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Water trading and water charge rules

A survey of irrigators in the Murray–Darling Basin

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**Research by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural
and Resource Economics and Sciences**

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1 Introduction

The Commonwealth Water Act (2007) provides the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) with a key role in developing and enforcing water charge and water market rules, and monitoring regulated water charges and transformation arrangements. Four sets of rules made under Part 4 of the Water Act are collectively referred to as the 'water charge rules'. They are the Water Charge (Termination Fees) Rules 2009, Water Charge (Infrastructure) Rules 2010, Water Charge (Planning and Management Information) Rules 2010, and Water Market Rules 2009.

This report contains a summary of results from a supplementary survey of 270 irrigation farms conducted between February and May 2015.

2 Results

Between February and May 2015 ABARES conducted a survey to examine irrigators' experiences of water trading and issues associated with the water charge rules. The survey was conducted as a supplementary to ABARES's 2014–15 survey of irrigation farms in the Murray–Darling Basin, based on the collection of data from 270 sample farms in the Basin.

The survey questionnaire consisted of four main components:

- impact of the structure and level of water charges on water trade decisions
- schedule of water charges
- barriers to termination of water delivery rights
- network planning.

All estimates are weighted (see the chapter 'Survey methodology') and presented as a percentage of the population. Results that were not statistically significant have been removed from the tables. Nevertheless, care should be taken in interpreting some of the estimates where the responding sample may be quite small.

Impact of the structure and level of charges on trade decisions

Across the Murray–Darling Basin, an estimated 46 per cent of irrigators indicated the level of fixed charges was very important to their decision to undertake a permanent water trade, with a further 20 per cent indicating it was somewhat important (Table 1). The highest responses for the importance of fixed charges in making permanent water trades were for the Goulburn–Broken and Murray region. In the Murrumbidgee region and northern Basin 47 per cent and 45 per cent respectively felt that fixed charges were not important in making a permanent water trade.

The level of variable charges was also important to irrigators' decisions to trade temporary water allocations (Table 1). An estimated 42 per cent of irrigators indicated the level of variable charges was 'very important' and a further 19 per cent indicated it was 'somewhat important'. The highest responses for the importance of variable charges to undertaking a temporary water trade were for the Goulburn–Broken (72 per cent) and Murray (71 per cent) regions. Few irrigators in the Murrumbidgee (39 per cent) and northern Basin (52 per cent) felt that variable charges were important to their decisions to undertake temporary water trades.

Irrigators were also asked to indicate where they obtained information about the charges payable in relation to water traded from outside their geographical region (that is, outside their irrigation network, valley, trading zone or state). Most irrigators (58 per cent) obtained information from a water market intermediary, such as a water broker or lawyer. Around 23 per cent obtained information from the irrigation infrastructure operator via the internet. Fewer irrigators across the Murray–Darling Basin obtained information from bulk water suppliers, the government or other irrigators. A small number of irrigators (6 per cent) indicated they did not know where to obtain such information.

Schedule of charges

Under the Commonwealth Water Charge (Infrastructure) Rules 2010, an infrastructure operator is required to provide its customers with a 'schedule of charges' that sets out all the regulated charges that could be imposed on irrigators by the operator. This document is often titled 'fees

and charges' or 'water price/pricing schedule'. The 'schedule of charges' must provide sufficient detail for irrigators to calculate the fees payable to the infrastructure operator.

As part of the survey, irrigators were asked to indicate which items they felt were important to be shown in an irrigation infrastructure operator's schedule of charges. The responses shown in Table 2 were relatively consistent across the Goulburn–Broken, Murrumbidgee and Murray regions, with more than 50 per cent of irrigators indicating a positive response for most items.

An estimated 74 per cent of irrigators indicated they had received a schedule of charges from their irrigation infrastructure operator or bulk water supplier in the past 12 months (Table 3). Most of the farms receiving a schedule of charges were in the Goulburn–Broken, Murrumbidgee and Murray regions, with only 16 per cent of irrigators in the northern Basin indicating they had received a schedule of charges in the past 12 months. Around 32 per cent of irrigators in the northern Basin were unsure if they had received a schedule of charges.

