

**VICTORIANS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CLIMATE CHANGE**
REGIONAL REPORT – OVENS MURRAY

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.



AMSRO



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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.

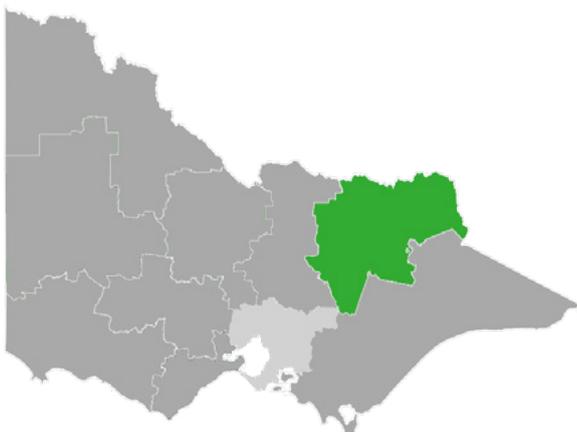
Telephone interviews were conducted from 17 November to 14 December 2016, following a pilot test among a small sample of Victorians. The online survey was conducted from 19 December 2016 to 20 January 2017, during which two reminders were emailed to nonresponders.

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>

Ovens Murray Region

LGAs in the region:

- › Alpine Shire
- › Benalla Rural City
- › Indigo Shire
- › Mansfield Shire
- › Towong Shire
- › Wangaratta Rural City
- › Wodonga City

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

FIGURE 1: SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

	Unweighted n=210 %	Weighted n=210 %
GENDER		
Male	45	48
Female	55	52
AGE		
Under 40	15	34
40-64	46	45
65 and over	39	22
EDUCATION		
University Degree or higher	35	12
TAFE/Technical/Vocational	28	39
Completed high school	17	26
Did not complete high school	20	23
Still at school	0	0
COUNTRY OF BIRTH		
Australia	86	90
Elsewhere	14	10

Key findings in Ovens Murray at a glance

Climate change is happening and requires action

95%

say climate change exists and humans are contributing to it;

74%

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

85%

believe their actions can help reduce the impact of climate change

The community want action on climate change from:



89%

State Government



85%

Local Government



93%

Business & industry



93%

All individuals

Residents are willing to take action

84%

are willing to take action on climate change

58%

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

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



80% concerned
Water shortages & drought



85% concerned
Crop failures or declines in agriculture



98% concerned
Severe bushfires



77% concerned
Severe storms & floods



31% concerned
Coastal erosion & changes to sea level



71% concerned
Heatwaves



53% 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.

Ovens Murray shows strong support for net zero emission and renewable energy targets

76%

support the net zero emissions target by 2050

86%

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

Ovens Murray is supportive of renewable energy

66%

would support wind turbines in their local area

92%

would support solar panels in their local area

75%

interested in taking part in community renewable energy projects

(highest in the state)

Detailed findings

Priority of climate change

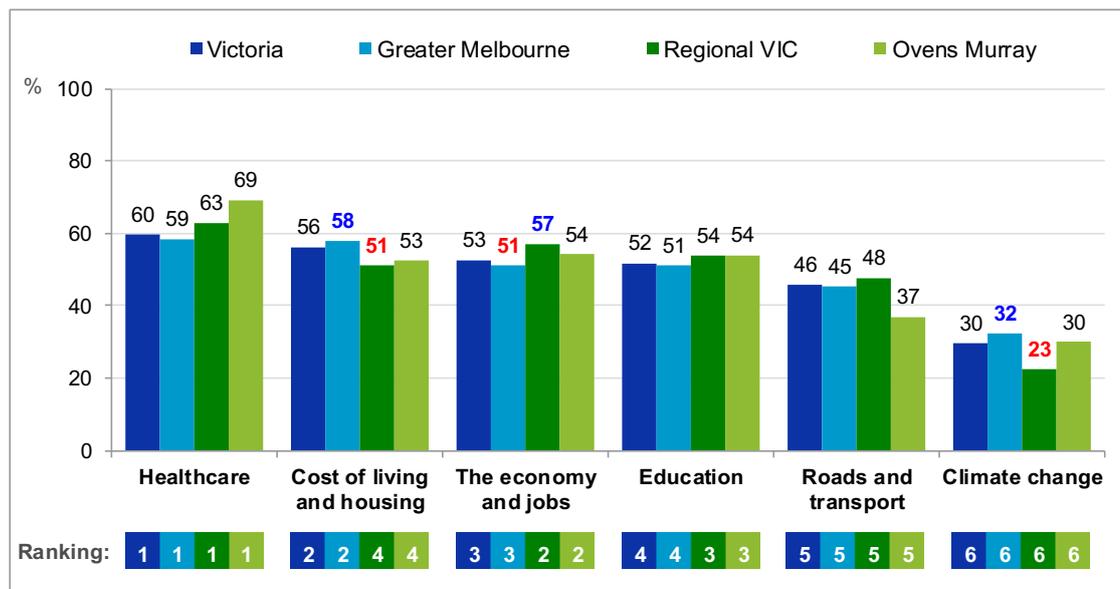
When prompted, climate change ranked sixth on a list of issues of importance in Victoria; with three in ten Victorians (30%) nominating climate change as one of the top three most important issues facing the state today. Overall, younger people ranked climate change higher; the issue ranks fifth among 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 Ovens Murray region.

