

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST CLIMATE POLL

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Introduction

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Foundation.

Across the country, Australians are living through climate damage.

As our communities continue to recover – financially, economically and emotionally – from the Black Summer bushfires of 2019 and 2020, we have seen climate disasters playing out in the northern hemisphere summer.

On our TVs we've seen heart breaking damage and death from bushfires in Turkey, Algeria, the Greek island of Evia, Russia, the USA and Canada. A village in Italy endured a 48.8°C day.

And in the back of our minds we know this could be a glimpse into our own coming summer. Or the one after.

Meanwhile, the world's top climate scientists warn of worse to come if we do not dramatically curb climate pollution now.

ACF wanted to take a temperature check on Australians' views about global warming, so we asked respected pollsters YouGov to conduct the biggest and most in-depth survey ever undertaken of Australians' opinions on climate change.

YouGov polled a nationally representative sample of more than 15,000 Australian voters on a range of questions on climate change and government action. Then, using the multilevel regression with post-stratification (MRP) method, YouGov made forecasts across every electorate in the country.

The MRP tool combines the polling data from the 15,000 respondents with census data such as population density, education and household income. This allows the poll to be broken down by electorates as well as demographics in a statistically reliable way. MRP accurately predicted the results of the last UK general election – even at electorate level.

The poll results reveal a groundswell of voters flagging climate change as a key election issue and continuing widespread support for clean energy solutions.

A majority in every federal electorate in the country wants our national government to do more to combat climate change.

It shatters the myth there's one view in the bush about climate change and a different one in the city.

One-in-three voters in inner metro electorates and one-in-four voters in rural electorates say climate change is the most important issue for them at the next election.

The poll shows Australians firmly reject the government's so-called gas-led recovery.

The poll didn't find a single electorate where there was majority support for new gas and coal-fired power.

Voters in Queensland's 'coal country' – electorates such as Flynn, Maranoa, Capricornia, Kennedy and Dawson – and in the NSW Hunter Valley believe the government needs to do more and that coal and gas should not be part of Australia's future energy supply.

Even the seat with the lowest levels holding this view – New England, represented by deputy PM Barnaby Joyce – it is still the majority view (55%).

Australia is a diverse nation, but we are united in our desire for climate action.

And the latest science shows we need to get to net zero emissions in the next 15 years. 2050 is too late.

What matters is slashing emissions this decade.

The Morrison government's position will be a sore point at the United Nations Glasgow climate summit in November, where leaders are expected to bring stronger commitments to the table.

The pressure is building from our friends and allies, unhappy that Australia is not pulling its weight in the global effort.

A switched-on government would see Australia has so much to lose by letting climate change rip – and so much to gain by leading the charge to cut emissions.

Australia could become a global clean energy powerhouse.

If we begin now, industrial hubs in Queensland could be pumping out green hydrogen, steel and aluminium within the decade.

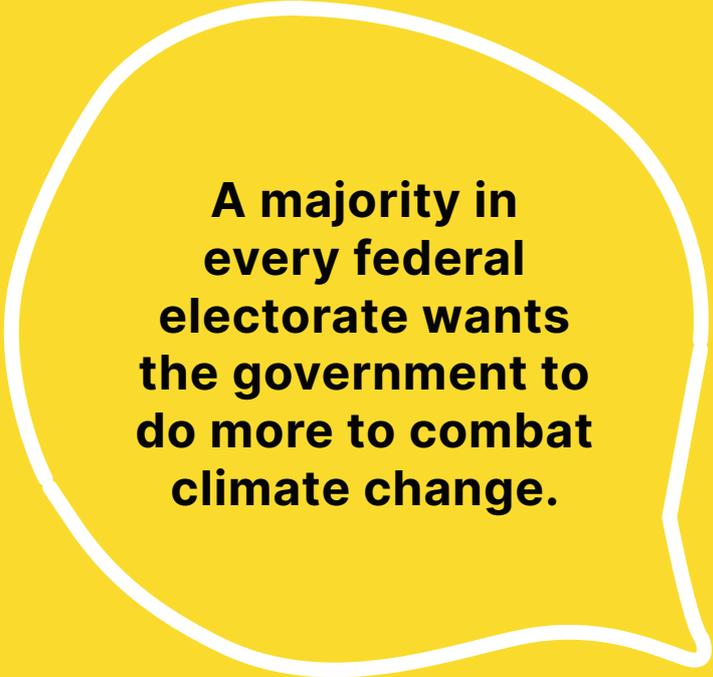
Inland regions of New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory could be generating clean energy from the sun. SA is already promising a future predominantly powered by renewables. Victoria and the ACT could similarly be wind-powering the grid.

