2015 Clearwater survey

Executive Summary

September 2015

Introduction

In May/June 2015, Clearwater sent out an online survey to collect industry feedback on (1) Drivers, barriers and challenges relating to the implementation of Integrated Water Management (IWM), (2) Clearwater's current service performance and (3) Communication and learning preferences.

A total of 116 respondents contributed to the data, with 84% hailing from the state of Victoria and 13% from New South Wales. Approximately 84% were from a capital city, and the balance was from a regional centre or rural area.

There was a good spread of industry representation, with approximately 30% from local government, 17% from Melbourne Water, another 17% from the private sector (consultants and developers), 13% from State government, 12% from other water authorities and 9% from Education or Research institutions.

While about 1/3 of respondents were from executive or middle level management positions (with decision making authority), 2/3 classed themselves as senior officers or officers (limited authority to make decisions).

This report summarises the survey's main findings.

Drivers of IWM

Survey respondents were asked to nominate what they considered to be drivers for IWM at the industry, organisation and individual level.

Industry level drivers

Although respondents expressed their views in a variety of ways, the key driver of IWM can be summarised as a need for a sustainable, cost effective, potable water supply in the context of:

- *Supply* pressures such as external influences (e.g. climate change), and the high cost of expanding supply capacity (whether through increasing storage capacity or building additional desalination plants); and
- *Demand* pressures such as population growth, and a trend towards increased liveability and urban amenity (which means greater green belts and increased water usage).

Organisation level drivers

The drivers at the organisation level reflected the interests of the different groups. For example:

- For local government it included requirements imposed by other levels of government, and increasing expectations from the community to better manage water resources and provide outcomes the community values, such as greater liveability and urban amenity.
- For the private sector, drivers included commercial opportunities (e.g. WSUD can increase sales prices for residential land).
- For education and research institutions, IWM provides a research and education focus for their core business.

Individual level drivers

Two themes emerged at the individual level:

- One concerned the near term and involved the impact of water on current liveability and urban amenity.
- The other theme concerned the longer term. It involved people's felt responsibility for future generations. Terms such as stewardship or intergenerational equity were used – that is, protecting water resources for future generations.

Gaps and needs for the successful implementation of IWM

Through a variety of research and stakeholder engagement projects with Victorian industry practitioners, Clearwater previously identified a range of industry gaps and needs for the successful implementation of IWM (Table 1).

Table 1 IWM gaps/needs verified in online survey

Across the industry	- Shared vision/understanding of IWM - Meaningful drivers to implement IWM - Strong leadership and direction in IWM - Coordinated and broad-scale community engagement - Ties between water and planning industry - Clear and holistic legislation on IWM - Cost and benefit information of IWM – business case - Clarity over who should bear the cost of IWM - Long-term funding sources - Enforcement of IWM
Within and between organisations	- Ongoing strategic engagement between state government and other stakeholders involved in IWM - Clear roles and responsibilities between organisations involved in IWM - Communication and coordination between organisations involved in IWM - Communication and collaboration within organisations involved in IWM (between the different groups/departments) - Organisational processes facilitating IWM - Buy-in from senior management on IWM - Willingness to take risks - IWM champions (individuals and/or organisations)
At the individual level	- Open and honest sharing between industry practitioners (in particular sharing of lessons learnt) - Coordination of programs who provide IWM information dissemination and/or training - Contractor skills/knowledge (construction, maintenance) - Learning from doing – hands-on training, on-site tours etc. - Technical skills/knowledge - Social sciences skills/knowledge (e.g. engagement, change management, economics, leadership etc.) - Planning provisions and deemed-to-comply solutions - Technical guidance and guidelines on IWM

The aim of the survey was to verify the IWM gaps/needs identified previously and to prioritise them. Survey respondents were therefore asked for their opinion on the *need for improvement* in these areas.

Need for improvement at the industry level

Whilst respondents indicated that all areas at the industry level require major improvements, the issues of leadership, direction and linkages between industry players, were dominant. The top areas for improvement according to the executive/ middle level manager group were:

- Shared vision/understanding of IWM
- Strong leadership and direction in IWM
- Ties between water and planning industry

Need for improvement at the organisation level

The respondents suggested that all of the listed areas, except the area 'need for IWM champions', need major improvement. However the *priorities* for improvement differed between senior managers (executive and middle level managers) and officers lower in the organisational hierarchy.

Senior managers listed the following as their top three ranked areas for improvement:

- Clear roles and responsibilities between organisations involved in IWM
- Communication and coordination between organisations involved in IWM
- Communication and collaboration within organisations involved in IWM (between the different groups/departments)

The top two priorities of the senior group support the need for coordination of players across the industry, while the third one reflects issues around internal effectiveness.

Officers listed the following as their top three ranked areas for improvement:

- Willingness to take risks
- Buy-in from senior management on IWM
- Ongoing strategic engagement between state government and other stakeholders involved in IWM

Whilst the third priority at the officer level relates to the first two priorities of the senior group (need for coordination across industry players), the top two reflect the view that they don't receive enough support from senior managers.

Need for improvement at the individual level

Overall, survey participants classified most items within the 'individual' level as *small* rather than *major* (as opposed to items at the industry or organisation level).

Both senior managers and lower level officers agreed on the order of importance for improvement at the individual level, with respondents feeling that the following were the priorities for improvement:

- Planning provisions and deemed-to-comply solutions
- Contractor skills/ knowledge (construction, maintenance)

It was unclear whether there was a clear majority in favour of the third ranked priority - Social sciences skills/ knowledge.

Current service performance

In addition to investigating barriers and challenges relating to the implementation of IWM, the survey also asked respondents a range of questions about Clearwater's delivery performance.

Overall, Clearwater is seen as providing high quality value-for-money services, with a high level of customer satisfaction. Clearwater is also valued as a trusted source of information, with very skilled staff. 83% would recommend Clearwater services to others.

Clearwater was rated highly for building individual and organisational capacity in IWM, with respondents agreeing that Clearwater services: had an impact on their personal knowledge; benefited their organisations; and, helped to develop their networks.

Communication and learning preferences

Lastly, respondents were asked questions about their communication and learning preferences:

- Across all respondents, the top 3 sources of information and advice were 'personal networks' and 'people in their own organisations', followed by capacity building programs.
- Communication channels such as emails, e-newsletters and face-to-face communications scored much higher than other methods such as phone calls, social media, YouTube or apps.
- Respondents showed a clear preference for learning methods involving face-to-face contact (be it one-on-one, as part of a group or during a site visit), as opposed to online/electronic learning methods.

Next steps

In addition to a variety of other data sources, the results of this survey data is being used by Clearwater to develop new and align existing capacity building services to best cater to the evolving needs of the water industry and ensure it continues to provide a relevant service.