

Christopher Wright. Australian Citizen, born in Auckland in 1945, grew up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Education background.

- 1964-68 Tertiary studies in Civil Engineering at Trinity College, Dublin, and
- 1969 Masters Degree in Agricultural Engineering at Silsoe, Bedford, UK.
- 1986 the short course on Hydrology run by David Pilgrim and Ian Cordery at New South Wales University;
- Masters Degree by Research at the University of Adelaide. Topic: Urban Flash Flooding

Married, with 3 children all currently working/studying in Europe.

Professional Background

I am an Engineering Hydrologist. After a career that began in Soil Conservation and Irrigation in Malawi, Central Africa, I moved to Nigeria for a few months, and in 1975 was posted to Yogyakarta, Indonesia to work on rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure. In 1979 I and my family moved to Adelaide, and I worked for Kinhill Consulting engineers for nearly 10 years. In 1988 I was employed by the Bureau of Meteorology in their South Australian Regional office, with the task of starting and running the Flood Warning service. The service has grown steadily over the years, and we now have flood warning arrangements in place for both flash and non-flash flood catchments in Greater Metropolitan Adelaide and the Mt Lofty Ranges.

A major part of the work has been interaction with other government and non-government agencies, convincing them that flood risk is a reality, even in times of drought, and providing information that people can use to help themselves.

Volunteer experiences

1. A major interest since 1987 has been the Scientific Expedition Group, a volunteer group that runs expeditions of a scientific nature, to various locations in South Australia, with the intention of educating young people in the environment, and the animals and plants that live in it, and through a bushwalking program to help them develop survival and self-protection capabilities. I helped to set up the Gammon Ranges Scientific Project in the northern Flinders Ranges. This project is centred on measurement of rainfall and river flow in this remote area, but includes aquatic biology, monitoring vegetation change, counting feral animals, and checking the numbers of Yellow Footed Rock Wallabies. Small expeditions to the area are run every 3 months, usually involving 4 to 8 volunteers. The monitoring program has been extended to take over 3 raingauge sites where the State Government agency could no longer afford to run them. We have involved more than 200 volunteers to date, some of whom have completed the Duke of Edinburgh Award program.
2. I assist with the Folk Group music program in the local church, beginning in 1970 and continuing to date, with a youth music group.
3. I have been assisting Sr Janet Mead since 1992 with a variety of volunteer activities, including the Soup Van (during the winter), an annual drama production raising money for poor people and AIDS victims.

Travel experiences

I have had the opportunity to travel widely.

1. In earlier days I travelled to many places in what is now Zimbabwe, including game reserves and the Victoria Falls;
2. I took part in several collecting expeditions to Botswana, the longest of which was 2 months;
3. I worked in Malawi for nearly 4 years, and travelled from end to end, along the edges of the Great Rift Valley, including many climbing trips on Mt Mulanje.
4. I and my family were posted to North East State of Nigeria, where I worked on South Chad Irrigation Project. We travelled from there, briefly, to Cameroon and Chad.
5. After a brief time in UK, we travelled to Indonesia and lived in Yogyakarta for 4 years. This was a most interesting place to visit, and we enjoyed the cultural exchange with the Javanese and other foreigners living in the University town. For recreation, I and a group of people from many backgrounds, regularly went climbing on the volcanoes in Central Java. I have climbed the active Mt Merapi on many occasions. This experience was most interesting.
6. I have visited Mauritius once, and have spent a while in South Africa.
7. Since moving to Adelaide in 1979, I have travelled to Northern Territory several times, and have covered some of Outback South Australia.
8. I spent a year working in Ireland in 2003 and took the advantage of cheap air travel to visit our children in London, Berlin and Prestwick.
9. Last year I visited North Vietnam briefly on a working trip, and was fascinated by this country which had so many awful war memories, but is now apparently at peace.
10. I am hoping to get to Sikkim next year for a 2-week walk to see Kanchenjunga.