



Headlines

2007

- » Climate change and energy issues **jumped in importance** from 2003 in a range of questions. Climate change was a general priority issue for government for the first time.
- » Respondents identified climate change **2nd** and energy **4th** issues as the **most important environmental issues**.
- » Energy/greenhouse/climate change measures were nominated by **14%** as the **most important environmental initiative** for the NSW government.
- » People believe climate change is **impacting themselves and Australia now** (54%).
- » About $\frac{3}{4}$ thought climate change will impact their **food and water supplies and household budgets**.
- » Those often **reducing fuel consumption** increased by 10% from 2003 to 2006 but dropped again by 4% in 2007.
- » **Younger people have embraced the climate change issue** with 28% of 15 to 24 year olds saying this is one of the top two issues for State Government.

2006

- » Less than half (**41%**) were **correct about the causes of climate change** but community awareness in this area has been increasing steadily since 1994.
- » There was strong support (81% agree) that **more money should be spent on education campaigns** about solutions to global warming.
- » Far **fewer people were positive about our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** in 2006 than in previous surveys (12% drop since 2003).
- » Younger people (aged 15-24) were less likely to act to reduce their energy consumption than older age groups, although they are more likely to think that efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have improved.

"It's not ever cold anymore. It used to be freezing, you used to walk out and see frost on the ground. I haven't seen a frost for years."
 Female, 35, inner city

Who Cares about the Environment in 2006-07?

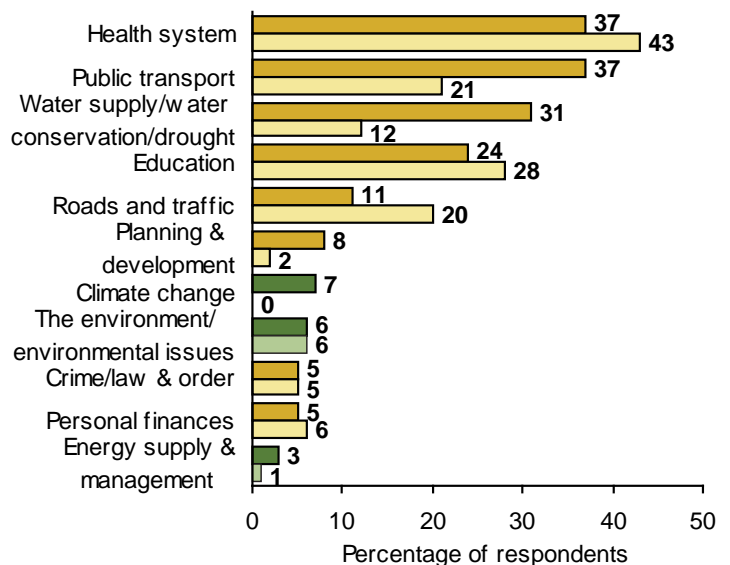
- Contains the results of two telephone surveys with a representative sample of 1721 people from across NSW,
- Includes analysis of demographic differences
- Includes findings from focus group discussions about people's views of the environmental views and activities.

The 2007 survey (825 people) repeated some core questions from 2006 with some new questions on climate change.

Priority issues for the NSW Government now ...

Climate change appeared in this question in 2007 for the first time since the survey series began in 1994. In 2006 56% of those mentioning energy in this question nominated energy or climate change as an environmental issue in a later question and were thus likely to be making the link between energy and climate change.

Most important issues for the NSW Government 2006-07



People aged 15-24 were most likely to mention climate change (28% compared to 2-6% of other age groups¹). Given this strong youth orientation it is not surprising that climate change was also more often nominated by those with a secondary education or less and less often mentioned by those with children.

However, climate change was also more likely to be mentioned by those outside Sydney than those in Sydney.

... and in the future

In 2006 people were also asked what they thought would be priorities for the NSW Government in ten years time. As a future issue, energy doubled to 4% of survey respondents.

¹Only those groups between which differences are statistically significant are reported throughout this fact sheet



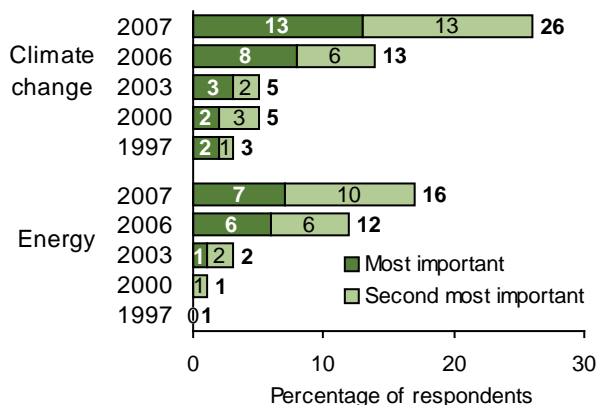
The most important environmental issues

Energy and climate change both increased dramatically from 2003 as one of respondents' two most important environmental issues. Climate change increased from 5% to 13% in 2006 and 26% in 2007, and energy from 2% to 12% in 2006 and 16% in 2007.

