



Australian Government



Inspector-  
General of  
Water  
Compliance

# Murray–Darling Basin community perceptions research 2022

## Understanding the Audience



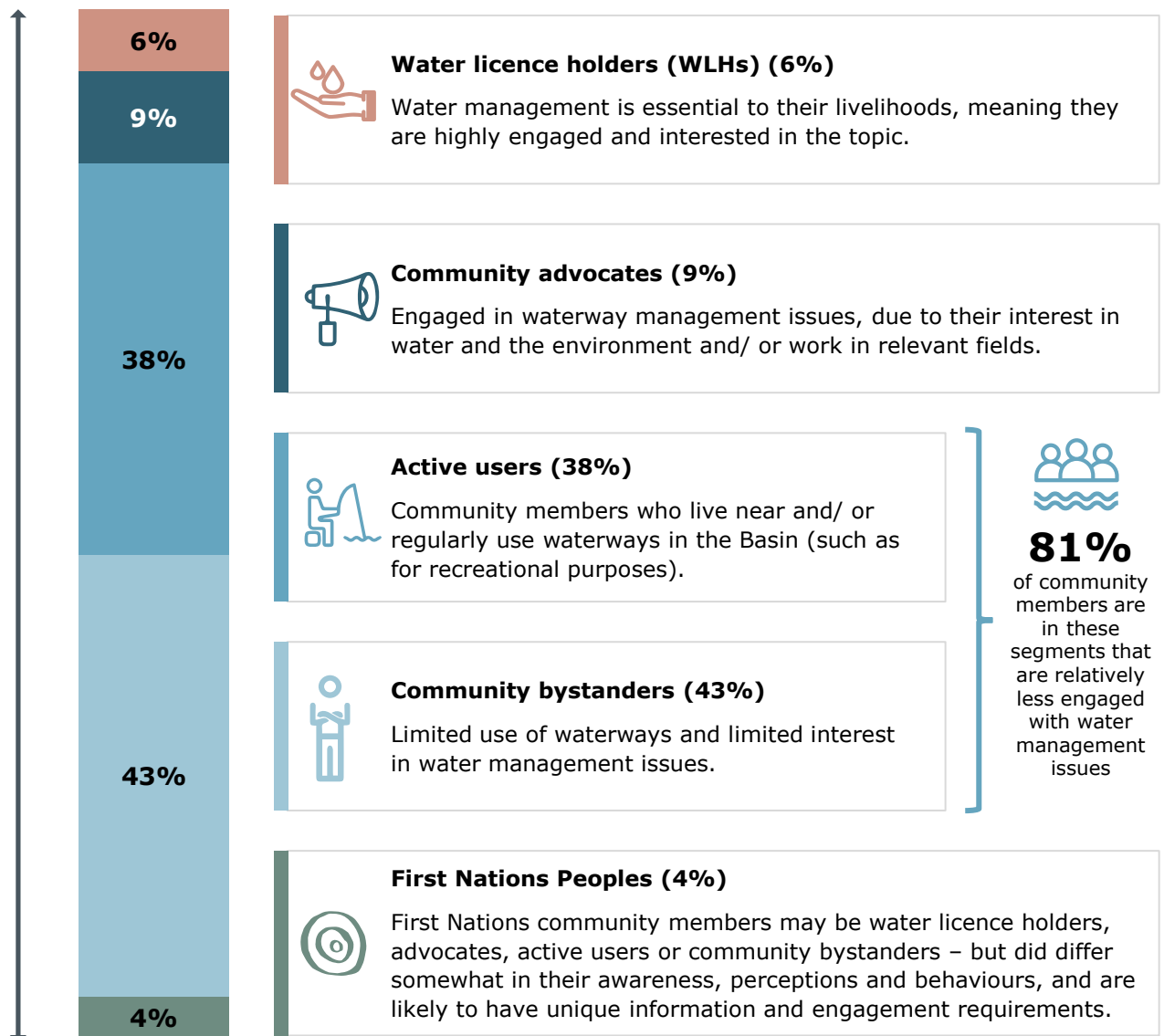
# Segments



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

**Five key audience segments** were identified in the research, as listed below (with detailed summaries on the following pages). These segments form a useful basis for better understanding the perspectives of key groups, including their needs and preferences, so as to reach, engage and tailor information and/ or other activities. Specific segment data and findings have been presented where findings differ by these segments and these differences have been considered relevant/ useful.



