



CRC for
Water Sensitive Cities

Targeting the Social Context: Engaging Diverse communities in the transition to WSC

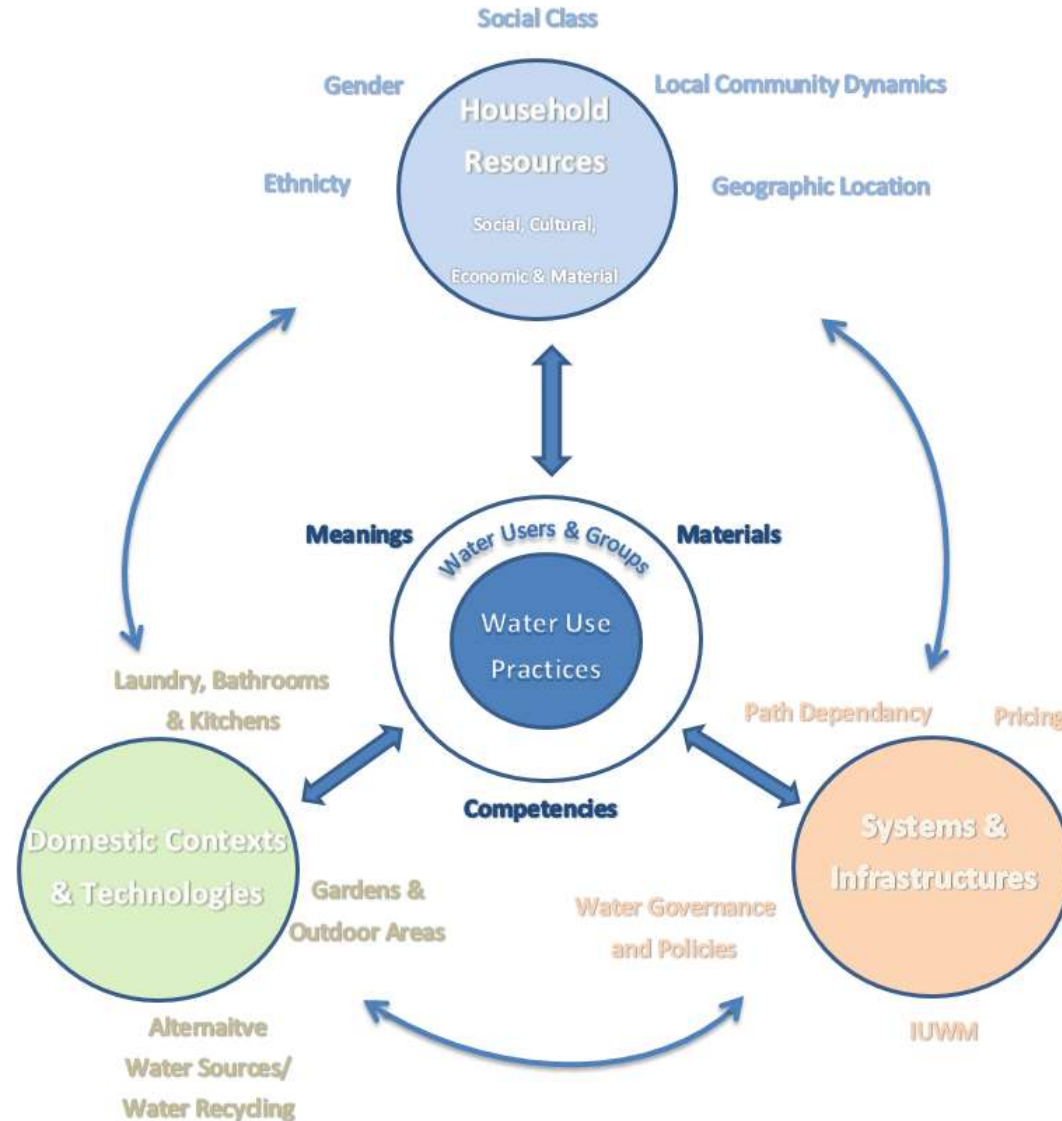
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Australian Government
Department of Industry and Science

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme

A2.1 Understanding Water Use Cultures



Three cities comparison: New normal after drought



In Melbourne sense of crisis and severe restrictions during drought had an impact.

