

**Media Release**  
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**Australian water sector believes prices are too low: State of the Water Sector Report 2015**

**7 October 2015:** Over one-third of water industry professionals recently surveyed by the Australian Water Association and Deloitte for their State of the Water Sector Report survey believe urban water prices are too low.

The 2015 survey, completed by over 1200 industry professionals working across Australia's water industry, and in both urban and rural areas, reveals attitudes and behaviours relating to a range of topics affecting the industry, today and into the future.

The survey report was released today at the Australian Water Association's National Policy Summit in Melbourne.

Deloitte National Water Leader Matt Williams said that findings on water pricing differed significantly across jurisdictions.

"Water pricing remains a hot topic, but it's also more about the level of the bill," he said.

"Despite Western Australia having amongst the highest bills in the country, more than 50% of WA respondents still considered the price of water was too low.

"This highlights that the industry understands that the perception of whether prices are too high or too low is not solely dependent on dollar value. Other factors such as water scarcity and perceived value are also important."

The survey also included questions on economic regulation and private sector involvement.

Australian Water Association Chief Executive, Jonathan McKeown, said respondents thought that health was the most effective form of regulation in Australia, followed by environment and then economic.

"Concerning was that the majority of respondents in all jurisdictions said that they thought that economic regulators in their state/region operated with levels of political intervention that slightly or significantly compromised independence. The jurisdictions that reported the highest perceived levels of political interference were the NT, with 76% reporting slightly or significantly compromised independence, followed by 73% in SA and 69% in Vic.

"There was strong support for harmonisation of regulation across Australia, with 70% of respondents considered it beneficial to harmonise economic, environmental and health - across jurisdictions.

"In regards to private sector involvement in the sector, 72% of respondents considered there was potential for more - although 53% of respondents considered this would lead to cost reductions, 58% thought it would increase prices."

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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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