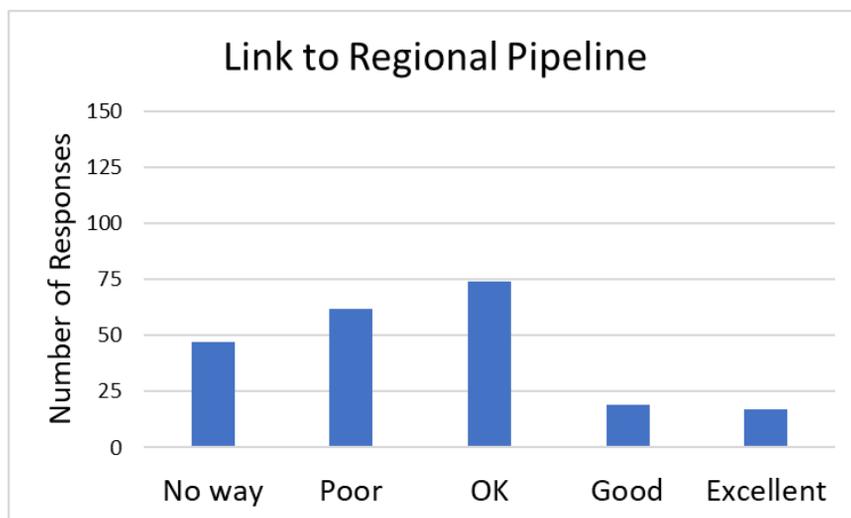
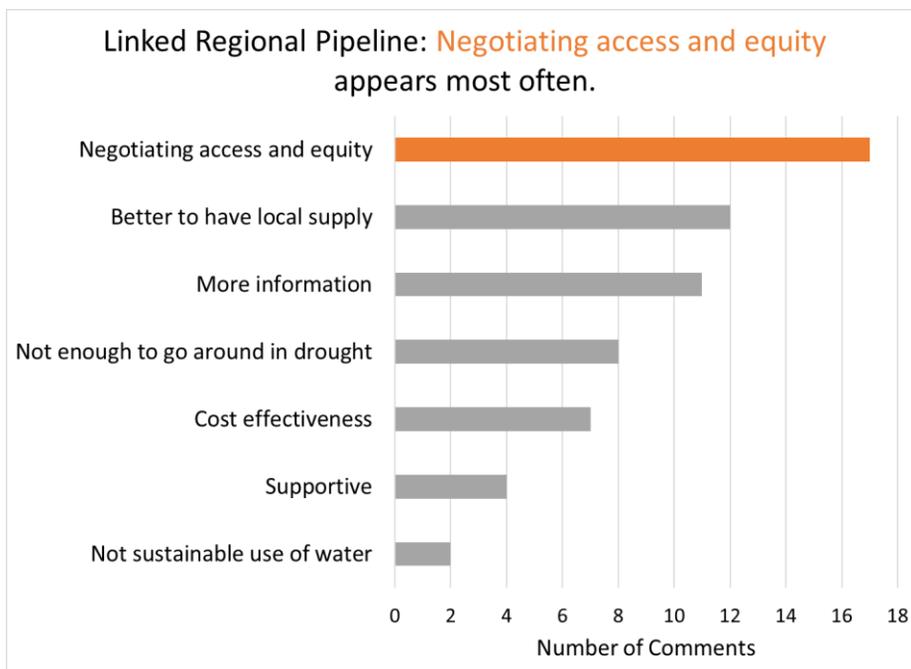


ZNET recently surveyed Uralla Shire residents on nine options for future water security

This is what people said about linking to a regional water pipeline to supplement 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 |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Negotiating access and equity | Negotiating cost would be high; in drought there is not enough fair co-operation – would require masses of bureaucracy; hi concern for BIG commercial users in other regions; secure water attracts high water users; could be on water restrictions we don't need to be; beware the word "share" – Armidale has a history; expensive option, competing, at risk and may not provide water when needed if all are in drought; the Murray -Darling debacle shows how users outside the Shire can impact our access; who would trust Armidale Council after recent legal issues with water extraction; support ourselves, be reliant ourselves; get f***ed Armidale – you're not having our water, arsenic and all! |
| Better to have local supply | Need to look after our town first; feel that anything managed locally is better; not needed – Uralla just needs more storage; each town needs to be water sufficient – put in OWN infrastructure and maintain and monitor; arsenic could be shared – no control over local issues; NO WAY, Vic Wright fought long and hare for us to not be beholden to Armidale – he raised the dam wall; moved from Central Coast which did exactly that – poor choice; |
| More information | What distance can water sharing pipeline cover? How much water could be saved/stored? This could be interesting to see how it works – could come in handy in drought; worth having ongoing conversation – 'Water Nationalism' is greatest hurdle; where would pipeline come from? |
| Not enough to go around in drought | Could end up with too many areas using same water supply in an emergency; we're in this together; high cost for something that might not be used if all regions are having same conditions at same time. |
| Cost effectiveness | Value for money; gross waste of resources; expensive and inefficient and will be poorly managed; requires a lot of money but could be achieved; expensive with risk of regional priority for water. |
| Supportive | If this is aligned with increased dam storage across the region, it may mitigate the worse impacts of drought on places with smaller reserves; option to join with Armidale once Malpas increased |
| Not sustainable use of water | This option seems to be a delay of execution – Australia is a dry continent with scarce water resources; not sustainable – should be mindful of sustainability of strategy. |

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

The option for regional linkages in water supplies did not garner significant levels of support, or positive community responses. For some participants piping water from Armidale to Uralla was seen as “**profoundly silly**”, while others warned of the possibility of a hostile response to this proposal from the broader community - “I think there'll be that much **community objection** to that”. For some this concern was also evident in earlier proposals for regional linkages in water supply, that this proposal “was talked about here years ago, and there was **community uproar**”.

Underpinning these observations were concerns for **the long-term sustainability** of linking regional water supplies, particularly in the context of drought and water shortages. One focus group participant summed up this concern, asking “They wouldn't have enough anyway. So, how could they supply us as well? They can't...”, while in a similar vein another suggested that “all the problems of the Armidale Council are **different** from problems of the Uralla Council.”

More generally the proposed linkage between regional water supplies was also perceived to work against efforts to achieved more localised forms of water efficiency and sustainability. One the the participants in our focus groups suggested that piping water between regional centres, is “not about **learning to be more careful**. It's about continuing with the lifestyle we like. **It's silly**. Piping water from one place to another is silly. We need to learn to **live within what we've got**”.

If linking to a regional water supply is part of the solution, community concerns would be acknowledged and addressed if Council can communicate on the following key issues:

- ✓ safeguards to ensure an equitable sharing of water and details on how water entitlements would be secured against competing demands from the growth of high-water-use businesses in the region
- ✓ information on water management track records of other local government areas/water utilities to be involved in agreements
- ✓ sustainable yield assessment for the key supply catchments to ensure water entitlements can be delivered in the event of widespread drought
- ✓ infrastructure required for regional water sharing and cost-effectiveness of water delivery