

Regional differences in views on climate change

Climate of the Nation 2016 • September 2016



Attitudes and concern about climate change are mostly steady between capital cities, regional areas and states however at times there is statistically significant divergence of 5 per cent or more.

City dwellers are...

- + More think climate change is occurring (79 per cent) than people living in regional areas (74 per cent).
- + More think that the main cause of climate change is human activity: 40 per cent compared to 35 per cent of regional residents.
- + More trust the science that suggests the climate is changing due to human activities, with 62 per cent of this view compared to 57 per cent of regional Australians.

Regional and rural Australians are...

- + Among people who think climate change is occurring, more think climate change is due to a mixture of human causes and natural cycles (54 per cent) than city dwellers (49 per cent).
- + While solar, wind and hydro are rated as top three preferred energy sources nationally, regional and rural Australians rate each higher than their city neighbours. Solar is equally rated, Wind is 74 vs 68 per cent, and hydro (dams) 52 vs 48 per cent.
- + More agree that Australia should set targets and implement domestic action to help limit global warming to 1.5-2°C and achieve net zero emissions (69 per cent vs 64 per cent of city residents).
- + More think that installing solar panels is an effective personal action in reducing emissions (65 per cent vs 60 per cent of city residents).
- + More look for locally produced products when shopping for household items (83 per cent vs 77 per cent of city residents).

Differences in attitude between states

Preferred energy source

- + More people in Queensland choose solar as their most preferred energy source than does the nation as a whole (Qld 59, Nation 52 per cent).
- + More Western Australians choose tidal/wave energy as their most preferred (WA 10, Nation 3 per cent).
- + More South Australians choose nuclear as their most preferred energy source (SA 12, Nation 6 per cent).

Coal closure

- + More South Australians agree that Australia should start phasing coal power stations out gradually so that we can manage the costs over time (SA 76, Nation 70 per cent).
- + Western Australians are far more likely to want to phase them out as soon as possible (WA 33, Nation 21 per cent).

Responsibility and leadership –

- + More Western Australians think state governments should take a leading role in driving action on climate change (WA 60, Nation 47 per cent) and disagree with the statement that “State governments shouldn’t act ahead of the federal government on renewable energy (WA 50, Nation 39 per cent).
- + Less people in Queensland hold the view that Australia needs to help developing countries decrease their carbon emissions and adapt for the impacts of climate change (Qld 48, Nation 55 per cent).
- + Despite the poll being conducted immediately after the South Australian electricity crisis, less South Australians think state governments are doing poorly (SA 22, Nation 29)

Cause of climate change

- + More South Australians think that the main cause of climate change is due to a mixture of human activity and natural cycles (SA 33, Nation 39 per cent).

This year’s results are based on a nationally representative online survey conducted by Galaxy Research 29 July – 7 August 2016 among 2,015 Australians aged 18+. The maximum margin of error on a sample of 2015 interviews is +/- 2.9 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level. Margins of error will be larger for sub-samples.

For more information visit: www.climateinstitute.org.au