

MEDIA RELEASE

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Victorians concerned about climate change, drought and population growth

7 October 2015: Authorities and other agencies increasingly understand that to best manage our water resources and deliver improved customer experience they need to hear what customers know, don't know and what their concerns are.

To support that, the Australian Water Association and Arup today released the 2015 Water Consumer Outlook, the results of a nation-wide survey to understand consumers' views about water in Australia.

The Chief Executive of the Australian Water Association, Jonathan McKeown, said the report was based on a survey of consumers, both urban and rural, and shows there is always more the water industry can do to hear from and engage with consumers.

"Consumers right across Australia are concerned about water shortages and the potential impacts on water, and in Victoria the leading concerns are drought, climate change and population growth.

"Victorians tended to exhibit a greater proportion of 'very concerned' responses for water impacts. This was evident in the impacts on water from unconventional gases (42% compared to 39% nationally), climate change (44% compared to 40% nationally) and drought (44% compared to 40% nationally).

"An extremely positive finding is strong support for alternative water sources, with 90% agreeing that water recycling was a sustainable non-drinking source, 84% for urban storm water and 58% for desalinated water.

"At today's National Water Policy Summit we are discussing opportunities for the industry to come together and help the water sector shape a wider community campaign to value water and also look at how we can integrate alternative sources of water into management plans better.

"The Survey gave us the opportunity to hear what Australians understand about our water security and supply, so as an industry we can better engage with consumers so that their priorities and views are heard," Mr McKeown said.

Daniel Lambert, Arup's Australasia Water and Urban Renewal Leader supports an increased customer focus, "The water industry in Australia has recognised the importance of shifting from a compliance focus to a customer focus. This commitment has been reflected in the utilities statements of obligation which acknowledge the importance of the customer."

"In order to have a customer focus, it is critical for the water industry to understand their customers. The 2015 Water Consumer Outlook provides the results of a nation-wide survey. This report provides a valuable insight into customer's views on important issues facing the water sector." Said Mr Lambert.

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About the Australian Water Association

The Australian Water Association is Australia's leading membership association for water professionals and organisations. The Association 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. The Australian Water Association provides a comprehensive program of conferences, workshops, publications, industry programs, training courses, networking and B2B opportunities. The Australian Water Association's Annual Conference and Exhibition, Ozwater, is Australia's largest water industry event.

About Arup

Arup is the creative force at the heart of many of the world's most prominent projects in the built environment and across industry. From 90 offices in 38 countries our 11,000 planners, designers, engineers and consultants deliver innovative projects across the world with creativity and passion.

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