

# UNDERSTANDING AUSTRALIA 2019

## Where to from here?



GAME CHANGERS





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# Foreword

Ipsos has been researching Australians for twenty years and as an organisation we seek to understand people, society and markets. While we research hundreds of discrete subjects every year, ultimately, we are exposed to a number of key themes that emerge through our work. In this publication, *Understanding Australia*, we are delving into a few of these, topics that have longevity but also resonate right now.

Intertwined in this report are the contexts of population growth and infrastructure, liveability, health, our climate and trust. In many regards these are the foundations of a healthy society and while we have some great success stories, we also have some challenges.

For example, it's intriguing to think that Melbourne's population has increased by nearly 1,000,000 over the past decade. How can a city's human and built infrastructure keep pace? This is the reality of Australia's fast-growing population, fuelled by migration. In this context, more and more Australians are interested in the quality of their own lived-experience. The lived-experience is driven by a range of factors, and Ipsos has ratings for all urban areas of Australia, however "feeling safe" and "access to great healthcare" rank first and second.

The good news is that our global and local research tells us that Australians are very happy with the quality of healthcare they receive. Across 27 countries, Australia ranks in the top four in terms of positive ratings of its healthcare system. Our local research says ratings of our healthcare system are at a 30-year high, increasing markedly over the past decade. But what additional pressure will an increasingly larger and ageing population have on our healthcare infrastructure?

Of course, climate is near the top of the agenda for Australians in terms of the issues driving concern and is now being reinforced through concern over adjacent issues such as waste management and the use of plastics. Interestingly, in response to this, Australians are expecting business to do more to tackle environmental degradation through corporate sustainability initiatives and are more critical of the performance of business than politicians in their response to climate change.

It's largely the success of our great cities that have created many of the challenges we face today. Urbanisation and congestion, greater participation in the workforce and expectations of the lived-experience, demands on infrastructure, the future of healthcare and growing climate concerns bring forward big decisions, where to from here?



**Simon Wake**  
**CEO**  
**Ipsos Australia and New Zealand**



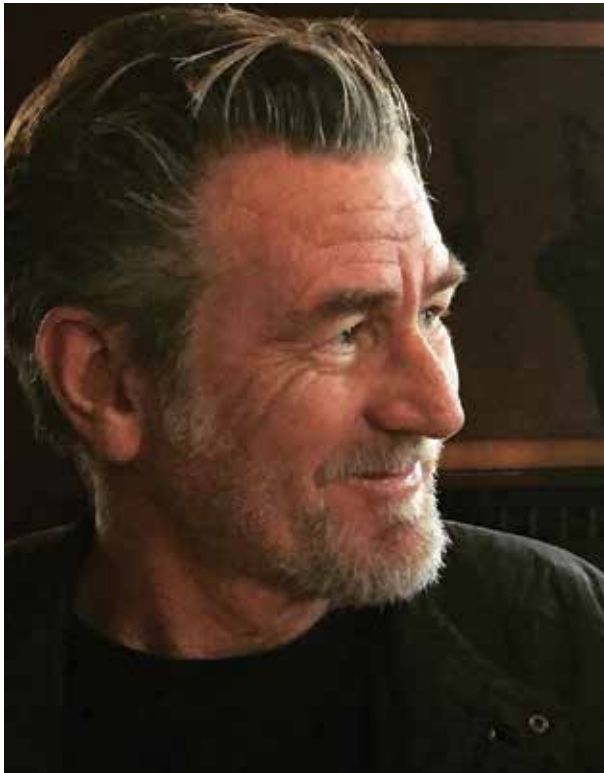


# Australia's growing population – what's the story?

## A conversation with Ivan Motley



Mark Davis  
Managing Director  
Ipsos Public Affairs



**Ivan Motley is the founder of .id – the population experts. Ivan is interested in how communities have access to education, housing, health, employment, recreation and each other. People in public and private organisations can be frustrated in their ability to contribute to this “good society” when they don’t have the right information to make critical decisions. Ivan’s idea is to introduce spatial thinking to organisations, look at places through a demographic lens, and use the power of storytelling to be persuasive.**  
[home.id.com.au/about-us](http://home.id.com.au/about-us)

## **Mark: We often hear and read about population change and its impacts. How is the Australian population really changing?**

**Ivan:** We are growing rapidly - in fact, Australia has uniquely high levels of growth by global OECD standards. Population change occurs through births, death and migration. In Australia's case, it is overseas migration primarily driving population change with many of our migration-based policy decisions having been driven by economic opportunity.

We are also ageing. The narrative we hear on this says we won't have enough people left in our labour force to pay for services for our aged in the future, and our tax base is eroding. However, at any given time, we have 1.5m people residing temporarily in Australia who are filling these needs. Historically, Australia has had large numbers of temporary migrants - many who have ultimately converted to permanent citizens. This large migration of (primarily) young people is fuelling population growth - women in these child-bearing age groups are giving birth to record numbers of children. Yes, we are ageing, but we are also experiencing record numbers of births, and children entering our schools.

As for our tax base eroding, it isn't - at least to the extent it looked like it would at the turn of the century. People are staying in the workforce longer. For example, participation of 60+ year-old females was 30% in 2000; it is 60% now.

Australia's population narrative cannot be separated from our economic narrative. Population growth has accounted for almost all of Australia's economic growth in recent times. Overseas migration feeds our education sector and fills skills gaps. In recent years, almost all job gains have been in health and education in the public sector. Put simply, the health sector serves the ageing, and the education sector serves the young. Jobs in these sectors are growing, as a result of population growth.

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**“Australia’s population narrative cannot be separated from our economic narrative. Population growth has accounted for almost all of Australia’s economic growth in recent times.”**

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**“Reacting to growth results in community anxiety to the rate of change in our neighbourhoods. We feel unsafe in what is, objectively, the safest place in the world. We don’t know why all these apartments are being built and our neighbourhoods are being transformed. We blame it on migration. We react.”**

#### **Is inequality rising with the growing population?**

Inequality, as measured by the Gini Coefficient, shows Australia does not have an inequality problem, compared to other similar places. However, the question of inequality is complex. There is inequality of opportunity, and inequality of income and wealth. Perhaps, looking at inequality is a distraction. If inequality leads to poverty, or undermines social cohesion, then we should focus on these issues, rather than inequality per se. For example, new migrants and Indigenous Australians experience poorer access to services and jobs. There is also intergenerational poverty, with around 800,000 Australians stuck in a cycle of disadvantage. This disadvantage is strongly related to levels of education, and disproportionately impacts the young, the old, Indigenous Australians and new migrants. It is strongly spatially manifested. However, places are unique and typically require unique solutions.

#### **Australia is one of the most urbanised nations in the world, but what does this actually mean?**

At the risk of oversimplifying, urban agglomeration results in higher densities of people, and the consequent production of more ideas per square metre, where ideas are the raw material of the new economy. However, wealth is generated only when these ideas can be implemented. Issues like poor internet speed, urban congestion and poor access to highly skilled labour can prevent ideas being implemented. High levels of urbanisation, if planned appropriately, can lead to more choice and cultural experiences, and potentially, more exposure to diversity - all of which can contribute to a “good society”.

#### **In an Australian context, what are the impacts of this urbanisation?**

While Australia’s high level of urbanisation sets us up to take advantage of the nature of the new and next economy, we have been slow to take full advantage. We have reacted to growth, rather than planned for it. We have not been strategic and have been behind on infrastructure and housing investment. It’s a different mindset to invest proactively in infrastructure to generate opportunity and wealth, rather than react in response to “growing pains”. Reacting to growth results in community anxiety to the rate of change in our neighbourhoods. We feel unsafe in what is, objectively, the safest place in the world. We don’t know why all these apartments are being built and our neighbourhoods are being transformed. We blame it on migration. We react.

Regional areas feel left behind and miss out on infrastructure dollars, despite being generally well-represented in terms of dollar allocation. A big challenge for regional areas is to think well-beyond their “own place” and to look at their connectivity with urban centres and the benefits it may bring.

#### **From your perspective, what are the opportunities?**

The opportunity to be bold, and build big, effective infrastructure relies on visionary story-telling from our leaders. To actively, purposely and consciously repurpose our cities from 20th-century, car-based “separated” land-use cities, to 21st-century, higher density, mixed-use, rapid transit cities would not only place Australia as a migration nation of well-planned cities, towns and neighbourhoods, but it would enable us to generate more wealth to fund better infrastructure, and provide quality services for our communities.

For example, take the challenge of managing the growth of western Sydney. Being bold in our collective decisions would mean building another two “Paramattas” to meet the region’s employment needs. This is an area of rapid population growth, where (if current rates of job generation are anything to go by) in 20 years, 500,000 people will be making long journeys to work outside the region - this is not a healthy outcome. This is a region of huge potential, with the largest concentration of young people in the nation. The opportunity to build urban major nodes, interconnected with rapid transport, and connected to Australia’s pre-eminent airport, is ripe.



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**“I believe the challenges facing local government could be halved, in terms of difficulty, if we were to have a frank, consistent and compelling national narrative about our nation’s economic and demographic future.”**

**Based on your experience of working with local councils and regional authorities across Australia, what is the role of local government in planning appropriately for this urbanisation?**

Local government is the level of government closest to our communities. It provides services and solutions as broad as collecting waste to economic development - and everything in between. In Australia, there isn’t a more complex organisation than local government. Local government deals with all the problems facing our communities, with very little funding. Objectively, local government does an extraordinary job dealing with rapid population growth, ageing, climate change, economic development and the impact of all the macro challenges previously described, at the local level - the community level - which is (some would argue) where it counts. Local government does so much more than “rates, roads and rubbish”. It is deeply engaged in addressing the communities’ health and well-being, access to education and employment via strategic planning and advocacy work and implementing innovative ways to address loneliness, housing supply, health, climate change, all while adapting modern services - you name it!

**In your opinion, what should their ultimate call to action be in affecting positive change across Australia and improving quality of life for all?**

Planning at state and local levels is in the spotlight - and for good reason. We should be planning for the complex challenges we are experiencing with much more agility. Sometimes I don’t think local governments adequately acknowledge the uniqueness of their places and communities in order to build on their strengths. Local governments’ corporate and strategic plans are too similar. Standard, zoning-based planning is not sophisticated enough to deal with rapid social change, or the challenges of the new and next economy. Long-term plans, set in stone, may give certainty but they sacrifice the agility needed to respond to emerging trends and opportunities. We need to make more informed decisions on evidence-based stories of “place” to better plan. We need to forecast the future of places, and ask ourselves: “if this forecast future is not desirable, how can we intervene to make a better future?”. The future of local planning is about understanding the changing role and function that places are likely to play, and how places can adapt. High levels of connectivity between places is a huge challenge for a nation as large and dispersed as Australia.

However, local government is having to plan and consult communities about rapid change, in the absence of a national narrative or sufficient funding required to plan for growth and change. I believe the challenges facing local government could be halved, in terms of difficulty, if we were to have a frank, consistent and compelling national narrative about our nation’s economic and demographic future.

