

Demographic Highlights

Climate of the Nation 2012 • July 2012

Breaking down responses by gender and age gives an interesting insight into the variation of views on climate change within Australian society today.

Battle of the sexes

Australian women are more concerned about climate change than men, feel more strongly about actions, whether individual or at government and industry action level, and have higher ambitions for Australia to tackle its emissions.

- + Women respondents were more likely to say that they think climate change is occurring (69 per cent), compared to males (59 per cent).
- + Women rank significantly higher on concern for climate change, with 62 per cent being fairly concerned or very concerned compared with 45 per cent of men. Men were also more likely to say that they were not at all concerned (23 per cent vs 8 per cent of women).
- + Men appeared to be more sceptical of the threat of climate change, with more of them saying that the seriousness of climate change is exaggerated (48 per cent compared with 37 per cent of women).
- + Men were also more likely to disagree that climate change poses a serious threat to our way of life over the coming decades (24 per cent disagreed vs 12 per cent of women).
- + Women appeared to have a much stronger commitment to action. 23 per cent of men do not think that the actions they take on a daily basis can help to address climate change, compared to 9 per cent of women.
- + Women were more likely than men to attribute a leading role in action on climate change to Federal government (73 per cent vs 60 per cent of men); business and industry (47 per cent of women vs 40 per cent of men); individuals and their households (22 per cent of women vs 16 per cent of men).

Older and less concerned

Older Australians are more sceptical about climate change and less likely to support action.

- + Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of 18-34 year olds said that they were concerned about climate change, compared with 54 per cent of those aged 35-54 and 46 per cent of those aged 55 and older.
- + Belief in climate change also drops with age. 71 per cent of 18-34 year olds indicated that climate change is occurring, slipping to 66 per cent among those aged 35-54 and 57 per cent of those aged 55 and older.
- + Younger people are more likely to attribute climate change to human activity. They are also more concerned about 'a polluted Australia' and about heatwaves, extreme weather events and the impact of rising sea levels to coastal communities.
- + Younger Australians are also more likely to agree that Australia should be a world leader in finding solutions to climate change and that it can be influential in encouraging other countries to tackle climate change.
- + Younger Australians are also more optimistic about the impacts of the carbon pricing legislation to them. Respondents aged 18-34 were more likely to indicate that they thought they would be a little better off (10 per cent) or about the same (25 per cent) under carbon pricing legislation, and less likely to indicate they would be much worse off (24 per cent). Those over the age of 55 were more likely to indicate that they would be much worse off (44 per cent).