

Media Release

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84% of water professionals agree recycled water is good to use for non-potable uses: State of the Water Sector Report 2014

15 October 2014: New South Wales water professionals believe dams are an effective way to manage water security where they live, however most don't want construction of new dams in their backyards.

The *2014 State of the Water Sector Report* released today by the Australian Water Association and Deloitte provides insights from a survey of over 1000 professionals working across Australia's water industry and highlights the need for governments to consider a range of options when planning for water supply and security.

NSW respondents were significantly more supportive of dams than their counterparts elsewhere across the country, with 83% saying they were an effective way to manage water security, 15% above the national average.

However, when asked specifically about the potential to construct more dams in South Eastern Australia 57% said there should be no further dams built. This comes at a time when the NSW Government is investing in costly feasibility studies on new or expanded dams in regional areas.

Chief Executive of the Australian Water Association, Jonathan McKeown, said dams are just one method of supply security and agreed with the NSW-based water professionals that there should be an increase in access to supplies from innovative sources to provide for the future water supply needs of users.

"It is pleasing to see that those who are developing and delivering on new technologies believe there is a plethora of safe supply options for potable and non-potable use to ensure water security. This comes on the cusp of National Water Week (19-25 October) which has the theme this year of 'Water Sources- there are more than you think'.

"87% of NSW respondents agree or strongly agree that desalinated seawater can be treated and managed to a level that is sufficient and safe for potable supply. Additionally, 44% agree or strongly agree that desalinated seawater can provide an environmentally sustainable source of potable water for Australian cities (only 22% disagree).

"In terms of providing a sustainable source of non-potable water for municipal and industrial use, 84% agree or strongly agree to the use of recycled water, compared with 74% of respondents for urban storm water."

Deloitte Risk Services Partner and National Water Leader, Matt Williams, went on to say that the biggest issue facing the NSW water sector according to those working in it was maintaining and augmenting infrastructure (48%, up 7% from 2013), followed by improving operational efficiency (44%, up 9%) and ensuring water supply security (40%, up 11%).

"The challenge for the NSW Government is to work out how they afford to maintain and augment infrastructure with a stretched balance sheet," he said.

“One potential solution, more private public partnerships, is supported by 82% of NSW respondents, who believe there are adequate opportunities in this space.”

The full report is available at www.awa.asn.au/State_of_the_water_sector_report

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About the Australian Water Association

The Australian Water Association is Australia’s leading membership association for water professionals and organisations. AWA is independent and not for profit. It plays an essential role in supporting the Australian water sector in the delivery of effective and sustainable water management practices. Our mission is to foster knowledge, understanding and advancement in sustainable water management – its science, practice and policy – through advocacy, collaboration and professional development. We operate across all Australian States and Territories through an active branch network as well as maintaining extensive international links, including with the International Water Association. AWA’s provides a comprehensive program of conferences, workshops, publications, industry programs, training courses, networking and B2B opportunities. AWA’s Annual Conference and Exhibition is Australia’s largest water industry event.

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