My call to action is not to local government, but to our national leaders, to do some frank truth-telling, and share a compelling, fact-based story, not only about our demographic, economic and environmental future, but also about our indigenous past. That would set the context for all of us to participate in improving quality of life across Australia.





# What are we like? If Australia were a town of 100



Lucy Hedt  
Senior Research Manager  
Ipsos Public Affairs





Each year, we undertake research with over a million Australians about a range of topics. We don't speak to everyone, nor do we need to. Instead, we carefully construct samples to draw conclusions (within known margins of error) about sentiments across the wider population.

We tend to express our findings as percentages. But what if, instead, we thought of Australia as just 100 adults, akin to a small town? We already know a fair bit about the demographic profile of the town – for example, the average age and income – but what about their attitudes and behaviours?

Looking at “our 100” through such a lens is not only fun, but informative. Our list of statistics may seem random, but on closer look, it is insightful in understanding the key concerns and interests of Australians.

Overall, these statistics paint a relatively positive outlook, (from our miniature version of Australia) begging the question: how do we maintain this positivity?





**86** believe humans contribute to climate change in some way<sup>2</sup>

**86**

report that taking all things together, they are happy (either very or rather)<sup>1</sup>

**81**

were optimistic 2019 would be a better year than 2018<sup>3</sup>

**80**

believe Australia has a responsibility to be a moral leader in the world and to set an example for other countries to follow<sup>4</sup>

**78**

are concerned about the effects of plastic on the environment<sup>5</sup>

**72**

believe that given the difficult economic issues in Australia today, Australia needs to focus less on the world, and more at home<sup>6</sup>

**71**

believe in the last year, the world has become more dangerous<sup>7</sup>

**67**

say Australia needs a strong leader to take it back from the rich and powerful<sup>8</sup>

**65**

agree temporarily cutting off social media platforms is acceptable at times of crisis, to stop the spread of false information<sup>9</sup>

**65**

agree this year, they will spend at least one full week away from home on holiday<sup>10</sup>

**64**

believe increasing renewable capacity should be a "high or essential priority" in Australia's energy policy<sup>11</sup>

**62**

believe social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, are giving a voice to people who wouldn't normally take part in debates and social issues<sup>12</sup>

**61**

agree achieving gender equality is important to them personally<sup>13</sup>

**58**

agree that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are making debates about social issues much more divisive than they used to be<sup>14</sup>

**57**

believe there is "a fair to great extent" of fake news in newspapers and magazines<sup>15</sup>

**51**

believe things in their country are heading in the wrong direction<sup>16</sup>

**46**

think immigration has had a positive impact on their country<sup>17</sup>



**37** agree most of the world's countries are doing what is appropriate and reasonable to fight climate change<sup>24</sup>

**46**

think their personal data will be leaked on the internet this year<sup>18</sup>

**45**

would support legalising the growth and possession of marijuana for personal use<sup>19</sup>

**40**

believe there are differences in people's political views, but it's healthy for society<sup>20</sup>

**39**

would eat a plant-based substitute for meat<sup>21</sup>

**38**

think Australian society is more at danger because of divisions between people with different political views than it was twenty years ago<sup>22</sup>

**37**

believe a country's human rights record should be most important to leaders, when deciding on whether to have relations with other countries<sup>23</sup>

**32**

believe healthcare is the top issue facing their nation<sup>25</sup>

**29**

are looking forward to old age<sup>26</sup>

**27**

believe automation is putting their jobs at risk<sup>27</sup>

**24**

are dissatisfied with their standard of living<sup>28</sup>

**22**

are consistently late in making payments for the majority of their financial commitments<sup>29</sup>

**15**

would feel comfortable sharing their political opinions with others, even if they don't necessarily agree<sup>30</sup>

**12**

say a woman's looks are a key factor in helping them get ahead (5% for men)<sup>31</sup>

**8**

believe time spent on social media is one of their greatest sources of happiness<sup>32</sup>

**4**

believe taxation is one of the top issues facing their nation<sup>33</sup>

**4**

believe there is no such thing as climate change<sup>34</sup>

# The good, the bad and the sprawly

## Understanding the impact of rapid urbanisation on citizens' concerns, values and lived- experiences



Dan Evans  
Deputy Managing Director  
Ipsos Public Affairs



**It's well publicised that Australia's population is on an accelerated growth curve, that the absolute and relative increase in the decade prior to 2018 was considerably higher than in the preceding 10 years, and that both the population growth and national economic output has become more concentrated in – and is increasingly derived from – our two largest cities, Melbourne and Sydney.**

Fact time. In the past decade five of the ten fastest growing metropolitan areas were in Melbourne, with the city adding more than 900,000 residents between 2009 and 2018 – more than the Tasmanian and Canberra populations combined. Sydney was home to three of the ten fastest growing areas (+700,000). In terms of composition, while Melbourne and Sydney's city centres drew in a larger than average share of the growth, the chunkiest proportion has and is forecast to continue to occur on the urban fringe. In the sprawl (see figure 1). While the word sprawl is not unusual it certainly is evocative. Google "sprawl" and you'll note that early definitions refer to it as the outcome of physical human movement, of limbs "falling into place". Beyond the outcome, these early definitions also place judgement on the decisions that informed the outcomes, and often nominate "sprawl" as the resultant act of undeliberate, ungainly, unattractive and even careless movement.<sup>35</sup>

**“In the past decade five of the ten fastest growing metropolitan areas were in Melbourne”**

A ballet dancer's arabesque or a boxer's weave also represent outcomes from movement, but these are as deliberate as they are efficient, and not only serve purpose in the moment, they set course for the dancer's next step, the boxer's shift from defence to offence. These movements are considered, use a combination of human tools to achieve the best possible outcome with economy, and are only ever put on display after countless hours of drilling, reflection and adjustment. These decisions are informed. And these movements would certainly not be described as sprawl.



Figure 1 - Population growth since 2009



**“Relative liveability – the distance between the most and least liveable areas – is acutely observed in Sydney, where residents of the Eastern Suburbs call the nation’s third most liveable region home a mere 40km from Sydney’s South West – Australia’s least liveable.”**

While it has been well documented that population growth and urbanisation are related to strong and often sustainable economic growth – and an overall improved quality of life – such expansion does not always benefit everyone, equally. It has also been argued that an increasing distance between the haves and the have nots negatively impacts both ends – not just those at the back of the pack.

And, while it may be untrue to suggest that the immense growth in the sprawl has been the result of undeliberate, ungainly, unattractive and careless decision making, achieving a better understanding of how this trend and disparate growth has affected citizens’ concerns, values and lived-experiences both within and across Melbourne and Sydney is a topic worthy of investigation.

**INCREASING ANXIETY ABOUT POPULATION GROWTH**

While the last decade’s absolute population numbers and geographic distribution represent the objective volume change and flow, recent findings from the Ipsos Issues Monitor<sup>36</sup> – Australia’s longest running ongoing survey of community concerns – deliver us a subjective understanding of how concerned Melburnians and Sydneysiders are about this, and how their worries have evolved over time.

In September 2019, 19% of Melburnians and Sydneysiders nominated population as one of the top three issues facing their local area, making it the 6th most important local area concern behind housing, cost of living, transport, crime and healthcare. And, while this places population among the handful of top worries, concerns haven’t always been this acute. In fact, worries about population were not on the radar at all between 2010 and 2015. Then, in early 2015, when residents of these cities started to absorb new citizens at rates well above trend, momentum-in-concern began its upward trajectory (see figure 2).

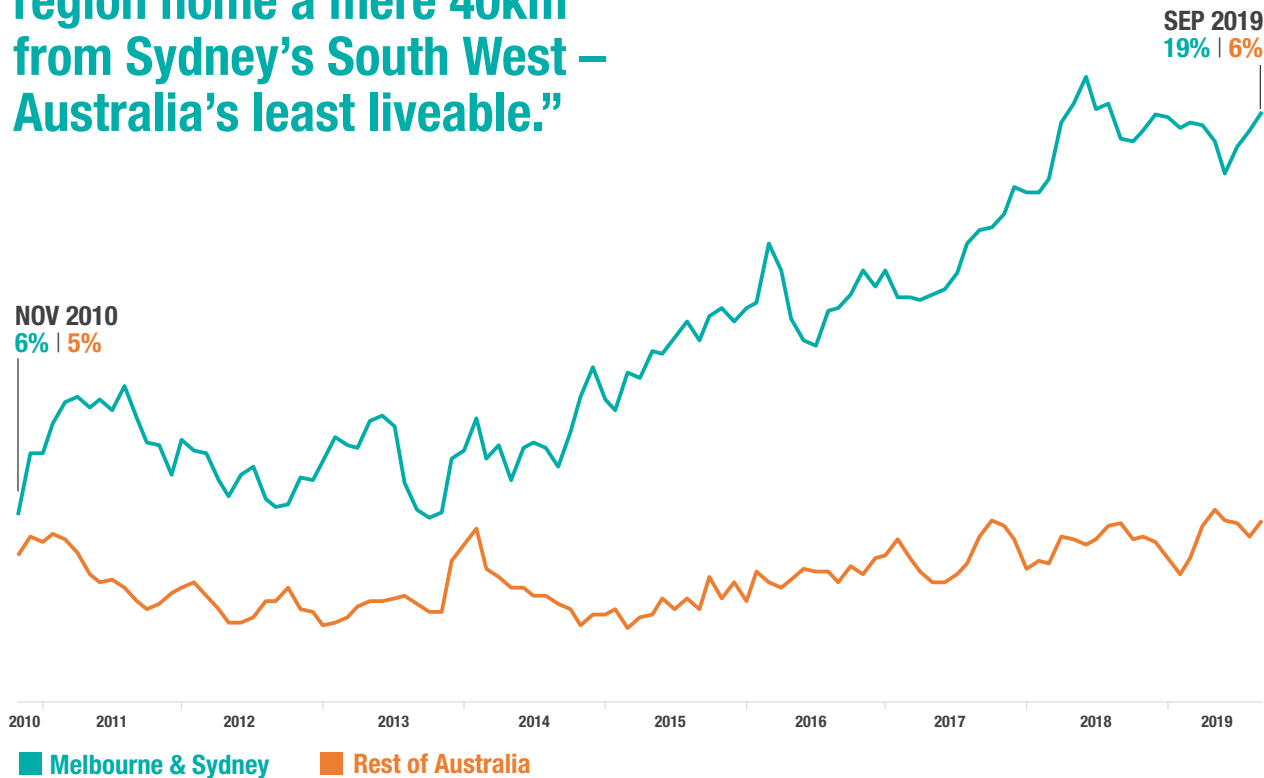
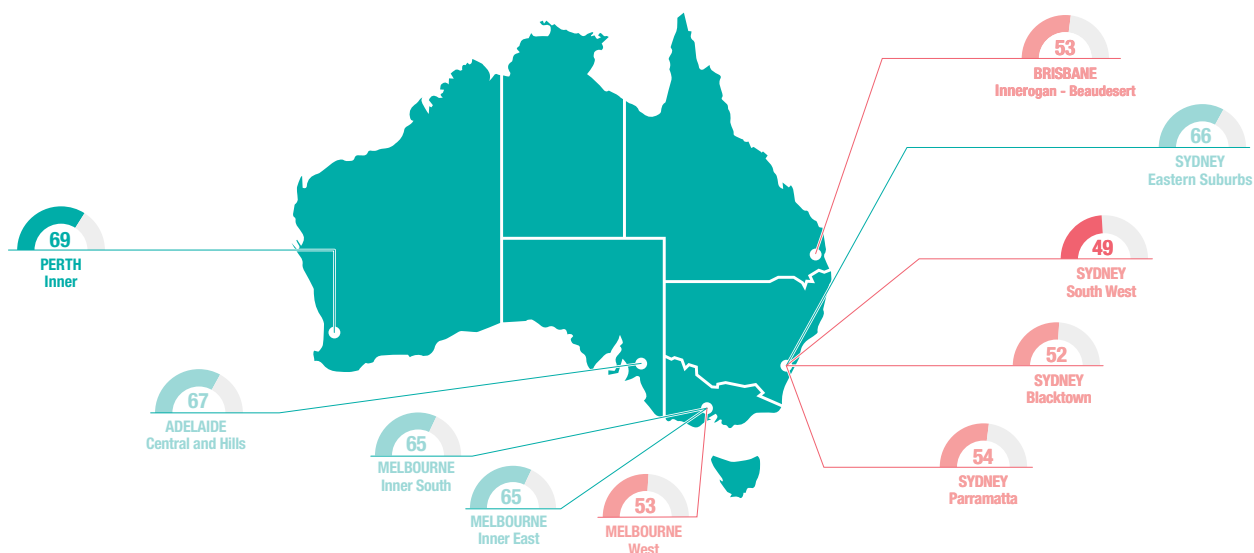