Ovens Murray had the same proportion (30%) as the overall State average ranking climate change in the top three areas of importance, and was higher than the regional average (23%).

For Ovens Murray the issue of most concern was healthcare (69%) followed by education (54%) and the economy and jobs (54%).

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 | Ovens Murray n=210)

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 Ovens Murray 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 | Ovens Murray n=210)

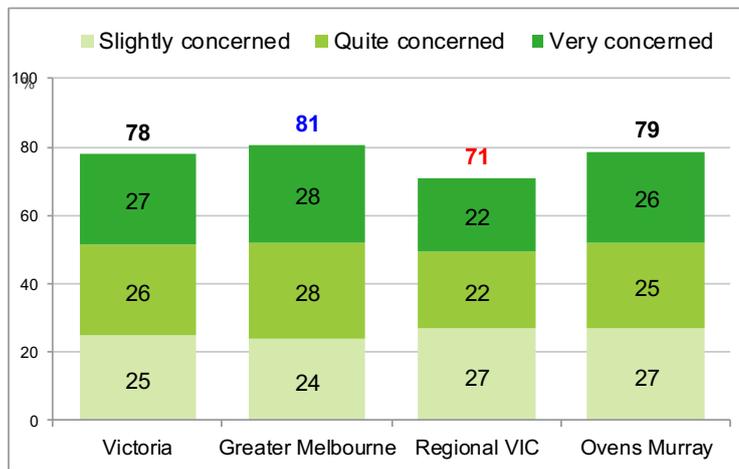
Level of concern

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 Ovens Murray with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria. Concern about climate change in Ovens Murray is similar to the state average.

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:

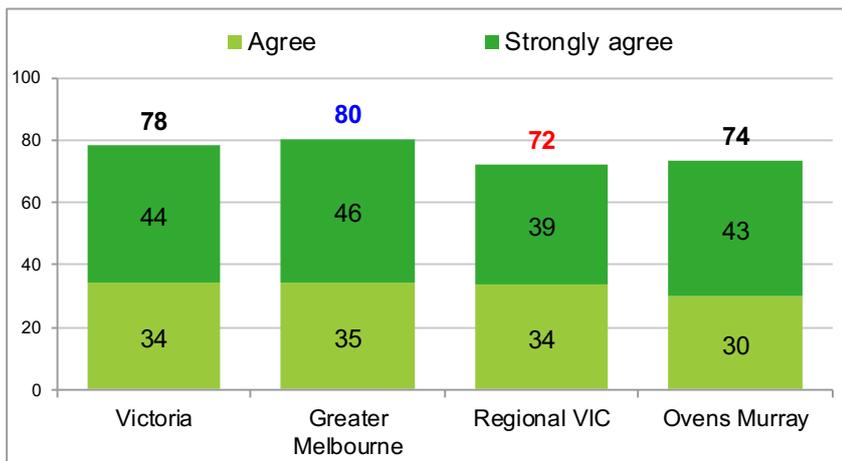
- › **The impact on future generations**
Victoria, 76%; Ovens Murray, 77%,
- › **The state of the planet**
Victoria, 48%; Ovens Murray, 48%,
- › **The impact on health / quality of life**
Victoria, 38%; Ovens Murray, 31%.

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 Ovens Murray (74%) 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

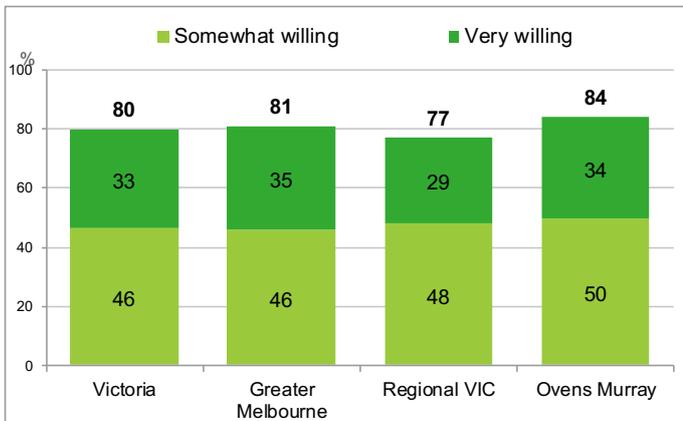
Willingness to act

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 Ovens Murray with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria. The willingness to act on climate change in Ovens Murray is slightly higher than both the state and regional average, however the 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

