

## **STORMWATER WA EVENT**

### **HYDROPOLIS 2017**

#### **Catchments are the community's infrastructure assets**

On Wednesday 31 May, Stormwater WA presented its first major event for the year, Hydropolis 2017 - Catchments are the community's infrastructure assets, at the City of Bayswater's Civic Centre.

The theme was an adaptation from the outstanding keynote address by Kim Stephens, at Stormwater 2016, emphasising the absolute importance of holistic watershed (in his terminology) management. This theme was further refined as "Towards achieving the objectives of a Water Sensitive City by integrating constructed stormwater management infrastructure into the catchment as part of the 'public domain' of road reserves and parklands".

The program was developed around the various delivery perspectives with a combination of both presentations and a site visit for an 'outdoor' morning tea. A team of local experts was assembled to deliver the various perspectives.

The day commenced with an opening address from Stormwater WA Chair, Bill Till, encouraging the audience to embrace the concepts to be presented during the day. He asked everyone to be active in encouraging those not present and those not yet convinced of the benefits of WSUD concepts, to embrace the concepts as the way forward to deliver the best outcomes for the community and the natural environment.

Greg Grabasch then gave a fantastic presentation from a 'landscape perspective' under the title 'Re-connecting with our urban waterways'. Greg emphasised the critical need for community consultation and real engagement to ensure understanding from both the deliverers and community's perspectives regarding infrastructure that the community will embrace, thus delivering better community outcomes including lower life cycle costs. He brought home the value of stories to lift the value of urban waterways so that the community can "truly belong rather than just live".

Suzanne Brown from the Water Corporation then presented from the 'service provider perspective' on the Drainage for Liveability Program which is a new joint initiative of the Department of Water and Water Corporation. We were ensured that the agencies were working together to 'go beyond regulatory compliance' to better and more holistically manage the Main Drainage networks across Perth and the South West Regions of the State.

This was then followed by a bus tour to the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary Wetland Project. Whilst delegates enjoyed their morning tea outside on a fabulously sunny last day of autumn, they were briefed by Rebecca Ferguson from the City of Bayswater, providing the local government perspective on the many initiatives in the Bayswater Brook Catchment resulting from the Bayswater Brook Action Plan. Participants were then taken through the details of the design and construction of the wetland project by Peter Adkins from the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The design was particularly complex due to being at the outlet of the Bayswater Brook catchment to the Swan River and thus also subject to extreme estuarine tidal events. But the creation of a fabulous ecosystem that was highly valued by people and animals was obvious for all to see.

On return to the Civic Centre, Jennifer Stritzke from the Department of Water then gave her presentation from the 'catchment perspective' on the State Governments 'Regional Estuaries Initiative: Restoring the environmental balance of estuaries through action in catchments. We all "got regional" and heard about the exciting program of interventions and new products to improve water quality in regional catchments.

Nicholas Deeks from GHD then presented from an industry perspective on Catchments: unlocking hidden value. The presentation showed examples of where designs had delivered on their objective and intent and examples where, despite best intentions, the desired outcomes had not been achieved.

The final presentations were from the 'research perspectives', with Prof Carolyn Oldham giving an update on a CRC for Water Sensitive Cities project under the title 'Protecting our catchments using water sensitive urban design: learnings from high groundwater case studies'. This issue and research is particularly relevant for Perth and the sandy soils of the Swan Coastal Plain, and the research has demonstrated the importance of understanding redox conditions and the need for a treatment train approach to effectively address the range of nutrients in our systems.

Kumar Kandappan, a UWA PhD Student then concluded the presentations with a talk titled 'Understanding asset management through the use of a trimetric model: Using stormwater infrastructure assets and Facility Management (FM) assets as a case study. He noted something which we are already quite aware – that drainage is not a sexy asset, but that the real value was in the water itself and the community and environmental benefits which are becoming more evident.

Shelley Shepherd, the New WATER Ways Program Manager and our able MC for the day then gave a tremendous summation of the presentations to conclude a highly successful day.

The presentations from Hydropolis 2017 can be accessed at [www.stormwaterwa.asn.au](http://www.stormwaterwa.asn.au) and <https://www.newwaterways.org.au/research/stormwater-hydropolis-2017/>