



Moving Towards a Water Sensitive Newcastle

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Newcastle City Council have revised their Urban Water Cycle Policy in early 2017, a significant achievement in the context of moving towards a water sensitive city. In an age where we are constrained by time, space, funding, climate change and lack of legislation it is refreshing to work with people who care and wish to make a difference. The significance of the Policy update may not be apparent when reading the document, which is all of three pages, it's within the organisation that dedicated staff are fostering a culture of integration. This has not happened overnight, Newcastle has a history of leading practice in stormwater management that is as long as it is strong. Instigated by one of the first Total Catchment Management Strategies in NSW for Throsby Creek, Council has a capacity for innovation and a gritty resilience that has endured implementation of water sensitive city principles in local government.

This paper aims to share the experience of updating our Policy to align with the water sensitive cities philosophy. We recognise that there is more to Urban Water Cycle management than managing water resource and reducing flood risk. And if we are to achieve anything as a Council we need to work together under guiding principles that form the structure of the Policy. Liveability is the key objective of our 2030 Community Strategic Plan, which has been a reference point when updating the Policy and is an objective we share with water authorities and government agencies.

In our experience it is just as important to review your internal relationships as it is to review the Policy itself. We are open to sharing our challenges, short-comings, revelations and achievements with those at the conference. This paper shall summarise the experience of updating the Policy and the story of a dedicated working group that has been established as a result of the Policy revision.