Across Australia, clean energy, in tandem with farmers' moves to make agriculture sustainable, can turbocharge our economy to make it the envy of the world.

But we desperately need national leadership to coordinate this push.

More delay means greater danger as our ability to limit climate damage moves further from reach. Every decision matters.

It's time for the Morrison government to listen to the people and get serious about cutting climate pollution this decade.



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Executive summary

Polling reveals just how important action on climate is to the voting population.

Across Australia, 1-in-4 voters (28%) say climate change is the most important issue to determine their vote at the next federal election.

And a significant number of voters in every electorate say climate change is one of the top three issues that will determine their vote at the next federal election – from as high as 1-in-2 to, at lowest, 1-in-5 voters.

The federal government's climate policies are falling short of the expectations of Australian voters.

A majority of voters in all 151 federal electorates believe the federal government should be doing more to stop climate damage.

The majority of Australians are behind a net zero target by 2050.

73% of voters believe the government should set a target to reach net zero emissions before or by 2050.

There is also strong support for bold cuts to pollution in the next decade.

61% of voters support action to cut Australia's greenhouse emissions by at least half by 2030.

To meet Australia's energy needs, voters want the government to back renewable energy over new gas and coal-fired power stations.

Only 29% of voters agree with the federal government's support for new gas and coal-fired power stations. 70% want to see new renewable energy projects built to meet Australia's future energy needs

Queensland's regional electorates of Flynn, Capricornia, Maranoa and Dawson have been described as 'coal country' and claims made that voters champion coal and gas as an election issue. But, their support for new coal and gas-fired power projects is only 41% or less across those electorates.

Key electorate results

Queensland

Across Queensland, 66% of voters believe the federal government needs to take greater climate action.

In regional Queensland, 64% of voters believe the federal government needs to take greater climate action.

A significant majority of voters in Qld's coal electorates - Flynn, Maranoa, Capricornia, Herbert and Dawson - do not support the government's plans for new coal and gas-fired power stations.

NSW electorates

Across New South Wales 65% of voters want the federal government to do more to combat climate change.

Significantly, in the state's coal communities there is not support new coal and gas projects.

Support for new coal and gas fire power versus new renewable energy:

Electorate	Support for coal & gas fired power	Don't support coal & gas fired power
Parkes	38%	62%
Hunter	34%	66%
Paterson	32%	68%
Newcastle	29%	71%

NT and WA gas/coal electorates

A significant majority of WA voters - (76%) - want the federal government to commit to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner.

In the most marginal Coalition-held electorate in WA - Swan (3.2% margin) - plans for action on climate change are the no.1 vote priority for 1-in-4 voters (27%).

Voter support across WA for new renewable energy projects is very high - 76%. Among Coalition voters, support is 71%, a stark contrast to the low support amongst coalition voters for new gas-fired power projects (25%) and new coal projects (13%).

Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister's electorates

59% of voters in the Prime Minister's electorate of Cook want him to do more to combat climate change, only 35% of Cook voters support his plans for new coal and gas-fired power to meet Australia's future energy needs.

55% of voters in Deputy Prime Minister and Nationals Leader Barnaby Joyce's electorate of New England want him to do more to combat climate change and the same number want him to support new renewable projects instead of coal and gas-fired power.

