



Australian Government



Inspector-
General of
Water
Compliance

Murray–Darling Basin community perceptions research 2023

Understanding the Audience



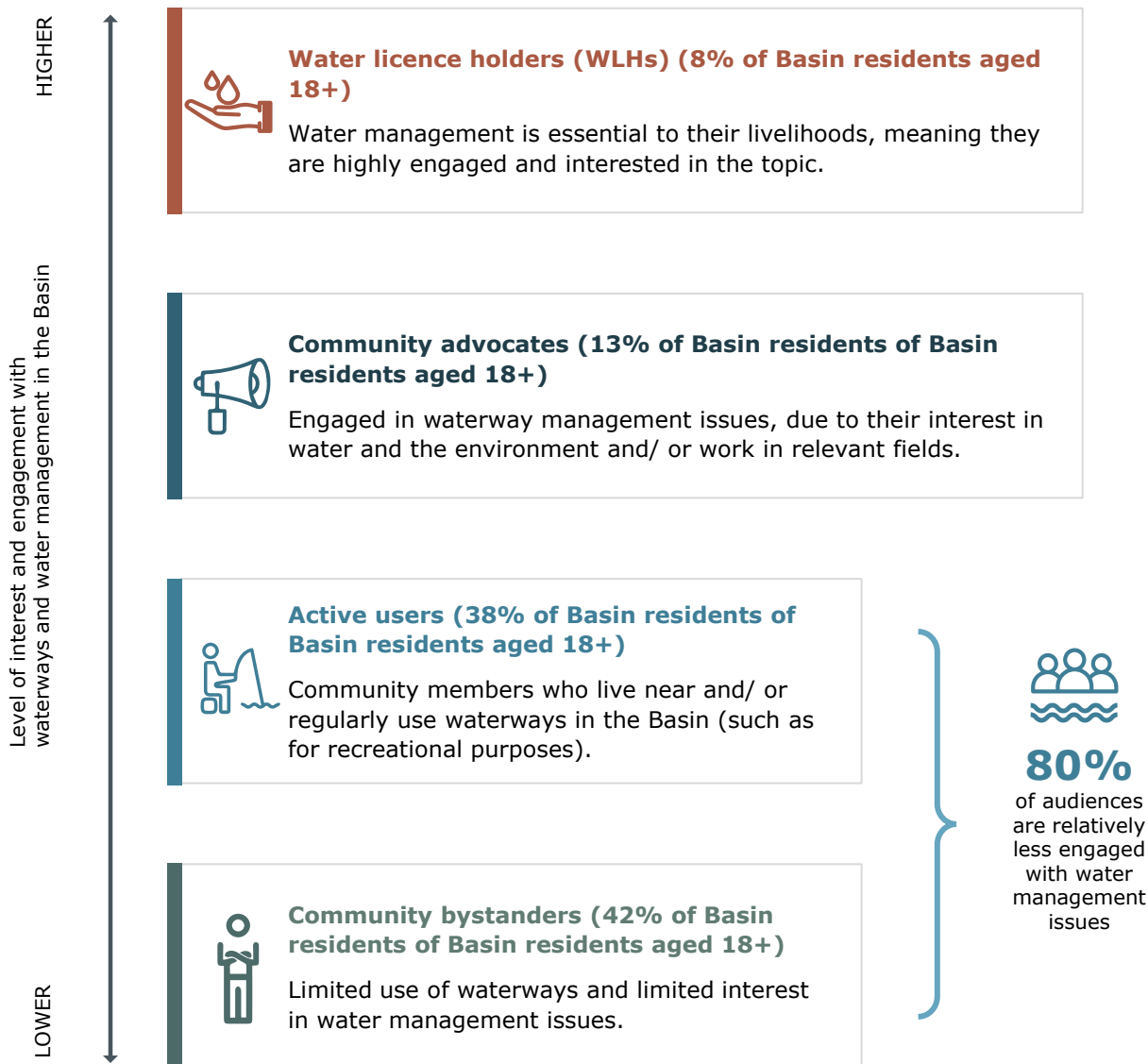
Different audience groups



Awareness, attitudes, perceptions and behaviours in relation to the topic of water management in the Basin (including compliance and enforcement) **differed by audience groups depending on the levels of engagement they had with waterways in their local area** – including what they used waterways for and how frequently.

