Murray–Darling Basin community perceptions research 2023

Findings relating to the Inspector-General of Water Compliance

# Awareness of the Inspector-General of Water Compliance (IGWC)

Overall, awareness remained relatively consistent with the 2022 results, with marginal but positive shifts. In support of this, a few participants reported knowing about the IGWC in the qualitative research sessions (this was higher among engaged users).

A participant quote stating: I know the IGWC are an independent regulator. They’re there to make sure everyone does the right thing. This quote is attributed to a community member aged 18-39 years, living in Murray Bridge.

### Overall awareness of the IGWC

#### Community:

In 2023, 83% had not heard of the IGWC, weren't sure or could not say; 14% were aware but not sure of the details; and 3% were aware and knew what it is. This is compared to 2022 data, in which 81% of respondents had not heard of the IGWC, weren't sure or could not say; 15% were aware but not sure of the details; and 4% were aware and knew what the IGWC was.

Considering those who said they were either aware of the IGWC and knew what it is, or were aware of the IGWC but are not sure about the details, each segment has different levels of awareness. 33% of community advocates were aware, 19% of active users were aware, and 11% of community bystanders were aware.

#### Water Licence Holders (WLH):

In 2023, 55% have not heard of the IGWC, aren't sure or cannot say; 16% are aware but not sure of the details; and 29% are aware and know what it is. This is in compared with the 2022 data, in which 58% of respondents had not heard of the IGWC, weren't sure or couldn't say; 17% were aware but not sure of the details; and 25% were aware and knew what the IGWC was.

Questions and data used for the charts above:

* Q33. Have you heard of the Inspector-General of Water Compliance?
* The community base size in 2023 was n=800, and in 2022 it was n=817. The water licence holder base size in 2023 was n=214, and in 2022 it was n=200. The community advocates base size in 2023 was n=105, the active users base size in 2023 was n=327, and the community bystanders base size in 2023 was n=368.

### Awareness of details of the IGWC, including that:

The Inspector-General of Water Compliance is responsible for overseeing compliance and enforcement of water rules and regulations in the Murray–Darling Basin, a responsibility previously held by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority.

Community members' awareness of the Inspector-General of Water Compliance being responsible for overseeing compliance and enforcement of water rules and regulations in the Basin:

* In 2023, 73% of community members were not at all aware, 25% were partially aware, and 3% were fully aware. This is in comparison with 78% of respondents in 2022 who were not at all aware, 20% who were partially aware, and 2% who were fully aware.
* The 2023 figures for respondents who were not at all aware and the figure for respondents who were partially aware can also be seen, indicating a statistically significant difference compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.

Water licence holders' awareness of the Inspector-General of Water Compliance being responsible for overseeing compliance and enforcement of water rules and regulations in the Basin:

* In 2023, 46% of water licence holders were not at all aware, 36% were partially aware, and 18% were fully aware. This is in comparison with 54% of respondents in 2022 who were not at all aware, 28% who were partially aware, and 18% who were fully aware.

Question and data used for the charts above:

* Q34. Before today, how much, if at all, were you aware of the following?
* The community base size in 2023 was n=800, and in 2022 it was n=817. The water licence holder base size in 2023 was n=214, and in 2022 it was n=200.

# Perceptions of the IGWC

IGWC’s community sentiments are moving in the right direction, with confidence and trust in the IGWC significantly increasing among community members, and the perceived performance of the IGWC increasing significantly among both audiences.

### IGWC’s community sentiment KPIs.

KPIs are out of a potential range of 0 to 100.

Awareness KPI, Confidence and Trust KPI, and Performance KPI scores of community and water licence holders for 2022 and 2023.

* For the Awareness KPI, the community KPI score was 16 in 2023, compared to a score of 15 in 2022. The water licence holders KPI score was 41, compared to a KPI score of 36 in the previous year.
* For the Confidence and Trust KPI, the community KPI score was 39 in 2023, compared to a score of 36 in 2022. The 2023 KPI score for community members can be seen, indicating a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level. The water licence holders KPI score was 47, compared to a score of 45 in the previous year.
* For the Performance KPI, the community KPI score was 35 in 2023, compared to 31 in 2022. The water licence holders KPI score was 44 in 2023, compared to a score of 40 in the previous year. Both community and water licence holder 2023 KPI scores can be seen, indicating a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.