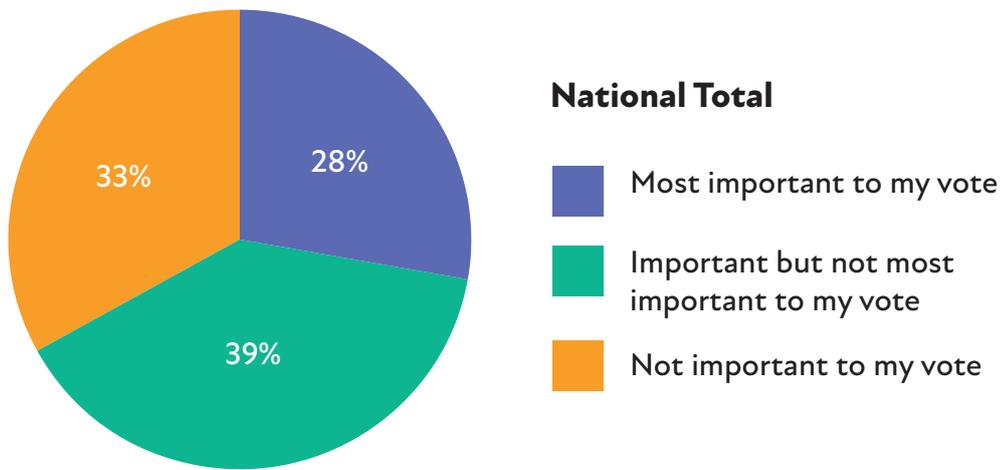
Marginal electorates

In the 10 most marginal Coalition-held electorates across the country, less than 1-in-3 voters support the government's plans for new coal and gas-fired power projects.

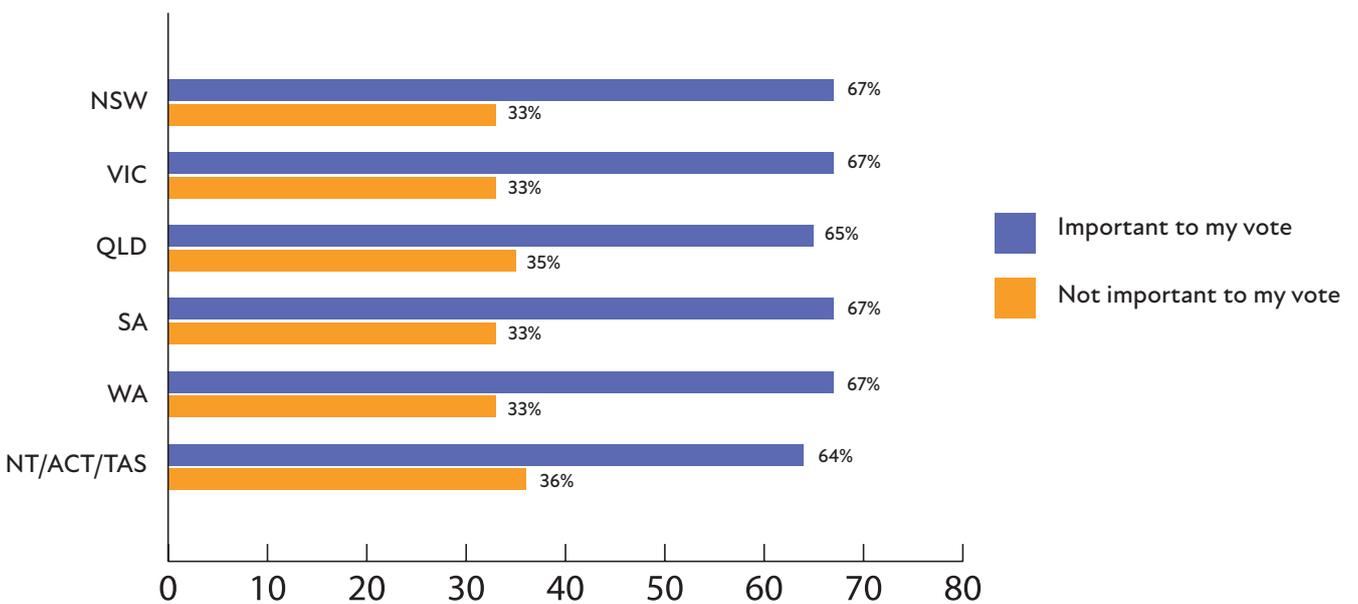
Poll results

At the next federal election, how important to your vote is action on climate change from the major parties?

