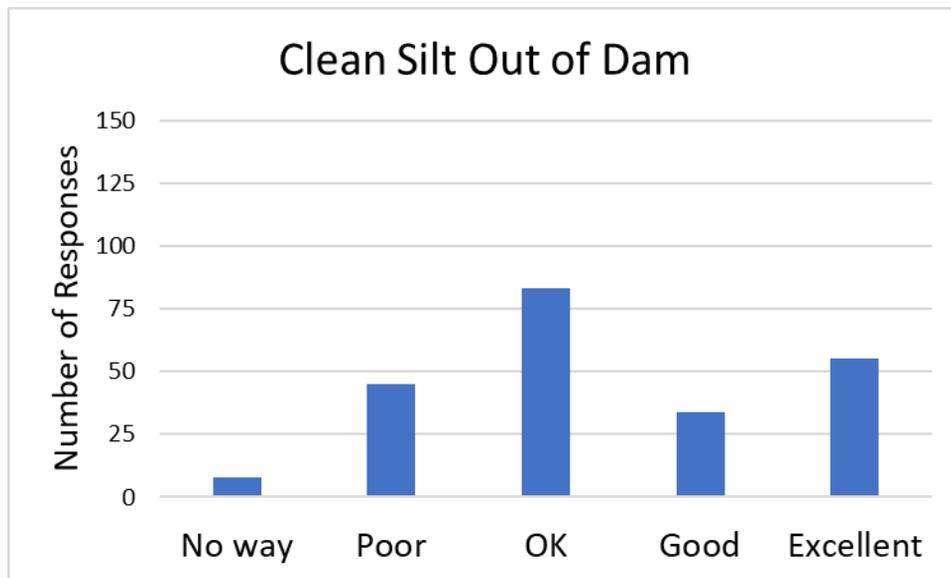
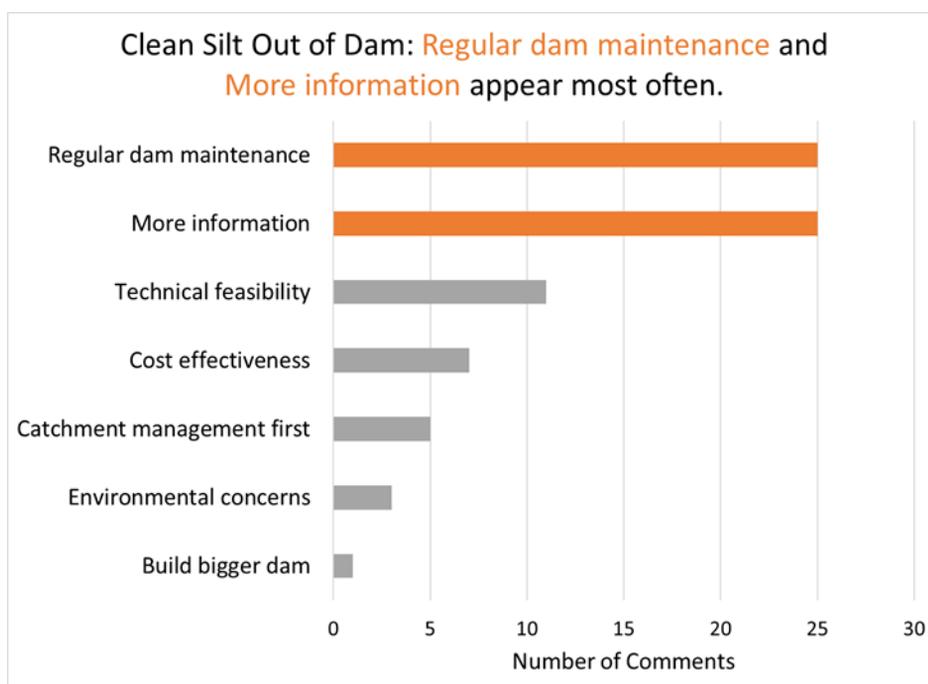


ZNET recently surveyed Uralla Shire residents on nine options for future water security

This is what people said about desilting the dam to increase the town water supply



People's comments give an insight into their rating for the option and allow common themes to be identified



## Individual comments relating to each theme build a deeper understanding of people's values and opinions

Comment Theme	Type of Comments
Regular dam maintenance	Should be part of periodic maintenance, long term planning and management plan; other Councils could also share silt pump; this should have been completed when dam was low; would have thought this is just regular maintenance; clean out the dam and Uralla will have more than enough water; finally!!
More information	What survey/engineering work has been done? How much extra storage is created? Problem of silt is not going to go away – has silt mapping (promised by USC in Jan 2020) been done? What happens with silt – is it useable elsewhere? Potential effects on water supply? Should be part of the solution; not sure after arsenic; will it stir up more arsenic? More info on cost, impact on water life in dam, where will silt be put, length of operation, examples of where this has been done before, duration of disruption to water supply....
Technical feasibility	Would need careful monitoring – the powers that be do not have good track record and we can't afford mistakes; better to create new storage for water; problem of supply the town while desilting; what to do with the silt; dams have high evaporation – might be better water option.
Cost effectiveness	Other water options may be cheaper in the long run; needs to be done but will be expensive; expensive exercise for what might be achieved.
Catchment management first	Better to keep the silt out; managed grazing in catchment to keep high ground cover; landscape hydration; create carbon sponge in the catchment; increase awareness of catchment role.
Environmental concerns	Would disturb healthy ecosystem developed over time; worried about heavy metals in silt; cost benefit and environmental effect may not be acceptable.
Build bigger dam	Expand dam with associated recreation, wildlife tourism spots.

### Our focus group research provides a rich picture of the *values* that informed people's perspectives

From the interviews and focus groups, a striking finding has been the ways in which the experiences of 2019-2020 have prompted an **appreciation** of Kentucky Creek Dam as the sole water source for Uralla's town drinking supply. History of the dam construction and the raising of the dam wall in the mid 1980s are well understood and appreciated by participants. So are concerns about the volume of silt within the dam. Accordingly, proposals for addressing the siltation of the dam generated a high degree of discussion.

Of critical importance to community members is the **value of reliable information** on the state of the dam itself. One participant captured this value, by referring to their experience of the 2019-2020 drought - "all of a sudden, we ... **found out that we had even less water** and the **information** was that our dam wasn't a good quality dam and it was full of silt and could literally run out at any moment".

Addressing silt in the dam as a part of **routine dam maintenance** was well supported in interviews and focus group discussions. However, participants were careful to note the need to address water management **holistically**. One participant highlighted, for example, the need to not only address silt already in dam water, but the processes that produced silt and runoff generally, suggesting that "the whole range of strategies for **slowing the movement of water** through landscape so that has the benefit of reducing amount of silt in the dam. Perhaps also removing some of the existing silt that might free up some water, ... it's more of a **collective problem** or **collective approach**", while another participant commented that "one of the options that people could think about is better management of silt and thus reducing loss of storage volume. And over a long period of time, you could think about how you could potentially **reduce erosion on the banks**. And you reduce erosion by **revegetation**, by making sure that you keep animals away from the banks".

### If desilting is part of the solution, community concerns would be acknowledged and addressed if Council can communicate on the following key issues:

- ✓ engineering report on projected increase in dam capacity from desilting and how much this additional storage will contribute to water security
- ✓ information on what measures will be taken to dispose of silt, to avoid or remove contaminants
- ✓ an assessment of technical feasibility and examples of case studies of similar dam desilting
- ✓ outline of accompanying measures and assistance to landholders to reduce further silt entering the town water supply dam