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# Strategies for community participation in Water Sensitive Cities

Prof Jo Lindsay  
CRCWSC and Monash University

26-28 March 2019







# Community engagement in the water sector

An outcome-focused review of different  
engagement approaches

Angela Dean, Kelly Fielding, Fiona Newton and Helen Ross



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4th water sensitive cities conference

[watersensitivecities.org.au](http://watersensitivecities.org.au)

# Different types of community participation and engagement



Angela Dean, Kelly Fielding, Fiona Newton and Helen Ross (2016)  
Community engagement in the water sector: An outcome-focused review of different engagement approaches



# National survey: Engagement with water



Online survey - representative sample of 5914 Australian adults

## Indicators of engagement



### Cognitive

- Water-related knowledge



### Emotional

- Support for alternative water sources
- Environmental identity



### Behavioural

- Water saving behaviours
- Uptake of water saving devices
- Pollution reduction behaviours



### Emotional

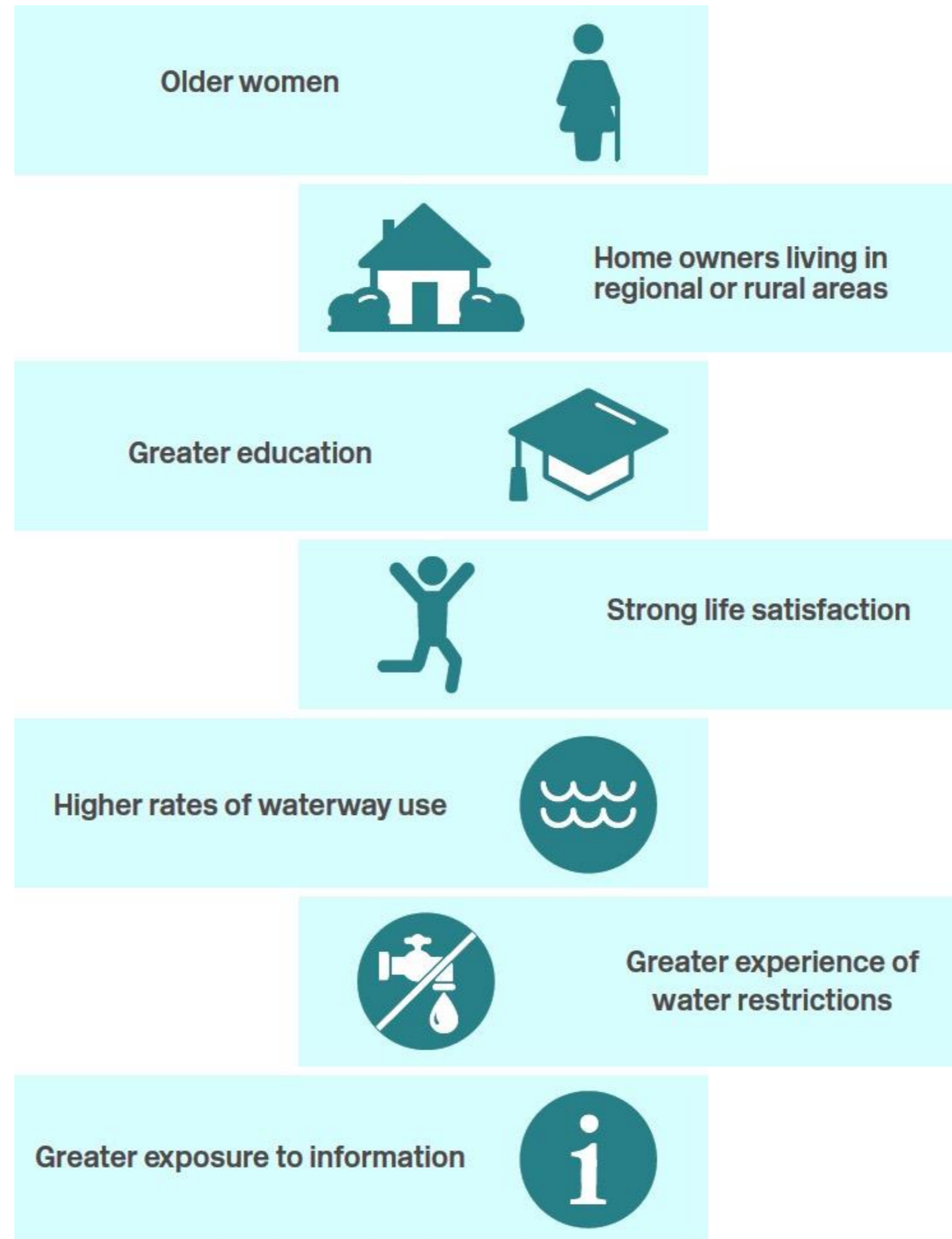
- Demographics
- Household characteristics
- Life experience & psychosocial characteristics