Of those farms that did received a schedule of charges, around 92 per cent indicated that the schedule of charges clearly set out the difference between charges payable for holding or using water and charges payable for accessing their operator's infrastructure.

An estimated 82 per cent of irrigators indicated the schedule of charges clearly set out the difference between charges payable for access to their operator's infrastructure and charges incurred by the infrastructure operator and passed onto the irrigator, such as bulk water charges.

Around two-thirds of irrigators indicated the schedule of charges provided sufficient information to allow them to calculate the charges payable to terminate some or all of their water delivery right, although responses for the Goulburn–Broken and northern Basin regions were significantly lower than for the Murrumbidgee or Murray regions.

While most farms in each region were customers of an irrigation infrastructure operator, there was a mixture of responses when asked how satisfied they were with the level of engagement from their operator (that is, consultation and the ability to provide input and feedback if desired) about changes to future fees and charges (Table 4). An estimated 51 per cent of irrigators across the basin were satisfied with the level of engagement from their operator, but responses ranged from a low of 37 per cent in the Goulburn–Broken region to 65 per cent in the Murray region. Around 16 per cent of farms across the basin were unsatisfied with the level of engagement with their operator.

Barriers to termination

Irrigators that were customers of an irrigation infrastructure operator were asked to consider what they would do with their water delivery right if they were to permanently sell their water. The most common response was to keep the water delivery right so that irrigators had the option of having water delivered in the future (37 per cent) (Table 5). A further 20 per cent of irrigators indicated they would sell the water delivery right with their water.

Only 9 per cent of irrigators had previously considered terminating some or all of their water delivery right but decided not to. The main reason given by these irrigators was that termination fees were too expensive.

There were also only a small number of irrigators (12 per cent) that had previously sold (not terminated) some or all of their water delivery right separately from a trade of an irrigation

right or water access entitlement. The main reason given for not doing so was that there was no need to sell the water delivery right (56 per cent).

Network planning

Around 54 per cent of irrigators obtain information about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to their operator's infrastructure by letter or mail-out from the operator (56 per cent) (Table 8). Other common responses were from the irrigation infrastructure operator's website or email (30 per cent), meeting (21 per cent), and from other irrigators (19 per cent).

There was a mixture of responses as to how well-informed irrigators were about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to their operator's infrastructure. An estimated 39 per cent of irrigators indicated they felt fully informed, 44 per cent were somewhat informed, and 17 per cent were uninformed.

A majority of irrigators was satisfied with the level of engagement from their operator about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to the operator's infrastructure. The highest rate of satisfaction was for the Murray region (67 per cent), while the Goulburn–Broken region had the highest proportion that was unsatisfied (33 per cent).

Table 1 Impact of the structure and level of charges on trade decisions

Percent of farms	Northern Basin	Goulburn-Broken	Murrumbidgee	Murray	Murray-Darling Basin
How important is the amount of fixed charges to your decision to undertake a permanent water trade?					
Very important	55 (10)	48 (12)	31 (4)	51 (6)	46 (10)
Somewhat important	0	25 (7)	22 (4)	22 (4)	20 (2)
Not important	45 (9)	27 (9)	47 (11)	28 (10)	34 (7)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
How important is the amount of variable charges to your decision to undertake a temporary water trade?					
Very important	52 (7)	40 (4)	22 (4)	52 (7)	42 (6)
Somewhat important	0	32 (5)	17 (8)	19 (10)	19 (10)
Not important	48 (12)	28 (10)	61 (7)	29 (11)	39 (12)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Where would you obtain information about the charges payable in relation to water traded from outside your geographical region (i.e. Outside your irrigation network, valley, trading zone or state)?					
Internet: irrigation infrastructure operator	29 (11)	28 (10)	16 (7)	23 (5)	23 (5)
Internet: bulk water supplier	10 (1)	12 (3)	2 (2)	14 (5)	10 (1)
Internet: government	52 (7)	2 (2)	3 (3)	11 (2)	12 (3)
Other irrigators	58 (13)	12 (3)	2 (2)	11 (2)	14 (5)
Water market intermediary (ie water broker or lawyer)	19 (10)	55 (10)	61 (7)	67 (13)	58 (13)
Other	3 (3)	0	9 (9)	3 (3)	4 (4)
Don't know	0	3 (3)	13 (4)	4 (4)	6 (6)

Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

Table 2 Items to include in an operator's schedule of charges

Percent of farms	Northern Basin		Goulburn-Broken		Murrumbidgee		Murray		Murray-Darling Basin	
Which of the following are important to be shown in an operator's schedule of charges?										
The circumstances in which the charge is payable	16	(7)	57	(12)	41	(5)	55	(10)	48	(12)
The type of right that the charge relates to (eg irrigation right, water delivery right, access right)	23	(5)	65	(11)	48	(12)	78	(15)	62	(8)
How often a charge is payable (eg quarterly, annually)	13	(4)	55	(10)	30	(3)	69	(15)	50	(5)
Whether a charge would be included in the calculation of a termination fee	13	(4)	47	(11)	27	(9)	57	(12)	42	(6)
Details of any applicable discount or surcharge relating to the charges	6	(6)	37	(10)	19	(10)	71	(8)	44	(8)
Charges that are incurred by the operator and passed on to customers (eg bulk water charges, government water planning and management charges)	19	(10)	47	(11)	31	(4)	56	(11)	44	(8)
Administrative charges for trades (internal and external, transformations and terminations)	19	(10)	50	(5)	44	(8)	69	(15)	53	(8)
Details of the process for determining level of charges	13	(4)	50	(5)	27	(9)	68	(14)	48	(12)

Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

Table 3 Schedule of charges

Percent of farms	Northern Basin	Goulburn-Broken	Murrumbidgee	Murray	Murray-Darling Basin
Did you receive a schedule of charges from your IIO/bulk water supplier in the last 12 months?					
Yes	16 (7)	83 (11)	75 (12)	84 (12)	74 (11)
No	52 (7)	7 (7)	20 (2)	10 (1)	17 (8)
Unsure	32 (5)	10 (1)	5 (5)	5 (5)	9 (9)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
If yes, did the schedule of charges clearly set out the difference between charges payable for holding or using water and charges payable for accessing your operator's infrastructure?					
Yes	100 (1)	80 (8)	96 (15)	95 (14)	92 (11)
No	0 (0)	20 (2)	4 (4)	5 (5)	8 (8)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Did the schedule of charges clearly set out the difference between charges payable for access to your operator's infrastructure and charges incurred by your operator and passed onto you (ie bulk water charges)?					
Yes	60 (6)	68 (14)	88 (16)	88 (16)	82 (10)
No	40 (4)	32 (5)	13 (4)	12 (3)	18 (9)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Did the schedule of charges provide sufficient information for you to calculate the charges payable to terminate some or all of your water delivery right?					
Yes	40 (4)	38 (11)	73 (10)	76 (13)	65 (11)
No	60 (6)	62 (8)	27 (9)	24 (6)	35 (8)
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

Table 4 Schedule of charges continued

Percent of farms	Northern Basin	Goulburn-Broken	Murrumbidgee	Murray	Murray-Darling Basin
Are you a customer of an irrigation infrastructure operator?					
Yes	80 (0)	94 (0)	96 (0)	96 (0)	95 (0)
No	20 (0)	6 (0)	4 (0)	4 (0)	5 (0)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
How satisfied are you with the level of engagement from your operator (ie consultation and your ability to provide input and feedback if desired) about changes to future fees and charges?					
Satisfied	43 (0)	37 (0)	40 (0)	65 (0)	51 (0)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	43 (0)	26 (0)	46 (0)	30 (0)	33 (0)
Unsatisfied	14 (0)	37 (0)	15 (0)	5 (0)	16 (0)
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

