



**VICTORIANS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CLIMATE CHANGE**
REGIONAL REPORT – GIPPSLAND

KEY FINDINGS – SOCIAL RESEARCH ON CLIMATE CHANGE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

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Wallis Market and Social Research achieved accreditation to the International Standard ISO20252 in September 2007. The Company is committed to maintaining administrative and operational procedures which comply with these accreditation requirements and to improving its performance in all aspects of the service it delivers to its customers. Wallis is an active participant in the market research industry, with senior staff making significant contributions to the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) and the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO). As such we actively pursue the ethical objectives of the industry.



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Introduction

Sustainability Victoria (SV) engaged an external research provider, Wallis Market and Social Research, to conduct a state wide survey to collect baseline quantitative data on Victorian residents' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in relation to climate change. The results will be used by SV and other relevant Departments to inform program development and policy.

This report is one of a series of reports prepared for each of nine regional groupings, which were taken from the Regional Development Victoria classification¹. Each regional report provides a descriptive analysis of results for that specific region, and compares the regional results to overall state results for Victoria.

Methodology

The main survey was administered using a telephone interview methodology, with an online follow-up survey emailed to those respondents who agreed to take part in further research.

A total of 3,333 Victorians aged 15 years and over took part in the telephone survey; of these, 451 also completed the follow-up online survey.

Telephone interviews were conducted from 17 November to 14 December 2016, following a pilot test among a small sample of Victorians. The online survey was conducted from 19 December 2016 to 20 January 2017, during which two reminders were emailed to nonresponders.

Sample Design

The sampling frames used for the telephone survey – randomly generated telephone numbers (probability sample) plus a list of existing phone numbers (regional booster sample) – ensured the widest possible coverage of the Victorian population.

The survey sample was carefully designed and controlled to enable regional analysis while providing results that can be projected to the broader population with confidence.

The sample was designed to deliver a minimum of 200 interviews in each of nine regional groupings. Weighting was applied to correct for the over-sampling of regional areas, as well as demographic differences between the probability sample and the regional booster sample, to ensure that the total sample is representative of the Victorian population.



¹Source: <http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-partnerships>

Gippsland Region

LGAs in the region:

- › Bass Coast Shire
- › East Gippsland Shire
- › South Gippsland Shire
- › Baw Baw Shire
- › Latrobe City
- › Wellington Shire

The table below shows the broad demographic characteristics of the survey respondents for the Gippsland region, showing the unweighted and weighted distributions.

FIGURE 1: SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

	Unweighted n=210 %	Weighted n=210 %
GENDER		
Male	48	49
Female	52	51
AGE		
Under 40	20	35
40-64	47	41
65 and over	33	24
EDUCATION		
University Degree or higher	26	11
TAFE/Technical/Vocational	28	36
Completed high school	19	24
Did not complete high school	27	30
Still at school	0	0
COUNTRY OF BIRTH		
Australia	84	88
Elsewhere	16	12

Key findings in Gippsland at a glance

Climate change is happening and requires action

94%

say climate change exists and humans are contributing to it;

69%

agree that climate change is an issue that requires urgent action now

83%

believe their actions can help reduce the impact of climate change

The community want action on climate change from:



96%

State Government



92%

Local Government



99%

Business & industry



98%

All individuals

Residents are willing to take action

74%

are willing to take action on climate change

66%

prefer to buy from businesses that show they are acting on climate change

Gippsland residents have observed the impacts of climate change and are concerned about future impacts



71% concerned
Water shortages & drought



70% concerned
Crop failures or declines in agriculture



82% concerned
Severe bushfires



60% concerned
Severe storms & floods



55% concerned
Coastal erosion & changes to sea level



63% concerned
Heatwaves



57% concerned
Air pollution

Around two-thirds believe that more bushfires, storms/flooding, drought and coastal erosion have occurred in Victoria during the past 10 years. The majority know that climate change is influencing the occurrence of these events.

Gippsland shows strong support for net zero emission and renewable energy targets

60%

support the net zero emissions target by 2050

76%

support the renewable energy targets (25% by 2020 and 40% by 2025)

Gippsland is supportive of renewable energy

74%

would support wind turbines in their local area

76%

would support solar panels in their local area

60%

interested in taking part in community renewable energy projects

Detailed findings

Priority of climate change

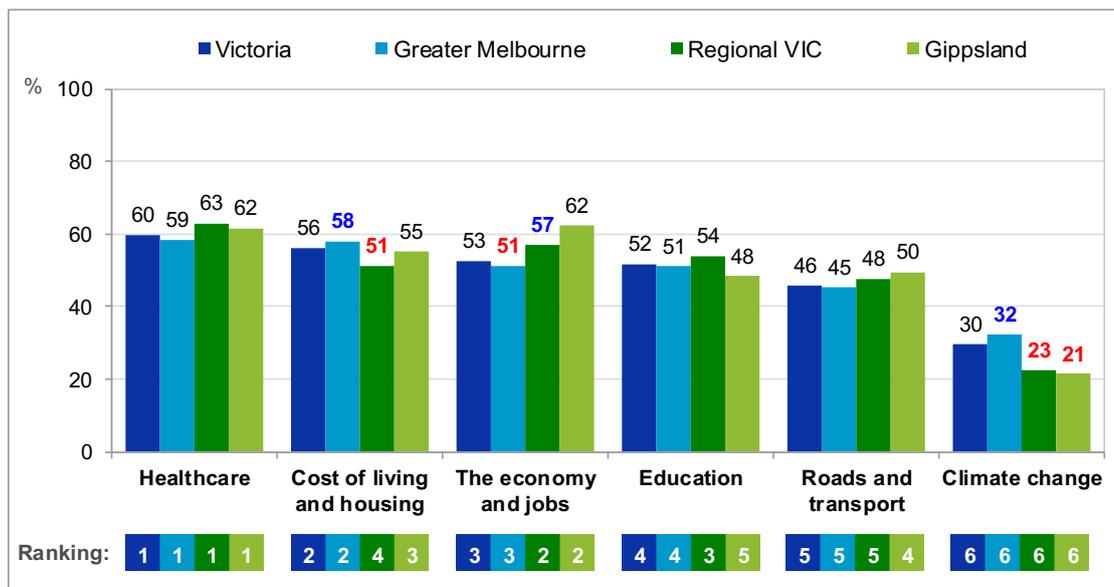
When prompted, climate change ranked sixth on a list of issues of importance in Victoria; with three in ten Victorians (30%) nominating climate change as one of the top three most important issues facing the state today. Overall, younger people ranked climate change higher; the issue ranks fifth among Victorians aged 18-24 (41% mentioned climate change as a top three priority), and climbs to second spot behind education among Victorians aged 15-17, (56% mentioned climate change as a top three priority).

