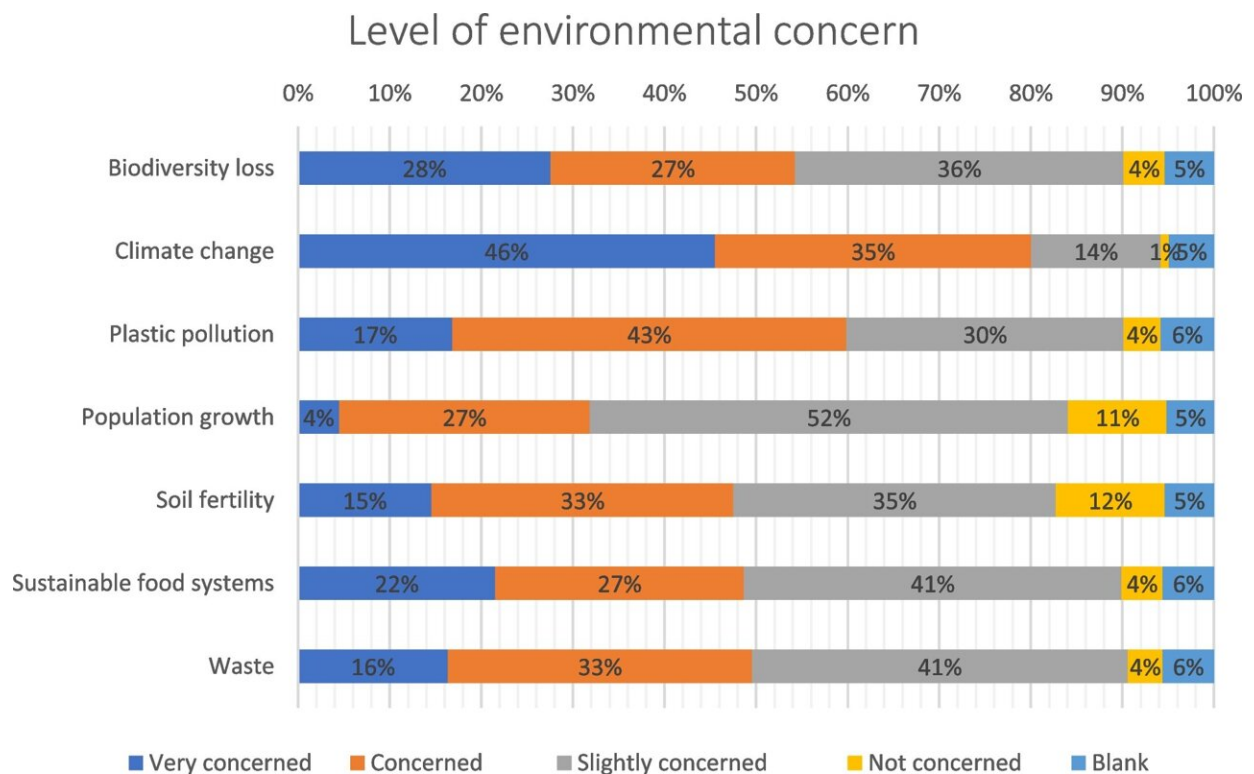


Gen Z's climate anxiety is real and needs action, says study

March 5 2024, by Samuel Jeremic



Levels of environmental concern of the Australian Generation Z sample for the 2021–2022 study. Credit: *Sustainable Earth Reviews* (2024). DOI: 10.1186/s42055-024-00075-w

New Curtin University research has shown Australian young people have major concerns about climate change, which is having a significant impact on their lives and could have broader consequences decades into

the future.

Published in *Sustainable Earth Reviews*, the [study](#) surveyed Australian university students belonging to Generation Z (people born between 1995 and 2010) and found climate change was their number one environmental concern.

More than 80% reported being "concerned" or "very concerned" about climate change, with many revealing they felt anxious over the issue.

Climate anxiety sees concern about climate change manifest as disturbing thoughts, overwhelming distress about future climate disasters and the continuing fate of humanity and the world. It can also translate into feelings of fear, insecurity, anger, exhaustion, powerlessness and sadness.

Curtin Professor of Sustainability Dora Marinova said climate anxiety was a contributing factor to Gen Z's overall sense of unease towards the future, which could have major future ramifications.

"These young people are very concerned and, in a way, intimidated by the lack of concrete action being taken to battle climate change," Professor Marinova said.

"Gen Z has serious concerns which will not only impact their [mental health](#)—which will be something society and the public health system will have to deal with—but also the choices young people make: how they spend their money, whether they have families, their choice of career and more."

The study also revealed despite their concerns, only 35% of Gen Z regularly engaged in traditional climate activism such as fundraising, donating money to worthy causes, supporting political campaigns, or

participating in events such as marches or protests.

Curtin Research Fellow Dr. Diana Bogueva said the survey respondents instead regularly use [social media](#) to voice their concerns and find out information.

She said while their online activities were important, Gen Z may need to engage in other ways to both alleviate climate anxiety and drive change.

"Gen Z should consider participating in more traditional or mainstream areas of activism such as [political campaigns](#) to engage with [policy makers](#) and better connect with other generations to influence decision makers, to accelerate [climate action](#), and help safeguard a livable planet for all," she said.

Dr. Bogueva stressed it wasn't solely Gen Z's responsibility to solve climate change—a problem they didn't create—but taking meaningful action can help alleviate an individual's feelings of anxiety and powerlessness.

"This can include finding out how they can be part of the solution in their personal lives, whether it's choosing a career which has an impact or adjusting the products or food they consume," she said.

"While the challenges of [climate change](#) can be scary it is not too late for Gen Z to make a difference fighting for a [sustainable future](#)."

More information: Rodrigo Bardales Salguero et al, Australia's university Generation Z and its concerns about climate change, *Sustainable Earth Reviews* (2024). [DOI: 10.1186/s42055-024-00075-w](https://doi.org/10.1186/s42055-024-00075-w)

Provided by Curtin University

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