



**TITLE: The force of habit: Changing domestic water cultures in Australian cities**

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This paper examines the diverse domestic water cultures and consumption habits after drought in three Australian cities – Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane. Each location has distinct environmental, geological, social and cultural attributes. All three cities have experienced drought, to varying degrees, over the past 15 years and each city has responded differently. Drawing on focus group data a rich picture of diverse water cultures emerges. Melbourne participants described a sense of water crisis during the drought that has since abated, yet they remain water conscious. Brisbane participants experienced unprecedented water shortages during the drought but have recently experienced substantial floods. They report a mixed response in their daily habits. Perth's drying climate has been addressed by technological solutions including the construction of two desalination plants and reliance on ground water and aquifer recharge which has seemingly mitigated any palpable sense of crisis and enabled heavy water use habits. We explore how participants in different cities engage with their water use habits and why some habits have been more amenable to change than others.