



THE SURVEY

On the 22 July UMCN sent out a short survey on Google Forms which asked members and associates about their understanding of and concerns around Water Quality and Security in the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment. The Survey asked:

1. What do water quality and water security mean to you? (Long answer)
2. Water in the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment is complex, with many different elements, issues and cross-jurisdiction stakeholders involved in its management. Thinking about WATER QUALITY AND SECURITY in the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment, which of the following topics is of greatest interest to you? (Select all that apply) Leaky weirs, Climate change, Drinking water, Urban run-off, Water policy, Water for the environment, Water for production, Ground water, Private water storage, River health and biodiversity, Floodplain harvesting, WSUD (Water Sensitive Urban Design), Other- Please specify.
3. Tell us more about your interest in the topic(s) that you have selected above. (Long answer)

We received 42 responses.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 1 AND 3

River health and biodiversity/ Water for the environment

Water quality and security for the environment was the top issue of concern, with most considering environmental water to be as important as water for human consumption. Specific issues of concern included: degraded riparian zones, headwater extraction, river and riparian damage from introduced species such as non-native fish and feral horses, water mismanagement and over-extraction of groundwater. *“I want the water and riparian zones to be healthy and beautiful refugia for people and wildlife for the next millennia.”*

Climate change

Many respondents expressed concern around the impacts of climate change on water quality and security, citing droughts, floods, and fires as the major threats. Many expressed the need for healthy functioning catchments to ensure preparedness for the impacts of climate change. *“Healthy natural water catchments are essential for clean water and to maximise water availability. This becomes increasingly important as the climate changes.”*

Urban run-off/ WSUD

Respondents had several concerns about the management of water around urban development and expressed interest in learning more about urban water management techniques so that they can contribute towards water sustainability and environmental health. Topics included: behavioural change campaigns to educate and encourage environmental custodianship with residents, smart urban design, leaky weirs, urban plantings and stormwater harvesting. Many expressed concerns about leaves entering waterways causing blue green algae blooms. *“I would like to contribute to WSUD so that rainwater on urban and ACT reserves recharges groundwater.”*

Groundwater

The issue of groundwater ran through other topics, with respondents recognising the interactions of groundwater and surface water. Some issues of concern raised included: lack of knowledge around re-charge rates, over-extraction, the impacts of peri-urban properties and the impacts of proposed cemeteries and quarries. *“Groundwater is increasingly over-extracted, causing local creeks to dry up more frequently.”*

Drinking water (and water for people)

Some respondents draw water for household use directly from local waterways, so high-quality river water was a vital concern. Many expressed that water quality for recreational purposes was of high importance, for activities such as drinking while bushwalking, swimming, and fishing. Others noted that preservation of rivers was important for social and cultural reasons. [“Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment provides drinking water. It should be clean.”](#)

Water policy

There was concern about environmental water in the Upper Murrumbidgee not being considered under the Basin Plan because it sits within Snowy Hydro legislation. There also were some concerns that government policies were inconsistent (for example environmental water from Tantangara Dam is protected in ACT but not in NSW) and too short-term, reducing the effective management of water quality and security in the region now and into the future. Considering water quality and security at a catchment-wide scale and cohesion of policy, were cited as of vital importance. [“\(Water\) security needs to be considered across whole catchment areas and river systems, not just single point flows.”](#)

Leaky Weirs

In addition to leaky weirs within the urban environment, several people expressed interest in learning more about leaky weirs so that they may install them on their rural properties to control erosion and retain water in the landscape. [“We would like to install a series of leaky weirs with minimal stock access.”](#)

Specific sites

Some respondents had interest in specific sites in the region, including: restoring Jerrabomberra Creek back to a chain of ponds and groundwater in the Half Moon catchment (Gudgenby tributary) where there is no water storage and few watering points for native animals such as Gang-gang Cockatoos. [“In our region river health is dependent on what comes out of Canberra.”](#)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2