Table 5 Barriers to termination

Percent of farms	Northern Basin	Goulburn- Broken	Murrumbidgee	Murray	Murray- Darling Basin
If you were to permanently sell your water, what would you do with your water delivery right?					
Terminate water delivery right to avoid ongoing access charges	0	11 (2)	8 (8)	9 (9)	9 (9)
Terminate water delivery right because I would be required to	29 (11)	0	0	1 (1)	1 (1)
Keep water delivery right as termination fees are too expensive	14 (5)	11 (2)	13 (4)	15 (6)	13 (4)
Keep water delivery right so I retain the option of having water delivered in the future	29 (11)	31 (4)	23 (5)	46 (10)	37 (10)
Sell water delivery right in a separate transaction	0	0	0	1 (1)	0
I would only sell my water with my water delivery right	0	26 (8)	27 (9)	15 (6)	20 (2)
Other	29 (11)	20 (2)	29 (11)	12 (3)	19 (10)
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Results in this table are for farms that were customers of an irrigation infrastructure operator.
 Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

Table 6 Barriers to termination continued

Percent of farms	Northern Basin	Goulburn-Broken	Murrumbidgee	Murray	Murray-Darling Basin
Have you previously considered terminating some or all of your water delivery right but decided not to?					
Yes	0	9 (9)	10 (1)	8 (8)	9 (9)
No	100	91 (10)	90 (9)	92 (11)	91 (10)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
If yes, why?					
Uncertainty regarding how the termination fee would be calculated	0	0	0	13 (4)	6 (6)
Termination fees are too expensive	0	100	60 (6)	50 (5)	67 (13)
Chose to sell water delivery right instead	0	0	0	13 (4)	6 (6)
Other	0	0	40 (4)	25 (7)	22 (4)
Total	0	100	100	100	100

Note: Results in this table are for farms that were customers of an irrigation infrastructure operator.
 Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

Table 7 Barriers to termination continued

Percent of farms	Northern Basin	Goulburn- Broken	Murrumbidgee	Murray	Murray- Darling Basin
Have you previously sold (not terminated) some or all of your water delivery right separate from a trade of an irrigation right or water access entitlement?					
Yes	0	6 (6)	2 (2)	20 (2)	12 (3)
No	100 (1)	94 (13)	98 (17)	80 (8)	88 (16)
Total	100	100	100	100	100
If no, why?					
Couldn't find a buyer	0	0	0	2 (2)	1 (1)
Have not needed to sell my water delivery right	100 (1)	48 (12)	60 (6)	55 (10)	56 (11)
Didn't know I could trade my water delivery right	0	7 (7)	0	4 (4)	4 (4)
My operator wouldn't allow it, or would require termination	0	2 (2)	8 (8)	1 (1)	3 (3)
Administration processes (applications and approvals) too complex	0	6 (6)	2 (2)	2 (2)	3 (3)
Administration processes (applications and approvals) too time consuming to make a timely trade	0	2 (2)	0	1 (1)	1 (1)
Other	0	35 (8)	29 (11)	35 (8)	33 (6)
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Results in this table are for farms that were customers of an irrigation infrastructure operator.

Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

Table 8 Network planning

Percent of farms	Northern Basin		Goulburn-Broken		Murrumbidgee		Murray		Murray-Darling Basin	
Where do you obtain information about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to your operator's infrastructure?										
Network service plan	0		9	(9)	6	(6)	16	(7)	12	(3)
Infrastructure operator website or email	71	(8)	26	(8)	33	(6)	27	(9)	30	(3)
Other websites	0		4	(4)	2	(2)	8	(8)	5	(5)
Meeting/AGM	14	(5)	22	(4)	13	(4)	25	(7)	21	(3)
Letter/mail-out from irrigation infrastructure operator	29	(11)	28	(10)	54	(9)	70	(7)	54	(9)
Media	14	(5)	9	(9)	6	(6)	8	(8)	8	(8)
Other irrigators	43	(7)	26	(8)	6	(6)	19	(10)	19	(10)
Other	14	(5)	19	(10)	15	(6)	1	(1)	9	(9)
How well informed do you feel about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to you operator's infrastructure?										
Fully informed	0		26	(8)	42	(6)	47	(11)	39	(12)
Somewhat informed	86	(14)	39	(12)	42	(6)	45	(9)	44	(8)
Uninformed	14	(5)	35	(8)	17	(8)	7	(7)	17	(8)
Total	100		100		100		100		100	
How satisfied are you with the level of engagement from your operator (ie consultation and ability to provide input or feedback if desired) about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to your operator's infrastructure?										
Satisfied	57	(12)	39	(12)	46	(10)	67	(13)	54	(9)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	43	(7)	28	(10)	35	(8)	28	(10)	30	(3)
Unsatisfied	0		33	(6)	19	(10)	5	(5)	15	(6)
Total	100		100		100		100		100	