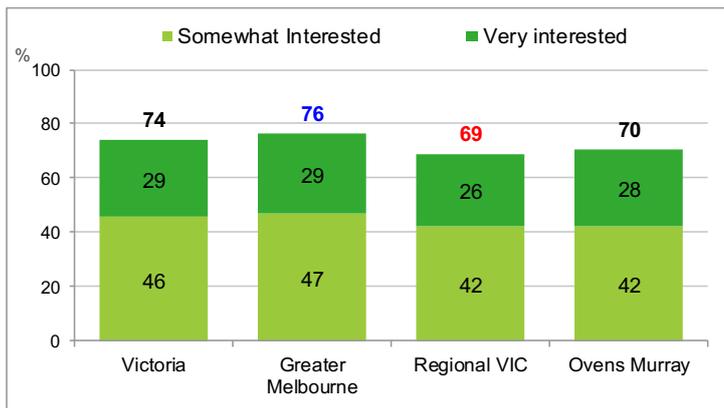
Reasons for not being willing to act were mostly related to denial that humans are causing climate change, or the attitude that there is nothing they can do about it personally, or lack of knowledge about what they can do.

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 Ovens Murray with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, and Regional Victoria; engagement in Ovens Murray is similar to the regional average.

FIGURE 7: INTEREST IN INFORMATION ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE



Source: B1 | Base: Total sample

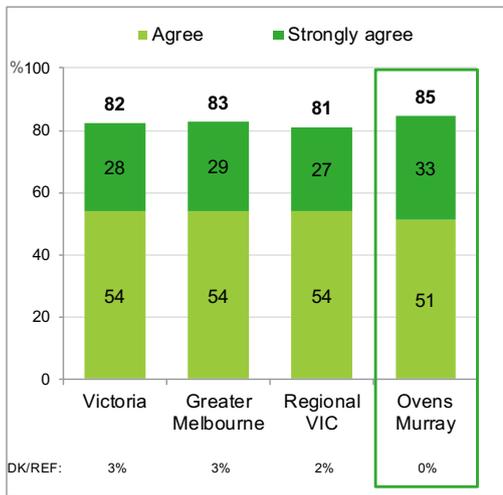
Willingness to act - other measures

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 Ovens Murray along with Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, and the average for Regional Victoria.

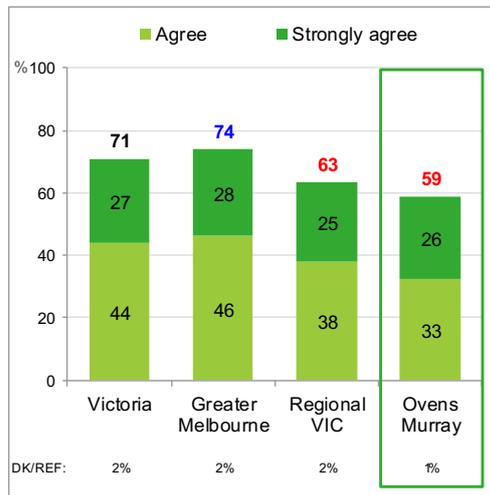
Self-efficacy is consistently high across Victoria, whereas feeling positive about being part of community-wide action on climate change varies in a similar pattern to concern about climate change; higher in Greater Melbourne (74%) and lower in Regional Victoria (63%). Interestingly, Ovens Murray had among the lowest proportion who would feel positive about being part of community action (59%).

FIGURE 8: SELF-EFFICACY



Source: D4g | Base: Module 2

FIGURE 9: FEELING POSITIVE ABOUT BEING PART OF COMMUNITY ACTION



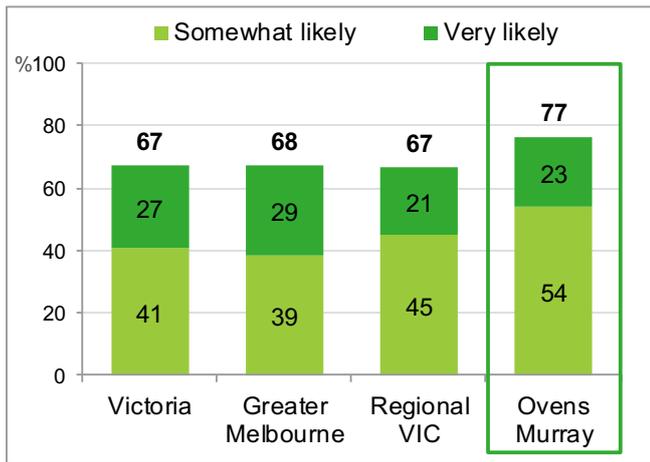
Source: D4b | Base: All who believe in some human causation

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.

This proportion appears higher for the Ovens Murray 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 shows the results for the Ovens Murray region and the state average. The weather events most people in Ovens Murray noticed included increases in bushfires (68%) and increases in severe storms (58%). Around half (53%) also noticed more crop failures and declines in agriculture.