National results

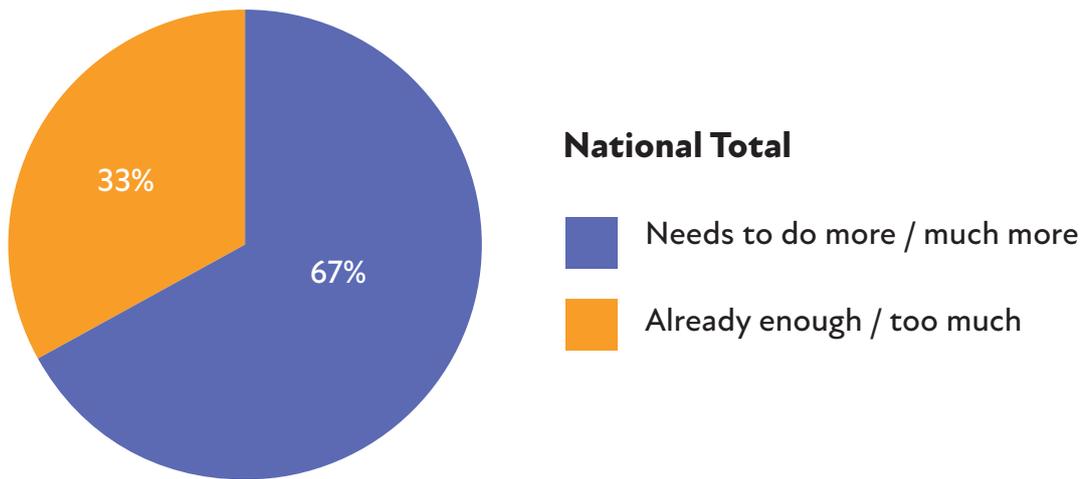


State results

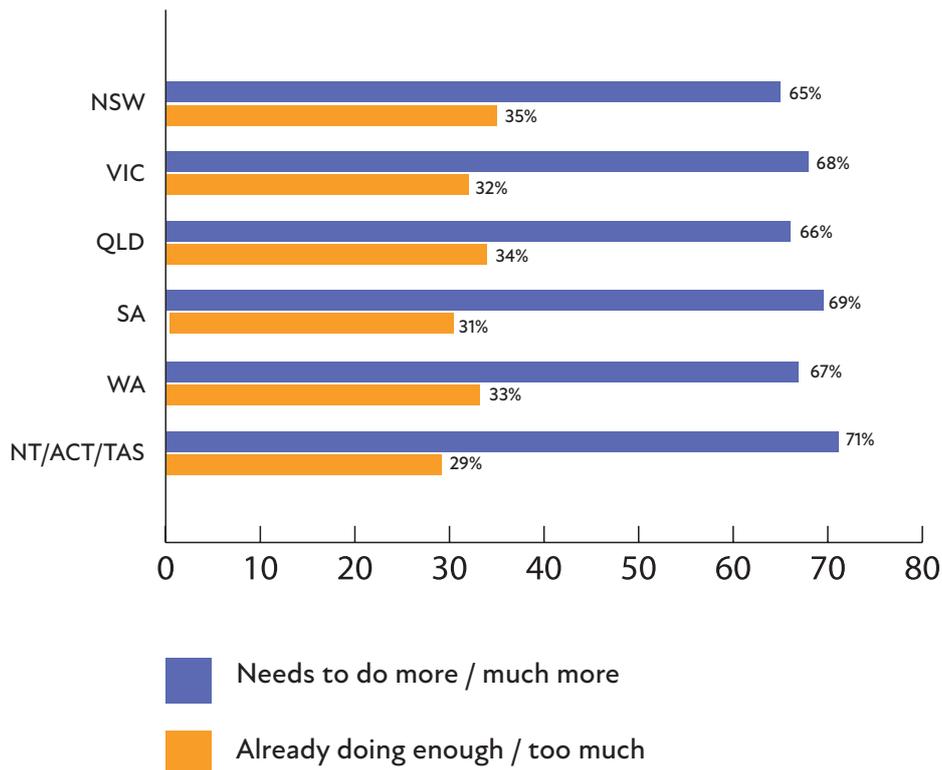


Do you believe the federal government needs to do more or is doing enough to address climate change?

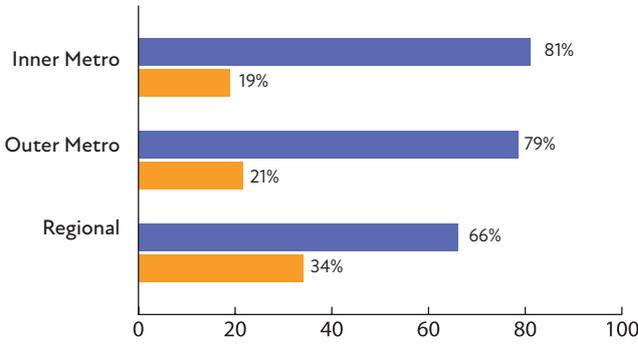
National results



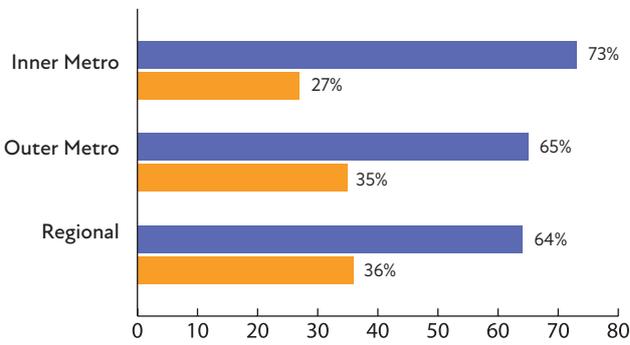
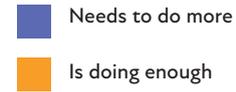
State results