Figure 2 below shows the proportions who mentioned each issue as one of the top three issues facing the state. Results are shown for Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, Regional Victoria and the Gippsland Region.

Gippsland had a lower percentage (21%) ranking climate change in the top three areas of importance compared to the state average (30%).

The issues of most concern for Gippsland was the economy and jobs (62%) and health (also 62%), followed by the cost of living and housing (55%).

FIGURE 2: TOP 3 PRIORITY MENTIONS BY LOCATION



Source: A1a/b/c.
 Base: Total sample (VIC: n=3,333 | GM: n=1,424 | Reg VIC n=1,909 | Gippsland n=217)

To avoid influencing responses to this question the survey topic was introduced as “an important issue facing Victorians” and did not mention that climate change was the focus of the survey until after this question.

In other national and international surveys on this topic, climate change consistently ranks below the more day to day and ‘hip pocket’ issues such as healthcare and the cost of living. However, despite low relative ranking of priority, results throughout this report show that climate change is recognised by the majority of Victorians as a serious issue that requires action from all sectors including government, business and individuals.

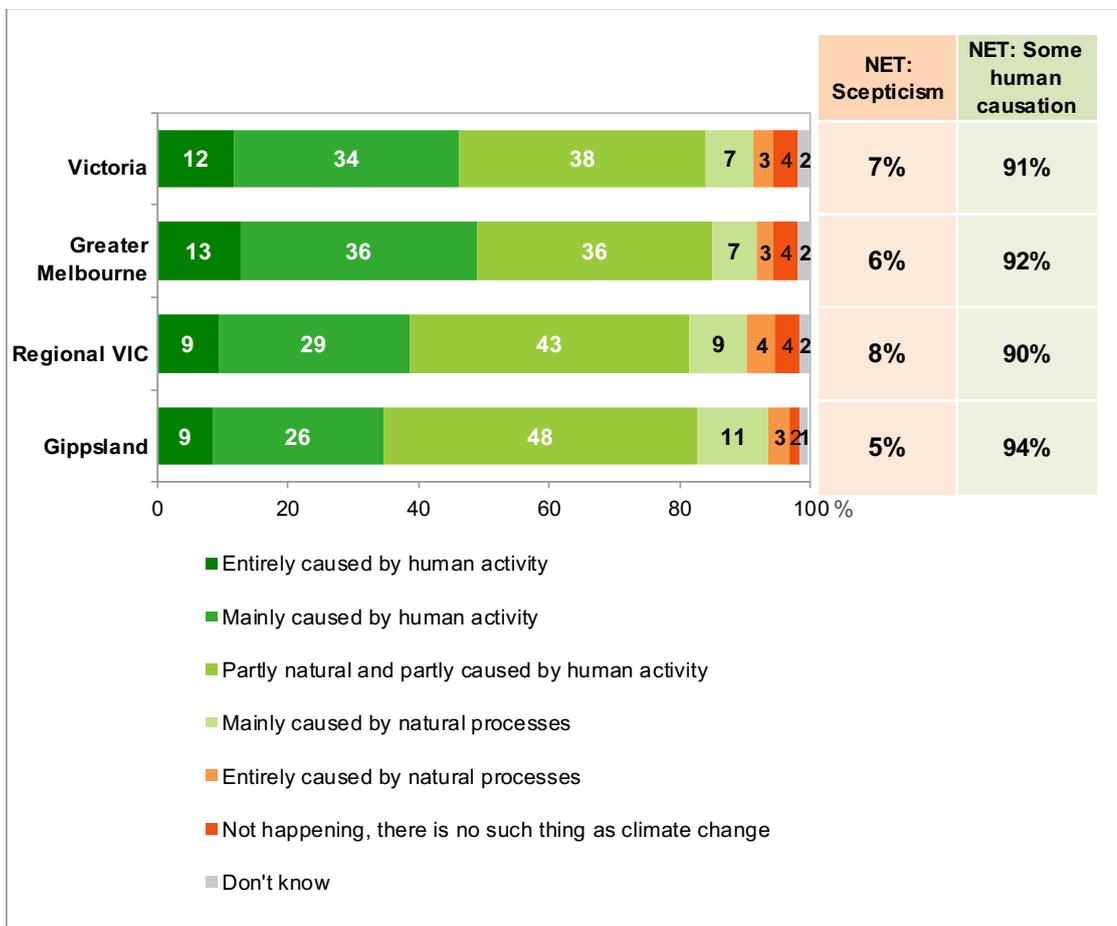
Causation of climate change

The clear majority of Victorians (91%) **accept some level of human causality** for climate change:

- > 3% think climate change is 'entirely caused by natural processes', and
- > 4% of Victorians hold the opinion that 'there is no such thing as climate change'.

Figure 3 below compares the results for Gippsland with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria. There were no statistically significant differences in acceptance of human causation or scepticism by location.

FIGURE 3: OPINIONS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE CAUSALITY



Source: A2
 Base: Total sample (VIC: n=3,333 | GM: n=1,424 | Reg VIC n=1,909 | Gippsland n=217)

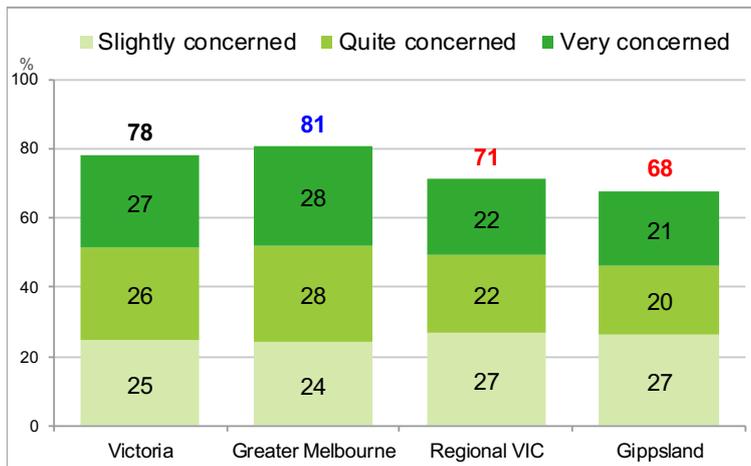
Level of concern

Almost four in five Victorians (78%) stated some level of concern about climate change. There were several variations among the demographic subgroups, with levels of concern being higher among:

- > younger age groups (82% among those aged under 40)
- > females (81%)
- > residents of Greater Melbourne (81%)
- > those with a university degree (39% are 'very concerned' compared to 27% average).

Figure 4 below compares the results for Gippsland with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria and shows that concern about climate change in Gippsland (68%) is lower than the state average (78%) and also slightly below the regional average (71%).