Figure 2 - Concern about population in your local area



**Figure 3 - The most and least liveable areas across metropolitan Australia**

### LIVEABILITY ACROSS MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY

But what impact, if any, does increased urbanisation and disparate population growth have on how liveable these cities are overall, and within?

While findings from the Ipsos Life in Metropolitan Australia report of 2018<sup>37</sup> – the nation's largest annual study of community values and liveability – show us that Melbourne and Sydney are home to four of the ten most liveable metropolitan regions, the report shows us that these cities are also home to seven of the ten least liveable areas. Relative liveability – the distance between the most and least liveable areas – is acutely observed in Sydney, where residents of the Eastern Suburbs call the nation's third most liveable region home a mere 40km from Sydney's South West – Australia's least liveable (see figure 3).

Only one of the top ten most liveable locations (Sydney – City and Inner South) also ranked among the top ten fastest growing areas. And, even though the most liveable local area overall (Inner Perth) grew relatively slowly and the least liveable local area (Sydney South West) grew faster than the average, equating high population growth with low liveability would be both lazy and potentially misleading.

Pound for pound, relative distance from the CBD appears to be a better surface indicator of liveability than population growth, with six of the ten most liveable metropolitan regions within or adjoining their respective city centres. On the flip side, six of the ten least liveable areas were in the sprawl.

And, just as it's been well publicised that Sydney and Melbourne's CBDs are contributing more than their fair share of the nation's economic activity, residents who live in these city centres and adjoining areas agree with this sentiment, consistently citing in our Life in Australia survey that their local areas are more economically prosperous relative to their neighbours who live in the sprawl. By extension, inner areas regularly deliver unemployment rates between 2% and 4% compared to those on the outskirts where it's not unusual to see rates around or above 6%. Oftentimes unemployment rates on Sydney's outskirts can be double what's reported in the urban, and urban/coastal areas. Again, Life in Australia shows us that those who live in urban areas feel much more

positively about job prospects in their local area relative to those on the fringe. But, perhaps most importantly, those who live in the sprawl consistently tell us that their local areas perform comparatively worse than those closer to the CBD with regard to being able to access and participate in those economic opportunities, including the provision of reliable and efficient public transport, making your way to and from services such as employment, education and healthcare with relative ease and a lack of road congestion.

### SO WHERE TO NOW?

Poverty, wellbeing, liveability – these all operate on continuums. There's always going to be a bottom and a top, but it's the mid-point, the distance between those two points, and whether the bookends are expanding or contracting that government, policy provocateurs and people in a position of influence should be most interested in.

If we continue to push disproportionately high volumes of people at above trend rates into the less liveable sprawl, and don't see any genuine broadening of the economic composition across small area lines, we risk creating two mega-cities where the brains and the hearts are too closely connected, places where citizens become more and more physically and economically divided, socially and culturally segmented.

While we need a national narrative about our population and demographic future a bottom-up approach is now required to better understand and advance the health of small areas to benefit all. But, in order for this approach to be instructive, it must incorporate objective and subjective measurement, and place just as much value on the self-reported concerns and lived-experience data as it does on the hard quantitative economic and social indicators. This approach must also lean into and learn from the intangible small area feelings or, dare I say, the vibe. While analysing the health of small areas consistently from the bottom-up might not solve the broadening economic and liveability gap immediately, it will hopefully start to bring some nuanced narrative, sense and instruction as to what small area levers need to be pulled to maintain and improve the quality of life for all Australians and finally shake the stigma that sprawl is undeliberate, ungainly, unattractive and careless.



# Happy about healthcare?

## Understanding Australians' perceptions of the public and private healthcare systems



Julia Knapp and Daniel Pole  
Directors  
Ipsos Public Affairs

**We Australians are quietly proud of our healthcare system. We don't "interpretive dance" about it like the UK, and their dedication to the National Health Service at the London Olympics opening ceremony, but across the country, we seem to agree healthcare is important and that we do it reasonably well - with plenty of room for improvement.**

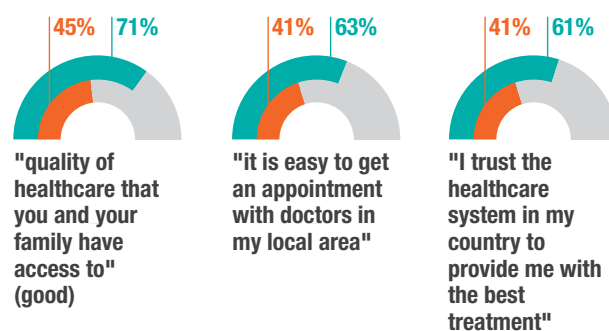
#### **DON'T BELIEVE THE MAPS: AUSTRALIA TOPS THE WORLD**

In a recent Ipsos survey of 20,767 citizens across 27 countries<sup>38</sup>, Australia ranked among the top countries – along with Great Britain, Malaysia and occasionally Spain – in terms of how likely its citizens were to positively rate the quality of healthcare they have access to, the ease of making a local doctor's appointment, and their trust in the system to provide the best possible treatment (see figure 4).

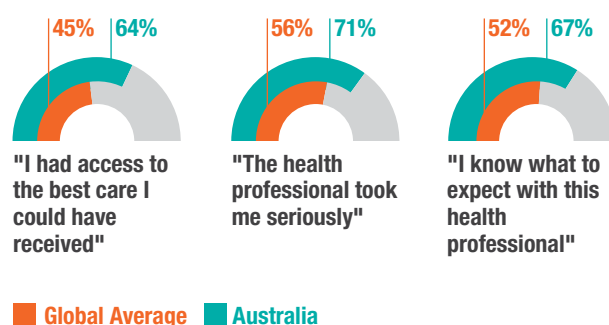
#### **EVALUATING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

Our confidence in the healthcare system is supported by positive experiences with health services and practitioners. In reflecting on our most recent healthcare experience, Australians top the world in terms of likelihood to report that we had access to the best possible care, were taken seriously by the health professional, and knew what to expect (see figure 5).

Australia's ranking in this global survey is a noteworthy endorsement and something to celebrate. But things have not always been so rosy. The Ipsos Health Care and Insurance Australia report – an ongoing monitor of attitudes towards the Australian health system – shows positivity about the quality of healthcare in Australia is currently at a 20-year high and has increased markedly over the last decade. This positivity is driven, at least in part, by what Australians think about the public hospital system, where ratings are also at a historic high.



**Figure 4 - Evaluating the healthcare system**



**Figure 5 - Most recent experience with a healthcare professional...**

**"Our confidence in the healthcare system is supported by positive experiences with health services and practitioners. In reflecting on our most recent healthcare experience, Australians top the world in terms of likelihood to report that we had access to the best possible care, were taken seriously by the health professional, and knew what to expect."**

WHY ARE WE POSITIVE ABOUT OUR PUBLIC HOSPITALS?

Ipsos conducts numerous patient experience surveys in the public health system around Australia and the world. Research spans the life cycle - from maternity and paediatric experiences, to palliative care - and services, from primary care to acute. Generally, regardless of whether a patient is reflecting on a brief trip to emergency, post-natal care in hospital after childbirth, or an appointment with a GP at a community health service, we find ratings of the quality of interpersonal experiences with healthcare professionals – things like feeling listened to, being treated with respect and compassion, and having information provided in a way that we understand – are generally high. This is important, not just from a human rights perspective, but because we know having positive experiences with healthcare professionals leads to better clinical outcomes.<sup>39</sup>

Another factor shaping our perceptions of the public hospital system is a sustained period of bricks and mortar investment. With the opening of Royal North Shore Hospital (Sydney), Fiona Stanley (Perth), The Royal Children’s Hospital (Melbourne), and Royal Adelaide Hospital, the last decade has seen most of our capital cities home to new, world-class, public hospital facilities. And with seven in ten Australians living in a capital city, this investment makes a difference.

“The Ipsos Health Care and Insurance Australia report – an ongoing monitor of attitudes towards the Australian health system – shows positivity about the quality of healthcare in Australia is currently at a 20-year high and has increased markedly over the last decade.”

