



## The Importance of Council Guidelines in Creating Water Sensitive Communities

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It can be argued that architects, engineers and designers have an ethical responsibility to improve the environments they work in, however the unfortunate reality is that the creation of water sensitive communities is rarely a priority for all interested parties. All too often aspects of engineering, architectural and landscape design that add environmental value, but are not strictly necessary, are removed to save project costs. Until there is a shift in priorities, it is policy that will dictate the extent to which water sensitivity is included in design and construction.

In practice in Victoria, these policies are the Victorian Planning Scheme and municipal council guidelines that need to be adhered to in order to acquire planning and legal point of discharge approval. However, there is often a significant gap in high level council strategies, which demonstrate the communities councils would like to create, and the quantitative requirements in guidelines that are adopted during design, which dictate the communities that are built. In addition to this, strategies for water management can vary significantly from council to council.

Focusing on water sensitive urban design, this presentation will compare municipal council strategies with design requirements in guidelines to highlight the gap between planning controls and desired outcomes. Particular consideration will be given to requirements for climate change adaptation, views towards flood mitigation and public realm flood storage, and goals to achieve greenfield flow runoff rates in brownfield developments. It is intended that this will identify burgeoning trends in municipal stormwater management, recognise areas where changes to policy are required, and encourage a unified approach to Victorian council strategies for water sensitive communities.