



**Water Sensitive  
Cities Index**

The process has been undertaken for 5 major Australian cities - **Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Gold Coast, Townsville and Bendigo.**

# Accelerate your transition to a Water Sensitive City

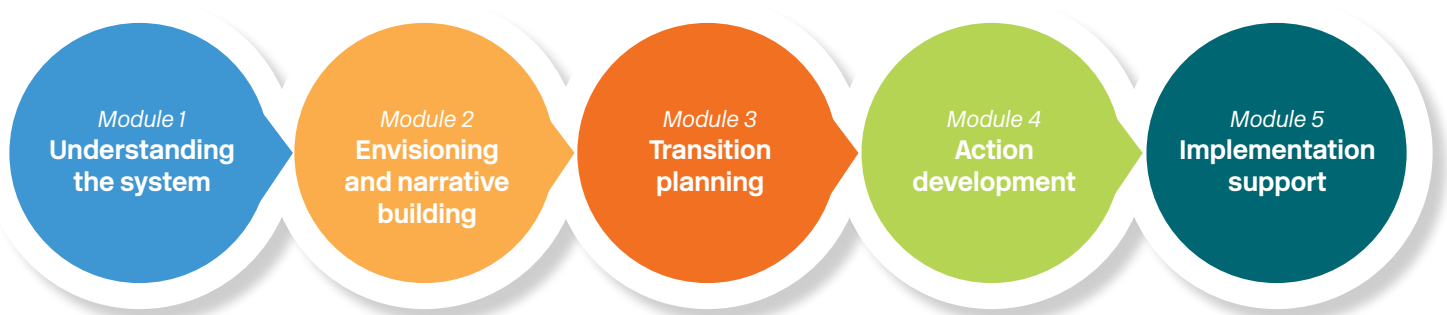
***The Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities (CRCWSC) has developed a Water Sensitive Cities Transition Planning Process to provide strategic guidance for cities and towns wanting to accelerate their transition towards their vision of a water sensitive future.***

Around the world there is necessary recognition of the critical role water will play in the future liveability, productivity, sustainability and resilience of our cities. While there is typically broad agreement, decision-makers and practitioners face the challenge of determining how to most effectively shape and service our cities to achieve these outcomes.

The **Water Sensitive City** is the label given to cities where the policies and practices associated with delivering water system services enable liveability, sustainability, productivity and resilience. It encompasses all the aspects of the water cycle and other key elements of city planning and operation.

The **Water Sensitive Cities Transition Planning Process** is based on a series of participatory workshops designed to bring diverse stakeholders together to develop a common framework for guiding strategic action that will accelerate their city's water sensitive transition.

The workshops utilise a range of tools and activities that support participants to learn from each other as they consider their system's transition needs, set out future aspirations, prioritise actions and build capacity for implementation. They are packaged into five modules, which can be applied in different combinations depending on a city's local context and needs.



CRC for  
**Water Sensitive Cities**



Australian Government  
Department of Industry,  
Innovation and Science

**Business**  
Cooperative Research  
Centres Programme

## Module 1

# Understanding the system

*Module 1 establishes a common knowledge base amongst stakeholders and is a useful starting point for a city embarking on a water sensitive transition journey.*

**WHAT** Benchmarking current water sensitive performance using the CRCWSC's *Water Sensitive Cities Index (WSC Index)*.

**BENEFIT** Application of the *WSC Index* is effective in bringing stakeholders together, generating momentum and familiarising stakeholders with water sensitive city concepts.

**HOW** 1x full day workshop to apply the *WSC Index* to the local area. Analysis and report write-up.

**PRODUCT** Benchmarking report detailing the *WSC Index* scores for its seven goals and 34 indicators, highlighting areas of strength and weakness.

## Module 2

# Envisioning and narrative building

*Module 2 gets stakeholders thinking creatively and beyond the boundaries of current water system practice to establish shared transformative water aspirations.*

**WHAT** Development of a local water story and shared 50-year water sensitive city vision.

**BENEFIT** Articulating a shared water sensitive city vision helps align stakeholders, generate commitment for and guide coordinated action towards a common goal. When exploring future aspirations, it is helpful to first look to the past to understand the unique parts of a city's water identity, as well as learn from drivers and patterns of change and how the system has responded.