Two most important environmental issues 2007	%
Water conservation and management/drought	67
Climate change	26
Air pollution/air quality	17
Forest/bushland/ biodiversity issues	16
Energy	16
Water pollution/water quality	10
Waste	8
Development and planning	4
Land degradation/ soil/ erosion/ salinity etc	3
Mining	3

In 2006 'energy' issues included energy conservation or management (7%) and nuclear power (5%). Nuclear power responses were mainly acknowledging that it is an issue for community and government debate, fewer expressed positions for or against this form of energy. Nuclear issues appeared less in 2007 (2%).

Climate change and energy as the most important environmental issues



In 2006 people with post-secondary qualifications were more likely to nominate greenhouse effect/global warming. In 2007 15-24s were much more likely to nominate climate change as one of the two most important environmental issues (49% compared to 18-30% for other groups). As the single most important issue, men (16%) were more likely than women (10%) to nominate climate change issues and 35-54 year olds (5%) less likely than all other age groups (10-36%).

In 2007 those nominating energy issues were spread across demographic groups.

Knowledge about climate change

In 2006 41% knew the greenhouse effect is not caused by a hole in the atmosphere, a steady increase from 24% correct

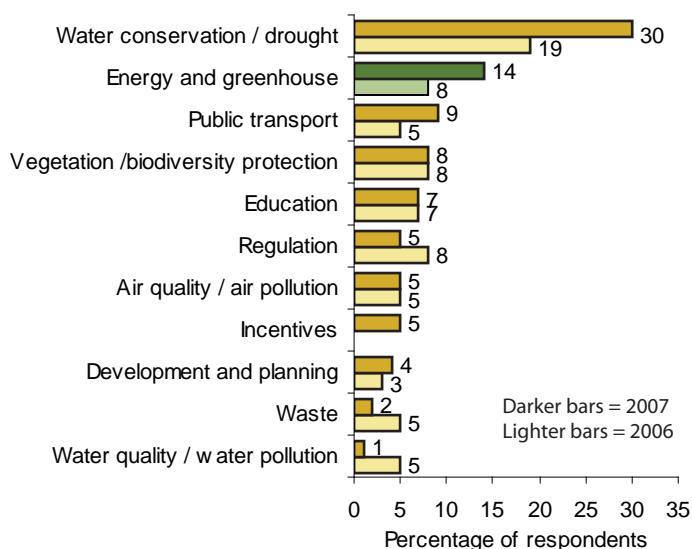
in 1994. However, over half the population (53%) was still confused and incorrect on this issue; while 5% did not know enough to give an answer.

Men (50%) were far more likely than women (34%) to be correct while more Sydney residents (44%) were correct compared to those in Hunter/ Illawarra (36%) or small country towns (39%).

The most important environmental initiative for the NSW Government

In 2007 energy and greenhouse measures² were the second top category of responses (14%) on the most important environmental initiative for government. This has increased steadily from 4% in 2000. The most important set of measures mentioned was 'finding/promoting alternative 'green' fuels or alternative energy sources' (10%).

Most important environmental initiative for the NSW Government in the next few years (2007)



Those with trade/technical qualifications were more likely to mention energy/greenhouse issues in both 2006 (13% compared to 6-8% of other groups) and 2007 (21% compared to 10-14%).

Context

The 2006 *Who Cares* was conducted in June-July. In the second half of 2006 Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* and the UK's Stern Report, along with the worsening drought, focused significant media and community attention on climate change.

The shorter 2007 survey was conducted one year later in June-July 2007 to assess the level of change that had occurred following the new community interest, focusing on the issues of water and climate change.

