



BASINPULSE

connecting people and decision makers

MEDIA RELEASE

Basin communities say bring on water changes

30 July 2010

80% of people in the Murray-Darling Basin agree that water allocations should change so enough water is available for the natural environment.

This is the key finding of a new independent initiative - Basin Pulse – that has been launched to capture and track the views of communities across the Basin.

Besides overwhelming support for change, the first Basin Pulse report has also revealed a strong sense of urgency for action. 50% of people living in the Basin believe that changes to water allocation should already be underway. A further 24% say it should happen without further delay.

Brian Ramsay, a leader of the Basin Pulse initiative, said that communities across the Basin identified water as the issue of greatest concern, with Victorians being most concerned and pessimistic about the future outlook for water reform.

Mr Ramsay said that people are realistic about the potential economic impact of water reforms but still want the process to go ahead.

68 per cent of Basin residents believe that if less water was available to farms, then their region will be worse off, but 70% of people are also expecting that more water for the natural environment will benefit their local area.

Basin Pulse gathered the views of almost 500 people from across Basin communities during June 2010 to understand how the community views national water reform.

"It's clear that people want change to occur, but there are real concerns about economic impacts. Community uncertainty and fears about local impacts make it important for certainty of process in reaching decisions, Mr Ramsay said.

"Delays with progress will arise along the way, but the complex issues have to be worked through a process of constructive engagement and dialogue with communities over the months ahead."

Basin Pulse is an independent initiative that exists to connect people and decision makers in the Murray-Darling Basin in support of positive, long term change.

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Further information and to download the Report: www.basinpulse.com.au

BASINPULSE

The Basin Pulse initiative

The Murray-Darling Basin is undergoing far reaching, long-term change. Drought, changing imperatives for water use, volatile international markets, new industries and economic opportunities and emerging social trends are pulling people in the Basin in many directions. Leaders in government, industry, business and the community are grappling with the challenges of transformational change in the Basin. There is an imperative to develop a dialogue with the people whose lives will be impacted by new policies, decisions and services. Securing people's attention and participation is crucial to successful change. If the people who are affected by reforms believe in the need for change and are actively involved then success is more likely to follow.

However, at Inovact Consulting we have observed that influential organisations often struggle to connect with people and develop relationships strong enough to enlist support and build commitment for change. New approaches are needed.

The Basin Pulse initiative was designed to be part of the solution for communities, industries and governments as they strive to adapt and reshape the Basin's long term future.

Basin Pulse exists to help bridge the divide between people and decision makers. Our mission is to enable connections to occur and to promote understanding and mutually beneficial engagement and dialogue. As an independent initiative we serve no vested interest.

Our interest is that people are connected with decision makers, that useful information is exchanged and that understanding and a 'conversation culture' is built over time. We believe that this is the pathway to the type of transformational change needed to benefit the community, environment and industries in the Basin over the long term.

The Basin Pulse team live and work in the Basin and are passionate about its future. We seek to be part of transitioning the Basin to a more sustainable and prosperous future. We encourage people across the Basin and decision makers to join us in developing processes of positive change.

About Inovact Consulting

Basin Pulse is an initiative of Canberra consulting firm Inovact Consulting Pty Ltd (see www.inovact.com.au). Inovact Consulting has been in business for over five years and acts as a specialist advisor to industry, government, research agencies and commercial clients. We assist clients to improve their organisations, their strategies and their business relationships so that resources, activities and effort are applied effectively. Inovact Consulting has particular strength in working with people to:

- Reform organisations, industries and institutions and
- Design services that translate knowledge into outcomes

We work across many service functions with a particular emphasis on strategic stakeholder engagement and subject areas related to environmental management and primary industries.

Some of our clients have included the National Water Commission, the National Farmers' Federation, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the ACT Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water and Horticulture Australia Ltd.