



Water workshop outcomes

Workshop participants were asked for ideas to make Canberra more sustainable. They were asked for proposals that can be implemented immediately, those that may take several years and those that may take more than a decade. In making their proposals participants considered the barriers to change and the main areas in which change needs to happen to achieve a more sustainable community.

Below are the questions put to the workshop and the ideas and suggestions in response.

Q1 How can planning of water use be improved to better address community values including social fairness and our image as the Bush Capital?

Barriers:

- Social fairness in terms of distribution, restrictions and pricing.
- Water restrictions and pricing.
- Pricing could improve environmental benefit.

Short term goals - 2 to 3 years

- Bush Capital - plant drought resistant, locally indigenous species.
- Need to understand the community's values.
- Determine how much water should be allocated for community benefit - eg. ovals.
- An independent authority, not the Government, should decide the dollar value of water.

Medium term goals - up to 5 years

- Need to determine water value in relation to availability.
- Move away from cost benefit analysis in decision making.
- Need to set priorities.
- Determine the amount of water appropriate for use - maybe capping.
- Review Territory Plan in regards to water policy.

Long term and strategic goals - 10 years +

- None identified.

Q2 What would be the preferred scale of implementation of Water Sensitive Urban Design strategies (on a block or neighbourhood scale?) for:

- **water use reduction;**
- **stormwater management; and**
- **waste water reuse.**

Barriers:

- None identified.

Short Term Goals- 2 to 3 years

- Health aspects of household scale strategies- possible impacts of grey water.
- Energy relationship to water management.
- Level for potable water.
- Aim for an overall water use decrease.
- More efficient systems.

Medium Term Goals - up to 5 years

- Behavioural change at household level.

Long term and strategic goals - 10 years +

- Neighbourhood scale recycled water.

Q3 The spatial plan identifies a Canberra population of 500,000 by 2050. How and why should the urban form change to accommodate this growth while improving the way we use water?

Barriers:

- None identified.

Short Term Goals - 2 to 3 years

- We must consolidate urban form and limit sprawl.
- Manage storm water on individual blocks as well as at a catchment scale.

Medium term goals - up to 5 years

- Intelligent metering to individually manage use.
- Forms of consolidation should include permeable areas, planting space and communal areas.

Long term and strategic goals - 10 years +

- None identified.

Q4 Can our behaviour and building design be improved to mitigate against the predicted impacts of climate change on water availability, quality and supply?

Barriers:

- People want larger houses.
- Government regulation is slow to respond.
- Resistance to change.
- Sceptics and scare mongering.
- Doubt over climate change.
- Lack of incentive for developers.
- Difficulty/cost of retro-fitting existing buildings.
- Lack of knowledge of options & facts – eg ground water.
- Environmental barriers.
- Government willpower.
- Lack of planning for larger population.
- Politics of pricing (political impact).
- Lack of alignment with agency policy.
- Lack of agreement regarding best practice with building.

Short term goals - 2 to 3 years

- Education - about all options.
- Water rating scheme for houses.
- Rebates to reduce resistance.
- Separate metering of apartments.
- Education regarding implications of reduced run off from overdeveloped blocks.
- Lobbying of government and industry.
- Use less saline products.

Medium term goals - up to 5 years

- Smart metering across all of Canberra.
- Enforcement of the installation of water efficient appliances.
- Improve planning and building codes and standards.
- Research into new technologies.
- New suburbs designed to mitigate against climate change whilst providing quality of life.
- Improve the ratio of developed area to open space.
- On block retention of salt and phosphates.
- Xeriscape gardens and low water lawns.
- Community gardens to optimise water use.

Long term and strategic goals - 10 years +

- Implement new technologies through incentives.
- Drinking water for drinking only.
- Composting toilets for houses.

Q5 What water management strategies can improve the functional, cultural and aesthetic use of water? e.g. Can we encourage more physical activity in water areas without compromising ecological values?

Barriers:

- Lack of review of standards for recreation ground management.
- Lake Burley Griffin needs to be separated from other lakes for management regime.
- Be wary of consequences of drawdown in certain areas.
- Money is needed for retrofitting.

Short term goals - 2 to 3 years

- Greater emphasis on wetland vegetation complex, rather than conceptualising it just as a pond.
- Reduction of pollutants in catchment.
- An environmental levy to be collected and fed into specific fund.
- Potential to enhance ecology value of ponds by drawdown.
- Restocking with native fish species – increased ecology and recreational values.
- Finer differentiation of values for 'urban waters' to set management objectives.
- Values differ i.e. purpose of stormwater may not be understood by other community groups.
- Implement Water Sensitive Urban Design techniques in new and existing areas.

Short term ideas:

- Integrated management. Potential for drawdown/flushing.
- Promoting community involvement in groups. i.e. frog watch, 'adopt a location' etc
- Industry and community saving goals for reuse in local area.

Medium term goals - up to 5 years

- Retrofit existing development for Water Sensitive Urban Design.
- Redesign of urban areas fronting rehabilitated drainage channels.
- Clarity around incentives for house owners. Which ones are effective, feasible and cost effective?

Long term and strategic goals - 10 years +

- Refurbishment of established systems.