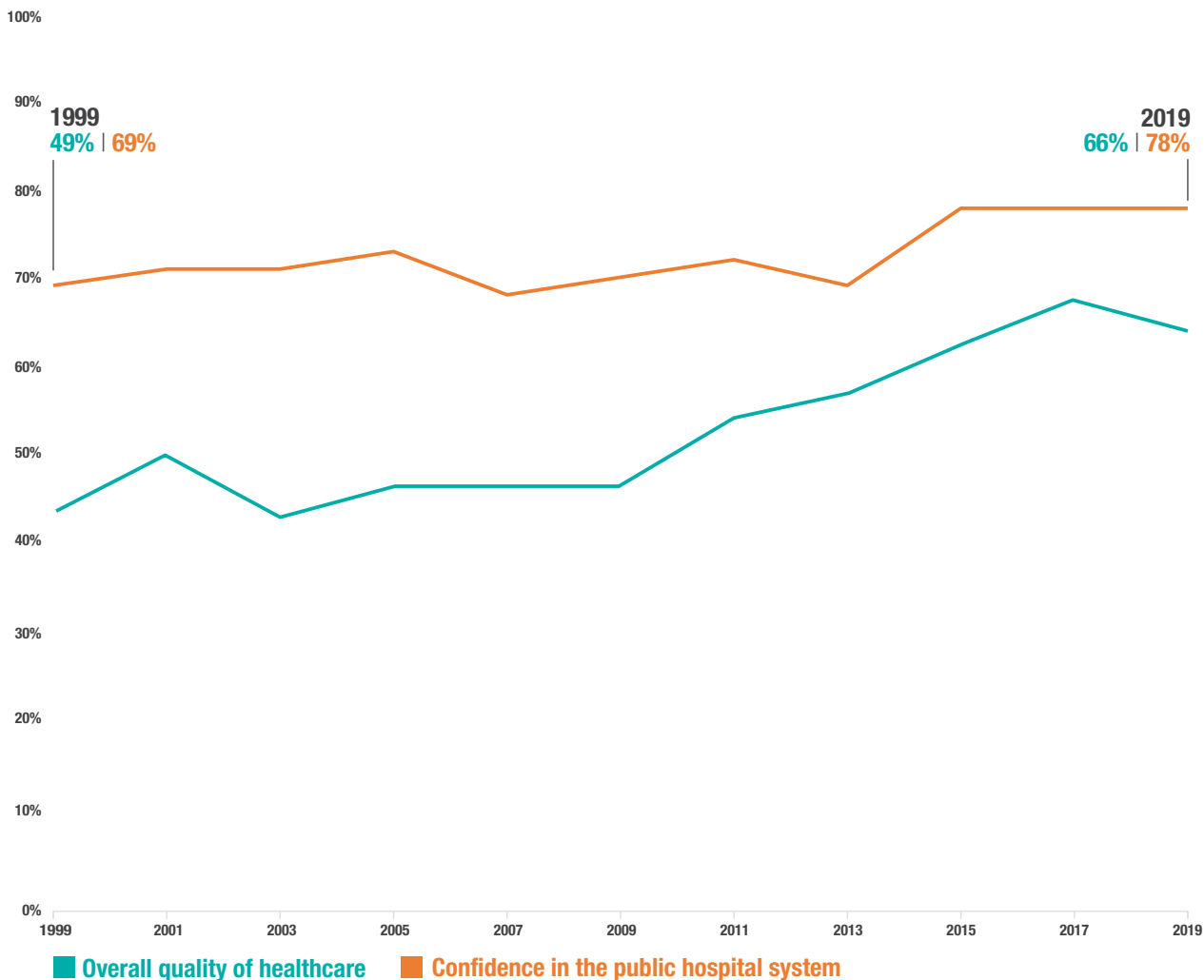


Figure 6 - Population rating “Overall Quality of Healthcare” (high or very high) / Population agreeing that “I have a fair bit of confidence in the local public hospital system”



And this investment is justified. In the Ipsos study, Life in Australia, access to quality healthcare emerges as the second most important attribute in making somewhere a good place to live, just behind feeling safe. Currently across the nation, we give our local metropolitan areas an average of 6.4 out of 10, in terms of access to quality healthcare, and 6 out of 10 in our local regional areas.<sup>40</sup> This represents a solid C overall - although some areas, like Central Queensland, (4.5 out of 10) are on a failing grade. Beyond the binary metro / regional divide, and beyond the shiny new hospitals (often delivered in urban areas) Life in Australia also tells us that citizens in areas of high population growth on our urban fringes rate their local areas comparatively worse for the provision of high-quality health services.

#### **SO WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

There are many challenges to delivering quality health services in a country like ours. Our population is growing fast (we reached 25 million last year), roughly doubling over the past 50 years. While growing, our population is relatively small by world standards, and dispersed over a continent blessed with venomous creatures and sharks. Despite these dangers, we are, on average, getting older. The median age was 27 in 1970 – it is now 38. This has implications on the nation's health needs and on the relative size of the working (and tax-paying) population.

Our healthcare system is also undergoing a slow, but profound change, with fewer people choosing to access the private hospital system. In June 2019, two in five (44%) Australians were covered by private hospital insurance – the most common method of paying for treatment in a private hospital. This represents a fall of 32,000 covered people from June last year and is the lowest rate of coverage since 2003.<sup>41</sup> This trend is being driven by many factors, key among them the growth in private health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket expenses, in an era of low wages growth. Another important factor, perhaps ironically, is the current rosy view of the public hospital system. In an era where public hospitals are well-regarded, fewer see the need to pay for the private alternative.

All of this means the public hospital system will need to carry a greater load in the future. Based on official statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the public system is already feeling the pinch. The median wait time for elective surgery in a public hospital was 40 days in 2017-18, up from 35 days in 2014-15. One in 50 patients (1.8%) were waiting considerably longer – one year or more.<sup>42</sup>

But, when we compare Australians' perspectives to those of other nations, we start to realise how lucky a country we really are. We are proud of our healthcare system – and justifiably so – but the challenges we face are significant and pressing. It is good to be proud, but it is important to remember what comes after.

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**“In the Ipsos study, Life in Australia, access to quality healthcare emerges as the second most important attribute in making somewhere a good place to live, just behind feeling safe.”**

# Climate change and the war on waste: a tale of two issues

Investigating a resurgence in environmental concerns among Australians



Jennifer Brook  
Director  
Ipsos Public Affairs

**Over the last five years, there has been a steady climb in the number of Australians identifying the environment as a top issue facing the country.**

The Ipsos Issues Monitor has tracked citizen concern about the environment since November 2010 (when one in five identified it as a top-three issue facing Australia). Since then, concerns about the environment eroded to the point where just 8% of Australians nominated it as a top concern in late 2016. However, momentum in concern started building again in 2017 and has continued to more rapidly climb over the past two years to reach an all-time high of 27 per cent in September 2019 (see figure 7).

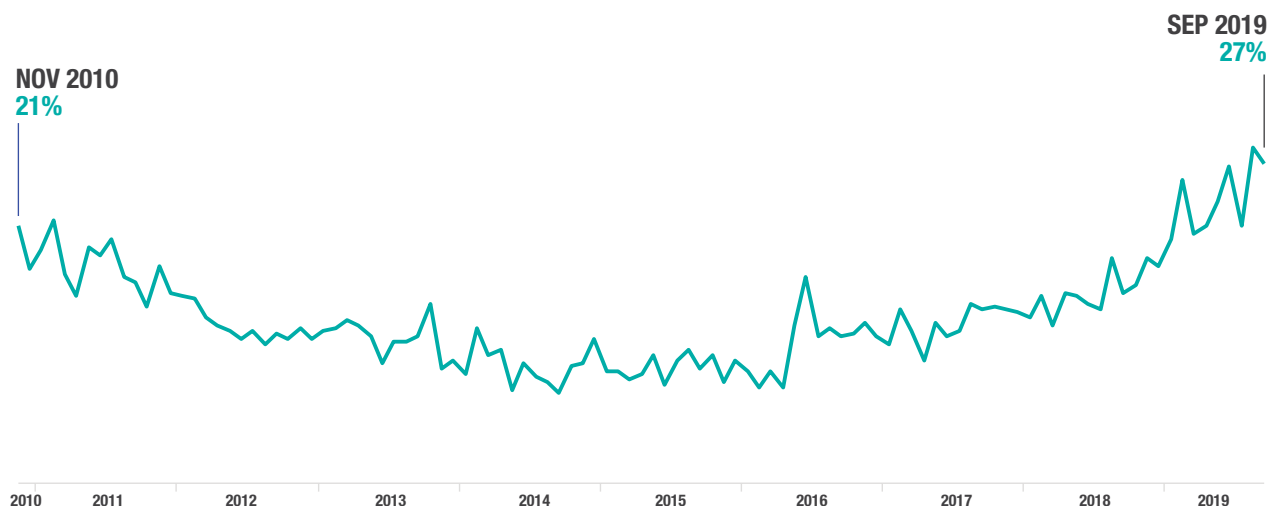
Concern about the environment has increased across all age ranges, however is most acute among younger Australians. “Gen Z” (including those approaching their mid-20s) and “Gen Y” (aka millennials) are more likely to identify the environment as a concern when compared with their older counterparts. So, what’s going on? Why this increase in concern, and what issues specifically are driving this renewed interest in the environment?

It appears there are two main issues currently resonating strongly with Australians and capturing the collective imagination. Both have resulted in a surge in public interest and media coverage. The first is climate change: a monumental challenge, with catastrophic impacts for all life, unless vast mitigation and adaptation activities are undertaken. The second issue is the amount of waste we generate, particularly plastics.

Australians sense an urgency for action on both these issues, however the solutions to these problems are quite different. Tackling climate change requires a global solution and disruptive changes to our economic, social and environmental systems, including changes to energy supply and use, and consumption patterns. On the other hand, while dealing with waste also requires changes to our consumption behaviours, the ability of everyday Australians to address waste production and management is arguably far easier.



**“Gen Z” (including those approaching their mid-20s) and “Gen Y” (aka millennials) are more likely to identify the environment as a concern when compared with their older counterparts.”**



**Figure 7 - Environment selected as a top issue facing our nation**



CLIMATE CHANGE

In a global study<sup>43</sup>, Ipsos established that climate change was the most pressing environmental issue (cited by 37% globally), followed by air pollution (35%) and addressing the amount of waste we produce (34%). In Australia, this concern rated higher than the global average: 44 per cent of Australians identified climate change as a top three environmental issue. The results also showed concern has increased over time – both globally (30% in 2018, compared to 37% in 2019) and closer to home (from 35% in 2018 to 44% in 2019 among Australians) (see figure 8).

It is the scale of the climate change issue that presents the greatest challenge. Global collaboration is required. However, mass collaboration at an inter-government level often leaves individuals feeling disempowered. Ipsos research repeatedly notes dismay among Australians that positive attempts to address the issue, via local policy or behaviour change, would likely be rendered ineffective by lack of action (or counter-action) in other parts of the world. This fear of our inability to affect positive change can translate to apathy and contribute to eco-anxiety.

