

Understanding our customers' needs

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As part of GMW's ongoing approach to understanding our customers' needs we recently engaged an independent survey team.

The team phoned 62 of our customers in January to gain a greater understanding on a range of matters, including:

- Our irrigation delivery services;
- 2016 Water Plan;
- Proposed tariff reforms;
- Feedback on the consultation process for our 2016 Water Plan;
- Information about farming enterprises;
- Preferences of service levels, and;
- Where GMW should be focussing in the next five years.

This survey was not standard process, we did it because we wanted to gather as much feedback as possible on our services, our future direction and proposed tariff changes. Put simply, we're making engaging and consulting with our customers a priority.

What did the survey tell us?

Value for money

There were mixed views on the value for money of GMW's delivery services. The overall average rating was 5.2 out of 10. About one third (34 per cent) gave a rating of seven or more. While a similar number (37 per cent) gave a rating of four or less.

Our customers expressed their concerns about prices being too high. For us, this confirms our drive to provide stable and predictable pricing for customers through tariff reforms, is the correct path.

Quality of delivery service

Most customers are happy with the delivery services they receive. The large majority (71 per cent) gave a rating of seven or more out of 10.

Delivery service the meets expectations

The vast majority of customers felt their delivery service expectations were being met. Eighty-one per cent felt their expectations were being met or exceeded and 19 per cent reported delivery services falling behind their needs.

Desired service improvements

Customers were asked where they thought GMW should deliver service improvements in the next five years. Reducing costs to prevent price increases and continuing with the modernisation of the system were the top two things outlined by our customers.

Views on Uniform GMID Delivery Charge

There was strong support for a minimum level of service delivery. Overall customers rated their support 7.8 out of 10, with 44 per cent of customers giving it an extremely high rating of nine or 10.

Overall 79 per cent of customers interviewed agreed with uniform pricing levels for customers who receive the same minimum service level. Only five per cent opposed this and 16 per cent were unsure.

Participants who were already aware of GMW's tariff reforms were also asked to rate their acceptability on the proposed changes before being given more detail. At this time 42 per cent rated it acceptable (five or more out of 10), 29 per cent rated it unacceptable and 29 per cent said they didn't know.

When participants were provided with more information about the proposed Uniform GMID Delivery Fee most saw it as highly acceptable, with 74 per cent rating it five or more out of 10.

The Uniform GMID Delivery Charge was a strategy developed to protect our customers from price shocks that may be caused by large capital renewals, natural disasters or a reduction in delivery shares.

We estimate a move to a Uniform GMID Delivery Charge will save the business about \$850,000 to \$1 million annually. This savings will be passed onto our customers and allow us to create more stable and predictable pricing.

Water plan consultation

Finally we asked participants if they were aware of our 2016-2020 Water Plan and its consultation process. About three quarters (73 per cent) of participants were aware of the 2016 Water Plan. Almost half the participants (48 per cent) were aware that GMW was asking for feedback on the plan and 11 per cent had attended an information session. Notably, participants were positive about the consultation process and their opportunity to provide feedback.

For more information go to www.gmwater.com.au

Participant selection, recruitment and interviewing was all undertaken by Newgate Research using a randomised database of all of GMW's customers.