

## Responsibility, performance & carbon pricing

Climate of the Nation 2012 • July 2012

### RESPONSIBILITIES AND PERFORMANCE IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

***Australians believe the primary responsibility of taking action on climate change rests with the Federal Government.***

Over two thirds (67 per cent) thought that the Federal Government should be taking a leading role in taking action on climate change. Only 11 per cent thought they should take no action.

State and territory governments were considered to be the next most responsible, 57 per cent thought these governments should be taking a leading role, only 10 per cent thought they should take no action.

It was considered that individuals and households, and local communities should be taking contributing roles in action on climate change: 67 per cent thought local communities should take a contributing role and 69 per cent thought individuals and households should take a contributing role.

Almost half (47 per cent) thought that Australian businesses and industry should be taking a leading role and 44 per cent thought business and industry should be contributing to action on climate change. Only 9 per cent thought they should take no action.

Australians charge the media with the least “leading” responsibility compared with everyone else, but despite this, over half (54 per cent) thought that the media should be contributing to action on climate change.

- + NSW residents<sup>1</sup> were less likely than other Australians to think that any level of government should be taking a leading role in action on climate change. 62 per cent of NSW residents thought Federal Government should be taking a leading role compared with 67 per cent on average. 50 per

cent thought state and territory governments should be taking a leading role compared with 57 per cent overall. 36 per cent thought local governments should be taking a leading role versus 41 per cent on average.

- + Females were more likely than males to think that all groups (except media – no difference) should take a leading role in action on climate change. For example, 73 per cent of females thought that Federal Government should be taking a leading role compared with 60 per cent of males.

***Australian media and business were considered to be the underperformers with environmental groups and NGOs the better (Figure 1).***

The net difference between positive and negative performance ratings reveals that environmental groups / NGOs were considered to be performing best in addressing climate change with a +33 score, local communities were the next best, with a score of +8.

Federal Government, who was considered to carry most responsibility, scored a performance rating of -6, followed by local governments with -8.

The media and businesses and industry were the worst performers in addressing climate change receiving a performance score of -22 and -21 respectively.

### CARBON PRICING

***Support for the carbon laws grows strongly with explanation of the details.***

When asked whether they “support the carbon pricing laws” only 28 per cent agree, with more than half disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (52 per cent) with a fifth (20 per cent) uncertain.

However, support for the carbon laws is much higher when the elements of the compensation package are explained.

Almost half of respondents (47 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that they would support the

<sup>1</sup>Base size for individual states varies between n=88 and n= 339, SA and WA based on relatively small sample sizes therefore results should be viewed with some caution.

legislation if all the money raised goes to support low and middle income households and Australian businesses and renewable energy investment. 29 per cent disagreed and 24 per cent were uncertain.

Agreement that climate change is occurring is the primary determinant of the base support for the laws with only 3 per cent of those who don't think it is occurring amongst the 28 per cent, with 11 per cent of those uncertain as to whether climate change is occurring and 41 per cent of those who think it is occurring support the laws undetailed.

**Australians are fearful that the carbon pricing legislation will have a negative impact on the economy, although many think that the legislation will drive investment in renewable energy.**

A majority of Australians (61 per cent) thought that carbon pricing would have a negative impact on the economy, but 43 per cent agreed that the carbon price would drive investment in renewable energy (27 per cent disagreed). Almost two-in-five (39 per cent) thought that the carbon pricing is better than taking no action at all (27 per cent disagreed).

More than a third (36 per cent) of respondents feared that their households will be "much worse off" and 29 per cent "a little worse off" under the carbon price legislation. One-in-five (20 per cent) thought their situation would be about the same; 10 per cent thought they would be better off.

- + Older Australians were more likely to disagree that carbon pricing would have a positive impact on the environment, 48 per cent of those aged 55 and older disagreed compared with 38 per cent of those aged under 55.
- + Males were more likely to disagree that carbon pricing is better than taking no action, 40 per cent of males disagreed compared with 32 per cent of females.
- + Regional based Australians were more likely to disagree that carbon pricing will drive investment in renewable energy than those in metropolitan areas (32 per cent compared with 24 per cent).
- + There is no significant variation across states or gender in those who thought they would be "much worse off," but 44 per cent of Australians over 55 were of this view compared to 24 per cent of 18 to 34 year-olds.

**Australians appear uncertain as to whether the Federal Government or the Coalition have effective plans to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by five per cent by 2020.**

Twice as many people think that Labor has an effective plan to achieve a five per cent reduction in greenhouse gases (28 per cent) compared with the Coalition (14 per cent), but both are low numbers.

A third (32 per cent) neither agreed nor disagreed on Labor and 44 per cent on the Coalition.

**Should the Coalition be elected in the next Federal Election, less than half think that the carbon price legislation would be repealed.**

Just under half (48 per cent) agreed that the Coalition should repeal the carbon price legislation (26 per cent disagreed). Less, 44 per cent, thought that the Coalition would repeal the legislation if elected (only 14 per cent strongly agreed, 30 per cent agreed, with 36 per cent uncertain).

- + WA residents were less likely to think that the Coalition would repeal the carbon price (26 per cent compared with the average of 44 per cent).
- + Older Australians (aged 55 and over) were more likely to say that the Coalition would repeal the carbon price (51 per cent) compared with those aged under 55 (40 per cent).

**Figure 1: Perceived performance**

Row %	Positive rating	Average	Negative rating	Net difference
Environmental groups / non-government organisations	50	32	17	33
Your local community	32	43	25	8
The Federal Government	30	33	37	-6
Local governments	25	43	33	-8
State and Territory governments	22	42	36	-14
The media	20	39	42	-22
Australian businesses / industry	19	42	40	-21

*This fact sheet analyses responses to a national online survey of 1,131 Australians conducted from 23-30 May. Quotas were set in order to ensure the survey comprised a good mixture of people, in addition to gender and age. Quotas were also set for metropolitan and regional residents. The data collected was then weighted according to ABS 2006 Census data for location gender and age.*