

**Emeritus Professor Richard H. Norris 18 January 1951–  
19 September 2011**

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## Emeritus Professor Richard H. Norris 18 January 1951–19 September 2011

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Richard Norris passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family on 19 September 2011, following an intense battle with cancer. Richard will be sadly missed by his friends and colleagues in Australia and around the world. He had officially retired as Professor of Freshwater Ecology at the University of Canberra, Australia on 1 May 2011, after earlier stepping down as the Director of the Institute for Applied Ecology (University of Canberra) and Leader of the eWater Cooperative Research Centre Education and Training Program. In recognition of his substantial contribution to the University and to freshwater ecology, he was appointed Emeritus Professor of Freshwater Ecology by the University council in June 2011.

Richard first attended an annual meeting of the North American Benthological Society (NABS) in 1992 in Louisville, Kentucky. The trip was an interlude during a visit to Burlington, Ontario, in the early phases of Reference Condition Approach work in the Great Lakes. After his first NABS meeting, he was a regular attendee and participant until his last NABS meeting in 2009 in Grand Rapids.

Richard was born to be a scientist. He was the son of renowned Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) entomologist Kenneth (Dick) Norris and the nephew of Don Norris, a world authority on plant viruses. Richard spent his formative days in Canberra, and did his first degree (with Honours) at the Australian National University before moving to Hobart for his PhD studies with Sam Lake at the University of Tasmania. Along the way, he completed a Graduate Diploma in Education and always had a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching and postgraduate training. In more recent years, this commitment extended to the development of innovative online content that allowed self-paced learning and flexibility for students. It is testimony to his influence in freshwater science and education that his former students are key staff in many of Australia's state, territory, and federal water management agencies.

Richard was at the forefront in the development of biological assessment for freshwater systems through the prediction of aquatic biota expected at sites using comparisons of independent data from matching sites.

His early work on the design and implementation of rapid assessment of river condition using benthic macroinvertebrate data developed with his friends in North America and elsewhere was instrumental in changing approaches to water resource assessment in Australia and many other parts of the world. The expertise that Richard developed in this area led him to extensive involvement in bioassessment in Canada and the USA, as well as in Indonesia and New Zealand. Richard's endeavours, either directly or indirectly, contributed to major Australian water initiatives, including the first National Land and Water Resources Audit (2000) and the snapshot of the Murray–Darling Basin river condition. More recently, he had input into the development of a framework for the Assessment of River and Wetland Health for nationally comparable reporting for the National Water Commission. Richard has authored/coauthored 79 papers published in refereed journals, 13 books or chapters in books, 24 refereed conference papers, and guest-edited 5 special journal issues. In his 30 y at the University of Canberra, Richard was inspirational for both undergraduate and postgraduate students and supervised 11 PhD, 10 Masters, and 16 Honours theses. His work in biological assessment of fresh waters was recognized recently through the US Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific and Technological Achievement Award and the Australian Society for Limnology 2010 Medal for outstanding contribution to Australian limnology. All in all, Richard made a remarkable contribution to the scientific community, on both a professional and personal level. His achievements were indisputably impressive, and his work influenced hundreds of people on a direct professional level and contributed to knowledge and management nationally. He leaves an impressive professional legacy, and an interesting and memorable personal legacy. Richard's commitment to scientific research never left him. The following article in this journal is a testament to his dedication for using science in environmental management.

Richard's passion and enthusiasm for science was matched by his passion for physical pursuits. He represented Australia in sailing, karate, and triathlon events. In 2009, he competed for Australia in his age class at the world triathlon championships. He was particularly fond of competing and loved nothing

better than to pit himself against his students in feats of endurance on his bicycle. Last, above and beyond his excellence in science, he was a great friend. Many of us in our careers meet people with whom we have successful collaborations, but few of us are lucky

enough to find collaborators and great friends. Richard was certainly that to us, he will long be remembered by colleagues and friends and will be greatly missed. Our thoughts at this time are with his family, his wife Ursula and 3 children Nicki, Emily, and Allie.