



**Water Sensitive  
Cities Index**

**You can now  
benchmark  
your city against  
indicators of a water  
sensitive city**

# Test whether your city is water sensitive (and prove it)

## Why use the Water Sensitive Cities Index?

Many cities and towns face pressures of climate change, population growth and rising urbanisation. Water Sensitive Cities recognise the fundamental importance of managing water resources and water systems services to enhance a city's liveability, resilience, sustainability and productivity. Less clear is how an individual city or municipality can understand its current performance, and how water can contribute to these outcomes.

Whether your city or town is thinking about becoming a water sensitive city or not, or whether you are well on your way, you will need evidence of what you've achieved. For the first time, a **Water Sensitive Cities (WSC) Index** is available to measure your city's performance and help you identify where you may improve your water sensitive practices.

The Index—developed by the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities (CRCWSC)—is a tool for benchmarking against 34 indicators that characterise a water sensitive city. The indicators relate to 7 goals:

- Ensure good water sensitive governance
- Increase community capital
- Achieve equity of essential services
- Improve productivity and resource efficiency
- Promote adaptive infrastructure
- Improve ecological health
- Ensure quality urban space.

## Every city and town can be water sensitive

The WSC Index works for small towns as well as cities, in both metropolitan and regional areas. So far, we have benchmarked municipalities ranging in population size from 10,000 to 600,000, as well as regional towns of 100,000 to cities of 5,000,000.



- Water Sensitive City — **16%**
- Water Cycle City — **63%**
- Waterway City — **100%**
- Drained City — **83%**
- Sewered City — **100%**
- Water Supply City — **100%**

WSC Index benchmarking result represented in a concentric bar graph using the City State Continuum framework.



CRC for  
**Water Sensitive Cities**



Australian Government  
Department of Industry,  
Innovation and Science

**Business**  
Cooperative Research  
Centres Programme

# You have plenty of reasons to benchmark your city

For the first time, you can see how you measure up as a water sensitive city. Then, you can use the WSC Index to lead change.

The Index helps you by:

- **fostering collaboration among stakeholders.** The Index uses a workshop-based process to gather experts, professionals and other interested groups. Workshop participants typically include representatives from councils, water authorities, state government agencies, developers and peak bodies. In other words, everyone involved in the water cycle can come together in the one place, and start developing the collaborative relationships needed to bring about real change.
- **describing the key attributes of a water sensitive city.** You can ensure workshop participants think about WSC concepts and principles in the same way.
- **benchmarking your city's water sensitive performance.** Participants score the indicators individually, but then discuss and agree on a final score. The Index translates these final scores into several measures of city status, to show the city's progress towards greater water sensitivity.
- **articulating shared WSC goals.** The Index helps participants identify what the city needs to improve.
- **catering to different stakeholders.** An accredited provider presents and explains the index results during the workshop, so different participants can present their perspectives and can ask specific questions. The provider then prepares a benchmarking and assessment report, which explains the indexing tool and presents comprehensive results. This report also summarises the workshop discussions and the evidence supporting the ratings. You can view the benchmarking results on a web interface too.
- **supplying reliable evidence to use in seeking project funding or approval, and to track progress over time.** The WSC Index is functional, reliable and scientifically robust. It has undergone two years of testing and validation with industry partners. And an accredited provider facilitates the workshop, to ensure the process complies with CRCWSC requirements.
- **becoming part of a unique network of water sensitive cities.** Connect to a growing network of Australian and international cities, to share knowledge and learnings that can help as you transition to a water sensitive city.



## Here's what you can do now

Contact a WSC Index accredited provider. The provider will explain how the Index works, how long it takes to run, and what it costs.

<https://watersensitivecities.org.au/solutions/wsc-index/>



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