### IGWC performance ratings

Index score out of a potential range of 0 to 100.

Index scores for different performance-related components, based on ratings provided by community members and water licence holders in the years 2022 and 2023:

* For 'capability', the community score was 41 in 2023, compared to a score of 36 in 2022. For water licence holders, the 'capability' score was 46 in 2023, compared to a score of 40 in 2022. Both community and water licence holder scores for 2023 indicate a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.
* For 'integrity', the community score was 40 in 2023, compared to a score of 35 in 2022. The community score for 2023 indicates a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level. For water licence holders, the 'integrity' score was 47 in 2023, compared to a score of 42 in 2022.
* For 'being evidence-based', the community score was 39 in 2023, compared to a score of 34 in 2022. For water licence holders, the 'being evidence-based' score was 45 in 2023, compared to a score of 40 in 2022. Both community and water licence holder scores for 2023 indicate a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.
* For 'accountability', the community score was 37 in 2023, compared to a score of 33 in 2022. For water licence holders, the 'accountability' score was 45 in 2023, compared to a score of 39 in 2022. Both community and water licence holder scores for 2023 indicate a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.
* For 'making a positive difference', the community score was 37 in 2023, compared to a score of 34 in 2022. For water licence holders, the 'making a positive difference' score was 46 in 2023, compared to a score of 41 in 2022.
* For 'ensuring consistency of water management across the Basin', the community score was 37 in 2023, compared to a score of 33 in 2022. For water licence holders, the 'ensuring consistency of water management across the Basin' score was 45 in 2023, compared to a score of 39 in 2022. Both community and water licence holder scores for 2023 indicate a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.
* For 'transparency', the community score was 35 in 2023, compared to a score of 30 in 2022. The community index score for 2023 indicates a statistically significant increase compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level. For water licence holders, the 'transparency' score was 43 in 2023, compared to a score of 39 in 2022.
* For 'communicating and engaging with the Australian community about water management', the community score was 32 in 2023, compared to a score of 30 in 2022. The water licence holders score was 41 in 2023, compared to a score of 38 in 2022.

Questions and data used for the charts above:

* The community base size in 2023 was n=800, and in 2022 it was n=817. The water licence holder base size in 2023 was n=214, and in 2022 it was n=200.
* Notes: Indices are calculated based on results from relevant questions, with survey responses given values ranging from 0 to 100.

# Expectations of the IGWC

Similar to the 2022 findings, most qualitative research participants reported feeling unable to rate the performance of the IGWC, that is, “sitting on the fence”, until they were provided with tangible evidence of the IGWC’s performance. In the quantitative research, clear actions and results and greater transparency were seen as central to enhancing community perceptions of the IGWC’s performance.

### What the IGWC can do to increase community perceptions of performance

This section describes unprompted responses from community members who provided a rating of less than 8 out of 10.

* 29% suggested monitoring and enforcement of compliance, results and/or actions, compared to 15% in 2022. The 2023 figure indicates a statistically significant increase from 2022, at a 90% confidence level.
* 16% suggested greater transparency in operations or results of investigations, compared to 14% in 2022.
* 12% suggested to increase awareness or the profile of the Inspector General, compared to 14% in 2022.
* 8% suggested greater community engagement or consultation, compared to 6% in 2022.
* 6% suggested communicating or providing clear information to the public, compared to 13% in 2022. The 2023 result indicates a statistically significant decrease compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.
* 3% suggested more staff or resources. This was a new code added in 2023, thus there is no comparison with the previous year.
* 2% suggested to ensure impartiality or political neutrality of the Inspector General, compared to 10% in 2022. The 2023 result indicates a statistically significant decrease compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.
* 2% suggested to not sell water to overseas companies or non-land holders, compared to 2% in 2022.
* 1% had other suggestions, compared to 10% in 2022. The 2023 result indicates a statistically significant decrease compared to the previous year, at a 90% confidence level.
* 31% responded that they didn't know or were unsure, compared to 27% in 2022.

Questions and data used for the chart above:

* Q38. What can the Inspector-General of Water Compliance or his Office do to increase (your rating of their performance)? [coded text responses]
* The base was community respondents who rated the IGWC’s performance as less than 8 out of 10, excluding those that said ‘nothing’, or those who responded ‘unsure’ at Q37. In 2023 the base size was n=344, and in 2022 it was n=317.