Segmenting audiences across the Basin

The 2022 research identified some key audience groups among people in the Murray–Darling Basin* (as listed below, with detailed summaries on the following pages). These groups form a useful basis for better understanding the perspectives of the people in the Basin, including their needs and preferences, so as to reach, engage and tailor information and/ or other activities. Throughout the reporting, specific data and findings have been presented where findings differ by these groups and these differences have been considered relevant/ useful.



*In the 2022 research, First Nations Peoples were identified as a key group. Due to the smaller scale of the 2023 research, this cohort was not systematically sampled, and thus have not been reported on separately for this research.
Note: Questions were asked in the survey to identify each group and their size.

8%

Water licence holders

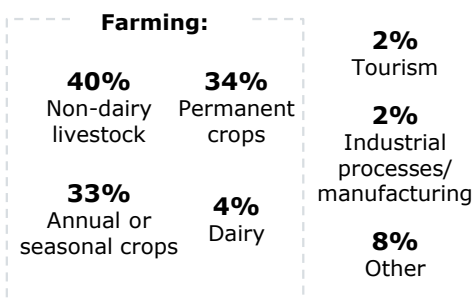


Water licence holders are highly interested in water management issues due to the impact it has on their livelihoods. Compliance and enforcement issues are therefore important for them.

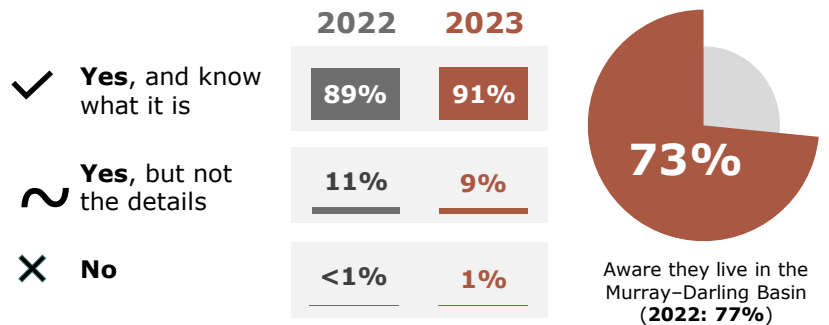
"Water is precious, and everyone needs it... regulations mean we can operate with certainty" – Commercial user of waterways, Dubbo

Demographics

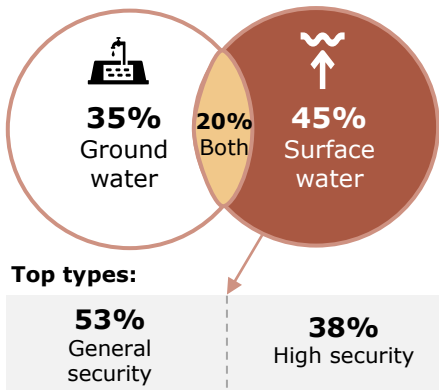
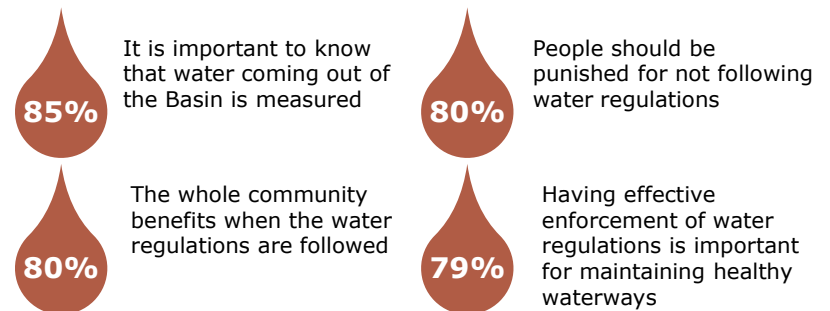
Type of water use



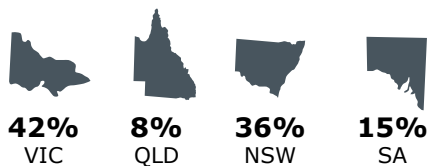
Heard of the Basin?



