

Climate change top concern of millennials

November 2 2016, by Niki Widdowson

Sixty-three per cent of young Australians rank climate change as the most serious issue facing Australia – three times the number in any other geographical area of the world, a global survey has found.

The World Economic Forum [survey](#), conducted by their Global Shapers network, canvassed more than 26,500 millennials (people aged 20 to 33) around the world.

QUT student Nicholas Johnson, who leads the World Economic Forum Global Shapers Brisbane hub which administered the survey in Australia, said it showed young Australians were far more concerned with the effects of [climate change](#) in their region than the rest of the world's young people.

"In stark contrast, 57 per cent of participants in the rest of the world said their top regional concern was government accountability and corruption," said Mr Johnson, who is QUT Student leader of the Year and graduating from a Business/Mathematics dual degree.

"However, slightly more than 74 per cent of Australian millennials said they welcome refugees to the country and 34 per cent would welcome refugees into their home."

Mr Johnson said the survey showed young Australians, unlike their peers in many other places in the world, did not consider government accountability and transparency anywhere near the top of their list of pressing issues.

"For Australians participants, gender inequality was cited as the second most pressing issue but the rest of the world's young people's top regional concerns were lack of economic opportunity, lack of education, and poverty."

Mr Johnson said survey participants globally were also surveyed on their view of the most serious issues facing the entire world.

"Here, climate change came out as the main global challenge at 45 per cent, followed by large scale conflict/wars (38 per cent) and religious conflicts (34 per cent)," he said.

"The Global Shapers survey indicates many young Australians have a different view from the rest of the world about the severity of major global issues.

"It suggests our young people are sheltered from the practical, everyday difficulties facing much of the world's youth every day such as resource scarcity and conflict."

Mr Johnson said that, overall, the survey found young people viewed the world with optimism.

"An overwhelming majority of [young people](#) believe that technology is creating jobs (86 per cent) as opposed to destroying them (14 per cent).

"They believe the next big trends will be artificial intelligence/robotics and the internet of things.

"Where, globally, 73 per cent cited privacy and the protection of personal data as strong concerns, Australians were pretty relaxed about their privacy and data with only 2.2 per cent worried about loss of privacy through technology."

Mr Johnson said that four key observations stood out in the survey results:

- a sense of optimism
- unity and a sense of shared destiny that transcends borders
- a desire for honesty, integrity and transparency
- embrace technology with caution

"Young people comprise 50 per cent of the world's population but are typically under-represented in global affairs.

"This survey helps to narrow the gap between millennial perspectives and global governance. These survey results will feature at the World Economic Forum annual meeting of world political and business leaders at Davos in January 2017."

The survey was conducted in 171 countries by more than 450 World Economic Forum Global Shapers hubs working in collaboration, and is possibly the most comprehensive global opinion survey of people in their 20s and early 30s ever conducted.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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