FIGURE 4: CONCERN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE



Source: B2
Base: Total sample

Reasons for concern

When asked to explain what they were concerned about in relation to climate change, the most commonly stated responses included:

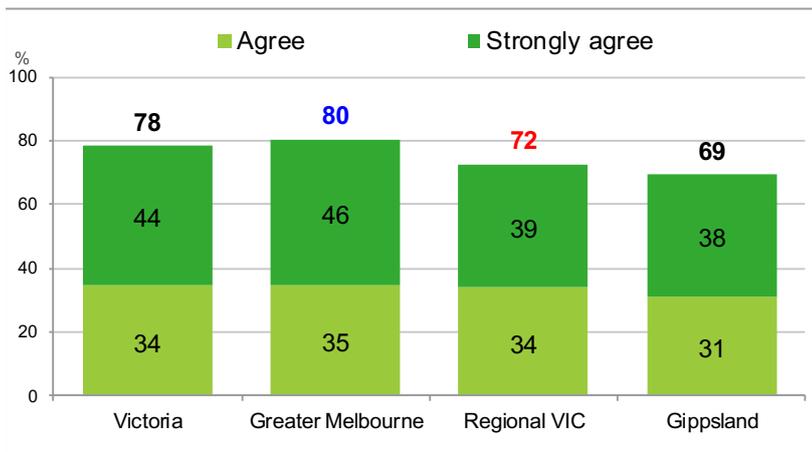
- > **The impact on future generations**
Victoria, 76%; Gippsland, 81%,
- > **The state of the planet**
Victoria, 48%; Gippsland, 41%,
- > **The impact on health / quality of life**
Victoria, 38%; Gippsland, 27%.

Need for action now

Four out of five Victorians (78%) agree that 'climate change is an issue that requires urgent action now'. As might be expected, the level of agreement with this statement was higher among those who stated a high level of concern about climate change (96% agreement among those 'very' or 'quite' concerned).

As seen in Figure 5 agreement with this statement was higher in Greater Melbourne (80%) than in Regional Victoria (72% average). The level of agreement in Gippsland (69%) was on par with the regional average (72%).

FIGURE 5: AGREEMENT THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN ISSUE THAT REQUIRES URGENT ACTION NOW



Source: D4e | Base: All who believe in some human causation of climate change

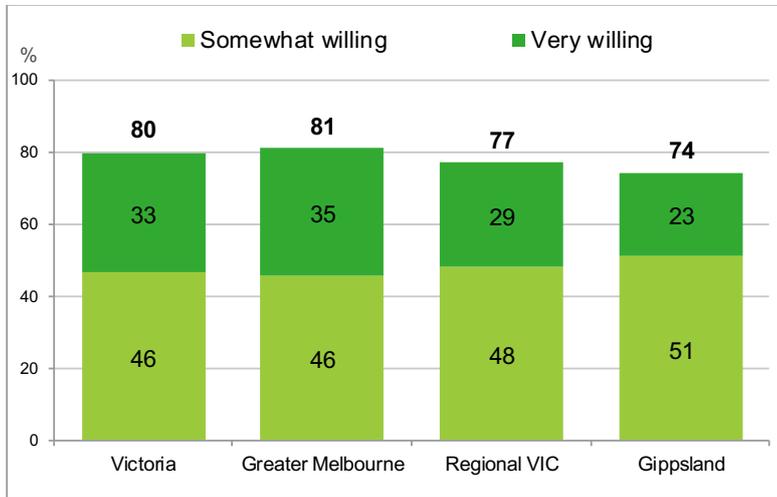
Willingness to act

The majority of Victorians (80%) are at least somewhat **willing to take action to tackle climate change** with a third (33%) stating they are **“very willing”**.

Willingness to act on climate change showed a very similar pattern to concern about climate change in terms of demographic variations; it is higher among the younger age groups (88% among those aged under 25, and 83% among those aged 25-49), and slightly higher among females (83% compared to 77% of males).

Figure 6 below compares the results for Gippsland with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria. The willingness to act on climate change in Gippsland is slightly lower than both the state and regional average, however this difference was not statistically significant.

FIGURE 6: WILLINGNESS TO ACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Source: A3 | Base: All who believe in some human causation of climate change

Motivators for action

Reasons for willingness to act included the desire to protect the environment for future generations, and /or to do their part to ensure the health of the planet.

Barriers to action

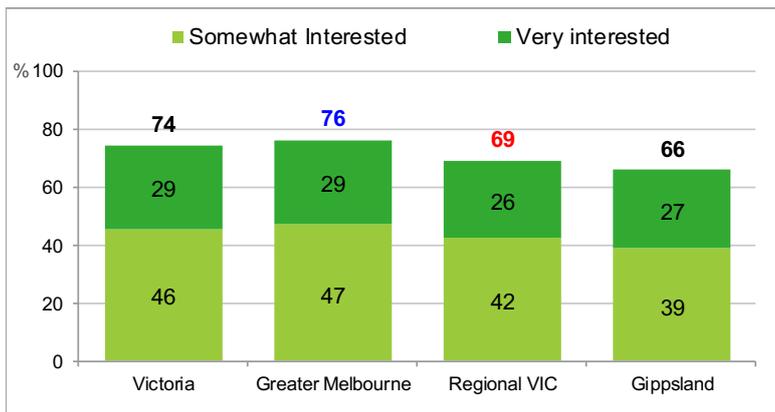
Reasons for not being willing to act were mostly related to denial that humans are causing climate change, or the attitude that there is nothing they can do about it personally, or lack of knowledge about what they can do.

Engagement

Engagement with the topic of climate change is reasonably high across Victoria, with three-quarters of respondents (74%) stating some level of interest in news items, documentaries or other types of information about climate change.

The Figure below compares the results for Gippsland with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, and Regional Victoria; engagement is lower in Gippsland (66%) compared to the state average (74%), and also slightly below the regional average (69%).

FIGURE 7: INTEREST IN INFORMATION ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE



Source: B1 | Base: Total sample

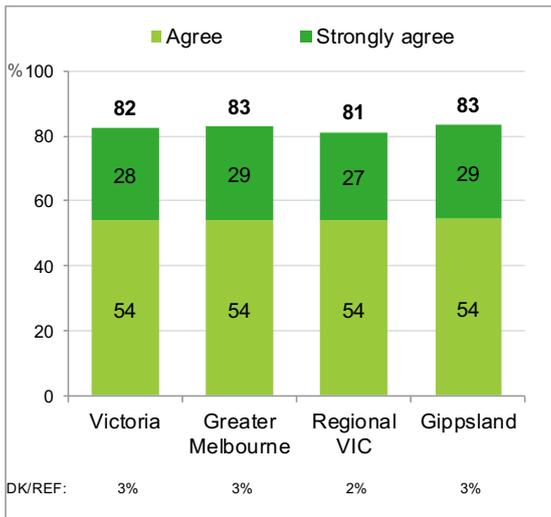
Willingness to act - other measures

Willingness to act is strongly related to self-efficacy, that is, the belief that there are meaningful things one can do to reduce the impact of climate change. Analysis revealed that the *more concerned* someone is about climate change, and the more they believe they can make an impact, the *more likely they are to state a willingness to take action on climate change*.

