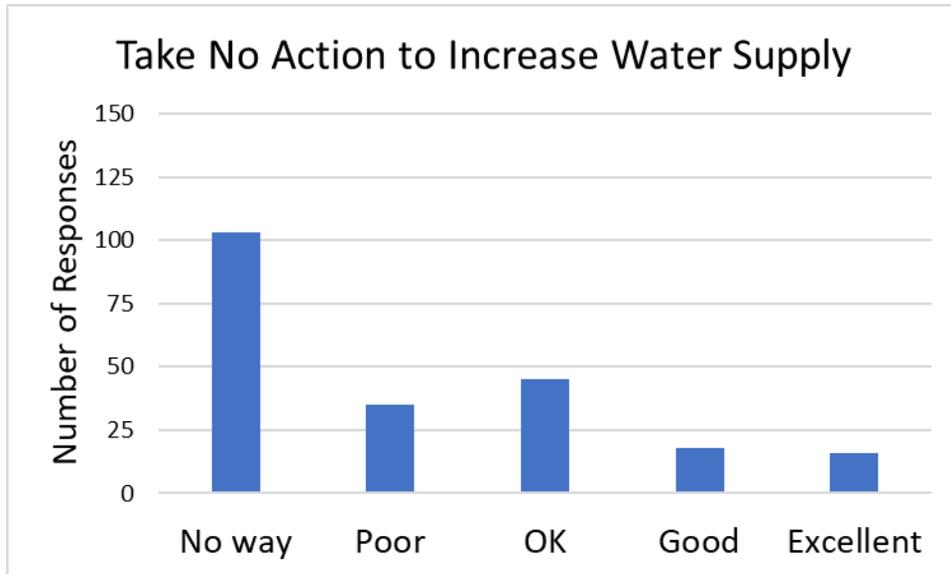
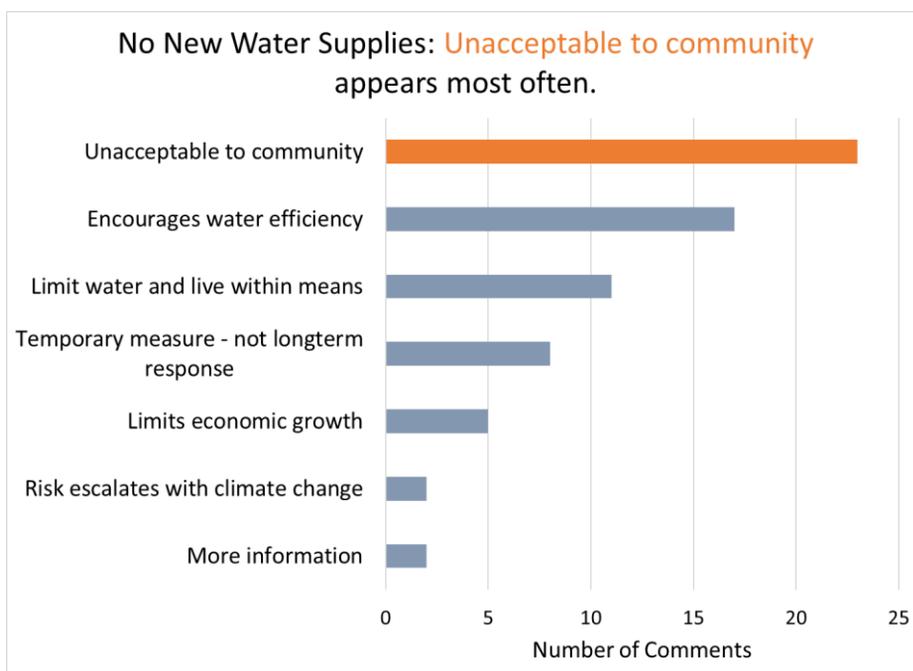


ZNET recently surveyed Uralla Shire residents on nine options for future water security

This is what people said about taking no action to increase 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
Unacceptable to the community	Who would want this? Less human centric; now is a good time to change given what we have gone through; water restrictions are too hard to “police” and don’t appear to work; entitled to good, clean and plentiful water; mental health aspects to constant restrictions; climate change does not allow us to do nothing; we cannot afford to ignore water security; to do nothing is criminal as there is no back up plan; head in the sand (wet or dry) does not work; I’m always down for doing nothing and drinking beer .... But if we run out of water, that could jeopardize even that; !!!
Encourages water efficiency	Would be risky but more responsible water use is essential; needs a lot of education and communication; sensible restrictions on watering gardens in the heat of the day; treat water as a valuable resource; tighter water restriction and more community education would be fine ALONG with some other plans to drought-proof our water supply.
Limit water and live within means	Living out of town makes you learn how to save water from early age and it becomes a lifetime habit; do better with less; be self-sufficient or “no go”; drought is common – manage for it; we live on the driest continent – all possible water conservation measures should be in place; tight water restrictions so people value water; households, businesses and industry waste water all the time because the true cost is not charged.
Temporary measure – not long term	Should have tighter water restrictions but future planning is necessary; happy with water restrictions an interim measure as other options are implemented; OK in conjunction with other approaches; we may not have a problem for another 30 years ... but that is unlikely; let’s think all of the above options first!
Limits economic growth	Limited ability to increase population and develop business; no way – not viable with increasing population; impact of water security on town finances; not an option if we are to continue to grow; does nothing for building stronger rural communities.
Risk escalates with climate change	Do nothing only works if climate change policy works i.e., climate does not change much; not an option with climate change.
More information	Does it limit economic growth or encourage water conservation? Where is the balance.

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

The experiences of 2019-2020, that included a prolonged drought, water restrictions and the “Do Not Drink” alert requiring the distribution of bottled water remain fresh in the minds of community members. Focus group participants suggested that this period “just **stretched everybody emotionally, mentally, physically**” and that the physical manifestations of the drought – dust storms, bushfire, the detection of elevated levels of arsenic in the Uralla drinking supply – were “**dire**”, and “**dreadful**”.

At the same time participants spoke about “people's **ingenuity** to solve the problem and there was a real community spirit”, the need to for community voices to be **heard** in decision making, for a “**community conversation**” about how we use water in Uralla, and for a “**water strategy that this community feels confident about**”

Importantly, the gravity of this experience informed a general consensus on the need to think strategically about future water security and sustainability. One participant commented that “the **wisdom** is get ready for the disaster” while another participant suggested that “I think we've got to be known as a **water-aware community**. I think there's a lot of **pride** in the community being in Uralla.” For these reasons taking no action to address water sustainability was widely seen as inconsistent with the lessons members of the community had learned during the last two years.

## If no further action is proposed to address water security, community concerns would be acknowledged and addressed if Council can communicate on the following key issues:

- ✓ a rational and clearly articulated reason why no action is being taken
- ✓ impact of constrained water resources on economic and population growth, and community wellbeing
- ✓ opportunities Council is pursuing for additional water savings and to improve water infrastructure to reduce losses
- ✓ assistance Council will offer residents to improve water efficiency
- ✓ need for long term planning that reviews sustainable water yields as the climate changes