of Basin Assessment 2018
  - ➢ SEA Myanmar Hydropower Sector 2018
  - ➢ Sekong Energy Development Options 2019 *[cumulative impact assessment]*
  - ➢ **Huge effort put into process and production – follow through needs more thought**

Transboundary water governance

- **Many Mekongs**
  - Delta, River, Basin, Region (regularly mixed up), watersheds, powersheds etc.
- **There is more than Track 1 GMS, MRC, JCCCN, RPTCC and LMC…**
  - Asian Development Bank Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation
  - Mekong River Commission
  - Joint Committee for Coordination of Commercial Navigation (on Mekong)
  - Regional Power Trading Coordination Committee
  - Lancang Mekong Cooperation

- **Across the Mekong Region there is much multi-track diplomacy, fact-finding and advocacy with multiple actors and coalitions operating to try to influence development directions and decision-making arenas**
  - Research networks
  - Media networks
  - Project-affected people networks
  - Advocacy campaigns
  - Dialogues, forums and other (more and less) deliberative processes
  - **Legitimate additions to what is a transboundary water governance complex**

Australia

water partners for development

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