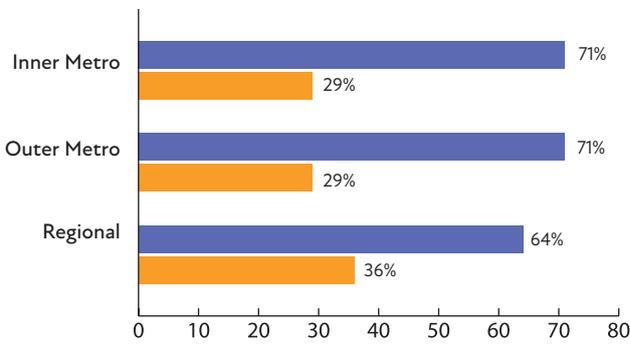
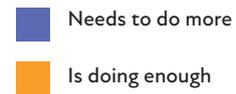
Regional results



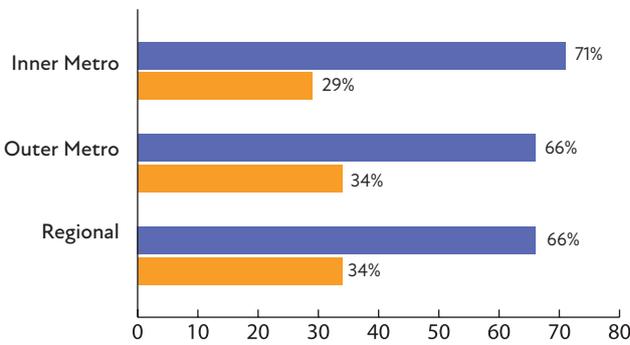
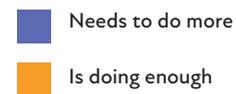
NT/ACT/TAS