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 %	OvMry %	VIC %	OvMry %	VIC %	OvMry %	VIC %	OvMry %
 Severe bushfires	61	68	4	1	29	30	6	1
 Severe storms and floods	58	58	4	6	30	33	8	3
 Air pollution	55	47	6	7	31	40	9	7
 Coastal erosion and changes to sea levels	52	50	4	1	21	21	22	28
 Crop failures or declining agriculture	50	53	8	6	20	28	22	13
 Heatwaves	49	50	11	4	32	40	7	6
 Water shortage and drought	47	48	15	12	29	35	9	6

FIGURE 12: IS CLIMATE CHANGE INFLUENCING?

Climate change is influencing the observed increase in this?	YES	
	VIC %	OvMry %
 Heatwaves	90	90
 Coastal erosion and changes to sea levels	89	88
 Water shortage and drought	84	84
 Severe storms and floods	83	83
 Crop failures or declining agriculture	82	77
 Severe bushfires	71	66

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 the Great South Coast 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%.

When compared to other regional areas, people in Ovens Murray are more likely to be concerned about:

- > severe bushfires (98% compared to 84% average in regional average);
- > crop failures (85% compared to 79% average in regional average); and
- > severe storms and flood (77% compared to 68% regional average).

Their concern about air pollution in Ovens Murray (53%) was lower than concern in Greater Melbourne (72%) and the regional average (57%).

FIGURE 13: PROPORTION WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT EACH ENVIRONMENTAL EVENT

		Victoria %	Greater Melbourne %	Regional VIC %	Ovens Murray %
	Water shortage and drought	72	70	79	80
	Crop failures or declining agriculture	71	68	79	85
	Severe bushfires	68	62	84	98
	Air pollution	68	72	57	53
	Heatwaves	67	67	66	71
	Severe storms and floods	65	64	68	77
	Coastal erosion and changes to sea levels	51	53	45	31