Note: Questions were asked in the survey to identify these segments. The size of the First Nations audience segment was calculated using ABS data of people aged 18 and older living in the Basin. The size of remaining segments were then proportionally attributed.

6%

# Water licence holders

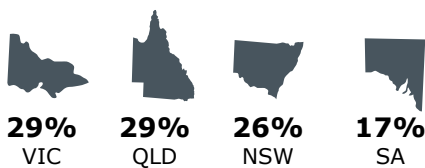
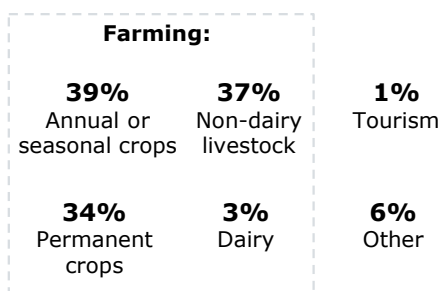


Water licence holders are highly interested in water management issues due to the impact it has on their livelihoods. Compliance and enforcement issues are also important for this audience.

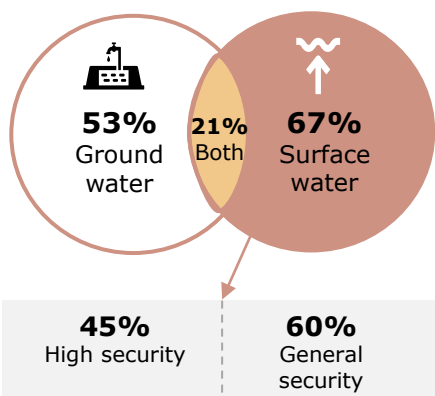
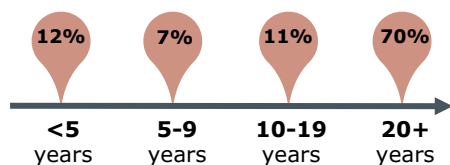
"When water is managed well, it gives us security from an economic point of view for ourselves and the local people."  
— Commercial user of waterways, Dubbo

## Demographics

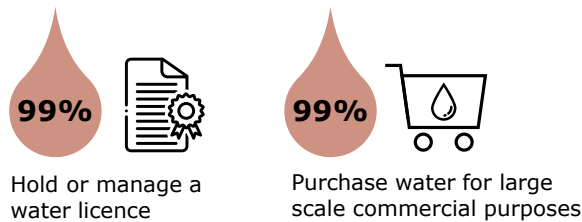
### Type of water use



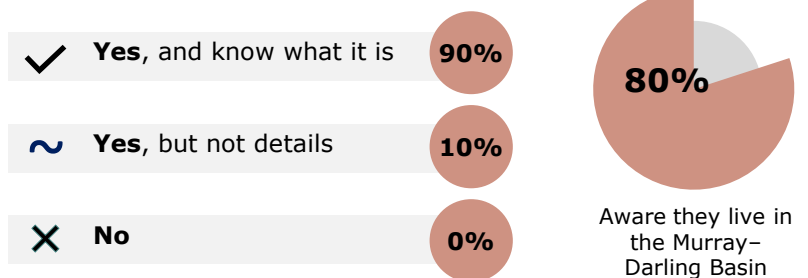
### Time operating



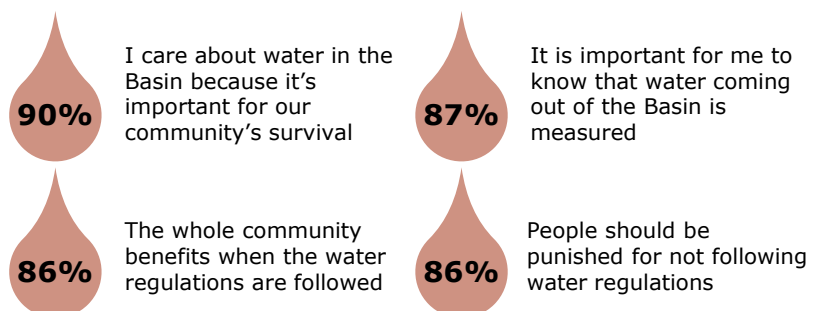
## Defining characteristics



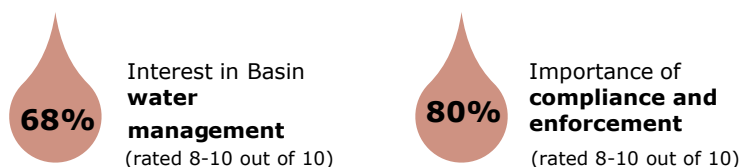
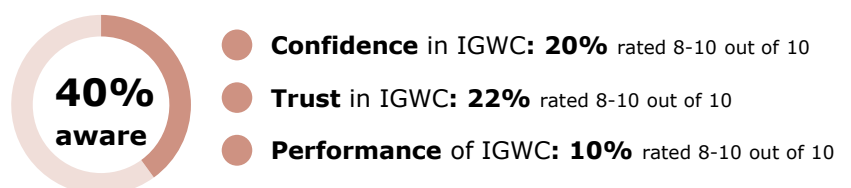
## Heard of the Basin?



