

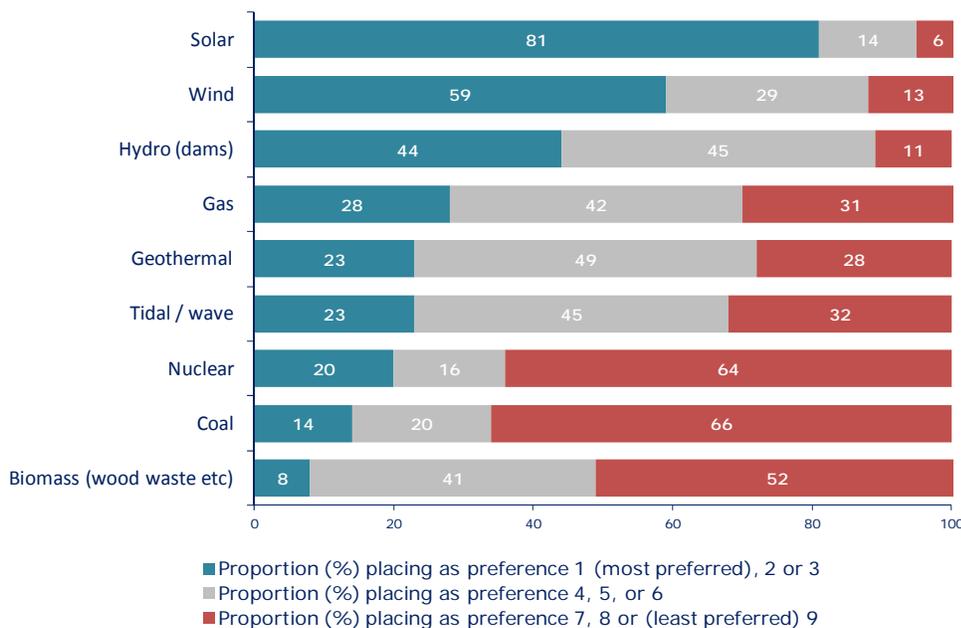
Preferred Energy Sources

Climate of the Nation 2012 • July 2012

Australians overwhelmingly support renewable energy both in terms of emission reduction and in ideal energy mix. Solar, wind and hydro are the preferred energy sources. Coal and nuclear are the least favoured.

- + Solar was the preferred energy source for Australia: 81 per cent of respondents placed solar energy within their top three preferred options, when presented with nine sources to choose from (see Figure 1).
- + Energy derived from wind was the second most preferred option, with 59 per cent placing wind within their top three preferred options.
- + Over two-in-five (44 per cent) placed hydro energy within their top three preferred sources (and a further 45 per cent placed it within the next three most preferred options, i.e. as either 4th, 5th or 6th most preferred).
- + Respondents were split over gas as an energy source: although 28 per cent placed it within the top three most preferred sources, 31 per cent placed it within the three least preferred energy options. Opinion was similarly divided for geothermal and tidal sources.
- + Coal was the least preferred option: 66 per cent of respondents placed it within their three least preferred options. Nuclear was also unpopular, 64 per cent placed it within their least preferred options but received the most negatively skewed preference vote: 46 per cent placed nuclear in last place, naming it as their least preferred option whereas 22 per cent placed coal as least preferred (however, 30 per cent placed coal as second least preferred).
- + Increasing the amount of renewable energy is perceived as the most effective greenhouse gas emission reduction policy, especially in Western Australia, which rated 8.2 out of 10 compared with 7.6 nationally (see Figure 4 in the full report).

Figure 1: Preferred energy sources for Australia



Please order the following energy sources for Australia from your most preferred to least preferred.

Total sample; Weight: Location Weighting - ABS 2006; base n = 989; total n = 1131; 142 missing; effective sample size = 917 (93%)

Regional Variations per Energy Source¹

Solar is the top choice across all states, with highest number of most preferred votes in Western Australia (88 per cent), followed by South Australia, Queensland and Victoria (each at 82 per cent), and New South Wales (75 per cent).

Wind was the second most preferred option across all states. Its highest supporters are in Western Australia, where 78 per cent chose it as second most preferred energy source, followed by South Australia (69 per cent), Victoria (61 per cent), and Queensland (57 per cent).

Hydro, gas, geothermal and tidal/wave received mixed rankings across the states.

+ Hydro is the third most preferred energy source in Victoria (47 per cent), as well as in NSW (45 per cent) and Queensland (49 per cent).

+ Tidal/wave is relatively popular in WA (37 per cent) and Vic (25 per cent).

+ Geothermal is the third most preferred energy source in SA, after solar and wind, at 36 per cent. New South Wales is also warm to the concept (23 per cent).

Coal and nuclear and the least preferred energy sources across all states.

+ Coal is least preferred (as a net of the three least preferred options) across all states except in NSW and Queensland where nuclear is even less preferred. The highest dislike of coal is in WA (78 per cent), SA (68 per cent) and Vic (68 per cent).

+ Nuclear is also unpopular, 65 per cent of Victorians placed coal in their three least preferred energy options, as did 78% of WA residents.

Climate of the Nation 2012 and associated video content can found at www.climateinstitute.org.au.

¹ Base size for individual states varies between $n=79$ and $n=314$, SA and WA based on relatively small sample sizes therefore results should be viewed with some caution.