The Figures below show the results from two measures; self-efficacy and feeling positive about being part of a community-wide movement to help tackle climate change. The results are shown for Gippsland along with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, and the average for Regional Victoria.

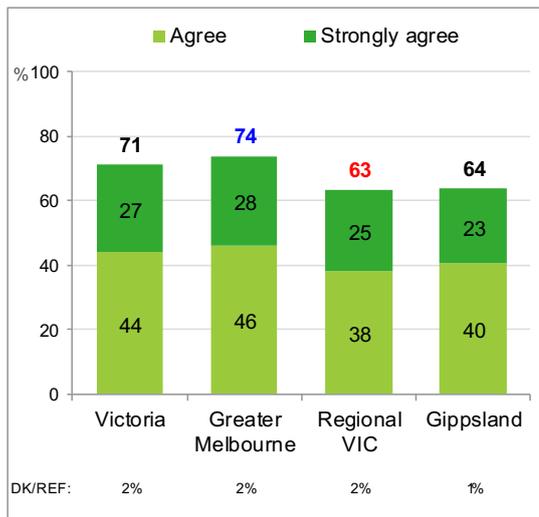
Self-efficacy is consistently high across Victoria, whereas feeling positive about being part of community-wide action on climate change varies in a similar pattern to concern about climate change; higher in Greater Melbourne (74%) and lower in Regional Victoria (63%). Gippsland was on par with others in relation to self-efficacy (83% believe their actions can make a difference) but were less likely, compared to the state average, to feel positive about being part of community action (64%). Those under 40 years, however, were more likely to say they would feel positive about community action on climate change (74%).

FIGURE 8: SELF-EFFICACY



Source: D4g | Base: Module 2

FIGURE 9: FEELING POSITIVE ABOUT BEING PART OF COMMUNITY ACTION



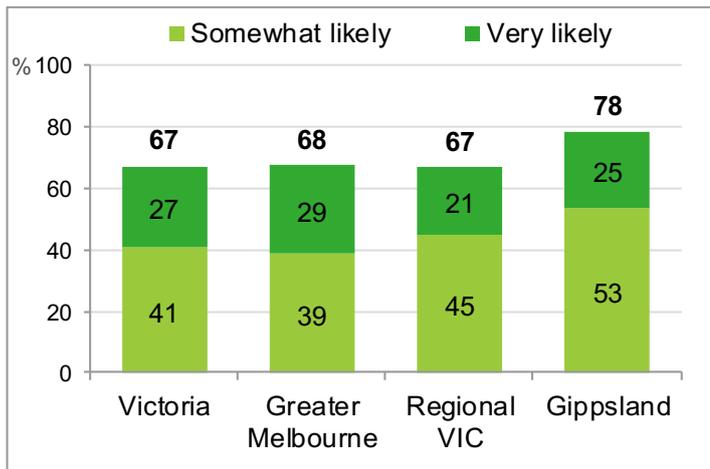
Source: D4b | Base: All who believe in some human causation

Pledge to TAKE2

Although awareness of the TAKE2 program was relatively low, the results regarding likelihood of making a pledge indicate potential for a good level of support for the program, with 67% of Victorians saying they are very or somewhat likely to pledge to TAKE2.

Interestingly, this proportion appears higher for the Gippsland region, but the difference is not statistically significant.

FIGURE 10: LIKELIHOOD OF MAKING A PLEDGE TO TAKE2



Source: C10a | Base: Module 3



Victoria is joining other leading states and regions around the world in committing to do our part to reduce emissions in line with international community's 2015 agreement in Paris. TAKE2 is Victoria's collective climate change pledge initiative to reach net zero emissions by 2050, and keep the global temperature rise to under 2 degrees. Businesses, community groups, local governments, schools and individuals can participate. Sustainability Victoria is the lead agency for voluntary pledges to take action on climate change. For more information on the TAKE2 program and how to get involved, please visit the [website](#).

Impacts of climate change

All survey respondents were asked to state if they have noticed any change in the occurrence of extreme weather and/or environmental events in Victoria over the past 10 years, and if so, whether or not they think that climate change is influencing these changes.

For the most part, the majority perceive that there has been an increase in each event. Among those who have noticed an increase in these extreme weather and/or environmental events, the vast majority linked these events to climate change.

Figure 11 below compares the results for the Gippsland region to the state average; although figures differ slightly from the state average these differences are not statistically significant. Then impacts that the majority of Gippsland respondents recognise as having increased in frequency include bushfires, crop failures and air pollution.

Figure 12 shows that Victorians clearly understand that climate change is influencing the increasing occurrence of extreme weather and environmental events. The linking of extreme weather and climate change is highest for heatwaves, with nine out of ten people stating that climate change is influencing the frequency of these.

FIGURE 11: OBSERVATIONS OF THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Noticed any changes in the occurrence of...	MORE		LESS		NO CHANGE		DON'T KNOW	
	VIC %	Gipps %	VIC %	Gipps %	VIC %	Gipps %	VIC %	Gipps %
 Severe bushfires	61	65	4	3	29	28	6	3
 Severe storms and floods	58	49	4	3	30	40	8	7
 Air pollution	55	56	6	3	31	32	9	8
 Coastal erosion and changes to sea levels	52	46	4	4	21	32	22	17
 Crop failures or declining agriculture	50	53	8	7	20	24	22	16
 Heatwaves	49	41	11	15	32	38	7	6
 Water shortage and drought	47	45	15	11	29	39	9	5

FIGURE 12: IS CLIMATE CHANGE INFLUENCING?

Climate change is influencing the observed increase in this?	YES	
	VIC %	Gipps %
 Heatwaves	90	92
 Coastal erosion and changes to sea levels	89	91
 Water shortage and drought	84	79
 Severe storms and floods	83	80
 Crop failures or declining agriculture	82	68
 Severe bushfires	71	54

Source: B5/B6 | Base: Total sample

Concern about the impacts

For each of the extreme weather and/or environmental events, all respondents were asked to state how concerned they are about each one directly affecting their local area in the foreseeable future. As shown in the Table below, levels of concern are quite high across the board, with water shortage and declining agriculture topping the list.