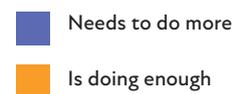
QLD



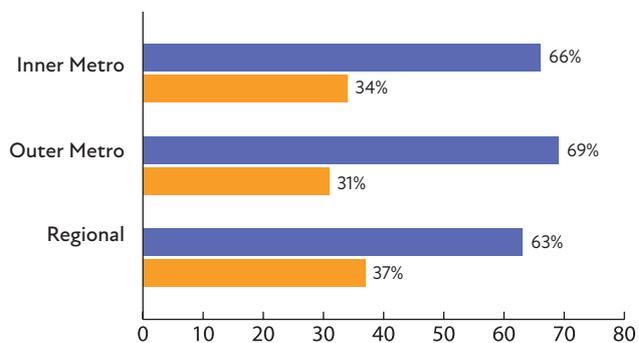
SA



VIC



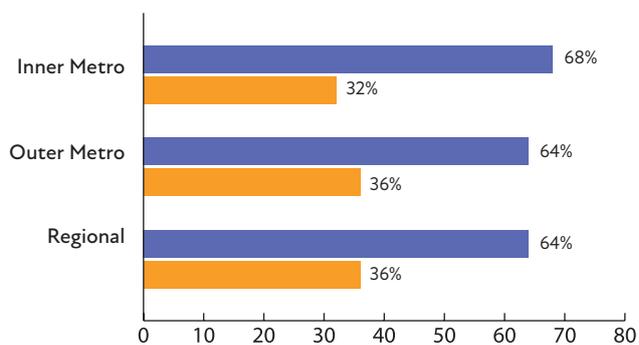
Regional results



WA

Needs to do more

Is doing enough



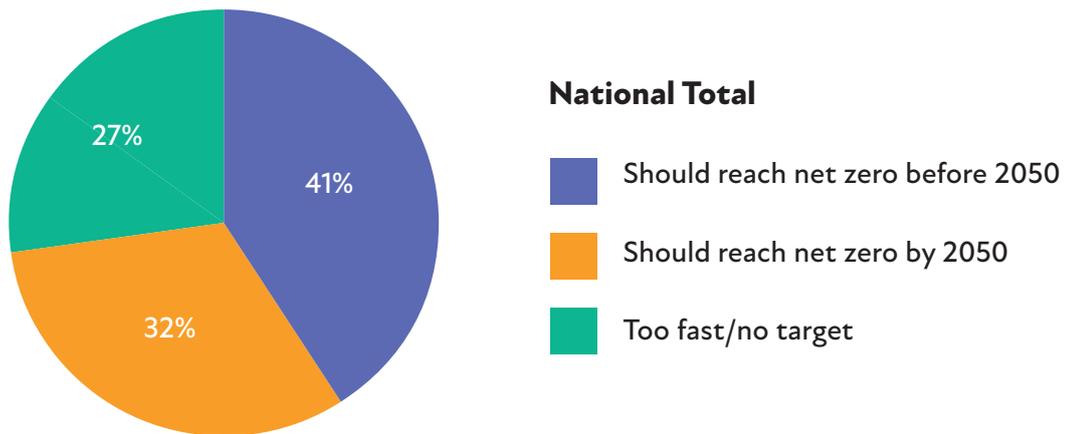
NSW

Needs to do more

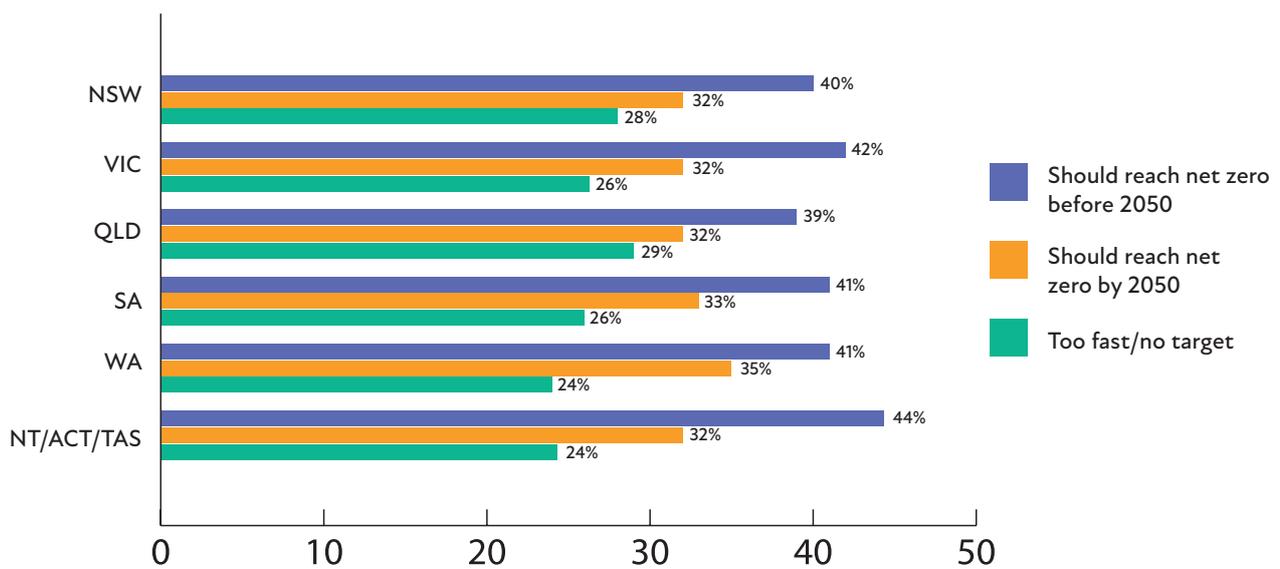
Is doing enough

Should Australia reach net zero emissions before 2050, by 2050, or not set a target?