“44% of Australians identified climate change as a top three environmental issue”

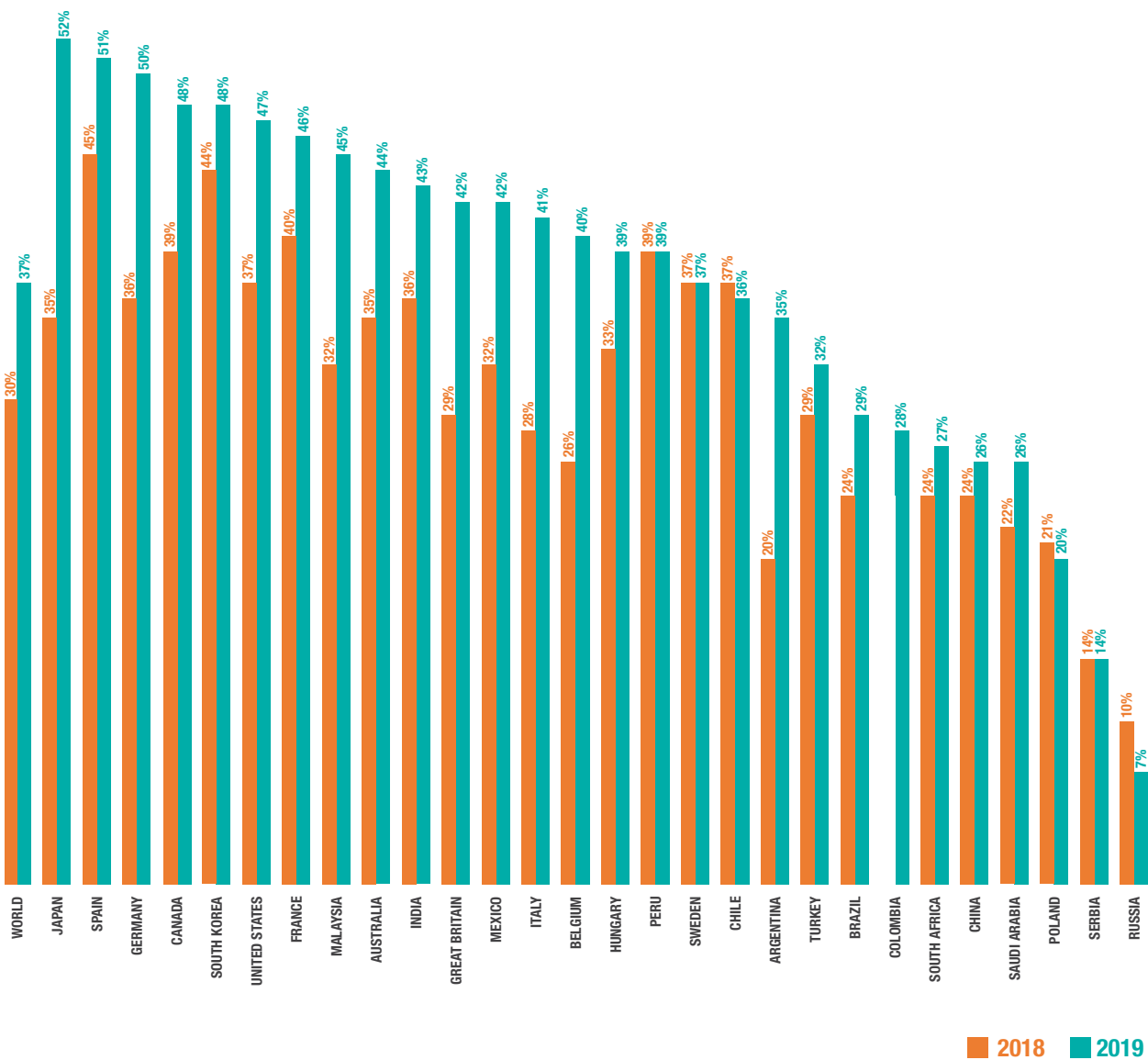


Figure 8 - Global warming or climate change selected as a top environmental issue

## DEALING WITH WASTE

Addressing the amount of waste generated is also of increasing concern to Australians. In 2019, 38% labelled it a top environmental issue, compared with 35% in 2018. Again, this reflects a global trend of increased concern (30% in 2018, compared to 35% in 2019).

Australians have longstanding concerns around certain aspects of waste. For example, illegal dumping has always been one of the top 10 environmental issues Australians would take action on if they were making decisions for the nation<sup>44</sup>, while household waste has leapfrogged to fifth place in the list of environmental issues for action (41%).

It is likely Australians' recent interest has been fired up by media coverage. The ABC's 2017 and 2018 series *War on Waste* focused on waste generation and management and identified things the public could do to reduce the amount of waste produced. Further, recent years have seen divisive public contests around waste being played out in our supermarket aisles, including conversations about attractive fruit and vegetables receiving priority over their spotty and disfigured cousins, the removal of single use plastic bags and subsequent introduction of plastic toys (minis and ooshies) to incentivise brand loyalty. Beyond the red spot special, China's National Sword policy (import restrictions imposed to reduce the amount of contaminated materials entering the country) shone a light on our waste generation; throwing Australia's recycling system into disarray in 2018. By extension, a number of other South East Asian countries have announced they will return contaminated waste to our shores.

Positively, this surge in interest in waste among Australians has been accompanied by an increased adoption of reusable coffee cups and straws, in place of single-use versions. This indicates that perhaps Australia is waking up to fears we cannot recycle our way out of a system that produces vast amounts of waste. Avoidance and reuse need to be at the core of addressing how we approach waste.

## A TALE OF TWO ISSUES

An important aspect of public interest relating to waste production and management is that individual and household behaviour changes, including a move away from single-use plastics, are an eminently achievable goal for average Australians. More importantly, the outcomes of individual behavioural change are immediately evident (such as no longer using plastic bags or saying no to plastic straws). In contrast, the scale of climate change means individual and household actions (such as adopting a meat-free diet, not owning a car or choosing a bank/superfund that have divested from fossil fuels) contribute in incremental ways to reducing carbon emissions - the impacts of our personal actions are not as tangible.

While addressing waste production and management is unquestionably important, the idea that "...issues like plastics in our oceans ... present even more immediate threats [than climate change]"<sup>45</sup> is problematic, particularly if it risks people becoming complacent about tackling climate change.

Australians want action on climate change. The Ipsos Climate Change Report has tracked the desire for more to be done to address climate change: 62% of those surveyed believe Australia should be doing more, while 72% think other countries should be doing more.

**“38% of Australians labelled waste a top environmental issues in 2019”**

Transitioning the economy away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources is a significant way to reduce the emissions contributing to climate change. Almost two thirds of Australians (64%) think increasing the amount of power generated from renewable energy sources should be an essential or high priority for the nation.

For now, there is momentum around climate change action, demonstrated by the strong turnout for the nationwide school strikes and the growth of the Extinction Rebellion movement. But sustained energy demanding action on climate change could be at risk, without ways that everyday Australians can feel their contributions are ameliorating the impacts of climate change. Perhaps that's where we can learn from our war on waste.

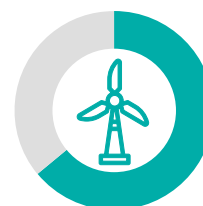
## Action on climate change:



**62%** believe Australia should be doing more



**72%** think other countries should be doing more



**64%** think that increasing the amount of power generated from renewable energy sources should be an essential or high priority for the nation



# Trust – You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone

Exploring why trust matter across society



Sally Braidwood  
Director and Service Line Lead  
Ipsos Corporate Reputation



**“WE’RE IN THE MIDST OF A TRUST CRISIS.”**

**“TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS IS IN FREEFALL.”**

**“TRUST IS LOWER THAN IT HAS EVER BEEN BEFORE.”**

**These are some of the narratives we regularly hear about trust. They’re also narratives that are simple and therefore easy to understand, believe and repeat. Ipsos’ recent Trust: The Truth report<sup>46</sup> reviewed decades of global data on trust and developed a different point of view. One that, unfortunately, is not that simple.**

The report found that low levels of trust are not new, but rather have been in various states of decline for the last 20 to 50 years.<sup>47</sup>

Low levels of trust are also not universal, in fact many cases of rising trust can be found in both established and developing markets. In Australia, while levels of social trust measured in the World Values Survey declined between 1981-1984 and 1995-1998, they increased in the period of 2010-2014.<sup>48</sup> In fact, in 2010-2014 Australia was the fifth most trusting of the countries tested (see figure 10 overleaf).

This does not mean that as a society we have nothing to worry about when it comes to trust but rather, we need to understand it better. Trust: The Truth proposes a useful medical analogy to aid this understanding; trust may be better described as a chronic issue as opposed to an acute one in that it has been developing over the long term, has multiple causes and may reduce our resilience as a society against other ailments.

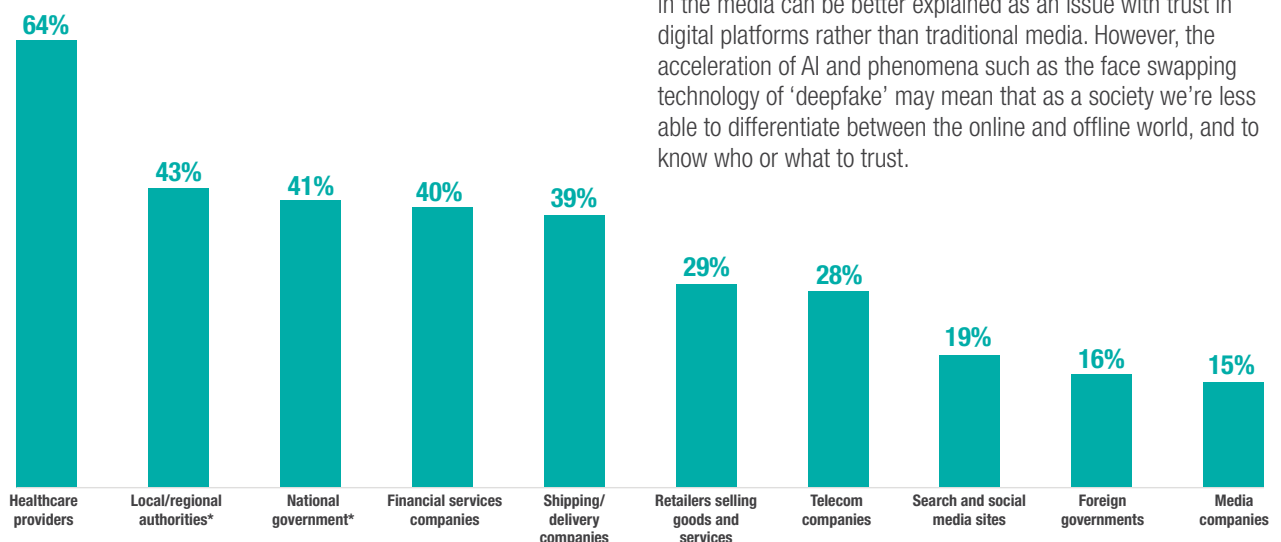
So what is ‘trust’? Trust is “the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something”.<sup>49</sup> It is a belief established over time as the result of repeated positive interactions.

And because trust is rooted in these positive interactions, our trust in local institutions is stronger than in national institutions because we’re more likely to have actual experience to draw upon as opposed to relying on perception. From a business perspective, this translates into individual companies, consumer facing ones in particular, typically enjoying higher levels of trust than whole sectors and non-consumer facing companies.