Figure 13 below compares the results for Gippsland with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria.

Results indicate that people in Regional Victoria are more likely than those in Greater Melbourne to be concerned about the impacts of:

- › severe bushfires, 84% compared to 62%;
- › crop failures/declining agriculture, 79% compared to 68%; and,
- › water shortage /drought, 79% compared to 70%.

People in Gippsland are most concerned about:

- › severe bushfires (82%);
- › water shortage and drought (71%) and
- › crop failures (70%).

Although not among the top concerns, their concern about coastal erosion (55%) is higher than the level of concern shown in other regions (45% regional average).

FIGURE 13: PROPORTION WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT EACH ENVIRONMENTAL EVENT

		Victoria %	Greater Melbourne %	Regional VIC %	Gippsland %
	Water shortage and drought	72	70	79	71
	Crop failures or declining agriculture	71	68	79	70
	Severe bushfires	68	62	84	82
	Air pollution	68	72	57	57
	Heatwaves	67	67	66	63
	Severe storms and floods	65	64	68	60
	Coastal erosion and changes to sea levels	51	53	45	55

Source: B5/B6 | Base: Total sample

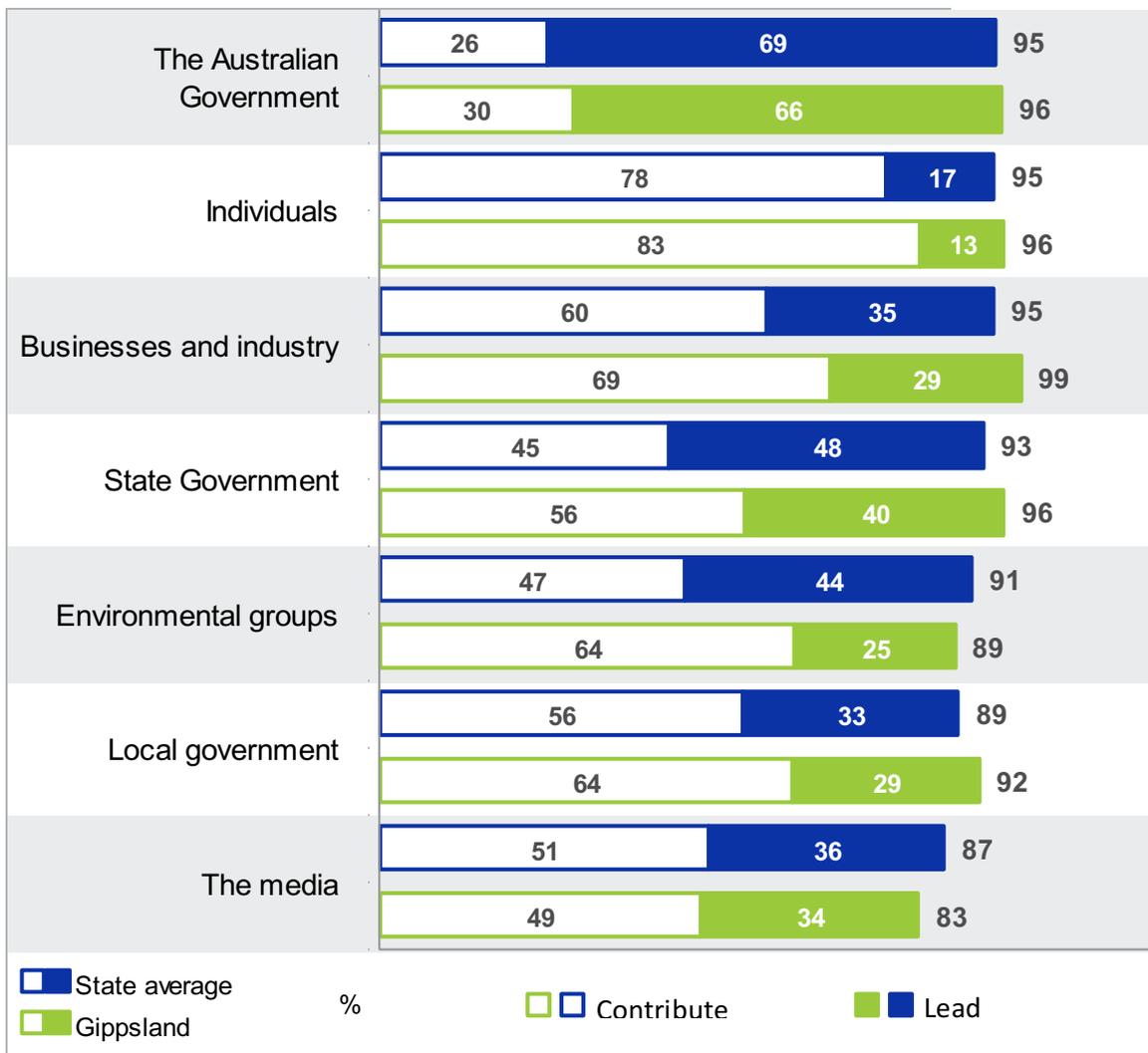
Leadership and responsibility

The Victorian community believes that government, individuals, and business and industry should all be taking action on climate change. Figure 14 shows, for each entity, the proportion of people who believe it should “lead action” or “contribute to action” on climate change, and compares results for Gippsland to the state average.

- 93% of Victorians believe the State Government should be acting on climate change – either in a leadership role or as a contributor.
- Figure 15 (opposite) shows that 22% think the Victorian Government is doing 'the right amount' but the majority (61%) think the State Government should be doing more.

Results for Gippsland did not differ significantly to the state average. It is interesting to note, however, that 99% of Gippsland respondents believe that business and industry should be acting on climate change.

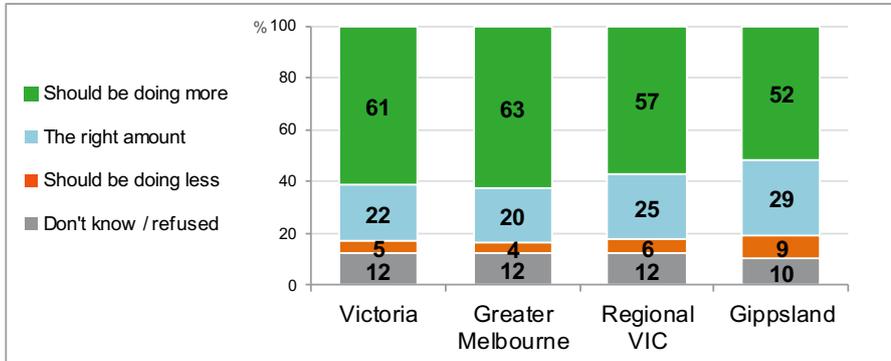
FIGURE 14: LEADERSHIP ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Source: C1 | Base: Module 3 (VIC: n=1,000 | Gippsland n=66) | results exclude DK/REF

State Government action

FIGURE 15: SHOULD THE STATE GOVERNMENT BE DOING MORE?