Water conscious, see themselves as water savers, some habits continue post drought, 'feel guilty' for using excessive water



In Brisbane sense of crisis and restrictions were effective. Then floods.

Responsive water users, willing to save water when necessary



In Perth technological solutions are dominant policy responses— eg reliance on aquifers and aquifer recharge desalination plants.

Reduced sense of responsibility, high water users

How can we change water habits?

Changing gardening habits has been more effective than changing showering habits. Greater focus is needed on indoor water use



Australians are open to changing their water consumption patterns **IF** firmly convinced of the need for change

Different strategies needed for each city context

Brisbane and Melbourne – could reactivate water saving habits, incrementally and with awareness raising

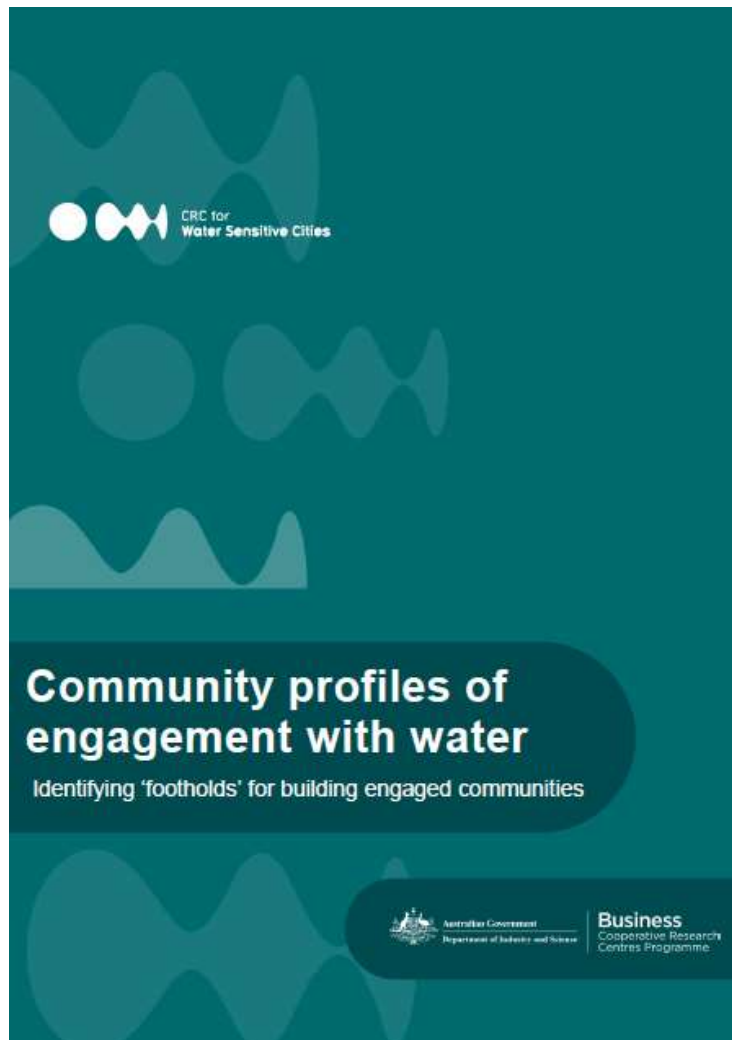
Perth – open to technical innovation in water sources, everyday water saving needs a greater focus

Water and the Australian city: Lessons from history

1. Path dependency has a strong impact. Decisions made in the past impact on the present.
2. Australians have demonstrated a willingness to conserve water in times of crisis.
3. To achieve water sensitive cities we need to take the past into account. It is highly unlikely that Australian families will give up their preference for low-density modes of living.



Community Profiles Report



Research Questions

How do Australians engage with water-related issues?