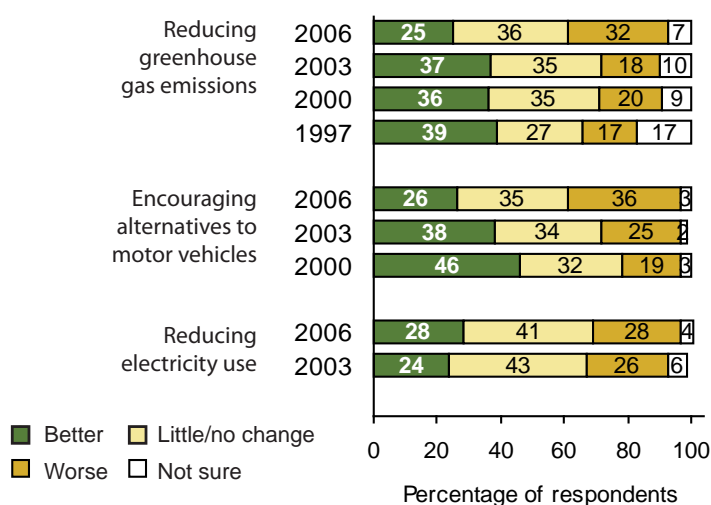
²Climate change is closely linked with energy as an environmental issue. However, survey respondents did not necessarily make that link. Mentions of energy as a priority issue may have been simply concerns about security of supply. This fact sheet presents survey data related to both issues and specifies where respondents linked the two issues.



Views on improvement or deterioration in energy and greenhouse issues in NSW

There was a significant change in perceptions about efforts to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**, with an increase in negative, and decline in positive views. More people (32%) believed efforts to reduce emissions have been getting worse compared to getting better (25%). The number of people unsure on this measure decreased from 17% in 1997 to 7%, suggesting community awareness has increased on this issue.

Perception of improvement or deterioration 1997 - 2006



Similarly, fewer people thought things were getting better at **encouraging alternatives to motor vehicle use**. Those who saw improvement almost halved from 2000 (46% to 26%) and those believing there has been deterioration almost doubled (from 19% to 36%).

An equal proportion of people (28%) thought that **reducing electricity use** had improved as thought it had become worse, but the greatest number saw no change. Perceptions on this indicator were first measured in 2003 and have changed only slightly since.

Younger people (aged 15–24) were more likely to think there had been improvements in reducing greenhouse gas emissions (36% compared to 20–27% in other age groups) and in using alternatives to motor vehicles (43% compared to 19–25%).

Sydney residents were more likely to see deterioration in reducing greenhouse gas emissions (34% compared to 23–28% in country areas) and in using alternatives to motor vehicles (40% compared to 26–33% in other areas). Those in large country towns were most likely to say using alternatives to motor vehicles had improved compared to those in other areas.

Further education on greenhouse solutions

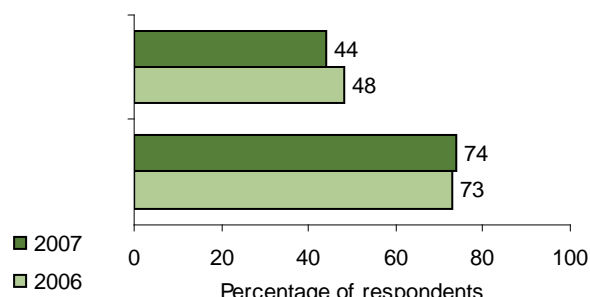
In 2006, **81%** agreed more money should be spent on education campaigns about solutions to global warming. Nearly one third strongly agreed with this proposition (29%). Young people (15–24) were most likely to agree with this (88% compared to 74–81% for those aged 35+).

What are people doing?

Those who reported often reducing **fuel consumption** jumped from 2003 by 10% to 48% in 2006 but dropped back to 44% in 2007, reflecting general changes in petrol prices at the times of the surveys. The proportion who never tried to reduce fuel consumption was high at 18% compared with many other pro-environmental behaviours included in the survey in 2006 and remained at this level in 2007 (17%).

Those who said they often reduced **energy consumption** in the previous 12 months increased 3% from 2003 to 73% in 2006 and remained at this level in 2007 (74%). In another question asked in 2006, a majority (67%) reported purchasing energy efficient appliances or light globes in the previous year. Women were more likely than men to have often or sometimes reduced fuel consumption in both 2006 (72% compared to 66%) and 2007 (73% compared to 59%).

Pro-environmental fuel and energy behaviours often done in the last twelve months



Saving money was the most common reason given for reducing fuel consumption (51% in 2006, dropping to 47% in 2007). Reasons for not trying to reduce fuel consumption included a lack of available infrastructure such as public transport (28%, increasing to 34%), not having any alternative but to use their car e.g. for work (19% dropping to 12%), and the inconvenience and time spent using alternatives (14% dropping to 12%).

Saving money was likewise the most powerful motivator for people to reduce energy consumption in 2006 (53% gave this reason). However one year later this had changed markedly with only 32% citing cost but 37% citing environmental knowledge/awareness or education, and media/advertising (more than double the 17% in 2006). People who never or just occasionally undertook energy reduction behaviours in 2007 said they had not started to do this because they were already doing it/doing what they can (40%, up from 12% in 2006). Those who gave no reason or cited laziness or forgetfulness dropped from 38% to 14%.