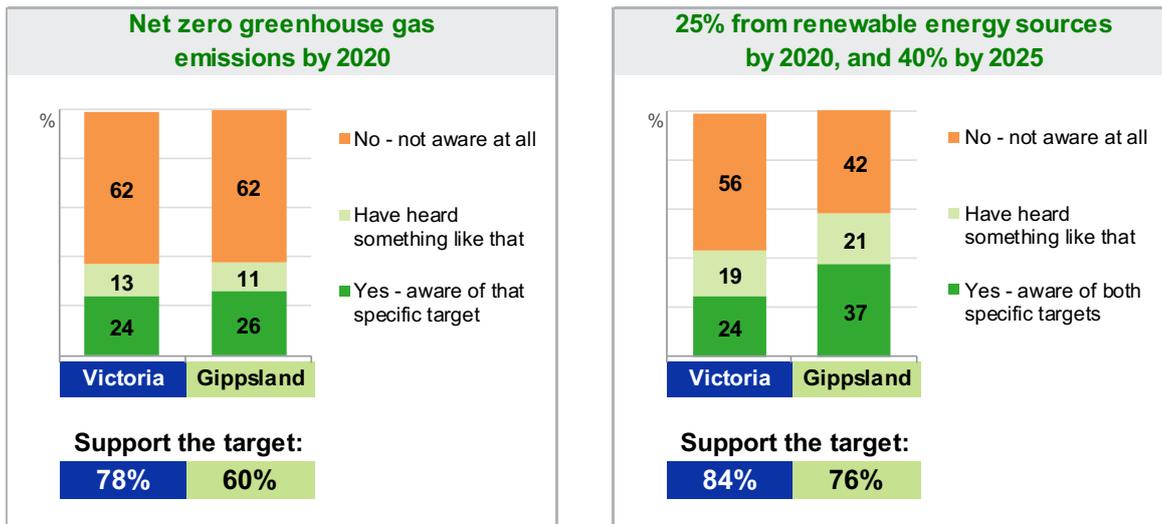


Source: C3 | Base: Module2

Government climate change targets

Support for the Victoria's emissions and renewable energy targets is high – both targets are strongly supported. The Chart below compares the results for Gippsland with the state average; awareness and support in Gippsland is similar to the state average.

FIGURE 16: AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT TARGETS



- > 24% of Victorians were aware of the Net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 target, and 13% were vaguely aware that a target has been set.
- > 78% of Victorians support this target.
- > Support for the target is stronger among younger Victorians; 88% of those aged 25-39 years.
- > The results for Gippsland were lower than the state average although this difference was not statistically significant.

- > 24% of Victorians were aware of the renewable energy targets, and a further 19% were vaguely aware that targets were set.
- > 84% of Victorians support these targets
- > Support for the targets was stronger among 25-39 year age group, 93%.
- > Although not statistically significant, higher proportions of respondents in Gippsland were aware of the renewable energy targets, probably due to strong community interest in energy generation in the region

Source: C4a/C4b/C5a/C6a | Base: Module 2

Reasons for supporting the targets:

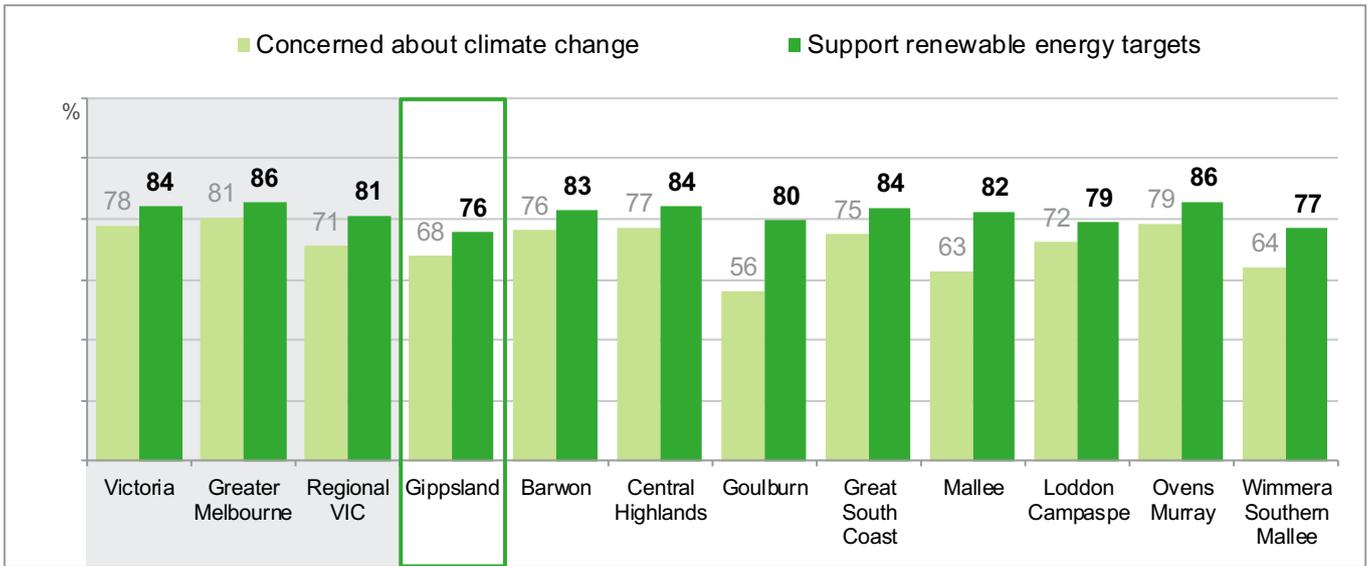
- > "The jobs creation partially. Also, as the technology improves the renewable energy becomes viable and should be pursued."
- > "If they are going to close down the Hazelwood coal power station, they're going to have to find the power from somewhere else, like wind power or solar power."
- > "Because we have to do something and it's got to come from government."
- > "They are realistic targets, and they can use this as an opportunity to provide green jobs for future generations in this state."

Support for renewable energy

As shown in Figure 17 below, levels of support for the renewable energy targets is consistently high across the state. The graph also shows each region's levels of concern about climate and indicates that high levels of support for renewable energy is not necessarily dependent on high levels of concern.

For example, results in Gippsland show higher support for renewable energy targets (76%) compared to the proportion concerned about climate change (68%).