#### **LOW TRUST GIVES RISE TO ‘ALTERNATIVE FACTS’**

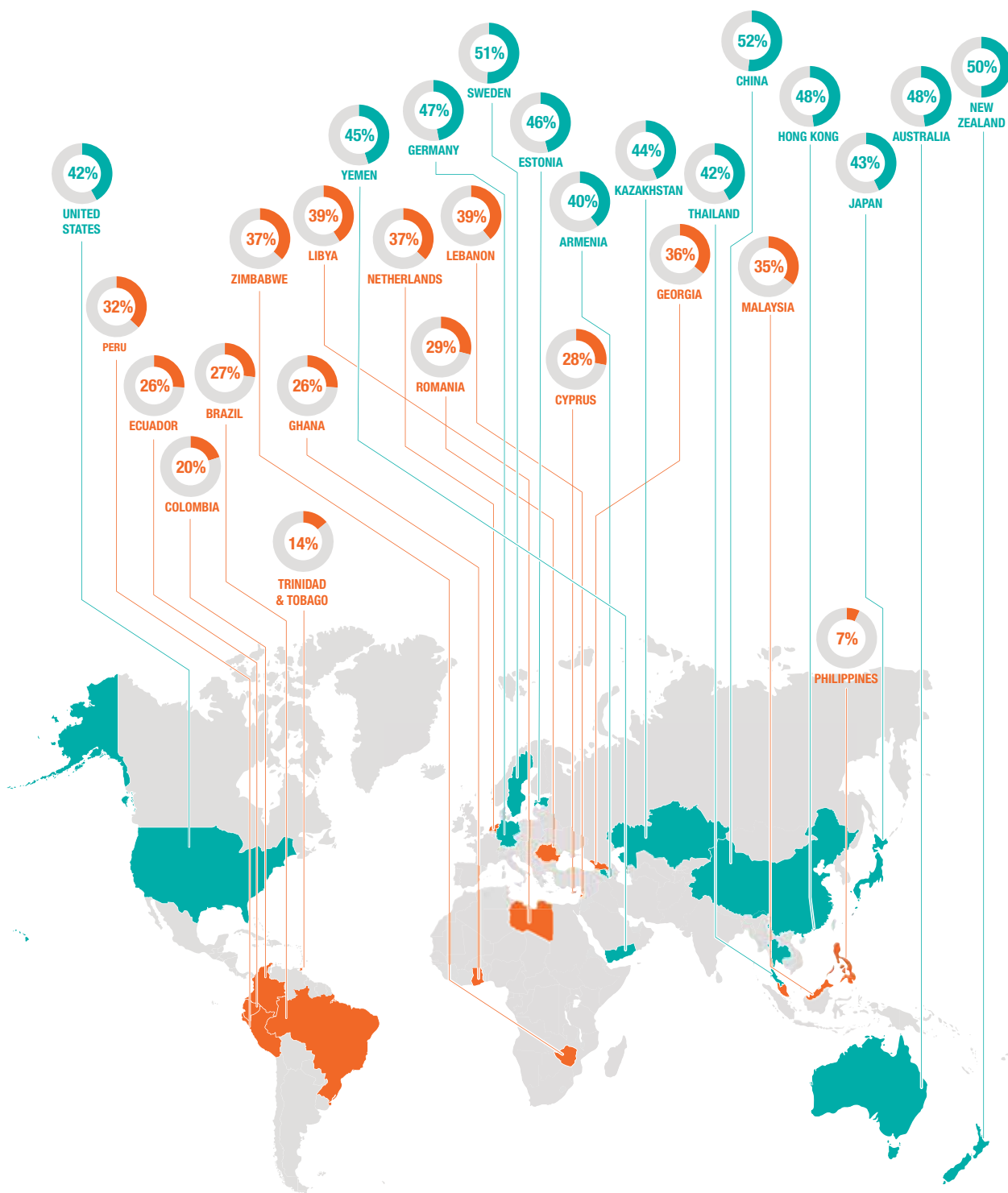
As evidenced by recent global experience, low trust environments are fertile ground for ‘alternative facts’ or ‘fake news’. The proliferation of the internet and the subsequent democratisation of information have given rise to a set of circumstances where, as a society, we no longer have a mutually agreed set of truths. This has led many to proclaim a ‘crisis of trust’ in the media.

Ipsos’ 2019 study, In Media We Trust<sup>50</sup>, surveyed 27,000 people across 28 countries and revealed that in established markets like the US, UK and Australia, this proclaimed crisis of trust in the media can be better explained as an issue with trust in digital platforms rather than traditional media. However, the acceleration of AI and phenomena such as the face swapping technology of ‘deepfake’ may mean that as a society we’re less able to differentiate between the online and offline world, and to know who or what to trust.



**Figure 9 - Public trust in organisations**

\*A great deal or a fair amount



**Figure 10 - Which countries are the most and least trusting?**

In exploring this theme of technology, Ipsos' study Data Distrust and the Privacy Paradox revealed that the majority of us from 28 countries around the globe don't trust organisations to use the personal data they collect from us 'in the right way'<sup>51</sup> (see figure 9). The same study revealed that Europe is (and actually has been for some time) one of the most privacy sceptical regions in the world which makes its recent roll out of the stringent and broad reaching General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation of little surprise. It also serves as a reminder that in the absence of trust and companies being afforded the benefit of the doubt to do the right thing, governments will regulate.

The extent to which we trust corporates matters for a range of reasons including the fact that large corporates have an increasing ability to do good in the world, sometimes even more so than governments given their wealth of resources and ability to act outside the bounds of bureaucracy. This is reflected in the changing societal expectations of corporates; we're in an era where doing no harm is no longer enough and expectations are now that corporates will find ways to make the world a better place and create social value.

## SUSTAINABILITY ON THE PUBLIC AND CORPORATE AGENDA

The Ipsos Issues Monitor shows Australians' concern about the environment is at record highs.

While concern about the environment sits fourth on the overall list of concerns behind healthcare, the economy and cost of living<sup>52</sup>, if as a society we're personally concerned about managing things like access to healthcare and balancing the family budget, we may increasingly look to business to take the lead on issues such as climate change and the environment.

However, Ipsos' annual Climate Change Report<sup>53</sup> reveals that Australians are most critical of the performance of business in response to climate change with 54% rating it as poor (see figure 11).

The rise of value-driven activism from shareholders, employees and consumers, demanding complete transparency about social, political, and environmental behaviours, puts corporates evermore under the microscope. Businesses' own behaviour can create material threats to future production, especially where operations rely on finite commodities or raw materials that are impacted by climate change or volatile social and political circumstances.

It's in this broader context of sustainability that there is an increasing opportunity for corporates to meet changing societal expectations through aligned, credible, and impactful corporate sustainability strategies. Well-developed and evidence-based strategies bring a range of benefits from rallying stakeholders behind a meaningful corporate mission to reducing existential threats, bolstering business continuity, and increasing competitive advantage.

However, taking a visible stand on issues like sustainability does bring risk. Brands can no longer make claims of environmental responsibility in the boardroom or the pages of the annual report and then send their products around the world in packaging that will take more than 200 years to breakdown. This smacks of inconsistency and inauthenticity, both of which kill trust.

## "As evidenced by recent global experience, low trust environments are fertile ground for 'alternative facts' or 'fake news'."

The challenge for most corporates in making these changes is to balance the needs of all stakeholders, not least shareholders. Corporates have struggled to balance a shift towards embracing more sustainable practices with ensuring ongoing maximised profits for shareholders. Fortunately, we're moving further into an era where sustainability is no longer incongruent with profit. There is increasing recognition that businesses which fail to adapt and become more sustainable will face material risks to trust levels which translates into ongoing social licence to operate, and this absolutely impacts profits. Hence, the rise of sustainability to the top of the corporate risk agenda.

### WE'RE BETTER WHEN WE TRUST

The adage that you don't know what you've got until it's gone brings important context to the trust debate because the value of trust is most apparent when it's absent. Trust matters across society. It makes all our interactions - interpersonal, commercial, political, communicational - more efficient.

When we trust, we shortcut the steps we normally take in transactions so when we lose trust, we become less efficient in how we operate; it's harder to establish political consensus, the media landscape further fragments, and companies have to work harder to be believed. Put simply, society functions better when we trust. But critically, government and business need to be nimble in responding to changing societal expectations because what was sufficient to establish and maintain trust yesterday, is not today and will no doubt be different to what's required tomorrow.

