

# Case study

## Greater Adelaide integrated water management

Adelaide, like many cities around the world, faces a future water crisis. Old models of water governance aren't coping with increased demand from population growth, a drying climate and extreme flooding events. Without attention, community values that are underpinned by water will not be supported. Water managers need new governance models that can address the future challenges and maintain Greater Adelaide's liveability, prosperity, environmental health and cultural well-being.

Watertrust is leading an independently convened process for stakeholders of the region to explore and create new governance arrangements for integrated water management (IWM). This case study shows how Watertrust's three streams of work come together in our 'Greater Adelaide Integrated Water Management' initiative to address this important issue.

### Engage

Our initial conversations with individual stakeholders revealed competing and contested interests of stakeholders in future governance arrangements, indicating that Watertrust could perform a valuable role in bringing them all together to find a mutual way forward. Having built support for Watertrust's role, we surveyed and confidentially interviewed a diverse range of key players to better understand their perspectives related to existing and future governance arrangements, along with continuing to build trust.

Positively, this revealed a shared desire for reform of governance arrangements. However, there was no shared agreement on:

- the outcomes that different stakeholders sought
- what 'good governance' might look like in practice
- their appetite for reform.

With more work clearly required, Watertrust convened an Executive Forum, bringing together 44 executives and senior managers from 30 stakeholder organisations on neutral ground to find a way forward together.

## Innovate

At this Forum, we presented a 'what we heard' synthesis of the insights they'd privately shared with us, including the areas of agreement and disagreement. For the first time, diverse stakeholders heard other voices and concerns. With all the issues on the table, we focused on the areas of disagreement, either brokering a resolution on them or reaching agreement for stakeholders to continue to work together to resolve them.

This laid the foundations for a Decision Charter, which provided clarity and transparency on inputs and roles of stakeholders in the next phase of creating a governance model for the future. With stakeholders from across the region and with different interests continuing to see value in the work and Watertrust's independent and impartial role, they readily agreed to meet again. In the meantime, Watertrust analysed evidence from across Australia and beyond to see what has worked before, what might work in Adelaide, and potential pros and cons of different options.

When we reconvened everybody for a series of facilitated workshops, they collectively built on our analysis and together developed a range of diverse governance options. The next step is for the stakeholders to agree on a short-list of options to present to the South Australian Minister for Climate, Environment and Water for decision.

## Empower

Watertrust's driving of this inclusive process is ensuring that all stakeholders are making a meaningful contribution to the future of water management for Greater Adelaide. Our independence and trust-based relationship building are proving critical for overcoming long-standing institutional challenges that has hindered necessary reform for over 15 years to the detriment of the community.

We anticipate this work will grow the capacity of all stakeholders involved for employing better policy-making processes into the future, no matter the issue. It will also serve as a model for cities across Australia that are facing very similar challenges.