FIGURE 17: CONCERN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUPPORT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS

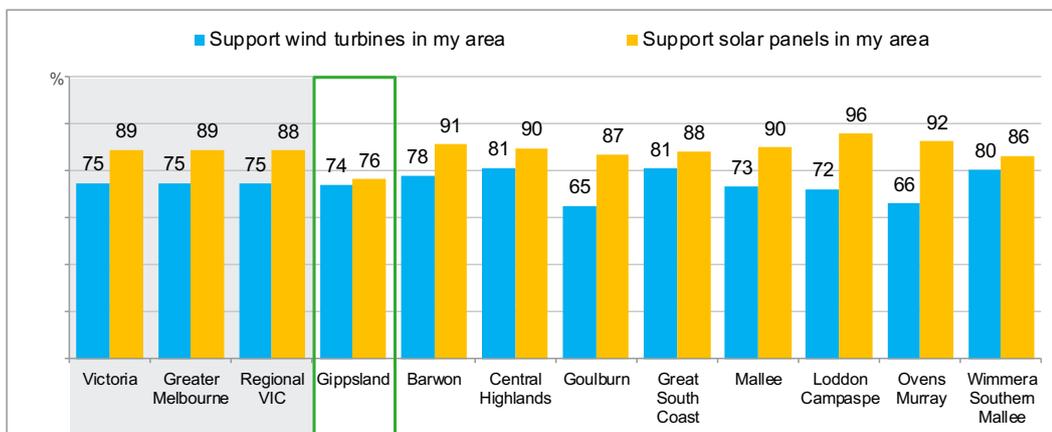


Source: B2/C6a | Base: Total sample (B2) / Module 2 (C6a)

As well as supporting the targets, the majority of Victorians are supportive of renewable energy infrastructure in their local area with 75% saying they would support wind turbines in their local area, and 89% saying they would support solar panels in their local area, providing access to renewable energy.

Figure 18 shows the levels of support for both sources of renewable energy, for Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, regional Victoria, and Gippsland. Unlike other regions which appear to clearly favour solar panels, Gippsland shows similar levels of support for both forms of renewable energy infrastructure (76% solar panels and 74% wind turbines).

FIGURE 18: SUPPORT FOR WIND TURBINES AND SOLAR PANELS



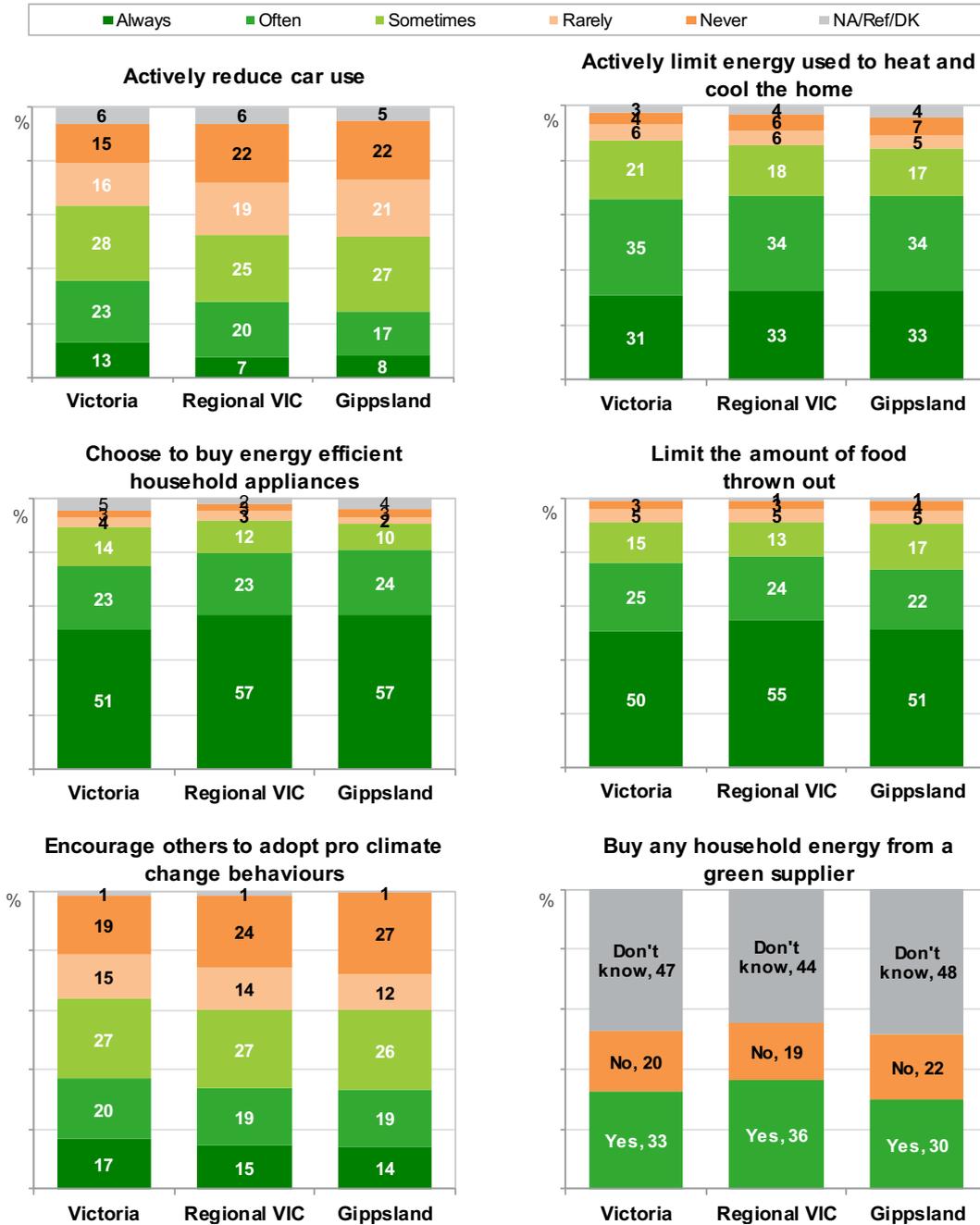
Source: D4d | Base: Module 1 (wind turbines) Module 2 (solar panels)

Everyday behaviours

The majority of Victorians are **already taking positive action to reduce energy use**. The Charts below show the everyday actions that people can do now but may need some encouragement to do. Actions that most people said they **always** do included **buying energy efficient appliances**, 51%, and **limit the amount of food thrown out**, 50%.

The Charts compare results for Gippsland with the state and other regions. No statistically significant differences were found.

FIGURE 19: TAKE-UP OF EVERYDAY BEHAVIOURS



Source: D1a/b/c/d/e/f | Base: Total sample

Motivations and barriers for everyday behaviours

The most commonly stated motivations for undertaking everyday basic included cost, convenience, and comfort. Concern for the environment was a reasonably strong motivator, but not the highest.