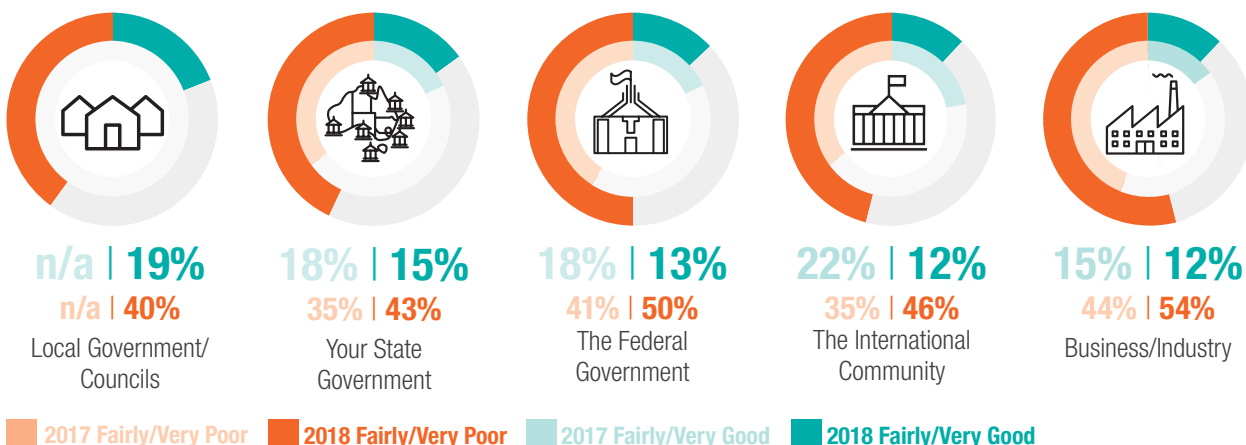


Figure 11 - Perceived climate action performance



# Where to now?

## A conversation with the Committees for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth



**Committee for Melbourne**  
**Martine Letts**  
Chief Executive Officer



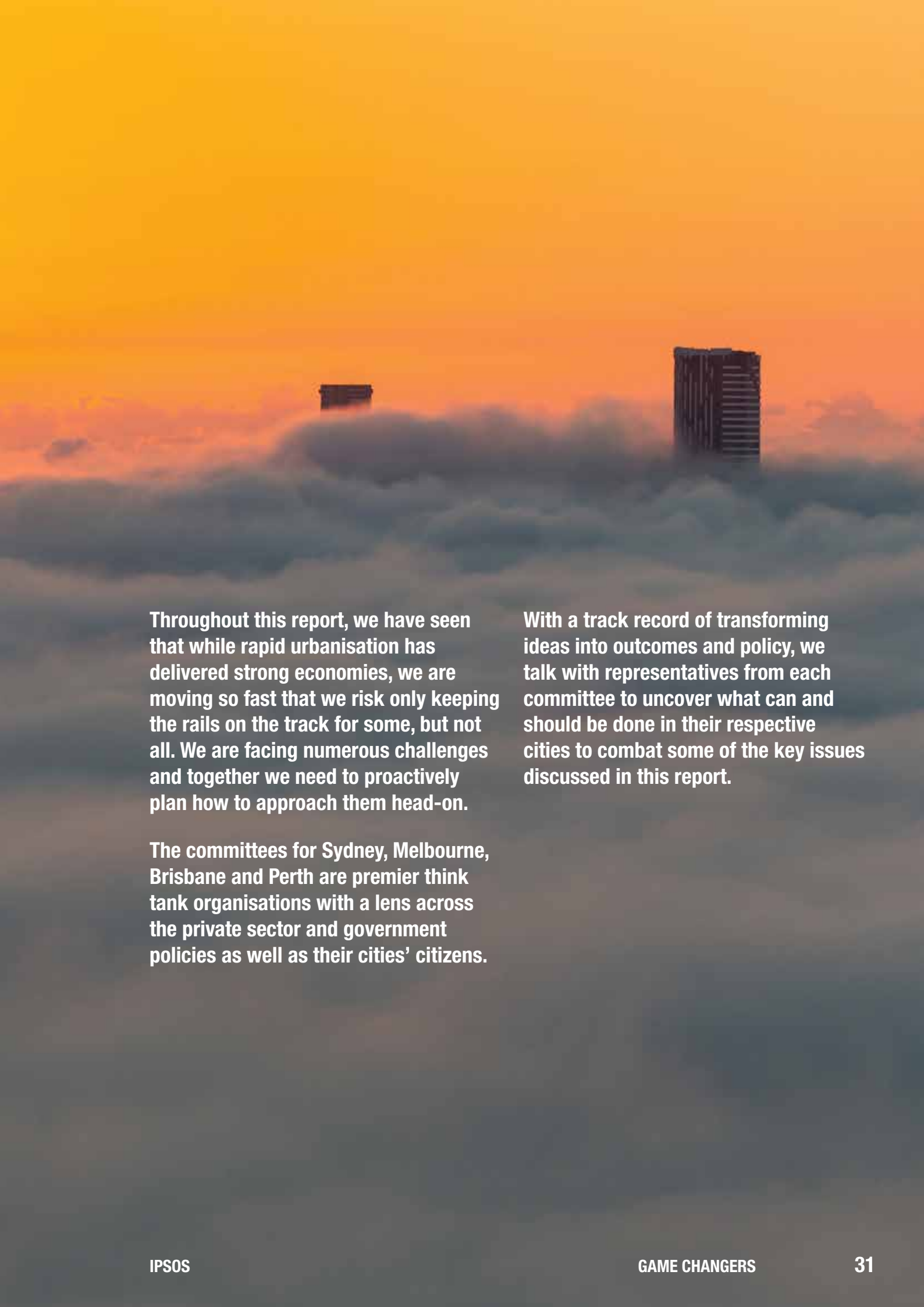
**Committee for Sydney**  
**James Hulme**  
Director of Advocacy



**Committee for Brisbane**  
**Annie Macnaughton**  
Executive Director



**Committee for Perth**  
**Marion Fulker**  
Chief Executive



Throughout this report, we have seen that while rapid urbanisation has delivered strong economies, we are moving so fast that we risk only keeping the rails on the track for some, but not all. We are facing numerous challenges and together we need to proactively plan how to approach them head-on.

The committees for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth are premier think tank organisations with a lens across the private sector and government policies as well as their cities' citizens.

With a track record of transforming ideas into outcomes and policy, we talk with representatives from each committee to uncover what can and should be done in their respective cities to combat some of the key issues discussed in this report.

**Ipsos: Ivan Motley from .id told us about the ins and outs of demographic composition across the nation, with a focus on small areas. Daniel Evans' article about urbanisation and sprawl discussed how these changes intersected with citizens concerns, values and experiences. Can you please tell us about how these items play out in your city, discussing its strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities.**

**James (CfS):**

Sydney is booming – but dealing with the side effects of the boom is difficult. Almost all the challenges Sydney is facing are the result of a successful economy and a growing city. In line with many global cities, housing unaffordability has risen because more people want to live here. Road congestion is costing billions because our public transport system hasn't kept up with growth. While Sydney has grown westward, adding 100,000 people every year, the economic gravity of our Eastern CBD means many people have to commute long distances to access jobs – although the jobs available are some of the most exciting, best paid jobs in the country.

To grapple with these side-effects of success, Sydney has a plan. An integrated land-use and transport strategy aims to 're-balance' the city towards three centres, focussed around the existing Sydney CBD, the emerging Parramatta CBD and the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis. This has the explicit aim of delivering a city where more people can access good jobs, world class health and education and community infrastructure within 30 minutes of their home by public transport.

While there is much to do, Sydney is heading in the right direction.

**Martine (CfM):**

There is a reason that Melbourne is consistently ranked one of the most liveable cities in the world. Melbourne's cultural heritage (including in arts and sports); multicultural population; choice of restaurants and bars; and access to jobs, education and healthcare - are amongst some of the attributes that make Greater Melbourne a great place to live. The fact that Melbourne's population growth is outstripping every other city in Australia, shows that people are voting with their feet to take advantage of the benefits the city has to offer. But as Melbourne's population grows, so does the pressure on house prices, transport, and the cost of living. That's why the Committee for Melbourne and its members are constantly striving to deliver forward thinking initiatives to deal with the arising challenges faced in this city. With the Committee's 4.0 agenda including integrated transport, AI, skills and affordable housing - and a broad membership supporting these initiatives – our future looks bright as we convert future thinking into action.

**Annie (CfB):**

Brisbane benefits from one of the most liveable climates in Australia. That climate enables us to genuinely engage across our public realm and native environments throughout the year.

That climate is inseparably linked to our identity through our architecture, landscape and urbanism. Unfortunately all those

**“To grapple with these side-effects of success, Sydney has a plan. An integrated land-use and transport strategy aims to ‘re-balance’ the city towards three centres, focussed around the existing Sydney CBD, the emerging Parramatta CBD and the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis.” James (CfS)**



qualities are under threat from our consumptive behaviours. Motor vehicle dependence, short life cycle products and artificial climate control are all having a measurable impact on our environment and, of more concern, our climate.

The desire for privatised open space also has had an expansive impact on the shape of our cities. Despite the climate change debate we are still as disconnected from the natural systems of our place.



The opportunity for Brisbane moving forward is to reconnect with our environment in a genuine and meaningful way. To see ourselves as not just custodians of our place but an integrated part of the natural processes we want to protect.

You can't talk about Brisbane without talking about its role and relationship with its near neighbours, the fast growing cities and communities of South East Queensland, and the rest of Queensland. Brisbane is a capital city, and growing in its dominance/reach as the state's economy shifts from commodities to knowledge-based economies.

Our leaders are struggling to make the decisions which will deliver the infrastructure the city needs to transform and meet the challenges of the global economy, and the need to service Queensland's dispersed population. At the same time, the places, assets and experiences that make Brisbane unique are suffering from underinvestment and comprehensive planning. Commute times, for example, have jumped to an average of 66 minutes per day, putting Brisbane just behind Sydney in terms of time spent behind the wheel.

With a formidable bid to win the 2032 Olympics, Brisbane must put its best foot forward and start thinking like a globally scaled metropolitan area rather than a regional capital city.

Brisbane's future will depend on whether or not regional coordination can be achieved within South East Queensland. Initiatives like City Deals aim to achieve this, but are challenged by fragmented agendas both statewide and within South East Queensland. The resulting lack of consensus can stifle projects that are not perceived to have statewide benefit, ranging from pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to much-needed river crossing bridges, to the perennial debate over daylight savings time.

In many ways, Brisbane's future is brighter than many other cities. Housing across South East Queensland is affordable by relative standards, and an abundance of land in key growth corridors assures plenty of room for future expansion. Brisbane's economy is not tied to any one industry in particular, though the coordination of Queensland's minerals, agriculture, and tourism sectors all play a key role.

### **Marion (CfP):**

Perth, or Boorloo as it is known by the Wadjuk People of the Noongar nation, is Australia's most westerly capital. The Greater Perth region is home to some 2 million people and this is expected to grow to 3.5 million by the middle of this century. With a reputation for its natural beauty and 300 days of sunshine each year, Perth offers an enviable active, outdoor lifestyle.

WA's economy is fuelled by the more than 20 mineral and energy commodities extracted and exported by some of the world's most prominent brands such as BHP, and local success stories FMG, Wesfarmers and Woodside.

Whilst the Central Business District is a thriving commercial centre, it lacks a critical mass of resident population. This results in a lack of vibrancy after dark which some visitors perceive negatively.

**“That climate is inseparably linked to our identity through our architecture, landscape and urbanism. Unfortunately all those qualities are under threat from our consumptive behaviours. Motor vehicle dependence, short life cycle products and artificial climate control are all having a measurable impact on our environment and, of more concern, our climate.”  
Annie (CfB)**



As one of Australia's lowest density cities, Perth and its suburbs sprawl for 140 linear kilometres along the coastline. The preferred mode of transportation is the car for reasons of convenience, although a number of people cycle and catch public transport for their daily commute.

**Ipsos: As highlighted in our Happy about Healthcare article, Australians are relatively positive about our healthcare system - but what needs to happen to make and keep our cities healthy?**

**James (CfS):**

One of the key changes that cities need to implement in order to improve health is integrating health into everyday activity. Having places to walk to makes people happier – and healthier. People who walk or cycle, whether to their ultimate destination or just to their nearest train station, are healthier than people who drive – stuck in traffic for extended periods.

This is only possible with a level of density higher than most Australian cities, but in line with many global cities with similar populations. A low-density design to suburbs means there isn't the critical mass of people to support shops or regular public transport options. But there are also simple things we can insist on. Streets must have well-maintained footpaths – with trees for shade and places for people to rest. Roads must be safe for cyclists – sometimes through shared lanes on suburban streets, but also through separated bike paths linking key destinations to where people live.

**Martine (CfM):**

It is extremely gratifying to know that Australians are positive about their healthcare system. If we are to maintain the quality of the system and services, we must consider the impact of trends such as population growth and the rise of technology. If Australia is going to offer the most up-to-date healthcare, ensuring that innovation and technology is developed and commercialised in Australia is essential. This requires establishing innovation precincts that foster the right skills, technological infrastructure, transport, housing and collaborative frameworks. BioMelbourne Network has a long history of biomedical research and will attest that investment and collaboration by all levels of government and the community are needed in precincts like Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Monash, Waurin Ponds and many more. Ensuring that there is support for the contributions by the not-for-profit sector from government and the community, is also important. The work done for example by the Royal Flying Doctors since 1928, which ensures that regional and rural dwellers have access to healthcare, continues to rely heavily on donations and volunteers from the broader community.

**Annie (CfB):**

The sprawling form of our cities has created a tyranny of distance within them that reduces our opportunities to live healthily. Significant sways of arterial road infrastructure with limited greening along them concentrates emissions in areas that people need to regularly connect with.

