

MEDIA RELEASE

WA residents most concerned about water shortages and most confident in alternative water sources

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 overall make it clear that Western Australians have major concerns about water shortages, but have confidence in using alternative water sources.

Australian Water Association CEO Jonathan McKeown said: “Western Australia community and industry respondents had the highest concerns about water shortages in their State out of all States and Territories.

“However, both industry and community are overwhelmingly supportive of alternative sources of water. Industry respondents were the most confident in all alternative sources of water for drinking and non-drinking uses of any State or Territory. This included 85% completely confident in desalinated water (66% nationally), 75% confidence in ground/bore (54% nationally) and 59% confidence in recycled water (39% nationally) as sources of drinking water.

“Western Australian community respondents also had the most confidence using each alternative water source for drinking and non-potable purposes out of all States and Territories. The community was also the most likely to be willing to pay more for alternative water sources.”

“With water flows from rainfall into Perth’s dams slumping significantly in recent years, coupled with some truly dire climate change projections, government and businesses have been required to focus on water security. With Perth’s desalination plant, Water Corporation’s Water Efficiency Management plan, and many years of community education, it’s not surprising to see such high confidence across the State in alternative sources of water.”

Additionally, the vast majority of all Western Australian respondents consider managed aquifer recharge a high priority (86% compared to 49% nationally), with another 9% considering it as a medium priority, which was the highest of any of the other States or Territories.

Western Australian industry respondents strongly identified the need for a significant amount of new investment in infrastructure to ensure water supply in 20 years (42% compared to 35% nationally).

Arup's Australasian Water Leader Daniel Lambert said it was encouraging to see West Australians embrace alternative water sources. "The new water recycling plant due to open in Perth later this year will not only provide a sustainable water supply for the city, but I expect will be the beginning of even more alternative water facilities to be built around Australia.

"We have the technology to provide safe and reliable potable and non-potable water and West Australians, particularly those in Perth, will be at the forefront of experiencing this technology," Mr Lambert said.

Mr Lambert said the survey results 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 Territory.

"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 said.

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](#).

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.

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The people at Arup are driven to find a better way and to deliver better solutions for our clients.

We shape a better world.

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