

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW residents have low confidence in their water providers

12 October 2016

The Australian Water Association and Arup have just released the Australian Water Outlook – the results of the Australian Water Survey which investigates attitudes to water issues among the Australian water industry and the wider community.

The survey attracted more than 2500 responses from the Australian community and the water sector, and the results from New South Wales showcased some genuine concerns from both the water industry and residents.

Fewer NSW water industry respondents were completely confident in the water sector compared to national results across all seven areas surveyed, including if the sector responded to faults and incidents quickly, although many more were “mostly confident”.

Australian Water Association CEO Jonathan McKeown said: “With over 100 water bodies covering urban, regional and rural areas in NSW alone, these results are no surprise. Compounding this is the high level of concern with our long term water security shown by NSW industry respondents. There is an opportunity for the water sector and residents of NSW to collectively improve issues around water security and delivery. This could simply be a matter of better communication, but might also mean looking at how we can better meet the water needs of the State.”

Additionally, fewer NSW water industry respondents were also completely or mostly confident in governments across four areas compared to the national results, including 28% stating they were completely or mostly confident (32% nationally) that governments were focused on water security as an important issue, and only 22% were completely or mostly confident governments consider water supply as part of city planning and urban growth (29% nationally).

When it came to community responses, the results were also concerning.

Only 3% of NSW community respondents were very confident that Australia has sufficient water security to meet their needs; only 29% were very or somewhat confident governments are focused on water security (38% nationally), equal lowest of any State or Territory.

Sixty-six percent were not very or not at all confident that governments recognise the need for new water infrastructure, the second highest of any State or Territory (61% nationally).

Interestingly, concern for the impact of mining and unconventional gas in NSW - which were ranked the second and third highest concerns for both industry and community – was the highest of any State.

Arup’s Australasian Water Leader Daniel Lambert said: “It’s clear that NSW residents are concerned about mining and gas industries. There has been a lot of media attention on water contamination from these industries recently which may have influenced respondents.

“The results from the survey provide insight into focus areas that the water industry and regulators could use to enhance the customer service, delivery and protection of water resources in each State, and governments should take notice of the concerns being voiced here.”

“Water is a major driver of our nation’s life and prosperity, and the Australian community and its leaders can’t afford to be complacent about water security for urban, regional, rural or remote communities. A national conversation needs to be had around water security, and we hope the Australian Water Outlook will help call attention to this conversation,” Mr McKeown continued.

The Australian Water Outlook will be used to inform the Association’s Water Security Scorecard due for release in May at Ozwater’17 which will shine a light on water issues in each jurisdiction.

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The Australian Water Outlook can be found [here](#).

The full State and Territory reports can be found [here](#).

To arrange an interview with Jonathan McKeown or Daniel Lambert please contact act Ashleigh James 0488 160 277.

About the Australian Water Association

The Australian Water Association is an independent, not-for-profit association for water professionals and organisations, providing leadership in the water sector through collaboration, advocacy and professional development. As Australia’s peak water industry body, the Australian Water Association has the largest broadly based membership, with approximately 700 corporate members and 5,000 individual members representing the diversity and breadth of the Australian water industry.

www.awa.asn.au

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. We offer a broad range of professional services that combine to make a real difference to our clients and the communities in which we work. We are truly global. From 90 offices in 35 countries our 13,000 planners, designers, engineers and consultants deliver innovative projects across the world with creativity and passion. Founded in 1946 with an enduring set of values, our unique trust ownership fosters a distinctive culture and an intellectual independence that encourages collaborative working. This is reflected in everything we do, allowing us to develop meaningful ideas, help shape agendas and deliver results that frequently surpass the expectations of our clients. The people at Arup are driven to find a better way and to deliver better solutions for our clients.

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