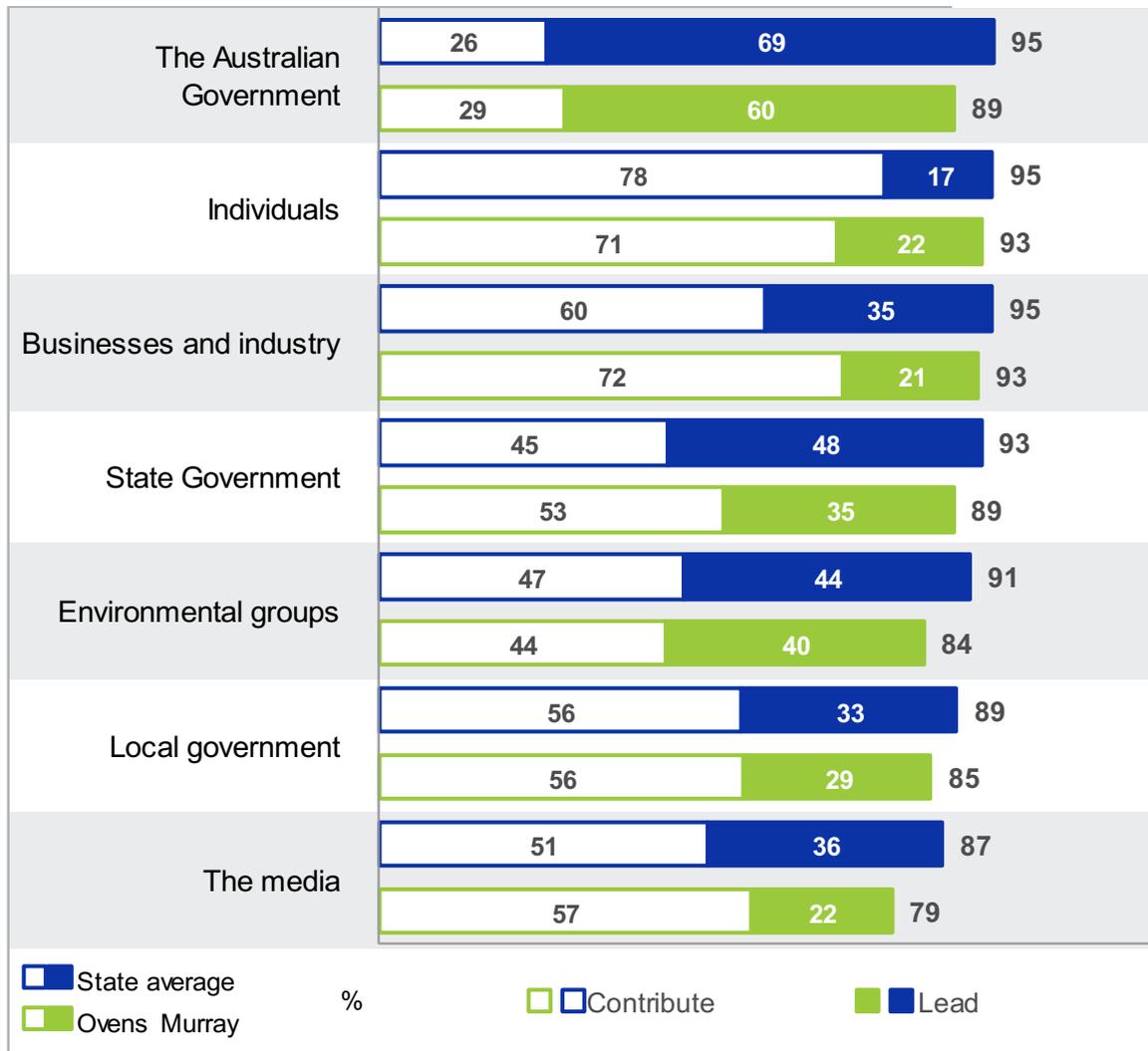
Source: B5/B6 | Base: Total sample

Leadership and responsibility

The Victorian community believes that government, individuals, and business and industry should all be taking action on climate change. Figure 13 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 Ovens Murray 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; the results for Ovens Murray did not differ significantly to the State average.

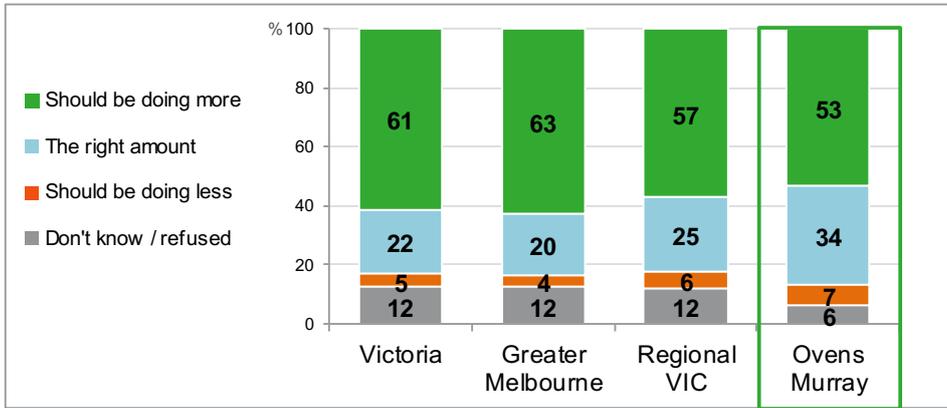
FIGURE 14: LEADERSHIP ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Source: C1 | Base: Module 3 (VIC: n=1,000 | Ovens Murray n=64) | results exclude DK/REF

State Government action

FIGURE 15: SHOULD THE STATE GOVERNMENT BE DOING MORE?

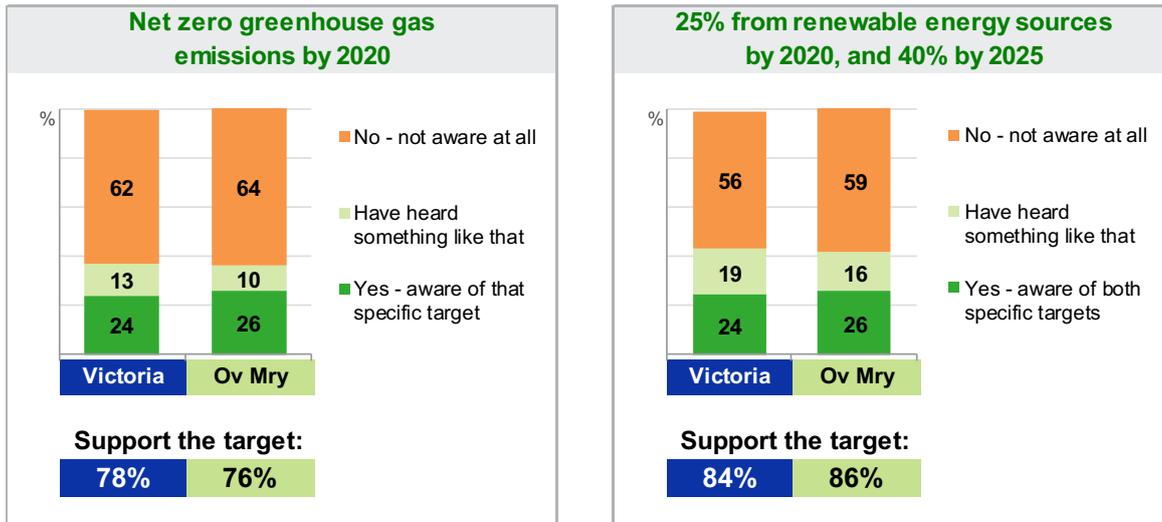


Source: C3 | Base: Module2

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 Ovens Murray with the state average; awareness and support in Ovens Murray is similar to the state average.

