



## **Can We Use Choice Experiments to Evaluate Community Expectation and Willingness to Pay for Stormwater Quality Management?**

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Imagine a survey in which a sample of a community were asked to state their preferences for improvements in stormwater quality improvement devices (SQIDs) (e.g. bioretention systems and gross pollutant traps). Now imagine if they were also asked to state how much they were willing to pay to secure their preferred improvements. Then imagine if the results of the survey were used to guide changes to the local government's stormwater management strategies, including adjustments to Council rates (or the stormwater service charge) to generate the funds required to deliver the improvements that the community preferred and valued the most.

What is described above is a SQID-specific choice experiment, a type of economic valuation technique that could be used to drive improvements in stormwater quality asset management in Australian local governments by:

1. Consulting the community to define level of service targets; and
2. Guiding changes to current funding mechanisms (e.g. environmental or stormwater service charge) to procure the funds required to achieve them.

This presentation will illustrate how the technique has been used for similar purposes around the world, including recently in Australia, and how it could fit in to existing local government asset management plans and strategies as a tool to achieve the above and educate communities on the importance of stormwater quality management. A mock experiment application will be presented that draws on the outcomes of a recent SQID audit exercise in a prominent local government in New South Wales, Australia. The results of this mock experiment, alongside similar applications, could lead to increased and targeted funds for SQID management and thus improvements in the delivery of their important environmental and social benefits.