National results

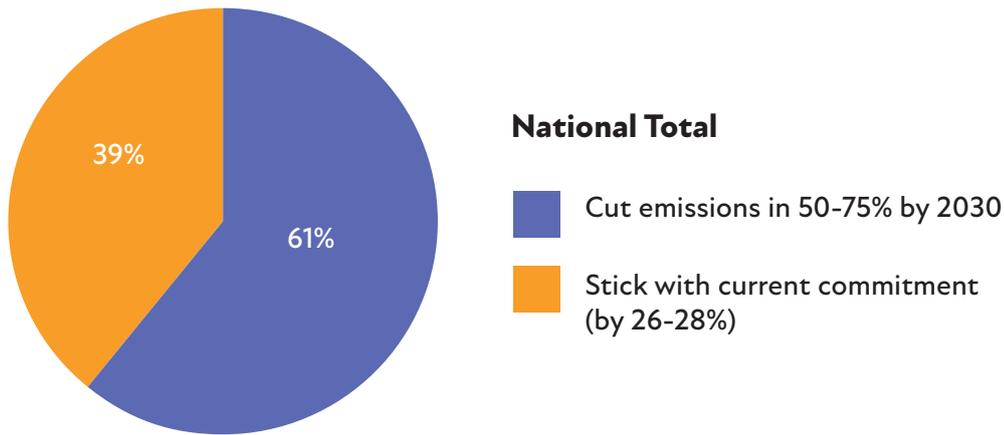


State results

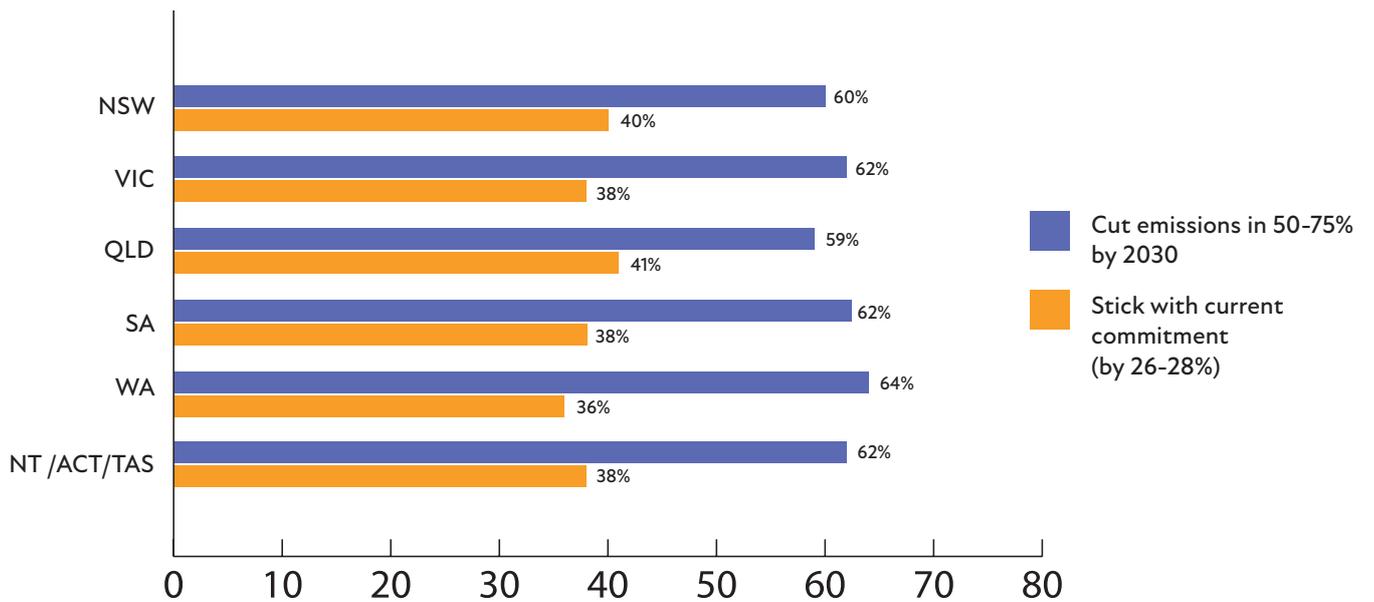


Should Australia cut emissions by 2030 and by how much?