# We found there are five different groups Disengaged



# Highly engaged





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# IRP1 Study Water sensitive city visions and transition strategies

Alex Gunn, Emma Church, Jo Lindsay,  
Briony Rogers (lead), Katie Hammer

[watersensitivecities.org.au](http://watersensitivecities.org.au)



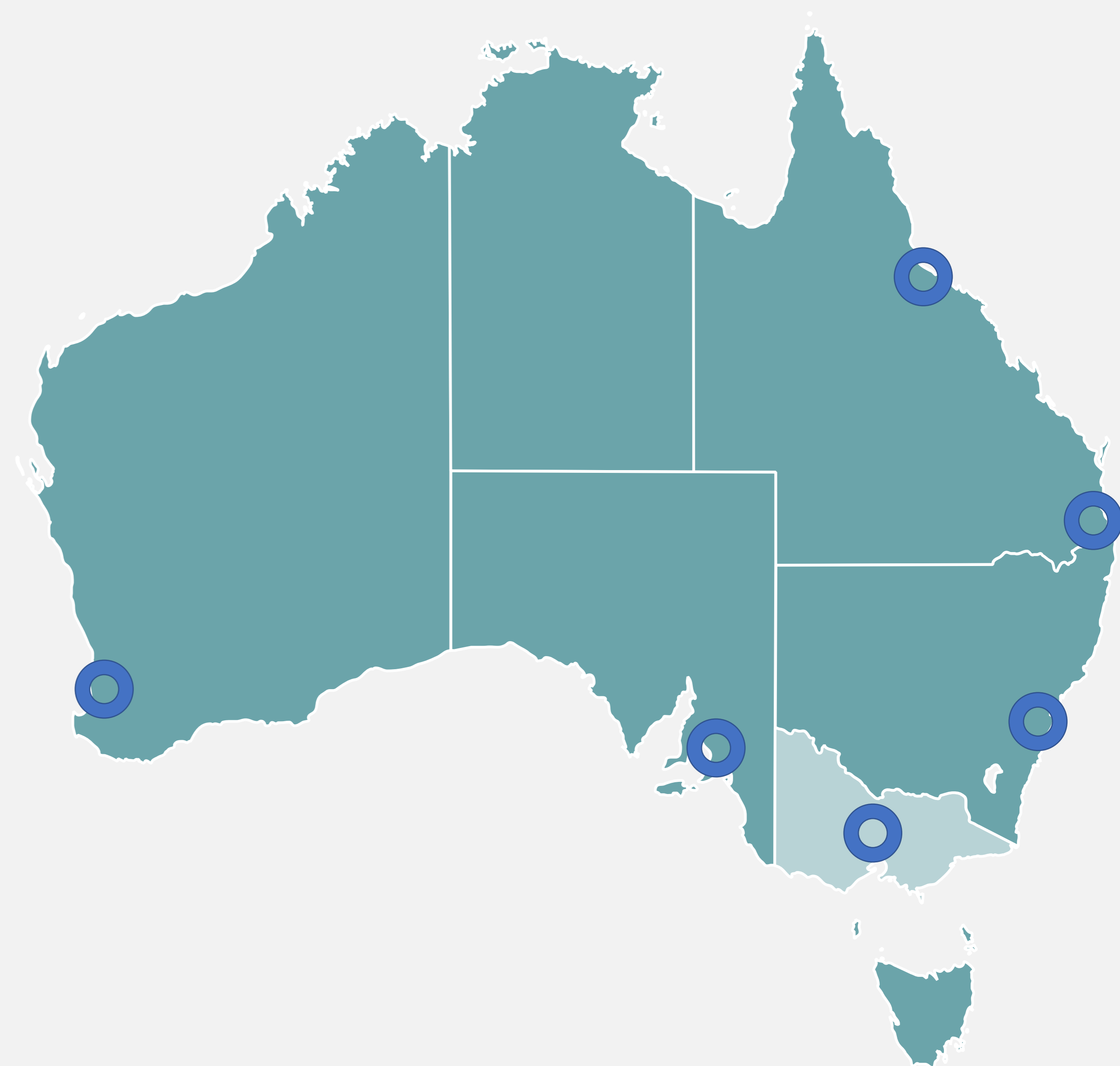


# Bendigo case study

Bendigo is a major case study in a national CRCWSC research project

Project aimed to develop methods and tools for guiding water sensitive city (WSC) transitions

- Comparing different scales and stakeholder groups
- Testing and refining CRCWSC processes and tools
- Delivering local impact



