

PHD Research on the Champion Phenomenon

This research project investigates the leadership dimensions of urban water management. Specifically, this involves investigating ways to enhance the so-called 'Champion Phenomenon'. This phenomenon is known to greatly accelerate the adoption of more sustainable forms of urban water management, but we know very little about it. The research aims to:

1. Understand the 'champion phenomenon' within the context of sustainable urban water management in Australia, with a focus on Melbourne, Perth & Brisbane.
2. Characterise effective 'champions' in terms of their: traits / personality features; behaviours and leadership styles; skills / competencies; the context they operate within (e.g. change environment, etc.); and their networks and relationships.
3. Determine which, if any, of the many leadership theories (and possibly social network theory) best explain the 'champion phenomenon' for sustainable urban water management in Australia. And if they don't provide a good explanation, develop a suitable theoretical framework.
4. Develop practical guidance on how staff in Australian urban water management agencies can strategically and effectively: recruit potential champions; develop their potential; plan for leadership succession; and create a supportive organisational culture for them to stay and thrive.