Note: Results in this table are for farms that were customers of an irrigation infrastructure operator. Source: ABARES survey of irrigation farms in the Murray-Darling Basin

3 Survey methodology

Between February and May 2015 ABARES conducted a survey to examine irrigators' experiences of water trading and issues associated with the water charge rules. The survey was conducted as a supplementary to ABARES's 2014–15 survey of irrigation farms in the Murray–Darling Basin, based on the collection of data from 270 sample farms within the Basin. Fieldwork was conducted between February and May 2015 using face-to-face interviews.

The ABARES survey of irrigation farms collected information from broadacre (including rice and cotton), dairy and horticulture irrigation farms within the Murray–Darling Basin. These survey regions cover around 62 per cent of irrigation farms in the Basin and are based on those defined by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in its Sustainable Yields Project (CSIRO 2007). The regions covered by the 2014–15 survey were Murrumbidgee, Murray, Goulburn–Broken, and Condamine–Balonne (Map 1). The Murray region includes parts of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Map 1 Reporting regions



Source: ABARES

Target populations

ABARES surveys are designed, and samples selected, on the basis of a framework drawn from the Business Register maintained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This framework includes agricultural establishments (farms) classified by size and industry in each statistical local area. To be eligible for this survey, farms had to have engaged in irrigated agricultural activities during 2013–14, had an estimated value of agricultural operations of \$40 000 or more, and be defined as cotton, rice, dairy or horticulture industry farms.

The industry definitions used in this report are based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC). This classification is consistent with an international standard and permits comparisons between industries, both within Australia and internationally. Farms assigned to a particular ANZSIC class have a high proportion of their total output characterised by that class (ABS & SNZ 2006).

The ANZSIC industry classes and codes associated with the broadacre, dairy and horticulture categories used for this study were:

Rice	Rice growing	ANZSIC code 0146
Cotton	Cotton growing	ANZSIC code 0152
Dairy	Dairy cattle farming	ANZSIC code 0160
Horticulture	Vegetable growing (under cover)	ANZSIC code 0122
	Vegetable growing (outdoors)	ANZSIC code 0123
	Grape growing	ANZSIC code 0131
	Apple and pear growing	ANZSIC code 0134
	Stone fruit growing	ANZSIC code 0135
	Citrus fruit growing	ANZSIC code 0136
	Other fruit and tree nut growing	ANZSIC code 0139

Survey design

The farm population to be surveyed was stratified by operation size using the estimated value of agricultural operation (EVAO). The size of each stratum was determined using the Dalenius–Hodges method (Lehtonen & Pahkinen 2004). The sample allocation to each stratum was performed using a mixture of the Neyman allocation, which takes into account variability within strata of the auxiliary variable (in this case EVAO), and proportional allocation, which only considers the population number in each stratum. The Neyman allocation allocates large proportions of sample to strata with large variability—in the case of this survey, strata of larger farms (Lehtonen & Pahkinen 2004).

Sample weighting

Farm-level estimates published by ABARES are calculated by appropriately weighting the data collected from each sample farm and then using the weighted data to calculate population estimates. Sample weights are calculated so that population estimates from the sample for numbers of farms, areas of crops and numbers of livestock correspond as closely as possible to the most recently available ABS estimates from agricultural census and surveys data. The weighting methodology uses a model-based approach, with a linear regression model linking the survey variables and the estimation benchmark variables. The details of this method are described in Bardsley and Chambers (1984).