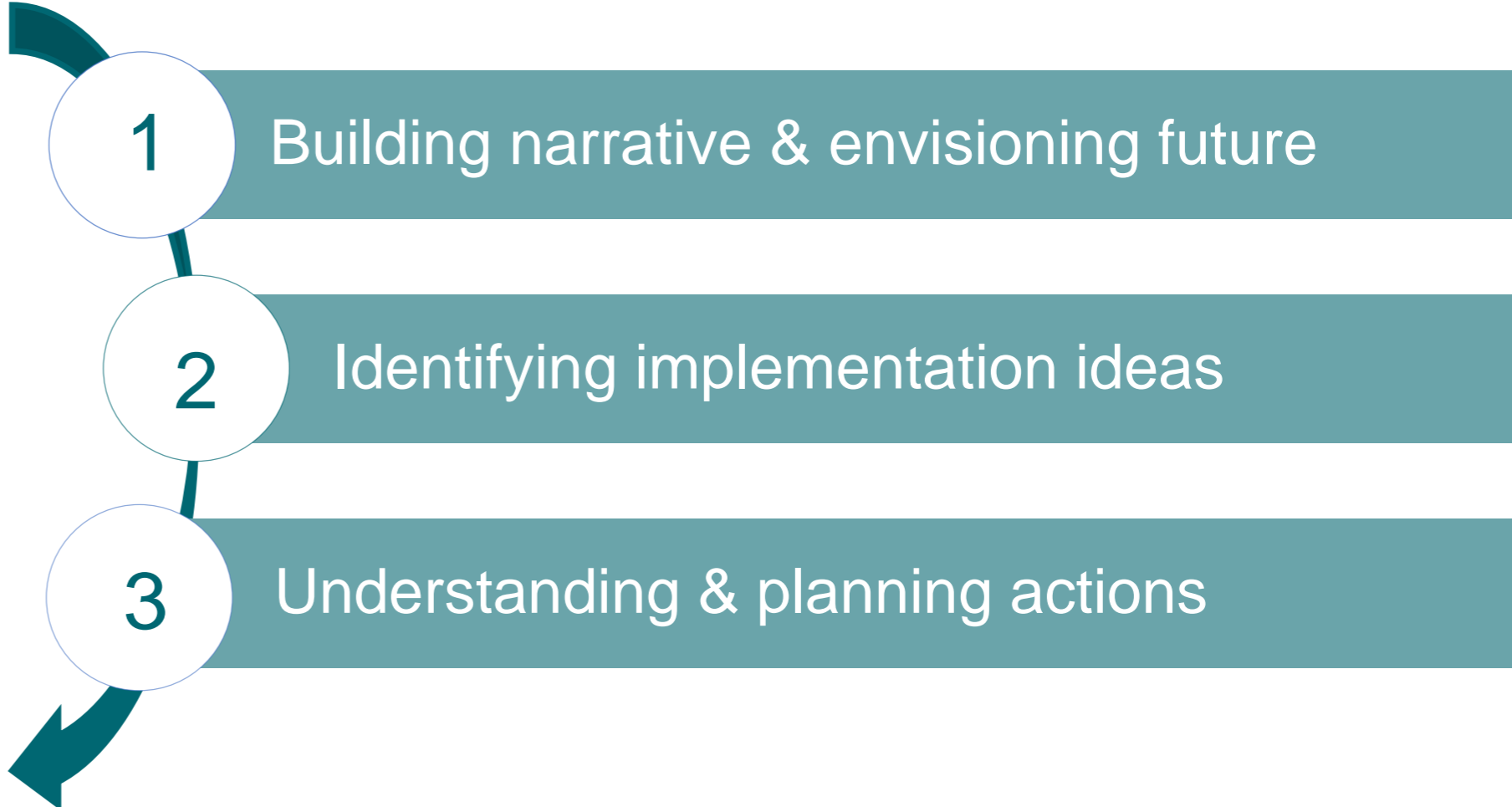
Desktop review

Participant interviews

Insights from analytical tools

Industry, government & NGO

Community



Current performance

Shared water narrative

Shared vision of a WSC

Transition strategy

Priority actions



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## Community participants particular demographic

- Community environmental groups
- Environment focussed occupations or work histories
- Environmental 'champions'
- Eg 'I love Bendigo creek'

# Additional focus groups to check vision and explore future engagement

**Low SES / young people / gardeners**



## **Activities**

I love Bendigo

Bendigo 2068 headlines

## **Feedback on the draft vision:**

- Broad support for the vision
- Links between environment and healthy communities not front of mind



## Key Differences between groups

### Young people:

- less content given in I love Bendigo and visioning process,
- more emphasis on negative future,
- mentioned the enviro education they had been given at school

### Low income:

- lots of discussion with the envisioning exercise
- focussed on things getting better – focus on support services, inclusion, equity, solving social problems,
- less positive about stewardship

### Gardeners:

- preferred to focus on present,
- most engaged with water in houses, practical activities beyond tanks- grey water
- most positive about stewardship and their involvement in planning

‘The creek is little more than a drain, I’d never take anyone there!’



# Community champions can play an important role as knowledge brokers

Eg Engagement advice



Article

## The Role of Community Champions in Long-Term Sustainable Urban Water Planning

Jo Lindsay <sup>1,2,\*</sup>, Briony C. Rogers <sup>1,2</sup>, Emma Church <sup>1,2,3</sup>, Alexander Gunn <sup>1,2</sup>, Katie Hammer <sup>1,2</sup>, Angela J. Dean <sup>2,4</sup> and Kelly Fielding <sup>2,3</sup>

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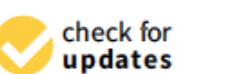
