

Encouraging Water Compliance in the Community

Summary Project Report
2018

- This project was commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME) and undertaken by the QUT Business School.
- This summary outlines the key insights gained from this study.

Background and Approach

An Important Resource

- 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.

Co-Design Workshops

A total of 25 stakeholders representing a number of different roles in the community and farming industry, participated in three co-design workshops. Diversity in participants is important for ensuring rich and varied insights for the project.

Surveys

A total of 117 people completed the survey.

The Research Team

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Graphics provided by Natalie Sketcher, QUT Visual Designer
QUT would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Samuel Ong and Brittany Bennett.

Key Insights

This section summarises the main insights gleaned from this study:

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.

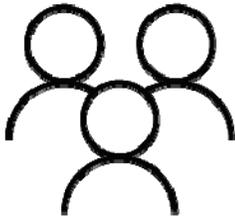


2. Barriers to sustainable use

There were a number of barriers, both at the individual level and at the environmental level, that need to be overcome in order to make sustainable use of water easier for the community. Often decisions are heavily influenced by external factors that are not under the control of the water user.

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

It emerged that there are distinct differences between what motivates people in how they use water.

5. The personal touch matters

Participants indicated that 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. This can mean other water users, local representatives, family and friends, and the community as a whole.

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. Any data solutions proposed that increase the ease of running a business while offering tools for success are favoured. The simulations also showed the positive results for water management of having access to appropriate technology.



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 also 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 (e.g., phone calls, emails, SMS, face-to-face) and avenues to share ideas and suggestions for Queensland's water management strategy. Email was a favoured approach to communication amongst survey participants.

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.