

Australians intend to vote on climate action at election

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One of the most ambitious climate change surveys conducted in Australia has found three out of four Australians are concerned about it and support policies that limit its potential impacts.

Results of the [Climate Action Survey](#), carried out by Griffith University's Climate Action Beacon, showed while climate change concerned a minority of Australians a decade ago (34%), in 2021 it was a mainstream issue that caused concern among the majority of Australians (72%) who demanded government action.

Climate Action Beacon researchers conducted the first of five annual Climate Action Surveys in September-October 2021.

"In terms of sample size, methodological rigor, multidisciplinary input and breadth of coverage, it was one of the most ambitious climate change surveys yet conducted in Australia," said lead author Associate Professor Sameer Deshpande.

The report was also the first in a series of five annual surveys to deliver a rich source of data on climate change attitudes and behaviors.

Key highlights:

- 3,915 Australian adults completed the online questionnaire.
- 87% of the respondents indicated that they believed climate change should be a priority for the Government.
- 22% believed climate change was an "extremely serious" problem right now, and 45% believed that it would be so in 2050.
- 76% stated climate change would be important to them when they vote in the next federal election, but this percentage varied by preferred political party: Australian Greens (90%), Australian Labor Party (72%), Liberal Party (45%), National Party (54%), and One Nation Party (33%).
- 54% of intending National Party voters indicated climate change would be relevant when voting for political parties in this election.
- 31% of respondents had personally and directly experienced at

least one extreme weather event or natural disaster in the preceding year. Those who had expressed greater concern and distress about climate change and were more likely to engage in pro-environmental actions.

"Approximately three out of four reported feeling 'fairly' or 'very' concerned about the effects of climate change, which is more than double that of a similar survey 10 years ago," Associate Professor Deshpande said.

"Almost a quarter of respondents believed that climate change was an 'extremely serious' problem right now, and 45% believed it would be by 2050."

In the first year of the survey 3,915 people (51.1% female, Male = 46.6 years), stratified by gender, age group, and state of Australia, were recruited and their sentiments used for analysis.

The results show that approximately 2% of the survey population were climate change deniers, 5% skeptics, 16% as unconvinced about climate change, and the vast majority (77%) were firm believers in the reality of climate change.

"There was high levels of climate change understanding, concern, and action in those 35 years or under, students, inner urban residents, the university educated, people who don't speak English as the main language at home, and people who vote for the Greens or the Labor Party," Associate Professor Graham Bradley said.

"Climate change denial, disregard, and inaction were more common among the older, less highly educated, and more politically conservative members of the survey population."

Compared to males, women reported stronger beliefs and greater climate change concerns.

The survey shows the Australians gather information about climate change from various sources.

"They place most trust in scientists and [scientific publications](#), and in long-established government organizations like the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO. They rate politicians and [social media](#) as the least trustworthy source of climate change information," Associate Professor Kerrie Foxwell-Norton said.

"In terms of responding to [climate change](#), the most commonly reasons for not engaging in pro-environmental [climate](#) actions were entrenched routines or habits, insufficient time and or money, and lack of knowledge about what actions to take and doubts about how it will help."

Analyses of data, and consideration of the implications of the findings, are ongoing, with a second [survey](#) planned for September 2022.

Provided by Griffith University

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