convective precipitation likely to increase more rapidly than stratiform precipitation^{8,9}. However, other changes — such as shifts in large-scale circulation patterns — may have different responses to climate change in different seasons¹⁰, and this can also influence trends in extreme precipitation intensity, as observed here. Simulating the combined effect of all of these processes remains a major challenge in climate modelling. Although some recent modelling studies have emphasized sub-daily precipitation¹¹, more work is needed to understand the dominant processes that govern changes in extreme precipitation at both short (sub-daily and sub-hourly) and long timescales.

Given the fundamental relationship between catchment size, the duration of an extreme precipitation event and flood magnitude¹², the finding that extreme precipitation is changing at different timescales has potentially surprising implications for flood risk. Our results

show that different or even opposing trends in flood risk are possible within a single geographic region, such as neighbouring catchments of different sizes, or even smaller sub-catchments within the same larger basin. This will be of interest to those involved in land-use planning, water infrastructure design (for example dams, levees, bridges and storm-water drainage networks), floodplain management, emergency response, as well as to the insurance industry. □

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Acknowledgements

This project was supported by the Federal Government through Geoscience Australia as part of the revision of Australian Rainfall and Runoff by Engineers Australia. We thank members of Engineers Australia for their contribution to this paper and project.

Additional information

Supplementary information is available in the [online version of the paper](#).

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CORRESPONDENCE: IAMs and peer review

To the Editor — Integrated assessment models (IAMs) have provided the bulk of the evidence relied on by prominent documents — such as the Stern Report¹ and the contributions of Working Group III to the IPCC Assessment Reports^{2,3} — as well as numerous research articles on the economics of climate change mitigation and related issues. I am concerned, however, that many published IAM-based research articles fail to adequately explain the basis for their findings, and do not justify these findings carefully based on sound scientific and logical argumentation, analysis, and data presented in the article itself (or in published appendices). Often the details of how the IAMs were used to derive the basic results are not described, meaning that reviewers cannot credibly assess the reliability of the results.

One major flaw of most, if not all, peer reviews of IAM-based research reports is that the models relied upon have not been reviewed in themselves. And yet such articles cannot be adequately reviewed without carefully critiquing the underlying models. All too often the original models, and subsequent versions, have never been formally peer reviewed publicly. Due to these shortcomings, even the recent 'model intercomparison projects'⁴ are, I would argue, of limited value.

Because economics claims to be a science, and because economists have developed many different IAMs, peer reviewers of IAM-based research articles should, in my view, assess: (1) the theory behind each model in light of model's intended purpose; (2) the structure of the model to determine if the theory was properly implemented; (3) the way in which various structural parameters were estimated based on historical data; and (4) the way in which the values of various input parameters were estimated or derived, especially those for the future. The last point is a particular problem because many IAM-based studies involve very long-term, multi-decadal projections. In addition, I believe that peer reviewers must especially assess how the model is being used in relation to the particular research questions being addressed, and what sensitivity analyses have been performed that might illuminate the answers to these questions. If any of these steps are skipped, then confidence in the reported findings is reduced. Of course, if some of these steps have been undertaken for previously published articles using the same IAM, and if the model has not significantly changed since these reviews were completed, then some of the above steps could be deemed to be complete prior to the current

review. It would be helpful in this regard if past reviews of the particular IAM were made available in some format. But this is almost never done.

In 2013, the IAM Consortium — which was set up at the request of the IPCC after the Fourth Assessment Report and of which I am a member — set up scientific working groups intending to establish community-wide standards on IAM documentation and the inclusion of key input assumptions in research publications. There has been little or no progress since. It is my contention that this situation should be rectified, so as to usher in a new era for peer reviews in this field. □

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