FIGURE 16: AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT TARGETS



- > Approximately one-quarter, 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 Ovens Murray were similar to the state average.
- > Approximately one-quarter, 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%.
- > The results for Ovens Murray were similar to the state average.

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

Reasons for supporting the targets:

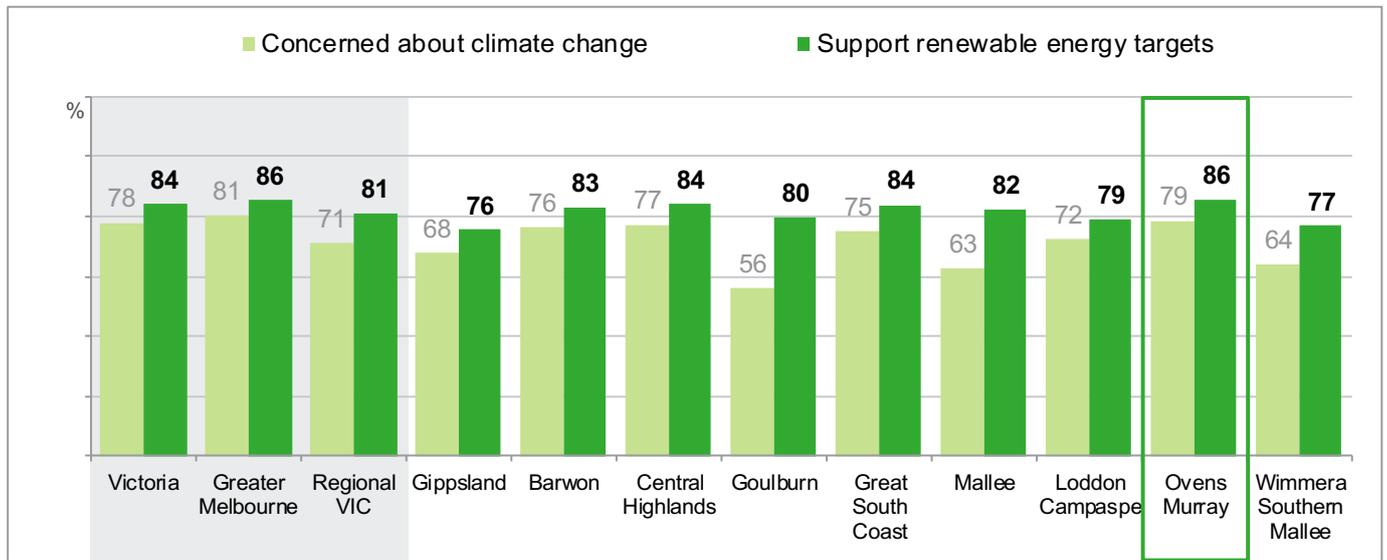
- > "I think renewable energy is the one sure-fire way of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. A lot of the emissions come from coal power stations, which are getting shut down, which I think is really great."
- > "I think its a great thing if it can be done at a reasonable cost. Fossil fuels are a finite resource, so if we can get more renewable sources of energy, then we will be better off."
- > "Because I think that we should be closing down all the coal based generation of electricity for a start because all of that is going into the atmosphere."
- > "I think any decrease in greenhouse gases has got to be good for the climate and for the future and the next generation."

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 Ovens Murray, both measures (support for the targets and concern about climate change) are similar to the state average.

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

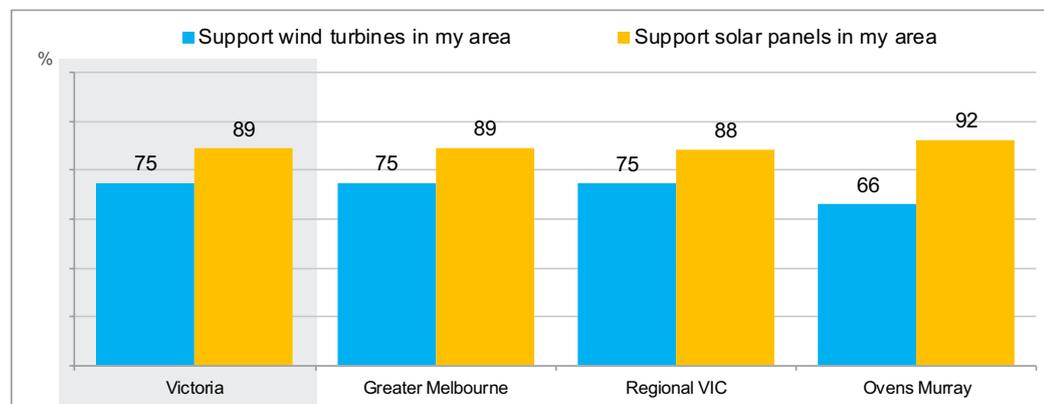


Source: B2/C6a | Base: Total sample (B2) / Module 2 (C6a)

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 each regional grouping; results in Ovens Murray show very high support for solar panels (92%) and lower support for wind turbines (66%).