Generally, larger farms have smaller weights and smaller farms have larger weights, reflecting both the strategy of sampling a higher fraction of large farms than small farms (the former

having a wider range of variability of key characteristics and accounting for a much larger proportion of total output), and the relatively lower number of large farms.

Preliminary and provisional estimates

Preliminary and provisional estimates of farm financial performance are produced within a few weeks of completing survey collections. However, these may be updated several times at later dates. These subsequent versions will be more accurate, as they will be based on upgraded information and slightly more accurate input datasets.

Reliability of estimates

Reliability of the estimates of population characteristics presented in this report depends on design of the sample and accuracy of the measurement of characteristics for the individual sample farms.

Sampling errors

Only a small number of farms out of the total number of farms in a particular industry or region are surveyed. The data collected from each sample farm are weighted to calculate population estimates. Estimates derived from these farms are likely to be different from those that would have been obtained if information had been collected from a census of all farms. Any such differences are called sampling errors.

The size of the sampling error is most influenced by the survey design and the estimation procedures, as well as the sample size and variability of farms in the population. The larger the sample size, the lower the sampling error is likely to be. Therefore, national estimates are likely to have smaller sampling errors than industry and region estimates.

Sampling errors are a guide to the reliability of survey estimates and have been calculated for all estimates in this report. These sampling errors, expressed as percentages of the survey estimates and termed relative standard errors, are provided next to each estimate in parentheses.

Calculating confidence intervals using relative standard errors

Relative standard errors can be used to calculate confidence intervals; these indicate how close the actual population value is likely to be to the survey estimate.

The standard error is obtained by multiplying the relative standard error by the survey estimate and dividing by 100. For example, if average total cash receipts are estimated to be \$100 000 with a relative standard error of 6 per cent, the standard error for this estimate is \$6000. One standard error is equal to \$60 00 and two standard errors are equal to \$12 000.

For a 66 per cent confidence interval, there is roughly a two-in-three chance that the census value (the value that would have been obtained if all farms in the target population had been surveyed) is within one standard error of the survey estimate. This range of one standard error is described as the 66 per cent confidence interval. In this example there is an approximately two-in-three chance that the census value is between \$94 000 and \$106 000 {\$100 000 plus or minus \$6 000}.

For a 95 per cent confidence interval, there is roughly a 19-in-20 chance that the census value is within two standard errors of the survey estimate (the 95 per cent confidence interval). In this example, there is an approximately 19-in-20 chance that the census value lies between \$88 000 and \$112 000 {\$100 000 plus or minus \$12 000}.

Comparing estimates

When comparing estimates between two groups, it is important to recognise that the differences are subject to sampling error. A conservative estimate (an overestimate) of the standard error of the difference can be found by adding the squares of the estimated standard errors of the component estimates and taking the square root of the result.

For example, irrigators were asked 'How important is the amount of fixed charges to your decision to undertake a permanent water trade?' Across the Murray–Darling Basin, 46 per cent of farms responded with 'Very important', 20 per cent indicated 'Somewhat important', and 34 per cent 'Not important'. The relative standard errors associated with these estimates are 10 per cent, 2 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. The standard error of the difference between 'Very important' and 'Not important' is estimated as:

$$\sqrt{(10 \times 46 / 100)^2 + (7 \times 34 / 100)^2} = 12$$

A 95 per cent confidence interval for the difference is:

$$12 \pm 1.96 \times 6 = (-10, +10)$$

Hence, if 100 different samples are taken, in 95 of them the difference between these two estimates would be between minus 10 and 10.

