Murray–Darling Basin community perceptions research 2023

Findings relating to the Murray—Darling Basin Plan

**Awareness and support for the Basin Plan**

A key element in understanding sentiment towards water management in the Murray–Darling Basin is knowledge of the Basin Plan.

While awareness of the Basin Plan has increased overall, support has decreased, particularly among water licence holders. Media coverage of the Plan leading up to and during the fieldwork period in 2023 may have influenced levels of awareness and sentiment (i.e. passing of the Water Amendment *[Restoring Our Rivers]* Bill in December 2023).

**Awareness of Murray–Darling Basin Plan**

20% of community members and 70% of water licence holders in 2023 said that they have heard of the Basin plan and know what it is, compared to 14% of community members and 59% of water licence holders in 2022. Upward arrows beside the 2023 figures for both groups can be seen, indicating a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year at a 90% confidence level.

48% of community members and 21% of water licence holders in 2023 said that they have heard of the Basin plan but not the details, compared to 48% of community members and 29% of water licence holders in 2022.

31% of community members and 9% of water licence holders in 2023 said that they had not heard of the Basin plan, compared to 38% of community members and 12% of water licence holders in 2022. A downward arrow can also be seen beside the 2023 result for the Basin community, indicating a statistically significant decrease from the previous year at a 90% confidence level.

Questions and data used for the charts above:

* Q21. Have you heard of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan? Community base size in 2023 was n=800, and in 2022 it was n=817. The water licence base size in 2023 was n=214, and in 2022 it was n=200.

### Support for the Plan

Among those who were aware of the details of the Basin Plan:

For community members, 20% were unsupportive, 39% were neutral or unsure, and 41% were supportive of the plan in 2023; compared to 20% who were unsupportive, 33% who were neutral or unsure, and 46% who were supportive of the plan in 2022.

For water licence holders, 35% were unsupportive, 38% were neutral or unsure, and 27% were supportive of the plan in 2023; compared to 20% who were unsupportive, 33% who were neutral or unsure, and 47% who were supportive of the plan in 2022. An upward arrow beside the unsupportive figure and downward arrow beside the supportive figure for 2023 can be seen, indicating a statistically significant difference compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.

A participant quote stating: We don’t trust the plan. It’s because we’re not involved, nor had anything to do with it. This quote is attributed to a commercial user of rivers in Dubbo.

Questions and data used for the charts above:

Q24. Overall, thinking about the Murray–Darling Basin Plan, how supportive are you of the Plan? Note: Unsupportive = Not at all supportive / Not supportive, Neutral / Unsure = Neither supportive nor unsupportive / Don’t know /not sure, Supportive = Supportive / Very supportive.

Base: Aware of details about MDB Plan – The community base size in 2023 was n=170, and in 2022 it was n=120. The water licence holder base size in 2023 was n=155, and in 2022 it was n=122.