STRATEGIC PLAN

Stormwater Management Authority

2023–2032

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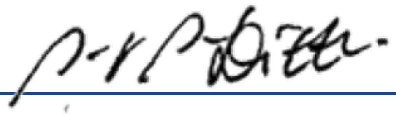
Signed: 
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Introduction and Purpose

A strategic, long-term approach to stormwater management can provide lasting social, environmental and economic benefits. While managing flood risk is central to state and local government's collective responsibility for stormwater, an integrated and holistic approach to stormwater management (Figure 1) can also:

- Reduce environmental impacts from urban run-off entering streams and coastal environments
- Provide community green spaces that support healthy living
- Provide a water source for domestic and industrial uses
- Ensure more liveable and productive urban environments.

South Australia is recognised as a leader in many aspects of stormwater management, but we risk falling behind without further reform. Lack of clear roles and responsibilities, climate change and poorly planned urban developments can risk undoing the gains that have been made. Continued effort is needed to build flood resilience into our towns and cities, protect our natural environment, and maximise the water security, greening, cooling and amenity benefits of stormwater reuse.

Figure 1: Integrated stormwater management reduces flood risk, risks to the environment and risks to water security.

Figure 2: Stormwater management planning hierarchy.

It is in this context that the Stormwater Management Authority (SMA) has prepared this strategic plan as a requirement of the 2013 *Agreement on Stormwater Management between the State of South Australia and the Local Government Association of South Australia* (the Stormwater Agreement). This plan sets a direction for the SMA's activities over a ten-year horizon, and is supported by the SMA's *Business Plan*, *Stormwater Management Planning Priorities for South Australia 2022*, and individual stormwater management plans prepared by councils or groups of councils (Figure 2).

The Stormwater Management Authority

The SMA is established as a statutory corporation pursuant to Schedule 1A to the *Local Government Act 1999* and is a key part of the Stormwater Agreement which was signed in 2006, and renewed in 2013.

The Stormwater Agreement was driven by the need to improve clarity in the roles undertaken by state and local government respectively, and to promote a more coordinated and collaborative approach to stormwater management.

The key roles of the SMA are to operate as a stormwater planning prioritisation and funding body and to administer the Stormwater Management Fund. Through the Fund, the SMA provides grants for stormwater planning and infrastructure projects under specific guidelines.

Statutory Functions of the SMA

The functions of the SMA, as set out in Schedule 1A to the *Local Government Act 1999*, are to:

- Liaise with relevant public authorities with a view to ensuring the proper functioning of the state's stormwater management system
- Contribute to the urban water plan for Greater Adelaide* and lead the implementation of elements of that plan relating to stormwater
- Facilitate and co-ordinate stormwater management planning by councils
- Formulate policies and provide information to councils in relation to stormwater management planning
- Facilitate programs by councils promoting the use of stormwater to further environmental objectives and address issues of sustainability including the use of stormwater for human consumption, for the maintenance of biodiversity and other appropriate purposes
- Ensure that relevant public authorities co-operate in an appropriate fashion in relation to stormwater management planning and the construction and maintenance of stormwater management works
- Provide advice to the Minister in relation to the State's stormwater management system.

* *For all intents and purposes the state government's 2022* Urban Water Directions Statement *is the urban water Plan for Greater Adelaide.*

Since its inception, the Stormwater Management Authority has approved over thirty-five stormwater management plans, and provided more than $60 million funding to eligible projects.

Stormwater Management in South Australia

Stormwater management in South Australia is a shared responsibility; many different organisations and groups contribute, including private landowners.

Responsibility for the various issues and opportunities associated with stormwater is spread across organisations, including in regard to flood mitigation, water quality improvement, water security and water supply.

The Stormwater Agreement recognises the shared responsibility for stormwater management between state and local government in South Australia and other parties (Figure 3), and is intended to further cooperation, collaboration, and the partnership approach that is critical to the successful delivery of stormwater services in South Australia.

Figure 3: Stormwater management in South Australia is complex and multifaceted, and responsibility is shared across many organisations and individuals.

Drivers

Environmental

South Australians have adapted and responded to extremes of flood and drought. Flood hazard and water security are key drivers for stormwater management.

Demand

There is demand for new stormwater infrastructure to meet growth, maintain levels of service, and operate in a safer and more environmentally responsible manner.

Strategic

The strategic direction for stormwater management is sensitive to the state's climate change action plan, planning system, landscapes strategy and emerging urban water reform agenda.

Legal, Policy & Regulatory

Key instruments include the *Local Government Act 1999*, *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*, *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, State WSUD Policy and the State Flood Hazard Plan.