Supplementary survey questionnaire

The impact of the structure and level of charges on trade decisions

1. How important is the amount of fixed charges to your decision to undertake a permanent water trade?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not important
2. How important is the amount of variable charges to your decision to undertake a temporary water trade?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not important
3. Where would you obtain information about the charges payable in relation to water traded from outside your geographical region (i.e. outside your irrigation network, valley, trading zone or state)?
 - Internet: irrigation infrastructure operator
 - Internet: bulk water supplier
 - Internet: government
 - Other irrigators
 - Water market intermediary (i.e. water broker or lawyer)
 - Other, please specify
 - Don't know

Schedule of charges

Under the Commonwealth Water Charge (Infrastructure) Rules 2010, an infrastructure operator is required to provide you (as a customer) with a 'schedule of charges' that sets out all the regulated charges that could be imposed on you by the operator. This document is often titled 'fees and charges' or 'water price/pricing schedule'. The 'schedule of charges' must provide sufficient detail in order for you to calculate the fees payable to your operator.

4. Which of the following are important to be shown in an operator's schedule of charges:
 - The circumstances in which the charge is payable
 - The type of right that the charge relates to (e.g. irrigation right, water delivery right, water access right)
 - How often a charge is payable (e.g. quarterly, annually)
 - Whether a charge would be included in the calculation of a termination fee
 - Details of any applicable discount or surcharge relating to the charges
 - Charges that are incurred by the operator and passed on to customers (e.g. bulk water charges, government water planning and management charges)
 - Administrative charges for trades (internal and external, transformations and terminations)
 - Details of the process for determining the level of charges
5. Did you receive a schedule of charges from your IIO/bulk water supplier in the last 12 months?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
6. If yes, go to Q6; If No, go to question 10.
7. Did the 'schedule of charges' clearly set out the difference between charges payable for holding or using water and charges payable for accessing your operator's infrastructure?
 - Yes
 - No
8. Did the 'schedule of charges' clearly set out the difference between charges payable for access to your operator's infrastructure and charges incurred by your operator and passed onto you (i.e. bulk water charges)?
 - Yes
 - No
9. Are you a customer of an irrigation infrastructure operator?
 - Yes
 - No

10. If Q8 = no go to end of module.

11. Did the 'schedule of charges' provide sufficient information for you to calculate the charges payable to terminate some or all of your water delivery right?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / not relevant

12. How satisfied are you with the level of engagement from your operator (i.e. consultation and your ability to provide input and feedback if desired) about changes to future fees and charges?

- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Unsatisfied

Barriers to termination [All questions in this section are only relevant for IIO customers]

13. If you were to permanently sell your water, what would you do with your water delivery right?

- Terminate water delivery right to avoid ongoing access charges
- Terminate water delivery right because I would be required to
- Keep water delivery right as termination fees are too expensive
- Keep water delivery right so I retain the option of having water delivered in the future
- Sell water delivery right in a separate transaction
- I would only permanently sell my water with my water delivery right
- Other

14. Have you previously considered terminating some or all of your water delivery right but decided not to?

- Yes
- No

15. If yes, why?

- Uncertainty regarding how the termination fee would be calculated
- Termination fees are too expensive
- Chose to sell water delivery right instead
- Other, please specify

16. Have you previously sold (not terminated) some or all of your water delivery right separate from a trade of an irrigation right or water access entitlement?

- Yes

- No

17. If no, why?

- Couldn't find a buyer
- Have not needed to sell my water delivery right
- Didn't know I could trade my water delivery right
- My operator wouldn't allow it, or would require termination
- Administration processes (applications and approvals) too complex
- Administration processes (applications and approvals) too time consuming to make a timely trade
- Other, please specify

Network planning

18. Where do you obtain information about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to your operator's infrastructure? (Indicate as many as apply)

- Network service plan
- Irrigation infrastructure operator website or email
- Other websites
- Meeting / AGM
- Letter / mail-out from irrigation infrastructure operator
- Media
- Other irrigators
- Other

19. How well informed do you feel about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to your operator's infrastructure?

- Fully informed
- Somewhat informed
- Uninformed

20. How satisfied are you with the level of engagement from your operator (i.e. consultation and ability to provide input or feedback if desired) about planned maintenance, expansion or improvements to your operator's infrastructure?

- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Unsatisfied

References

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