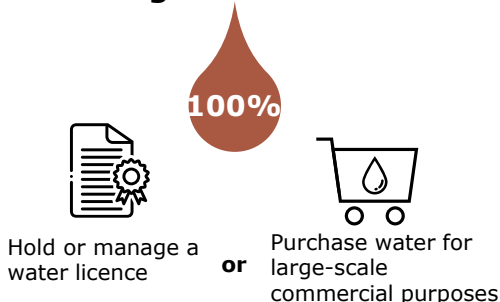
Top perceptions: Water licence holders tended to agree that...



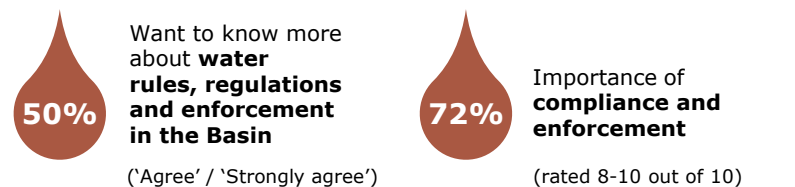
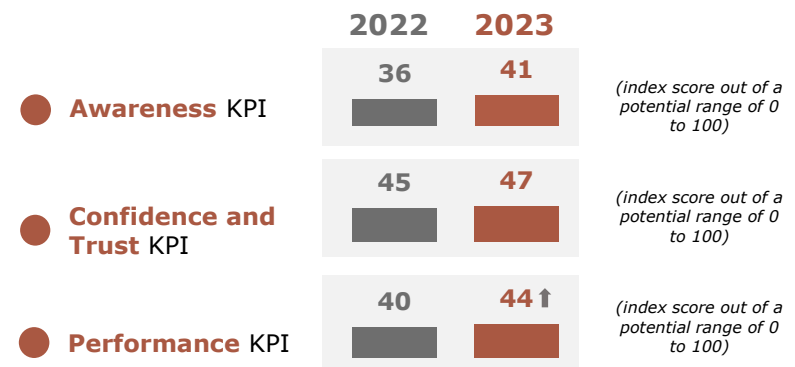
Where they live



Defining characteristics



IGWC



13% Community advocates



Community advocates are members of local Basin communities who are passionate and interested in water issues, including compliance with and enforcement of water rules and regulations.

"If there's no water there's no food bowl...everyone relies on it. Water management ensures the waterways are looked after for everyone"
 — Community member, aged, 40+ years, Shepparton

Demographics

Gender

59% Male



40% Female

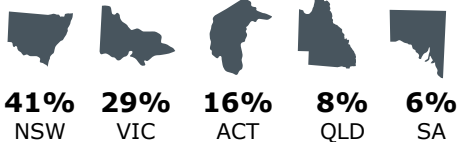
Age

18-34 years 46%

35-54 years 26%

55+ years 28%

Where they live



23% Northern Basin



77% Southern Basin



56% Metropolitan, regional centre or large rural town



44% Smaller rural town/ remote community

Defining characteristics

67%



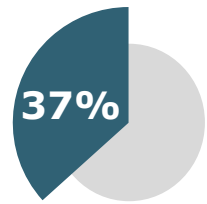
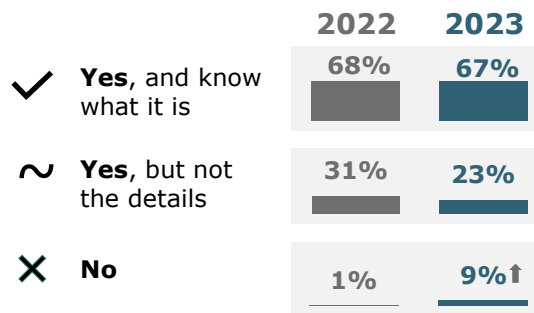
Passionate about water management decisions