## Top perceptions: Water licence holders tend to agree that...



## IGWC





# 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.

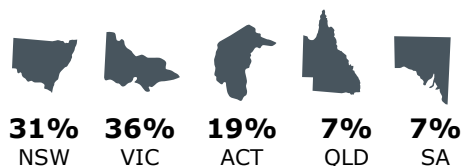
"A lot of our recreation time is spent on the water, we've seen it change over time. When we used to swim in the creek as kids you could see all the way to the bottom."  
 — Community member, Wodonga

## Demographics

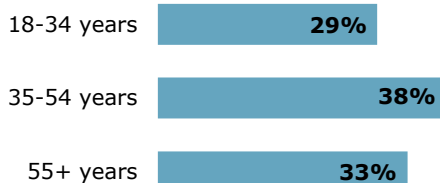
48% Male



52% Female



## Age

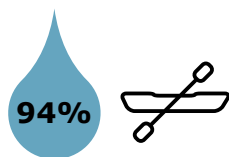


59% Metropolitan, regional centre or large rural town

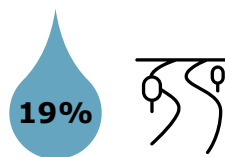


41% Smaller rural town/ remote community

## Defining characteristics

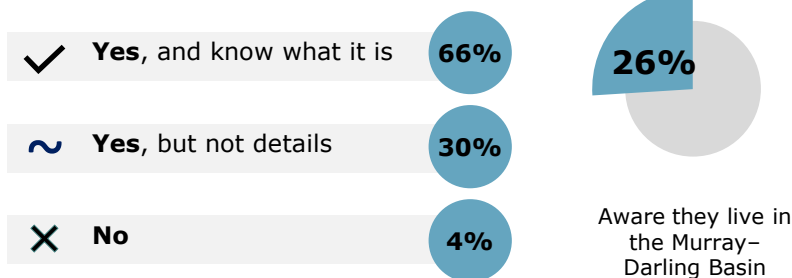


Use waterways at least a few times a year

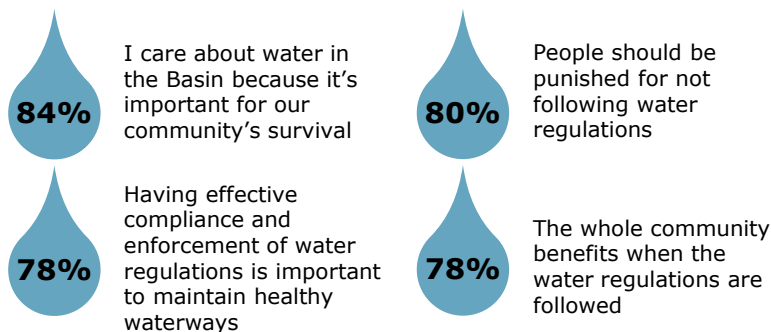


Riparian landowners

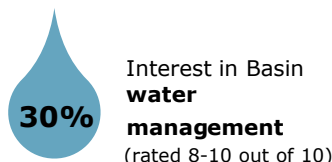
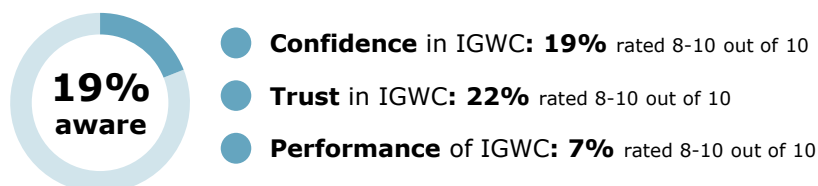
## Heard of the Basin?



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



## IGWC



43%

# Community bystanders



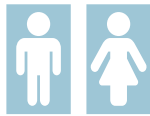
Community bystanders are the largest of the segments. They live in Basin communities, but have very limited engagement with waterways. As such, their knowledge of, and interest in, water management in the Basin is low.

