



Waterway Health Improvement Program

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The institutional arrangements around stormwater and waterway management in Sydney are complex, involving multiple stakeholders with unclear roles and responsibilities and inconsistent management practices. Similarly, there is no one piece of legislation that governs waterways and waterway health. In addition, the community has limited understanding of the stormwater system and its governance in Sydney and expect government as a whole to properly manage the city's waterways and support initiatives that will improve waterway health.

In recent years, the expectations and frustrations of the community around the management of stormwater have become apparent with increasing complaints. In response, Sydney Water has developed a Waterway Health Improvement Program (WHIP), that would supplement current investment by local councils in order to help improve the ecological and social values of Sydney waterways.

The \$20M program consists of several water sensitive urban design (WSUD) projects, developed in collaboration with Councils across three major catchments.

To demonstrate the success and learnings of the program, Sydney Water has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework and is undertaking a choice modelling study to assist with the justification of a long term investment of this program.

Sydney Water's Waterway Health Improvement Program (WHIP) funds water sensitive urban design projects within its area of operation. The WHIP was approved by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in the recent pricing review as a new part of Sydney Waters' Stormwater Capital Investment Portfolio. Funds have been allocated for the 2016/17 to 2020/21 price period. Sydney Water intends to maintain the WHIP as an ongoing capital program that complements assets renewals, flood mitigation and growth programs. The M&E framework and the choice modelling study will enable Sydney Water to quantify the benefits and impacts of the program, in the absence of a clear regulatory driver and inform the development of a broader approach to Sydney Water's stormwater management role particularly around waterway health outcomes.

The implementation of the program is composed of several different workstreams:

1. Design development, stakeholder engagement and construction
2. Development and implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework - Provide performance information (both qualitative and quantitative) to enable decision making and the planning for future phases of the waterway health improvement program.

3. Willingness to pay study/choice modelling – An economic assessment of the program will identify a dollar value for the outcomes that the program will achieve now or in the future and enable the economic justification of the WHIP

The following long-term outcomes are expected from the program:

- Ecological values of waterways are improved - by removing sediment and nutrient flows, reduction in the volume and intensity of stormwater flows from contributing catchments and creation of habitat
- Social values of waterways are improved - Improve the visual appearance of the waterways by reducing litter/gross pollutants loads, improving social amenity and usability of project sites and through micro climate cooling.
- Catchment management practices are improved – collaboration on the projects leverages co-investment, builds capability and improves reputation. This is to be lead by the Splash Network via training and peer to peer learning.

The type of data we will collect to monitor the outcomes and the choice modelling study could be applied to a number of other programs in regard to waterway health improvement.

This program is the first significant stormwater quality improvement capital investment Sydney Water has embarked on since the early 2000's. The WHIP goes beyond just managing drainage and flooding to also managing water quality and amenity. In line with customer and stakeholder expectations, it is anticipated that the current program will become an ongoing part of Sydney Water's Stormwater Investment Portfolio. The current projects will act as benchmarks for Sydney Water to demonstrate leadership and play a co-ordinating role in a complex institutional environment.