16%



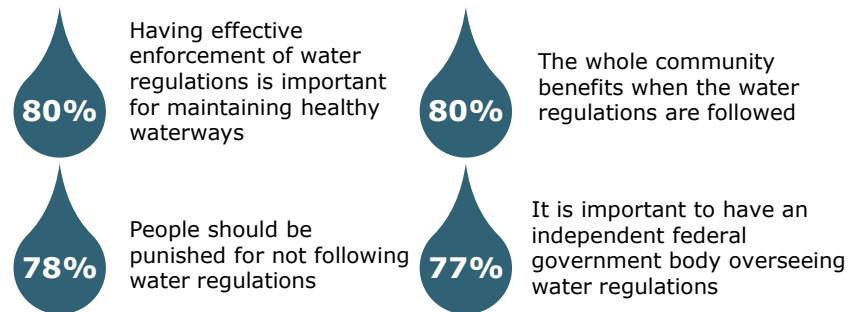
Part of a local water/ waterways group

Heard of the Basin?

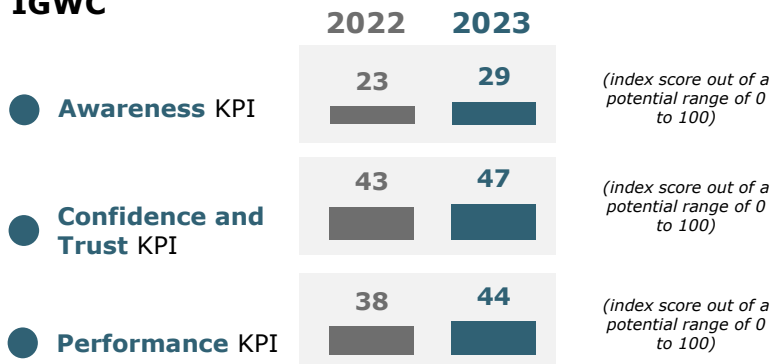


Aware they live in the Murray-Darling Basin [2022: 42%]

Top perceptions: Community advocates tend to agree that..



IGWC



64%

Want to know more about **water rules, regulations and enforcement in the Basin**

('Agree' / 'Strongly agree')

63%

Importance of **compliance and enforcement**

(rated 8-10 out of 10)

38%

Active users



Active users engage with waterways for recreational purposes and/ or live close by. Being on the water regularly means they are engaged with their local catchments, but most do not think of this as being part of the Basin system – and their interest in water management in the Basin is thus limited.

“I went for a swim in the river not long ago and there was a fair bit of flow coming down compared to a week ago... When the river drops it’s always a big conversation”
 — Community member, engaged user, Murray Bridge

Demographics

Gender

44% Male



56% Female

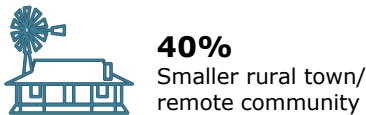
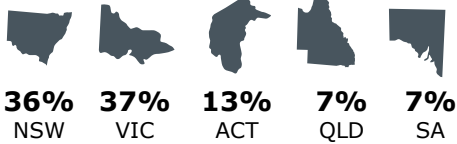
Age

18-34 years 31%

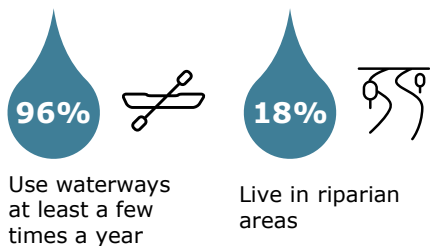
35-54 years 33%

55+ years 36%

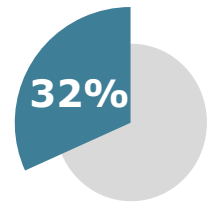
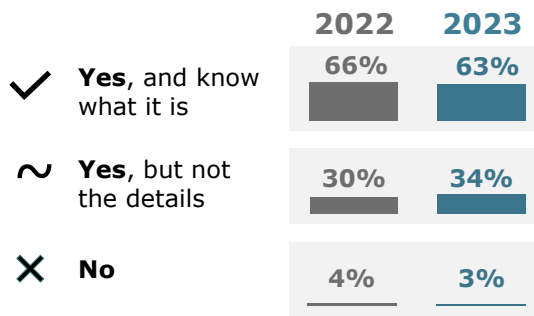
Where they live