FIGURE 18: SUPPORT FOR WIND TURBINES AND SOLAR PANELS



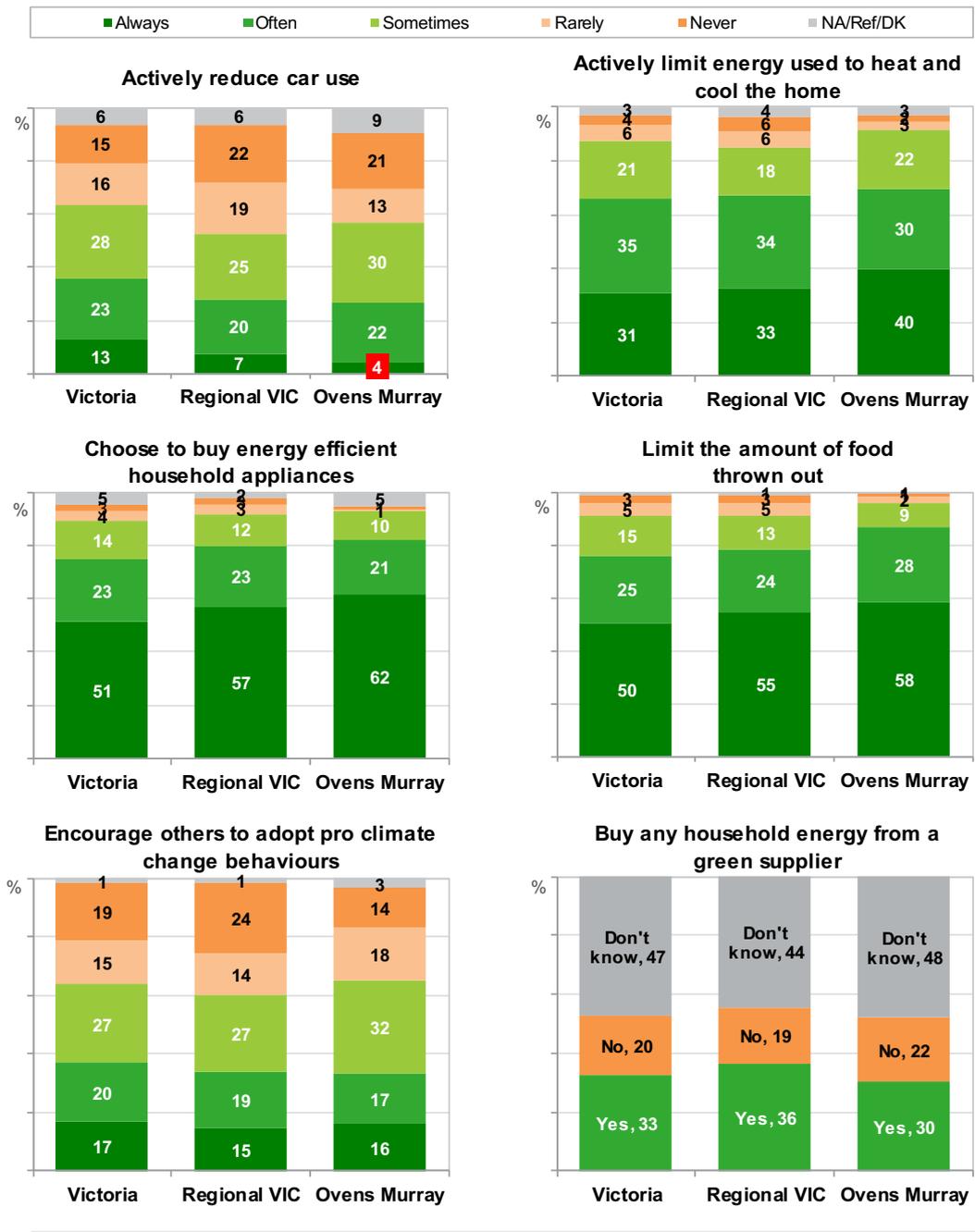
Source: D4d | Base: Module 1 (wind turbines) Module 2 (solar panels)

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 Ovens Murray 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 Ovens Murray region is shown below.