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**Abstract:** Community engagement and stewardship are important elements in urban water planning if we are to achieve the vision of water sensitive cities. The aim of this study was to explore how community members could participate in collaborative water planning processes that are adaptive, participatory and transdisciplinary. We conducted a case study of community participation in a water planning process in the regional town of Bendigo in Australia. Over a period of eight months, we worked with key stakeholders to generate integrated, collaborative and people-centred water planning. This involved a series of community champion workshops supplemented by focus groups with additional community members that ran alongside workshops with water and local planning professionals. The goal of the process was to bring together industry, government partners and community members to develop a 50-year vision for a water sensitive Bendigo and to identify the steps needed to achieve this vision. Key findings were that community champions were keen to learn and contribute to urban water planning in their local context. Given time and support, community champions were able to distil complex ideas and make compromises to contribute to a shared vision for the city. Our findings confirm that community champions can play the role of knowledge brokers between water managers and the general population. The research contributes knowledge regarding the value of engaging community champions in urban water planning.

**Keywords:** water resources planning; water resources governance; community participation; community champions; sustainability transitions; water sensitive cities

# Concluding insights

New ideas can gain traction when part of whole-system planning – ambitious, intensive

Community appreciated their own space to learn and contribute

Participants with time for refinement can distil and compromise

Check with broader community members beyond the champions – it is possible they do not love the creek

Community champions as knowledge brokers/filters/advocates



# Thank you



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