**HOW** 1x full day workshop with creative envisioning and water story activities. Analysis and report write-up.

**PRODUCT** Visioning report detailing a high-level vision with supporting text and a local historical water story.



## Module 3

# Transition planning

*Module 3 develops the pathways that link a future water sensitive city vision with current water system practice as a framework for designing strategic transition action.*

**WHAT** Analysis of a city's current transition barriers and enablers using the CRCWSC's *Transition Dynamics Framework* to identify priority strategies for advancing the transition to water sensitive practices.

**BENEFIT** Application of the *Transition Dynamics Framework* emphasises the need to focus on building up the enabling environment for the successful transition to new practice. It helps build the capability of practitioners to implement these enabling strategies while also providing a framework for monitoring transition progress.

**HOW** 1x full day workshop. Analysis and report write-up.

**PRODUCT** Report detailing a *Transition Dynamics Framework* analysis for the range of practice changes that need to occur for the water sensitive city vision to be achieved, along with recommended transition strategies.

## Module 4

# Action development

*Module 4 builds directly on the outputs of previous modules to provide city stakeholders with the basis for operationalising an action plan that will drive the city's water sensitive transition.*

**WHAT** Development of specific actions for implementing transition strategies and improving *WSC Index* scores, and prioritising them in the context of existing or upcoming local opportunities.

**BENEFIT** Development of actions is a necessary step in linking the vision and transition strategies to on-ground practice, and prioritising these actions is essential to harness limited resources for maximum impact.

**HOW** 2x full day workshops. Analysis and report write-up.

**PRODUCT** A report outlining an action plan that sets out specific actions relating to transition strategies, and identifies local opportunities for implementation. The report also includes guidance for coordinating and guiding implementation of actions.

## Module 5

# Implementation support

*Module 5 is designed to be undertaken at the end of the process to support stakeholders as they implement their prioritised transition actions.*

**WHAT** Tailored capacity-building and knowledge-sharing activities (e.g. workshops, seminars, training sessions).

**BENEFIT** Application of the *WSC Index* is effective in bringing stakeholders together, generating momentum and familiarising stakeholders with water sensitive city concepts

**HOW** Context-specific

**PRODUCT** Strategic advice, capacity-building activities and knowledge resources relevant to the local context

# Tools

The WSC Transition Planning Process incorporates several tools and products developed by the CRCWSC. These include:

1. The **Water Sensitive Cities Index** to benchmark a city's current water sensitive performance
2. The **Transition Dynamics Framework** to diagnose the presence or absence of enabling factors that are needed for a city's transition to new water sensitive practices
3. **Envisioning process** to develop a shared water sensitive city vision
4. **Community engagement strategies** to help bring the community along the water sensitive transition journey



# Benefits

Benefits to stakeholders who undergo this process 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
- Improved capacity to implement a range of strategies and actions focused on building up the conditions that will enable a city's water sensitive transition
- Tools and products to strengthen strategic planning for achieving long-term water sensitivity

“This was the best consultative work that I have witnessed in 17 years. The CRCWSC’s professionalism and knowledge showed that the Council clearly found the right people for the job. The workshop environment was truly objective, with no bias or pressure. I am very confident that the outcomes will yield the best results for the project.”

— **City of Gold Coast workshop participant**

# We would love to partner with you

Contact us today to discuss your local water sensitive city journey and we will advise you on the suitable applications of the five modules to meet your needs.

For application of the Water Sensitive Cities Transition Planning Process in Australia, please **contact the regional manager in your state:**

New South Wales—Kristy Good ([kristy.good@crcwsc.com.au](mailto:kristy.good@crcwsc.com.au))  
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Other states and territories—Barry Ball ([barry.ball@crcwsc.com.au](mailto:barry.ball@crcwsc.com.au))

If you are interested in applying the Water Sensitive Cities Transition Planning Process in an international context, please **contact the engagement manager for your region:**

China – Jianbin Wang ([wang.jianbin@crcwsc.com.au](mailto:wang.jianbin@crcwsc.com.au))  
Indo-Pacific – Kerrie Burge ([kerrie.burge@crcwsc.com.au](mailto:kerrie.burge@crcwsc.com.au))  
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