



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Sustainability Victoria Climate Change Social Research



Background

With Sustainability Victoria's (SV's) refocus on supporting the community to act on climate change, the need for reliable intelligence on current community attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and expectations of government in the area of climate change was needed to inform policy and program development.

The Climate Change Social Research was conducted on behalf of Sustainability Victoria by Wallis Research, a Victorian-based research company with a strong reputation for expertise in conducting social and government research.

Survey content was developed with input from a range of relevant experts on questionnaire design, climate change and /or behaviour change.

The research was conducted in November and December last year using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) methodology.

A total of 3,333 Victorians took part in the survey. The survey sample was carefully designed and controlled to provide results that can be projected to the broader population with confidence. The survey estimates have a high level of statistical reliability. (At the 95% level of confidence, the margin of error associated with the sample of 3,300 is plus or minus 2.5%.)

Survey data will be used by Sustainability Victoria and actively promoted to other Government Departments and through regional networks to:

- › Inform the development of programs
- › Guide the evolution of policy
- › Provide a baseline against which to measure future changes

This document summaries the key topline findings from the research.



Key findings

Victorians are concerned about climate change – it is an issue that needs action now

- 91% know that climate change is happening and that human activity is contributing to it.
 - Only 4% say there is no such thing as climate change
 - A further 3% believe climate change is entirely due to natural processes
- One-third of the population rate climate change in the top three most important issues facing the state.
- Four out of five Victorians (78%) are concerned about climate change.
- The things people worry about most in relation to climate change include:
 - The effects upon future generations (76%)
 - The state of the planet (48%)
 - The impacts upon the quality of life and their health (38%).
- The population is engaged on the issue with three-quarters of Victorians stating they are interested in news items, documentaries and other forms of information on climate change.
- Over three-quarters believe climate change is an urgent issue that needs action now.

Victorians believe their actions can make a positive difference

- Self-efficacy is an important part of an individual's decision to take action – generally people are more likely to consider an action if they believe the action will make a difference. Self-efficacy among Victorians is positive with 82% believing that "I can do meaningful things to reduce the impact of climate change".

A clear majority of Victorians are willing to take action on climate change

- Four out of five Victorians are willing to take action on climate change.
- Seven in ten agree that they would feel positive about being part of a community that is working together to tackle climate change.
- Victorians see action on climate change as the responsibility of all individuals – 93% believe that individuals should be taking action on climate change, either contributing, 77%, or leading in their community, 16%.



This 'willingness to act' is reflected in higher-than-expected levels of interest in a number of advanced pro-climate change actions

- › Three-quarters of Victorians are interested in purchasing 100% green power for their home.
- › Three-quarters are interested in generating their own power and feeding excess back into the system.
- › Seven in ten are interested in solar battery storage systems.
- › Just over half are interested in taking part in community renewable energy projects.
- › Just over half are interested in buying an electric or more fuel efficient car.

Victorians believe that government and business should be acting on climate change

- › Almost all, 95%, believe that the Australian Government should be taking action on climate change. The majority hold the view that the Australian Government should be leading action (68%).
- › Almost all, 93%, believe that the State Government should be acting on climate change – either in a leadership role (48%) or as a contributor (44%).
- › Only 7% of Victorians think the State Government should take no action.
- › Nine in ten (88%) also believe that Local Government should be acting on climate change – most think they should contribute (55%) rather than lead (33%).
- › The community also expects action on climate change from:
 - Environmental groups, 89%. Respondents are fairly evenly split on whether environmental groups should lead (43%) or contribute (46%)
 - Business and industry, 93%. Most think business and industry should contribute to action (59%) rather than lead (34%)

The majority of Victorians want more action from the State Government

- › One in five think the Victorian government is doing enough but more than half (61%) think they should be doing more.

Climate change impacts have been observed by most Victorians and there is concern about future impacts

- › Approximately 50–60 per cent of all Victorians believe there has been an increase in the occurrence of environmental events in this state over the past ten years, including:
 - severe bushfires
 - storms and floods
 - coastal erosion
 - crop failures/declining agriculture
 - air pollution
 - heatwaves
 - drought
- › More than half of the population are concerned about the effects these environmental events might cause their family in the foreseeable future.
- › Of those who had observed increases in the occurrence of extreme weather events in Victoria, the clear majority (70–85%) believe climate change is influencing this.

There is strong support for the Victorian Government's Climate Change agenda – targets are strongly supported

Net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

- › One-quarter (24%) of Victorians are aware of the net zero emissions by 2050 target
- › Four out of five Victorians (78%) support the government's zero emissions target. Support increases to nine in ten among those aged 40 or under.

Renewable energy targets

(25% of the state's electricity to come from renewable energy sources by 2020, and 40% by 2025)

- › One-quarter (24%) of Victorians are aware of the renewable energy targets
- › 84% of Victorians support the target. Similar to the zero emissions target, support increases to over nine out of ten among those aged 40 or under.

Victorians are particularly supportive of renewable energy

- › 75% would support wind turbines in their local area providing the community with renewable energy
- › 89% would support solar panels in their local area providing access to renewable energy

Further information

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