National results

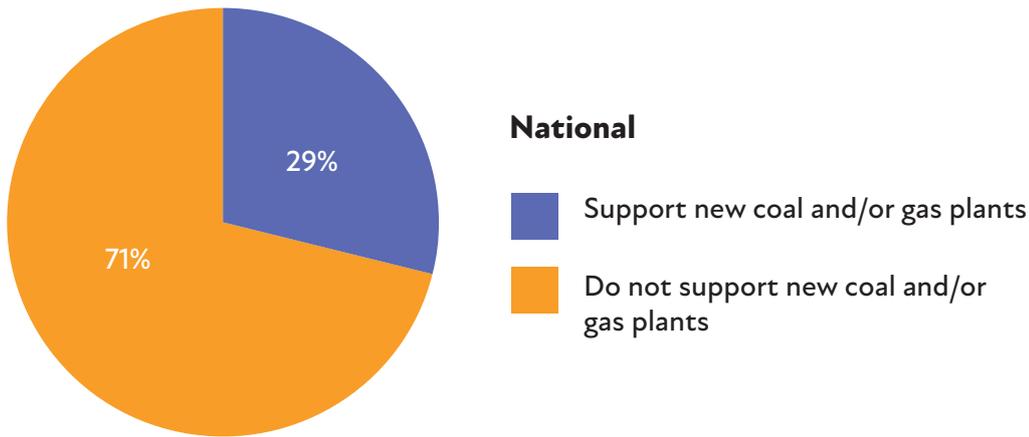


State results

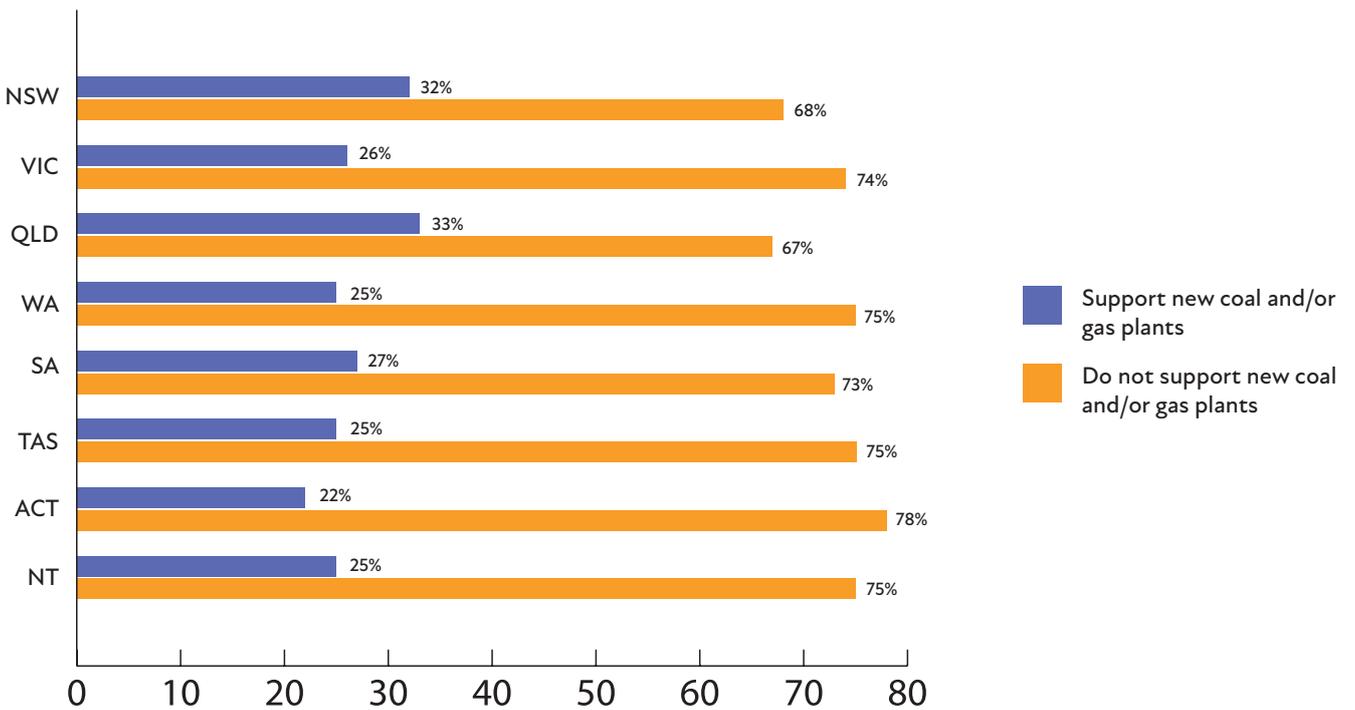


To meet Australia's energy needs, should new gas or coal-fired power stations be built?

National results



State results



Methodology

The poll was conducted on a nationally representative sample of more than 15,000 Australian voters aged 18+ and used multilevel regression with poststratification (MRP) analysis for the first time in Australia, after the technique's stunning success in predicting the results of the 2019 British election.

The MRP tool combines census data such as population density, education and household income with polling data to construct an estimate of how issues would play out in that specific geographical area. It allows for the poll to be broken down by electorates as well as demographics in a statistically reliable way.

YouGov Associate Director Ben Oxenham said the MRP method is an innovative way of reliably mapping community sentiment across electorates.

MRP is based on the understanding that people with similar characteristics behave in similar ways and it allows us to paint a much more detailed picture using our polling data.

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