

Media Release

Queensland water professionals say yes to dams and desalination

State of the Water Sector Report 2013 released

8 November 2013: The State of the Water Sector Report 2013, a joint report by the Australian Water Association (AWA) and Deloitte, has found that Queensland water professionals support diverse water supply systems – including dams and desalination.

Chief Executive of the Australian Water Association, Jonathan McKeown, said the report was based on a survey of more than 1,500 members of Australia’s water industry and continued to be one of the most comprehensive periodic reviews of attitudes across the Australian water sector.

“Today I met with the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, Mark McArdle, to discuss the findings of our Report and highlight the key areas of concern for local water professionals.

“Eighty percent of Queensland participants believe that current water supplies are either quite or very secure in the state. However, 75% still believe that that desalination should have a role in providing water security in Queensland as either a core or a backup source of supply.

“Views were mixed in response to recent investments in desalination infrastructure projects. Fifty-seven per cent of participants supported desalination projects with 27% saying investments were timely and will provide security against climate change, drought, and future demand. However, a further 30% of respondents agreed the decisions to invest were timely, but current plans are too large and costly. Nineteen percent said decisions to invest and construct were ill-advised,” said Mr McKeown.

Deloitte Risk Services Partner and National Water Leader Matt Williams, went on to say that professionals working in Queensland’s water sector didn’t think desalination was the only alternative supply source.

“Accessing supplies from innovative sources was the most favoured measure for maintaining water supply, however curbing water usage through education, and encouraging or requiring the installation of rainwater tanks also ranked highly,” he said.

“Seventy-eight percent of Queenslanders in the sector support the use of dams as an effective way to manage water security, compared to 65% nationally. Furthermore, 73% agree that there is currently more scope for dams to provide additional water supply.

“That said, 78% of Queensland respondents considered that, to some extent, the Australian community is resistant to building dams, compared to 66% nationally. The Queensland sector is more positive toward more dams in the Murray-Darling Basin and southern Australia coastal areas than in other states and territories. Only 27% disagreed with the idea compared, to 37% in the rest of the country.”

To access the full *State of the Water Sector Report 2013*, visit deloitte.com.au or awa.asn.au

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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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