The public realm of our cities needs to change to favour the walking experience, social interaction and active transport. High quality public realm supports air quality, exercise and social interaction, all-important preventative measures for physical and mental health. Only when we have favourable public realm will there be genuine motivation to move to compact communities that make walking a viable transport alternative.



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**“If Australia is going to offer the most up-to-date healthcare, ensuring that innovation and technology is developed and commercialised in Australia is essential.” Martine (CfM)**

There is a growing acceptance by urban planners and designers that modern cities have delivered the chronic health and lifestyle conditions which are driving demand for health services across Australia.

Design guides promoting healthy, walkable communities have been published by governments, but what is lacking in Brisbane/South East Queensland is an explicit strategy to address the social determinants of health, and in particular the locational and social disadvantage experienced by communities on the edge of our city. Further compounding this issue is shared responsibility over the steps needed to rectify this—roadways and planning functions are largely presided over by State-level departments, while individual councils seek to muster resources for parks and local-scale development.



Strategic interventions are required to deliver place-based solutions that support affordable, sustainable and healthy living for all in the community. Smart planning, design and community development programs can reduce the incidence and health impacts of loneliness, social isolation and exclusion.

Our cities need to create places of learning, wellbeing, respite and creativity where individuals and communities are able to interact and connect on a regular basis. A city of villages, where streets and public spaces bring people together, and build social relationships and networks which support good health.

#### **Marion (CfP):**

Cities house the majority of Australia's population and as living organisms they have a significant role to play as facilitators of health, wellness and wellbeing for society as a whole. They must add, rather than detract, from quality of life.

Reducing congestion needs to be a priority, not just to improve air quality but also to lessen the time residents spend commuting in their cars, given the negative impacts this has on physical and mental health. The longer the commute, the greater the disbenefits. Smart cities are claiming their streets back for walking and active transport by prioritising people over cars.

Perth is blessed with two new state-of-the-art medical facilities in Fiona Stanley Hospital and the Perth Children's Hospital. It is home to leading medical practitioners and researchers such as Professor Fiona Wood AM and Nobel Laureate Professor Barry Marshall AC. However, Aboriginal people live shorter lives than the general population and this gap must be closed. An average woman in Western Australia can expect to live to the ripe old age of 84; her Aboriginal peer to just 58.

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**“Reducing congestion needs to be a priority, not just to improve air quality but also to lessen the time residents spend commuting in their cars, given the negative impacts this has on physical and mental health.”  
Marion (CfP)**



**Ipsos: Addressing climate change is often cited as a wicked problem. Where have you seen real change in your city to address this issue, and how can we learn from this?**

**James (CfS):**

Sydney is alive to the challenge of urban heat and rising sea levels. With increasing risk of heat, especially in Sydney's West, along with an urban environment without enough trees or water to reduce temperatures, our city is extremely exposed to the health implications of rising temperatures. The NSW Government has commenced a program of tree planting, along with thinking differently about how we integrate urban water into our city. However, more needs to be done at the other end of the city to grapple with the risk of sea level rises and climate change-related storms.

**Martine (CfM):**

As Ipsos highlights, tackling climate change 'needs a global solution' and requires 'disruptive changes' – and this can seem a daunting and almost impossible task. However, there are actions that individuals, organisations and institutions can take to at least begin the discussion on activities that might lend themselves to a greater solution as we move forward. Committee for Melbourne, for example, has been advocating for an integrated transport plan – which necessarily must include consideration of shared mobility and mechanisms to discourage the use of private vehicles. Already, many of the Committee's members such as GoGet, Lime scooters and UBER, are providing shared mobility solutions aimed at reducing the number of vehicles on the road. Melbourne Water and Yarra Water are also acting to reduce their carbon footprint by investing in solar farms and waste management (e.g. recycling facilities). And waste management is an equally difficult issue, including changes to people's 'consumption behaviours'. Many Committee for Melbourne members are actively involved in waste management, such as GoGet (supported by City of Melbourne and City of Port Phillip) that is using its vehicles to allow communities to sort their personal recycling.

**Annie (CfB):**

The adoption of renewable energy sources, especially solar, in homes and businesses has been a positive change in the way we build our cities. It comes down to the concept of "using less" and questioning what we actually need rather than consuming what is easiest.

Responding to the challenges of the future climate will require city leaders and opinion-makers to accept that there is an issue, and be open to working with communities, business and stakeholders on locally appropriate solutions.

Engaging with young people and emerging professionals will be critical to building positive momentum over the next 5-10 years.

**Marion (CfP):**

Australia is home to some of the world's most liveable cities. Together Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth house some 16 million people but because of their coastal locations they are some of the most vulnerable to climate change. Because of a lack of policy commitment, Australians are viewed as climate change deniers internationally.



**“With increasing risk of heat, especially in Sydney’s West, along with an urban environment without enough trees or water to reduce temperatures, our city is extremely exposed to the health implications of rising temperatures.”**  
**James (CfS)**

Despite a lack of country-wide policy, local government authorities across Perth are addressing climate change to manage local issues. For the more environmentally aware, smart technology deployment is proving to be a cost-effective way of managing everything from park watering and lighting to bin emptying.

The coastal dune system is undergoing constant rehabilitation and groynes play an important role in calming the Indian Ocean swell and protecting Perth's prized beaches. A slow process of river wall strengthening is underway to deal with fluctuating tides and storm surges.

However, Greater Perth lacks an overarching strategy to understand climate change threats and create risk mitigation strategies. The development of a plan of this kind would help to create positive, cumulative impacts.

**Ipsos: Thinking about the fact that Australia is one of the more trusting countries<sup>54</sup>, what can policy makers and those in a position of influence do to build and maintain trust to ensure that together we are creating prosperity and improving quality of life for all Australians for the long term?**

**James (CfS):**

We have seen, most notably in the UK and the USA, what happens when the trajectory of cities and regional and rural areas diverge. Trust between people breaks down, and an 'us vs. them' mentality takes its place.

Government has to walk the tightrope between ensuring policy supports the most productive areas of our cities – the dense urban cores – while also ensuring that the benefits are shared by all. This doesn't just mean the far-flung suburbs of our cities, although they need more investment, it also means linking the success of cities like Sydney to the benefits felt by regional Australia.

**Martine (CfM):**

There is no doubt that the community is feeling greater dissatisfaction towards established institutions – including government and business. Recent events such as the banking inquiry, protests about climate change and the apparent interference of social media in overseas democratic elections, has caused community concern and raised some important questions. Recognising that the community is feeling this way, it is important for organisations and institutions to respond. That's why the Committee for Melbourne was at the forefront of the establishment of the Victorian All-Party Parliamentary Group on Artificial Intelligence (VAPGGAI) and has set up its own taskforce to look into the issue. It is essential that bi-partisan AI initiatives are established to protect privacy and security of individuals whilst also ensuring that the benefits of innovation are shared equitably in the community. Businesses and governments must increasingly embrace genuine, integrated corporate responsibility initiatives.

**Annie (CfB):**

Brisbane showcases the benefits as well as the challenges of metropolitan government. Benefits include the efficiencies that come from delivering city wide planning and city infrastructure projects, the ability to attract and retain investment due to a strong vision and strategy, and consistent standards of service to business and stakeholders. The challenges come from losing touch with the needs and aspirations of individual communities, and the need to plan for the long-term future of the city.

Trust and goodwill can be maintained and develop open and transparent decision-making. At present, there is a sense that government is not open, particularly when it comes to decisions around climate, as well as infrastructure, planning and development projects.

The challenge is to avoid the separation of decision making away from the people and giving it to unelected elites. Democracy is an unwieldy and often inefficient means of governance but preferable to most all other forms. Trust from the people in their institutions, governments and political leadership relies on a strong relationship between those in positions of power and influence, and others who put their trust in them.

**“Businesses and governments must increasingly embrace genuine, integrated corporate responsibility initiatives.” Martine (CfM)**



**Marion (CfP):**

Australia has had a long run as the “lucky country” but it may not remain so. Policy makers need to ensure that Australia and its states and cities are resilient and adaptable. The headwinds of change are strong and ever present.

Two examples immediately spring to mind. Technological advancement will create disruption to traditional sectors and ways of doing things. This will cause widespread change and affect the workforce as a whole.

Urbanisation is a global trend. When people with ideas cluster together in cities, it provides many commercial and social benefits. Yet without appropriate infrastructure and social services, our cities will fail to thrive and become places of discontent.

Policy makers in Australia need to understand that the world is watching us. In this connected world, expectations are high when it comes to the responsibility of global citizenry, including human rights and environmental management.

Brand Australia has high recognition and trust elsewhere. We must protect that by creating policies that advance Australia fairly.

# End notes

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Q: 'What would you say are the three most important issues facing your local area today?' [Population]
3. Source: Ipsos Life in Australia 2018: Understanding liveability across metropolitan Australia, nationally representative sample of 9515 adults aged 18+, 1 – 31 October 2018. The Metropolitan Australia Liveability Index is a measure of metropolitan Australia's liveability between 0 and 100. The Index is created by multiplying each attributes' importance by how well Australians rate its performance in their local area.  
Q: From the list below, please select the five attributes that you believe are most important to make somewhere a good place to live.  
Q: How well does [State] and your local area perform on each of the following attributes?
4. Source: Ipsos Global Views on Healthcare 2018, representative sample of 23,249 adults aged 16 – 64, 25 May – 8 June 2018.  
Q: How would you rate the quality of healthcare that you and your family have access to in your country? By healthcare we include doctors, specialist physicians such as surgeons, hospitals, tests for diagnosis and drugs to treat various ailments.  
Q: And to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
  - I find it easy to get an appointment with doctors in my local area
  - I trust the healthcare system in my country to provide me with the best treatment
5. Source: Ipsos Global Views on Healthcare 2018, representative sample of 23,249 adults aged 16 – 64, 25 May – 8 June 2018.  
Q: Below are some statements related to your personal healthcare treatment. Please think about the last time you saw a healthcare professional. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one.  
  - had access to the best care I could have received
- Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?  
  - This doctor takes me seriously
  - I know what to expect with this doctor
6. Source: The Ipsos Health Care and Insurance Australia report, nationally representative sample of 5,500 per wave, adults aged 18+, data collected July-August each year, 1987-2019.  
Q: How would you rate the quality of health care in (respondent's home State/Territory)  
Source: The Ipsos Health Care and Insurance Australia report, nationally representative sample of 5,500 per wave, adults aged 18+, data collected July-August each year, 1999-2019.  
Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: I have a fair bit of confidence in the local public hospital system
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Q: 'What would you say are the three most important issues facing Australia today?' [Environment]
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Q: In your view, what are the three most important environmental issues facing [COUNTRY] today? That is, the top environmental issues you feel should receive the greatest attention from your local leaders? [Global warming or climate change]
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Q: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people? (Code one answer): Most people can be trusted.
11. Source: The Ipsos Climate Change Report 2018, nationally representative sample of 1000 adults aged 18+, 6th – 11th December 2018. Q: How would you rate each of the following groups in terms of the actions they have taken in response to climate change?



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