Defining characteristics

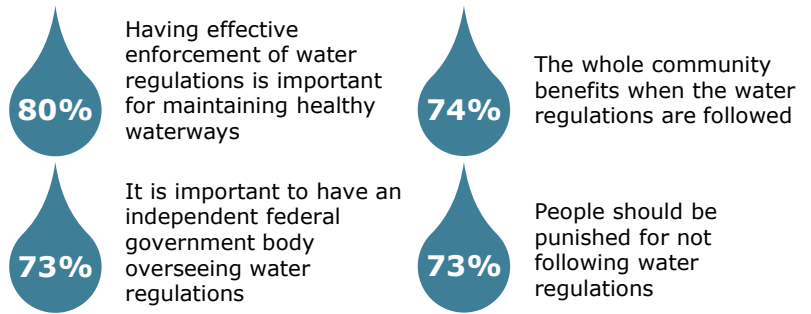


Heard of the Basin?

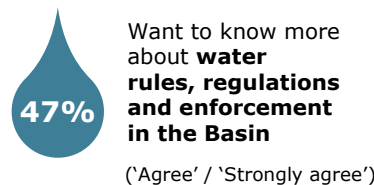
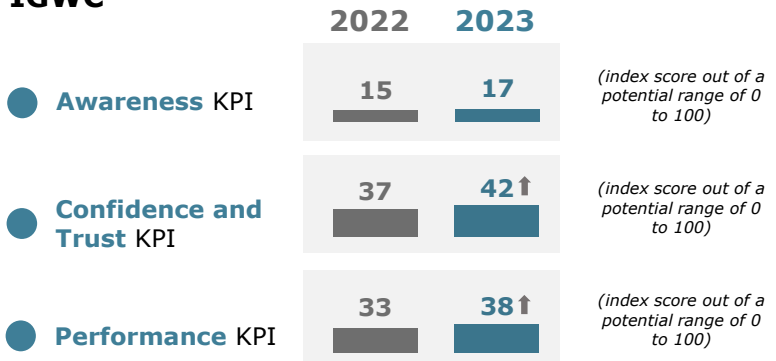


Aware they live in the Murray-Darling Basin [2022: 26%]

Top perceptions: Active users tend to agree that...



IGWC



42% Community bystanders



Community bystanders are the largest of the groups. They live in Basin communities, but have very limited engagement with waterways. As such, their knowledge of, and interest in, water management in the Basin is low.

"I know we're situated on the river but I don't think about the Murray Darling basin or water management as such"

— Community member, aged 18-39 years, Murray Bridge

Demographics

Gender

50% Male



50% Female

Age

18-34 years 17%

35-54 years 32%

55+ years 51%

Where they live



37% NSW 21% VIC 24% ACT 14% QLD 4% SA

33% Northern Basin



67% Southern Basin

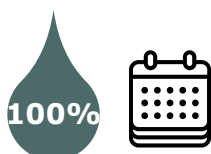


65% Metropolitan, regional centre or large rural town



35% Smaller rural town/remote community

Defining characteristics



100% Use waterways once a year or less

Heard of the Basin?

✓ Yes, and know what it is

2022 2023

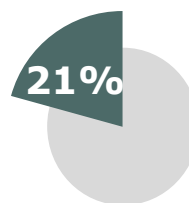
55% 55%

~ Yes, but not the details

38% 39%

✗ No

7% 6%



Aware they live in the Murray-Darling Basin [2022: 17%]

Top perceptions: Community bystanders tend to agree that...

77%

Having effective enforcement of water regulations is important for maintaining healthy waterways

69%

People should be punished for not following water regulations

67%

It is important to have an independent federal government body overseeing water regulations

67%

The whole community benefits when the water rules and regulations are followed

IGWC

2022 2023

● Awareness KPI

12 10

(index score out of a potential range of 0 to 100)

● Confidence and Trust KPI

34 34

(index score out of a potential range of 0 to 100)

● Performance KPI

28 29

(index score out of a potential range of 0 to 100)

32%

Want to know more about **water rules, regulations and enforcement in the Basin**

('Agree' / 'Strongly agree')

42%

Importance of **compliance and enforcement**

(rated 8-10 out of 10)