In 2006 those in large country towns were more likely to name climate change as one of the two most important environmental issues (21% compared to 12–18% in other localities) but they were least likely to reduce fuel consumption (34% say they never or just occasionally do this).



2007 Views on Climate Change

Knowledge about climate change

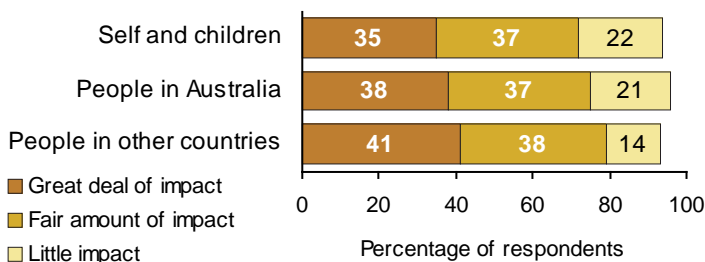
Almost half the respondents (48%) said they have a fair amount of knowledge about climate change and global warming, and a further 9% said they know a lot. Men (13% compared to 5% of females) and Sydney residents (11% compared to 5-9% of residents elsewhere) are more likely to say they know a lot. Those aged over 55 are more likely to say there is no such thing as climate change (6% compared to 0% of those aged under 45).

Perceived impact of climate change

Over 70% of people said climate change will have a fair amount or great deal of impact locally and globally. However, more people said the impact will be greater for people living in other countries and on people elsewhere in Australia than on themselves or their children.

Residents living in large towns are more likely to say climate change will have a fair amount or great deal of impact on others living in Australia (81%) and people living in other countries (89%).

How much will climate change impact?



When climate change will start to impact

More than half (54-56%) of those who say climate change will have some impact believe it is impacting now on themselves and their children, on people living elsewhere in Australia those living in other countries, 69-74% said now or within 10 years.

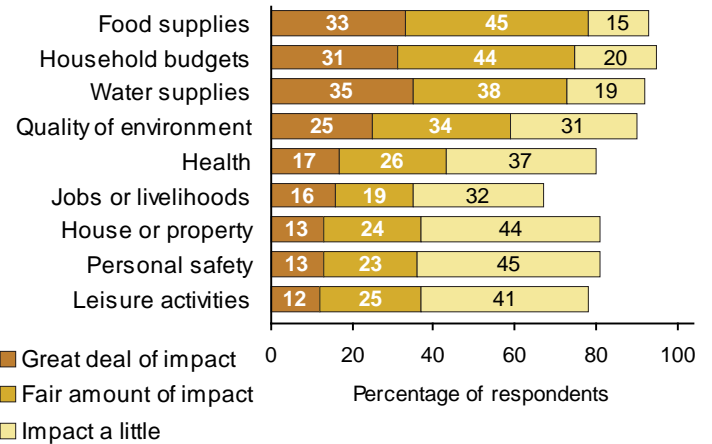
People in small towns were more likely to say climate change is impacting now and those in the Hunter/ Illawarra were less likely.

How climate change will impact

Food supplies, household budgets and water supplies are the aspects of people's lives or their children's lives they believe will be impacted by climate change (about one-third said a great deal and three-quarters said a great deal or a fair amount). Under 20% said climate change will greatly impact leisure activities, homes/property and personal safety.

Significantly more men than women think climate change will have little or no impact on most aspects of their lives or their children's lives (excluding jobs and livelihoods).

What will climate change impact?



Those aged 35-44 are less likely to say climate change will have little or no impact health, quality of the environment, leisure activities, household budget and personal safety.

Responsibility for reducing the impact of climate change

Almost everyone (88-93%) thinks that the Federal Government, industry, other countries, and State Government should have a major responsibility for reducing impact of climate change. People aged 45-54 were more likely than other age groups to attribute major responsibility to the Federal Government, State Government, industry and farmers.

People with a degree were more likely than other education groups to attribute major responsibility to the Federal Government, State Government, other countries, individuals and farmers.

Nine out of ten people living in Sydney think the responsibility belongs to the State Government (90% compared to 82-87% elsewhere) while 80% of people living in small towns (compared to 64-68% of those elsewhere) think individuals should have a major responsibility for reducing the impact of climate change.

Most important things to do to prevent climate change

One in three people (34% each) nominated promoting and using alternatives such as public transport and green energy and fuel sources, and reducing the use of energy, fuel, vehicles, water etc. as the most important things to help prevent climate change, while 24% nominated reducing emissions.

