

PROJECT SUMMARY

Encouraging Water Compliance in the Community 2018



Research Aim

This project aimed to investigate the motivations of authorised water users, and barriers they experience in appropriately managing their water take, including compliance with the Water Act 2000.

Background

- Rural Queensland water users have always known the importance of responsibly and sustainably managing one of our most precious resources – water
- An important part of managing the water system is ensuring that this limited resource is used fairly
- The project aimed to gain a more thorough understanding of what motivates sustainable use of water, and how the community would prefer to engage with the Department regarding this important resource

The Research Team

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Method

This project used a literature review, targeted focus groups and an innovative scenario-based survey to provide insight into barriers, motivators and attitudes towards water compliance.

The use of situational simulations has allowed researchers to investigate how different interventions may work in the real world.

A total of 25 stakeholders representing a number of different roles in the community and farming industry participated in three co-design workshops, while 117 people completed the survey.

Diversity in participants was important for ensuring rich and varied insights for the project.



This project was commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME) and undertaken by the QUT Business School.



Findings & Key Insights

1. Plain speaking is preferred:

Participants in the workshops indicated that clear, matter-of-fact language is the best way to speak about water resources.



2. Barriers to sustainable use: Often decisions are heavily influenced by external factors that are not under the control of water users.

3. Practical motivation: Participants in the workshops identified that managing water responsibly is important, but that this goal can sometimes be in competition with other more practical goals around business success.



4. Different types of people: There are distinct differences between what motivated people in how they use water.

5. The personal touch matters: While there were avenues now for digital communication, more personal forms of communication still had a place in helping them manage their water use.

6. Looking after the family and community: It is important to consider not only the main person who is being communicated with, but also the network to which they belong.

7. There is a place for more data: Most participants indicated that they would be open to receiving additional data on water use in the future.

8. Flexible arrangements: Many participants in the workshops also indicated that flexible arrangements would better help them to manage their water use needs now and in the future, for instance, being able to work more closely with the Department on a water allocation.



9. Transparency: It was indicated that more transparency in how the water system works and where the water comes from/is going to, would be useful.

10. Water users are business people: Just like other business owners, many water users are interested in ways to increase the success and profitability of their businesses, but do not want paperwork and reporting requirements to be burdensome.

11. Open to more communication: Many of those involved in this study voiced the desire for more engagement with the Department – with options to get in touch via different channels to share ideas and suggestions for QLD’s water management strategy.



12. Easy access to the right information at the right time: Information is the backbone on which business decisions are made, but information can come from many sources. In the workshops, desire was expressed for a ‘one stop shop’ of relevant and up-to-date information that is easily accessible to guide decisions.

For more information, please contact the BEST Centre (best@qut.edu.au) or visit

<https://research.qut.edu.au/best/projects/encouraging-water-compliance-within-communities-project/>