

Urban Water Strategy

What we have heard

October 2026

The key findings across all engagement activities are as follows:

- Traditional Owners and First Nations groups emphasised that water planning must recognise rivers and waterways as living entities, strengthen cultural water access and entitlements and provide a genuine voice in decision-making.
- The community recognises the importance of water security to support future growth and shows strong acceptance of water restrictions, particularly when they are predictable, mild and implemented to reduce the likelihood of more severe measures.
- There was a clear expectation that public open spaces, parks and sporting fields be maintained responsibly during drought, with strong support for alternative water sources such as recycled water for irrigation.
- Views on affordability and infrastructure investment were balanced: some participants preferred more frequent restrictions to limit bill increases, while others were willing to pay more for projects that improve long-term water availability and reliability.
- Workshop participants preferred demand-side water security measures, with Integrated Water Management (IWM) being the most highly voted option, followed by increasing the frequency of water restrictions.
- Participants accepted that demand management alone will not resolve long-term shortfalls; they supported a staged pathway that demonstrates all practical lower-cost options have been considered before committing to major infrastructure solutions. Community representatives also noted there is a risk for future generations in delaying infrastructure investment.
- Purified recycled water was seen by many stakeholders as a reliable and cost-competitive future supply option, but community trust, safety perceptions and the 'yuck factor' remain key barriers requiring further education, engagement and willingness-to-pay sentiment surveys.

Overall, these findings suggest community readiness to accept trade-offs that support long-term water security, when they are perceived as fair, transparent and forward-looking. The UWS process provides an opportunity to build understanding of future water challenges, strengthen trust through proactive engagement, and demonstrate the value of investment in diversified water supplies.