Men and those over 54 were more likely to nominate reducing emissions while more women nominated promoting and using alternatives.

The most common thing people said they themselves would do was to reduce energy consumption (63%).

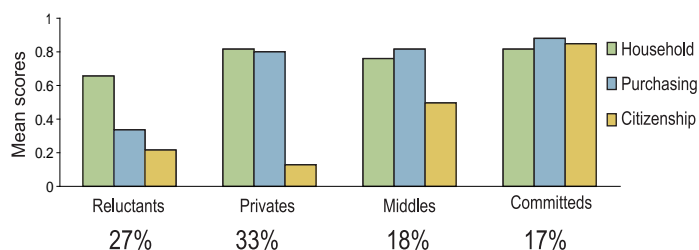


Community segments

Pro-environmental behaviours surveyed in *Who Cares?* cluster into 3 types: in-household behaviours (e.g. saving energy, avoiding stormwater pollution), green purchasing (shopping decisions), and environmental citizenship (Landcare, community participation, advocacy).

Based on the extent of involvement in these types of behaviours, those surveyed were allocated to four segments, called *Reluctants*, *Privates*, *Middles* and *Committeds**. The graph shows the level of involvement in each behaviour type for those in each segment and the proportion of the population falling into each segment.

Behaviour profiles for community segments



* Different names to the focus group research are used to avoid confusion with the findings of that part of the research.

Responses on climate change and energy

While *Committeds* and *Middles* mentioned energy as an environmental issue less than *Reluctants* and *Privates* in 2006, this reversed somewhat in 2007. *Committeds* jumped: 12% to 21% and *Middles* 9% to 13%, while *Reluctants* fell: 19% to 15%.

A much higher percentage of *Committeds* (64% in 2007, up from 56% in 2006) than other groups had often actively tried to reduce fuel consumption and to do this for environmental reasons. *Committeds* were also more likely than those in other segments to say in 2006 that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is getting worse (44% compared to 27-33%).

Reluctants were the most likely to have never tried to reduce fuel consumption (40% in 2006, 29% in 2007) but for those who have, they are much more likely to say they do it to save money.

The *Reluctants* were less likely than other groups to engage in reducing fuel and energy consumption. However, both *Privates* (62%) and *Reluctants* (63%) were less likely in 2006 to have purchased energy efficient appliances than the *Middles* and *Committeds* (77-78%).

Privates were also least likely to know about the causes of the greenhouse effect, with 61% believing it is caused by a hole in the atmosphere.

In 2007 *Reluctants* nominating energy/greenhouse initiatives as the most important thing for government to do to protect the environment doubled (5% to 10%), as did mentions by *Privates* (7% to 14%) but this was still slightly lower than *Committeds* (16%) and *Middles* (17%) both a small increase on 2006.

Increasing engagement in pro-environmental behaviours increased the likelihood of believing climate change is impacting now: *Reluctants* 45%, *Privates* and *Middles* 50% & 54%, *Committeds* 67% for impact on self and children with a similar pattern for other people in Australia and elsewhere. Along with this, *Committeds* are the most likely and *Reluctants* the least likely to think there will be a great deal of impact on all aspects of their lives, but particularly on environment, leisure activities, personal safety and job or livelihoods.

Qualitative research - focus groups

Focus group discussions were also held with people grouped on the basis of their level of environmental interest, knowledge and behaviours. These groups, called *Limiteds*, *Moderates* and *Strongs*, were quite different in their perceptions of the environment, understanding of environmental concepts and commitment to behaviours and activities that protect the environment.



Responses on climate change and energy

There are striking differences in belief about the severity and timeframe of climate change between these groups. *Strongs* have no doubts about the seriousness and current consequences of climate change. Many *Moderates* are convinced that it is an increasingly serious issue but see the consequences as affecting future generations and not themselves. *Limiteds* are highly sceptical about climate change as the effects aren't immediately visible and the science is complex.

Limiteds' narrow awareness of environmental issues and their difficulty in understanding complex concepts such as climate change act as a barrier to behaviour change. *Limiteds* will reduce electricity use or change to efficient light bulbs for financial reasons but they are least likely to do these things for environmental reasons as they would consider this radical. *Moderates'* behaviours are also more likely to be motivated by personal gain than environmental benefit and conserving electricity for cost reasons is normalised behaviour for this group.

With their concern about the immediate threat of climate change, *Strongs* are most likely to make considerable and expensive efforts, such as buying fuel efficient cars, carpooling or riding a bicycle and to engage in environmental activism around these issues.

More details

Who Cares about the Environment in 2006? is available in print from the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW on 131 555 and online at: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

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