Economic

Sound investments in stormwater management reduce the costs of responding to and recovering from flood events, and permit stormwater to be used as an economic resource.

Technological

Technological advances permit better modelling, analysis, predictions and forecasts, and provide new abilities to operate systems more dynamically and in real-time.

Challenges

Population Growth

The number of South Australians living in 'significant urban areas' is forecast to reach over 1.5 million by 2036.

Infill Development

Denser development and more impervious area increase the rates and volumes of stormwater runoff.

Climate Change

Predictions for South Australia include intensification of extreme rainfall events, changes in rainfall seasonality and sea level rise.

Cost

The costs of stormwater infrastructure are significant. Stormwater represents the second highest infrastructure investment by local government (after roads).

Ageing Infrastructure

The operation and maintenance requirements of ageing stormwater infrastructure are increasing, and significant renewals will be required in coming decades.

Community Expectations

Communities want responsive and efficient services, and are concerned about our environment, natural hazards and the way we manage water.

Opportunities

Legislation & Policy Reform

Legislation and policy reform could assist in establishing clearer roles and responsibilities for stormwater management and new funding mechanisms.

Stormwater Utilities

With appropriate regulation, stormwater infrastructure could be constructed, operated and maintained as a cohesive utility network.

Stormwater Reuse

Increasing passive and active reuse of stormwater at allotment, street and suburban scales can offset potable water use and decrease reliance on traditional water sources.

Urban Greening

Stormwater can be used to support green parks, gardens and reserves that lead to cooler, more liveable cities and towns.

Resilient Communities

Sensible decisions about the planning and design of cities and towns, and citizens that are educated and forewarned of flood risks, can reduce the impact of floods when they occur.

Funding Reform

A 'beneficiary pays' approach would bring stormwater services in line with the way that other utility services are funded and delivered.

Strategic Priorities

Vision

Stormwater is a valued resource that is managed as part of the urban water cycle for beneficial social, environmental and economic outcomes.

Guiding Principles

Leadership

The SMA will use its unique position as a partnership between the state government and the Local Government Association to establish a clear vision for stormwater management, advocate for clear roles and responsibilities, and contribute to a long-term strategy for urban water management in South Australia.

Integration

Stormwater should be considered within an integrated water cycle management framework, alongside water supply, sewerage and ecosystem function.

Equity

The development of stormwater infrastructure should aspire to:

- Agreed common standards, with clear criteria to support deviation from standards where this is justified
- Lever appropriate levels of investment from all stakeholders, and share costs and benefits in an equitable and transparent manner.

Informed Decisions

Decisions on investment and management should be prioritised based on:

- Objective assessment and comparison of risks and opportunities for people, property and the environment
- Understanding of the direct and indirect whole-of-life costs and benefits of alternative options.

Targeted Solutions

Solutions should be targeted to reflect community values and aspirations and optimise the mix of social, environmental and economic outcomes.

Goals and Strategies

STRATEGIC GOAL 1	**Stormwater is recognised as an integral part of urban water management**	STRATEGY 1.1	Provide leadership and promote the role of the SMA in managing stormwater in South Australian towns and cities
		STRATEGY 1.2	Proactively contribute to government institutional reforms that are of relevance to stormwater management
STRATEGIC GOAL 2	**Opportunities for stormwater to provide public health and economic benefits are maximised**	STRATEGY 2.1	Drive the development of stormwater management plans by prioritising grant funding towards their preparation or revision
		STRATEGY 2.2	Drive the implementation of stormwater management plans by measuring, monitoring and reporting on the completion of works and measures identified in approved plans
STRATEGIC GOAL 3	**Impacts of stormwater on people, property and the environment are mitigated**	STRATEGY 3.1	Advocate for flood resilience and water sensitive urban design principles to be consistently applied in residential, commercial, industrial and transport developments
		STRATEGY 3.2	Promote the adoption of stormwater management standards and guidelines and, where appropriate, develop new standards and guidelines
		STRATEGY 3.3	Target grant funding to projects and initiatives which provide the best social, environmental and economic outcomes

Enablers

Sustainable & Adequate Funding

Sustainable and adequate funding is key to maintaining South Australia's position as a leader in stormwater management and improving stormwater management outcomes across the state.

Defined Roles & Responsibilities

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities support the delivery of stormwater management services which are effective and efficient.

Partnerships & Collaboration

The best outcomes are realised when there is effective collaboration, cooperation and sharing of resources between all levels of government, commerce and industry, the not-for-profit sector, and the community.

Communication & Engagement

Effective communication and engagement help to drive a common approach to stormwater management and lead to stakeholders that are more aware and informed of how their actions contribute to stormwater management risks and opportunities.