What are the different engagement groups?

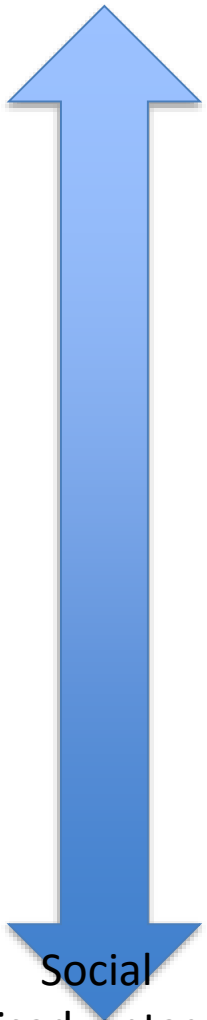
How do these groups differ?

These findings reinforce the diversity
of engagement & provide footholds
for intervention



The Social Gradient & Water Use Practices

Social Advantage



Greater –

- Use of water for leisure and luxury,
- Access to water saving technologies,
- Technical knowledge and capacity to engage with WSUD
- Community Connectedness and Cohesion

Greater –

- Use of water for basic welfare needs
- Practical “hands on” approaches
- Vulnerability to heat

Less

- Access, capacity and community resources

Social

Disadvantage

The Social Gradient and Liveability

Social Advantage



“We really like it here because of all the trees. Everybody does their bit to keep them all well watered and well kept so on the rare summer day we get to enjoy them- it just adds to the ambience in the most lovely way... (also) You cant put a value on them on hot days.



Social

Disadvantage

The Social Gradient and Liveability

Social Advantage



“If you closed your eyes and didn’t know where you were in some of these streets you would think you are in a third or second world country... The (tap) water doesn’t taste too good. Like every time we drink it we feel like we want to vomit it up... My son and I drink bottled water now”

Social

Disadvantage

The Social Gradient and Sustainability

Social Advantage



“I couldn’t justify using mains water if there were alternate ways of reusing water... During the drought we installed five water tanks in our backyard. We also installed the recycled water unit which processes wastewater to A1 drinking water”



Social

Disadvantage

The Social Gradient and Sustainability

Social Advantage



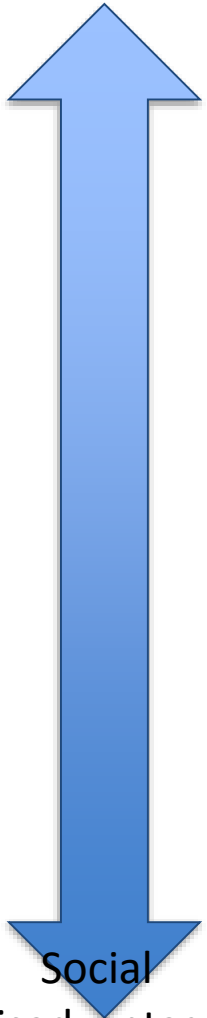
“I can’t remember how many years ago the drought broke. But my garden really struggled to survive. I was doing things like throwing the water from the dishwashing onto the garden and scooping out water from the shower... I looked into grey water reuse systems a while ago, but just couldn’t afford it”

Social

Disadvantage

The Social Gradient and Resilience

Social Advantage



“I have been known on really hot days to water the concrete to get an evaporation going. The evaporation means that it actually takes the heat away... We will also run the evaporative air conditioner..it doesn't impact the bill too much, or at least we don't notice“

Social

Disadvantage

The Social Gradient and Resilience

Social Advantage



“In the summer, it gets hot, very hot. We basically bare the heat sometimes. We live like that because we know, from other people, some people can get thousand dollar electricity bills. We're not going to do that. No way”

Social

Disadvantage

Considerations

Liveable, Sustainable and Resilient Water Sensitive Cities... for Everyone?

- How can we better understand the vulnerabilities, capacities and existing experiences of our communities?
- What might effective interventions and engagement pathways look like in the face of these values, needs and understandings?
- What successes have you had with engagement?