Motivations	Barriers
Actively reduce car use	
"Exercise keeps me fit, not using my car. I don't like to take my car if I don't have to. There are too many cars on the road. We've only got the bus here for public transport."	"We live in Wangaratta and it's 5 kilometers to the shopping centre; I can walk but I'm not that fit, I don't have a bike, and I could take the bus but I don't, because I have a car."
Actively limit energy to heat and cool the home	
"Two reasons; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also to save money, which is a big motivator."	"Because if it's hot outside, I'm going to cool the inside. If it's cold outside, I'm going to be warm. I make sure lights are switched off, but if its temperature, I don't care."
Choose to buy energy efficient household appliances	
"Well because it is cheaper if it is more energy efficient in terms of running the appliance."	"The last one blew up. I don't check the stars on the energy rating."
Limit the amount of food thrown out	
"I have a dog that just about eats anything. We cook what we need so generally all leftovers are either for lunch the next day or goes to the puppies."	"Just because it festers in the fridge and I don't eat it so I end up throwing it out, I'm over-buying I suppose."
Encourage others to adopt pro climate change behaviours	
"It's not about climate change as such; I do believe in saving resources and recycling though and I encourage others to do that."	"I don't know, it's just not something we talk about. When we talk about it, I do, but there are usually other things going on."
Buy any household energy from green supplier	
"I think it's going to help the environment, to make sure the planet is kept in the best order as possible."	"Because we've just moved, and I wanted to expedite the process of getting the power connected."

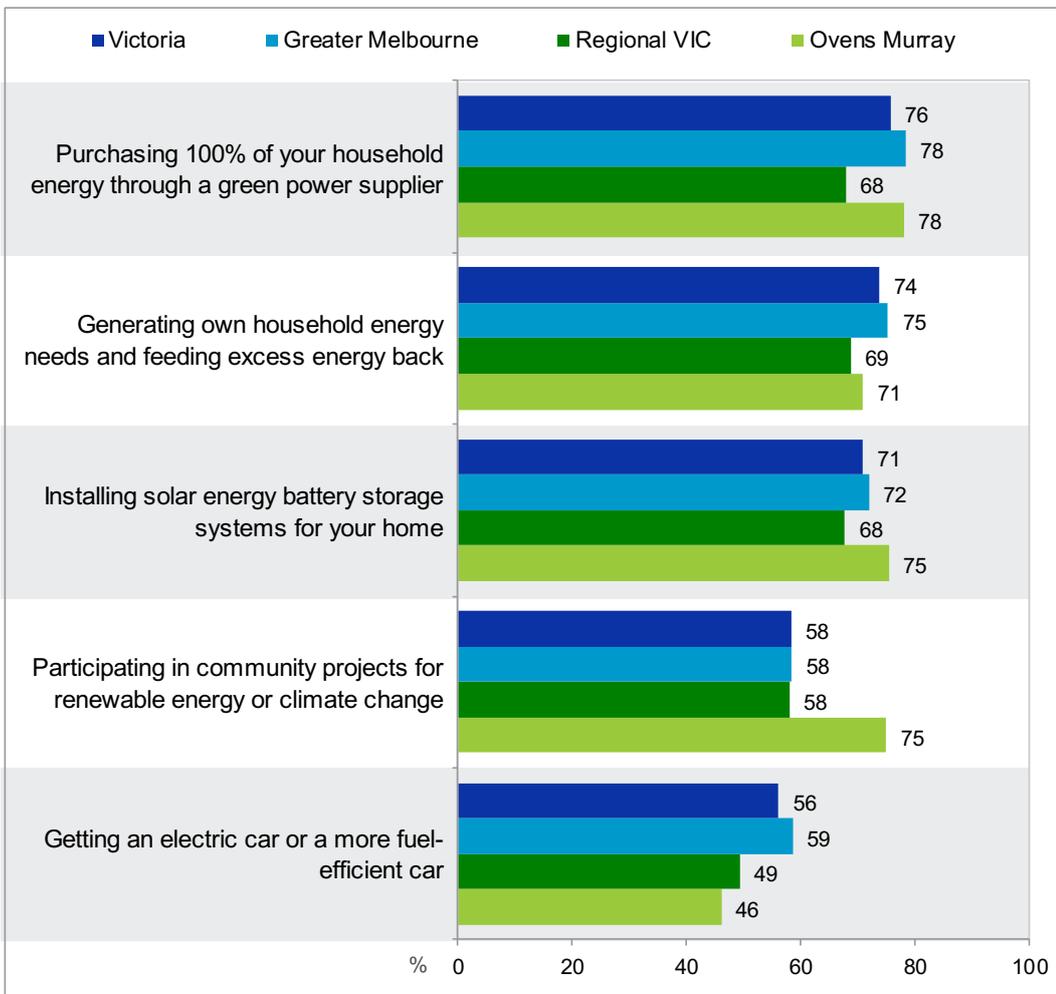
Advanced actions

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. The Figure below shows the proportion who are 'very' or 'somewhat' interested in each action, for Victoria overall, Greater Melbourne, regional average and the Ovens Murray Region. While there were no statistically significant differences in the level of interest by location, it is important to note the following:

- Ovens Murray respondents had the highest level of interest in participating in community-based renewable energy projects, 75% compared to 58% state average;
- Ovens Murray also had higher levels of interest in buying 100% green power (78%) than the regional average (68%).

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

For more information contact
Sustainability Victoria
info@sustainability.vic.gov.au

Sustainability Victoria
Level 28, Urban Workshop,
50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone (03) 8626 8700
sustainability.vic.gov.au

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