A selection of comments from those in the Gippsland region is shown below.

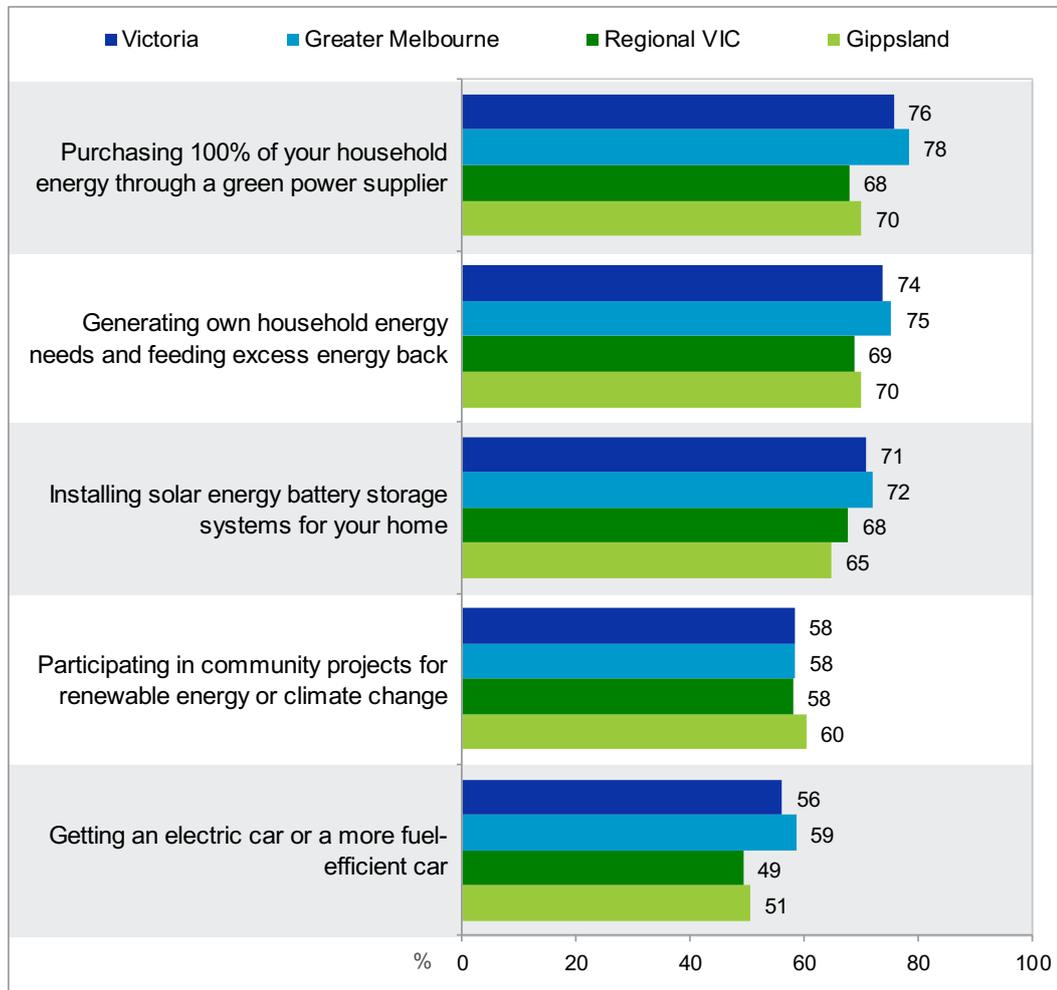
Motivations	Barriers
Actively reduce car use	
"Here in Sale it is much easier to walk so walking is a very easy choice. My house is close to the supermarket and the library. Why would you take a car?"	"We have very little public transport; a bus twice a day which is very hard to get onto. We only use the car to go into town to shop and get home again."
Actively limit energy to heat and cool the home	
"We live in rural Victoria, so we only have LPG gas, which is very expensive, so obviously the cost. We won't put the heater on carelessly. We're also concerned about the effect on the environment."	"Because for my husband is there is problem with being cold, for his circulation."
Choose to buy energy efficient household appliances	
"They are more efficient and cheaper to run, and they are better for the environment."	"Too overpriced - most of the products here in Victoria are about twice the price of those in Queensland."
Limit the amount of food thrown out	
"It's wastage; if you consider paddock to plate and all the energy that is used it is more than 50% now for Australia. It is absolutely ludicrous."	"We only buy what we need to use, but occasionally something will expire and we don't get to use it."
Encourage others to adopt pro climate change behaviours	
"There's no point me trying to do things to minimise climate change if other people don't, it's a team effort."	"I hate when people try to force things on me so I don't like forcing things on others."
Buy any household energy from green supplier	
"Because renewable energy has to be supported, and there are more jobs in it."	"No power companies around me use renewable."

Advanced actions

To better understand the actions that Sustainability Victoria might support in the future, it is important to gauge the level of interest (framed within a five year period) in a selection of 'advanced' behaviours. They are considered 'advanced' because they have high upfront costs and require a level of planning by those who wish to adopt them.

Respondents were presented with the five advanced behaviours shown below, and asked to state their level of interest in each one; as seen in Figure 20, the level of interest in taking up these actions within the next 5 years was high. Figure 20 shows the proportion who are 'very' or 'somewhat' interested in each action, for Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, regional average and the Gippsland Region. While there were no statistically significant differences in the level of interest by location, it is important to note Gippsland's high level of interest in participating in community-based renewable energy projects.

FIGURE 20: INTEREST IN ADVANCED BEHAVIOURS



Source: D3a/b/c/d/e.Base: Module 1 and accept some human causation | Results exclude "already doing this"

How the Victorian Government can support individuals

Survey respondents were asked to comment on what they think the State Government could do to support individual action on climate change, with 62% being able to think of suggestions. The comments were coded into themes as shown in the Table below. Across Victoria, the majority of comments related to education (providing information on what people can do to tackle climate change), providing incentives and/or subsidising solar and other renewable energy sources, and providing funding for community programs.

FIGURE 21: SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT CAN SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Suggestions for how to support individual action	ALL VIC (n=523) %
Education / promotion of climate change issues	30
Support / promote / subsidise solar power	23
Support / promote renewable energy	18
Reduce waste and pollution	16
Provide funding / financial incentives	13
Improved public transport / cycle tracks	9
Increase legislation / regulation of business and industry	4
Better recycling / waste reduction	3
More schemes such as the Green Energy Lighting scheme	3
Support / promote green cars	3
Reduce / ban plastic bags	2
Plant more trees / re-vegetation	1
Other	10

Source: F4 | Base: Module 3

Further information

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Summary of key findings – Climate Change Social Research
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