



CRC for  
Water Sensitive Cities



# Integrated research project 1 — WSC Transition strategies and implementation plans

## Overview

There is a growing international interest by governments, water and planning industries, and local communities in the topics of liveability, sustainability, and resilience, the foundations of a water sensitive city (WSC). While there is typically broad agreement about high level aspirations such as these, decision-makers face the challenge of determining how to most effectively drive the transformations needed to steer a city or town in the aspired direction, and of ensuring strategic and operational alignment across the wide range of stakeholders that need to be part of the transition through their policies, strategies and programs of action.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities' first integrated research project (CRCWSC IRP1) "Water Sensitive City Transition Strategies and Implementation Plans" develops innovative tools and methods targeted at addressing these challenges, with a particular focus on accelerating the transition to water sensitive cities and towns in Australia. The research involves workshop series in multiple case study locations, designed to facilitate in-depth discussion and analysis amongst key local stakeholders of how their urban region can be transformed to provide reliable water services, ensure public health and wellbeing, enhance urban amenity and protect the environment over the long-term.

## Aim and objectives

IRP1 aims to deliver a suite of participatory methods and associated tools for developing strategic guidance to cities and towns wanting to accelerate the transition towards their envisioned water sensitive future. These methods and tools will be applicable across neighbourhood, metropolitan and regional scales and have the flexibility to be tailored to local contexts. The following objectives will be addressed:

1. Enhance, refine, implement and evaluate the developed benchmarking, envisioning and backcasting process methodologies across different spatial scales.
2. Integrate, test and refine developed CRCWSC knowledge and tools into the participatory methods to support communication and understanding about WSC concepts and transition dynamics.
3. Develop transition strategies and implementation plans for selected regions to advance their WSC vision, incorporating tools that address transition barriers, existing regional initiatives, local stakeholder knowledge and research findings from the CRCWSC Tranche 1 program.
4. Analyse the processes and patterns of change across the selected case studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the participatory methods, transition strategies and implementation plans in steering policy and practice towards the WSC vision.



# Approach

IRP1 has selected five case studies across Australia based on recommendations from the local CRCWSC Regional Advisory Panels. Perth (WA) and Bendigo (VIC) were selected for full process cases, and Adelaide (SA), Townsville (QLD) and Sydney (NSW) were selected for preliminary process cases. Participatory processes will be facilitated for each case study to inform the development of local water sensitive city transition strategies, and for some cases implementation plans, that enable and guide action for achieving WSC outcomes. The figure below shows the components that make up a transition strategy and implementation plan:

The project will involve the application of tools and processes that were developed in the CRCWSC's first tranche of research. These include:

1. The Water Sensitive Cities Index tool to benchmark a city's current water sensitive performance,
2. Envisioning and backcasting processes to develop a shared vision and transition strategies for achieving the vision, and
3. Community engagement strategies to help bring the community along the water sensitive transition journey.



## Products

The key deliverables for this project will include:

- Transition strategies detailing a benchmark of the current system, contextualised water sensitive city vision, and priority strategies for overcoming key challenges and achieving the vision. Detail and operational focus will depend on the extensiveness of the process.
- Technical reports on 1) a comparative analysis of the contexts, WSC visions, transition strategies, and patterns and drivers of change across the case studies, and 2) strategies for engaging with communities to build their support for water sensitive city transitions
- Process guidelines for participatory envisioning, backcasting, scenario methods, and the use of associated tools, for developing strategic transitions guidance

## Benefits

Benefits to the research participants in IRP1 are expected to include:

- In-depth discussions to develop a shared understanding of issues and aspirations across diverse stakeholders who need to collaborate in order to drive water sensitive city transitions
- Influence over the development of a local transition strategy that will steer the future directions for water and planning initiatives
- Tools and products to strengthen strategic planning for achieving long-term water sensitivity.

For further information do not hesitate to contact the project team:

**Briony Rogers**  
Project Leader  
briony.rogers@monash.edu  
03 9905 2581

**Kelly Fielding**  
Deputy Project Leader  
k.fielding@uq.edu.au  
07 3365 1125

**Katie Hammer**  
Project Manager  
katie.hammer@monash.edu  
03 9905 4213

## Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities

Level 1, 8 Scenic Boulevard  
Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800

info@crcwsc.org.au  
www.watersensitivecities.org.au



**Business**  
Cooperative Research  
Centres Programme