

## WATER SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA- WHERE TO NOW?

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The concept of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) was invented here in Perth in the early 1990's by a group of enthusiastic practitioners as a way of articulating the need to integrate water issues in all its forms into the urban planning and design progress.

Since that time translation of the early work into policy and practical on the ground outcomes has been patchy to say the least. Interestingly, other jurisdictions around Australia have more fully embraced the concept. At a national level there is even a Water Sensitive Cities initiative as part of the Nation Water Initiatives process.

The question of where to now in WA is especially timely given the twin pressures of rapid urban growth and drying climate. These two factors now provide a context to reconsider and reposition the focus for WSUD in WA.

In this paper I provide a little history along with a brief status of where we are up to, before presenting some ideas about where to from here. In this paper I am going to highlight a number of important initiatives which are either underway or in the planning phase, including the following:

- *A planning and approval framework* that provides clear guidelines to developers and regulators about how to implement water sensitive urban design.
- *A capacity building program* with the working title New Waterways. This program is focused at the practitioner and will aim to expand the awareness, knowledge and skill of planners, designers, engineers and scientists in delivering WSUD on the ground.
- *Research priorities and coordination* - one of the biggest challenges has been establishing an R&D program for water sensitive design that can help us learn about *what works and doesn't work in our local context*
- *Integrating water cycle management* - we need to develop an approach to integrating land and water management at the strategic scale so that we can learn how to align systematically water resource, water infrastructure and land use change rather than continue to be reactive to development pressures.
- *Demonstration* - we need a long-term commitment to a whole of Government and industry partnership to deliver a suite of demonstration projects to test some of the innovative ideas that are around.