"I use the waterways for drinking, but otherwise I've never thought about water management."

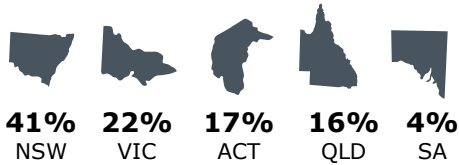
— Community member, Goondiwindi

## Demographics

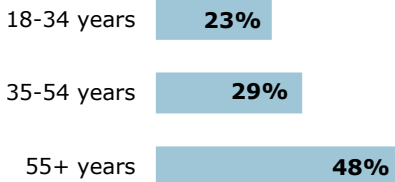
52% Male



49% Female



## Age

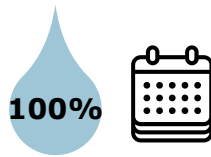


62% Metropolitan, regional centre or large rural town



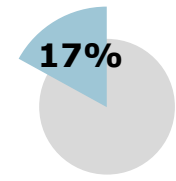
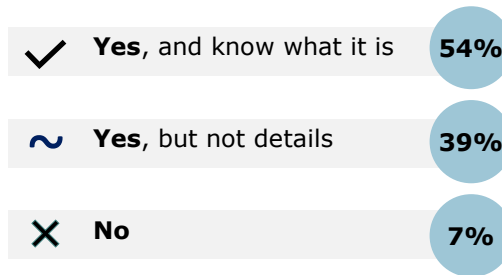
38% Smaller rural town/remote community

## Defining characteristics



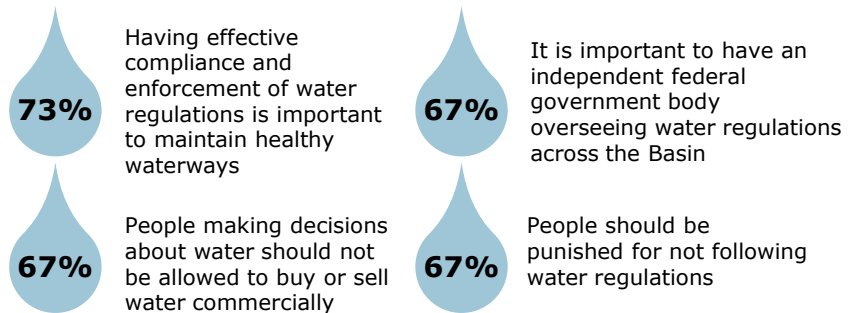
Use waterways once a year or less

## Heard of the Basin?



Aware they live in the Murray-Darling Basin

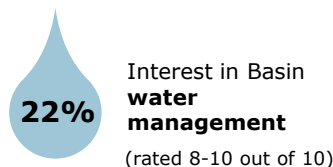
## Top perceptions: Community bystanders tend to agree that...



## IGWC



- Confidence in IGWC: 16% rated 8-10 out of 10
- Trust in IGWC: 20% rated 8-10 out of 10
- Performance of IGWC: 9% rated 8-10 out of 10



4%

# First Nations peoples



First Nations audiences tend to be more aware that they live in the Basin compared to other community audiences, and are strongly supportive of the enforcement of water rules and regulations.

"It affects us Aboriginal people when there's no water in the river...it stops us from fishing."

— First Nations participant, Bourke

## Demographics

48% Male



52% Female

## Age

18-34 years 42%

35-54 years 33%

55+ years 25%



27% Metropolitan, regional centre or large rural town



73% Smaller rural town/ remote community

## Defining characteristics

100%

Identify as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander

## Heard of the Basin?

✓ Yes, and know what it is 34%

~ Yes, but not details 51%

✗ No 15%

51%

Aware they live in the Murray-Darling Basin

## Top perceptions: First Nations respondents tend to agree that...

91% People should be punished for not following water regulations

89% The whole community benefits when the water regulations are followed

89% Having effective compliance and enforcement of water regulations is important to maintain healthy waterways

89% People making decisions about water should not be allowed to buy or sell water commercially

## IGWC

26% aware

● Confidence in IGWC: 12% rated 8-10 out of 10

● Trust in IGWC: 20% rated 8-10 out of 10

● Performance of IGWC: 12% rated 8-10 out of 10

32%

Interest in Basin water management

(rated 8-10 out of 10)

40%

Importance of compliance and enforcement

(rated 8-10 out of 10)