



## **Encouraging levels of public acceptance: national baseline data**

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### **Background**

Flinders University Adelaide has established national data on Australian attitudes to water recycling. Sampling covered the seven capital cities that had experienced water restrictions in the previous summer. A total of 2,504 householders participated in the telephone survey (Nov 04 to Jan 05) and were given clear explanations of fit for purpose alternative sources of water.

### **Findings**

It was found that 68% are in favour of using reclaimed water for vegetables and fruit crops (Figure 1). A spokesman for a water authority has confirmed that this proportion of acceptance meets the two-thirds majority yardstick that is used in deciding whether to implement a project. Based on previous research, Dr. June Marks believes that familiarity with water recycling and a clear flow of information builds trust in the use of the water. The figures for Adelaide support this claim, where the use of reclaimed water for market gardens (Virginia) and vineyards (Virginia and Willunga) is well established: Adelaide has the highest level of acceptance for this application, being 6% more than the national average.

Another encouraging finding is that people seem to be ready to discuss the idea of mixing 'drinking water quality' reclaimed water with traditional sources for showering, cooking and drinking. A total of 73% of Australians in this sample are either willing without hesitation or willing with some qualifications to use the product water for all uses in the home. When confidence levels were investigated,

acceptance was confirmed (Figure 2) for showering (76%) but, as predicted, fell for uses involving direct ingestion: cooking (54%) and drinking (42%). Even so, these confidence levels are robust and are higher than earlier findings for Perth (16% acceptance) and Sydney (26% favour) and better reflect recent results in Perth (Po et. al 2005).

**Further details**

Marks J S, B. Martin and M. Zadoroznyj (2006)

Acceptance of water recycling in Australia: national baseline data, Water, March, pp.151-157.

**Reference**

Po M., B.E. Nancarrow, Z. Leviston, N.B. Porter, G.J. Syme and J.D. Kaercher (2005) Predicting community behaviour in relation to wastewater reuse: What drives decisions to accept or reject? Water for a Healthy Country National Research Flagship, CSIRO Land and Water, Perth.

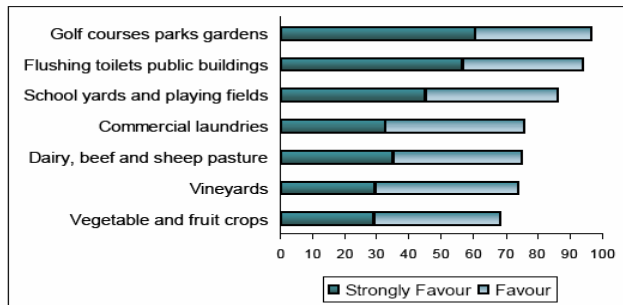


Figure 1 Percentage 'strongly favour/favour' recycling reclaimed water (n=2504)

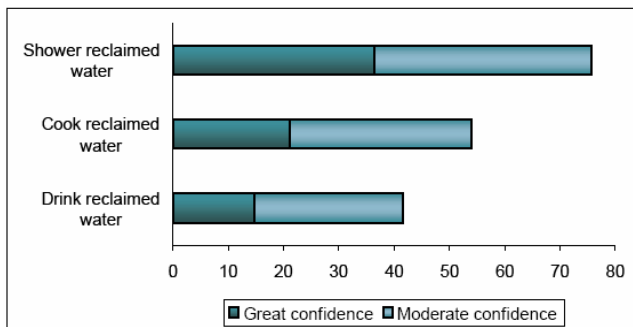


Figure 2 Confidence in indirect potable reuse (percentages, n=2504)