



## PRESS RELEASE

### Majority of Australians expect government to make environment a priority in post COVID-19 recovery – Ipsos survey

#### Australians overwhelmingly agree that the environment is a serious threat to their health and is a high priority right now

**June 5 2020** — Three in four people in 16 major countries, and 70% of Australians, expect their government to make protection of the environment a priority when planning a recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, according to a global Ipsos poll conducted to mark World Environment Day on 5<sup>th</sup> June.

In a survey of 16,000 people from May 21 to 24, a majority of people in all 16 countries agreed with this action with the highest support in emerging markets of China (91%), India and Mexico (89%), Brazil (85%), and South Africa (84%).

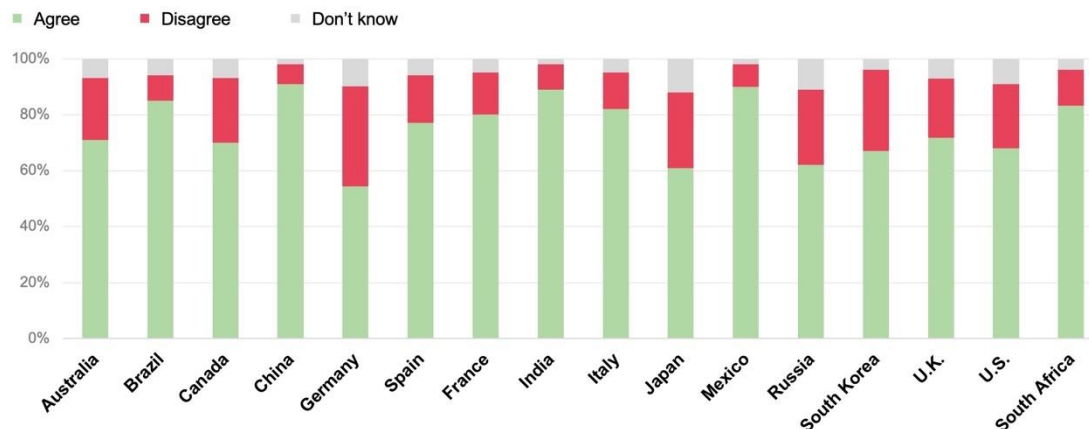
Disagreement over making the environment a government priority in a COVID-19 recovery is highest in Germany (36%), South Korea (29%), Japan and Russia ( 27%), the United States and Canada (23%).

“It’s clear that most Australians see a strong connection between the health of the environment and their own wellbeing. Where our views differ is in relation to how that concern should be reflected in government action. Only two-thirds of us feel the environment should be prioritised as we plan to recover from COVID-19. That’s broadly in line with other countries in the anglosphere such as Canada, the US and the UK,” Ipsos Australia Director, Stuart Clark, said.

“Following the global financial crisis in 2008 our data showed that Australians’ focus on climate change dropped dramatically as economic concerns became more important. Now that we are officially in a recession, it will be interesting to watch how these figures move. The idea that the recovery should be led by projects that support the green economy has gained a lot of media attention, and it will be interesting to see whether that traction remains as people start to feel the pinch financially.”

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### Should your government make environment protection a priority in recovery from COVID-19?



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
I expect my government to make protection of the environment a priority when planning for the post COVID-19 recovery.

15,951 adults polled in 16 countries from May 21 to 24, 2020

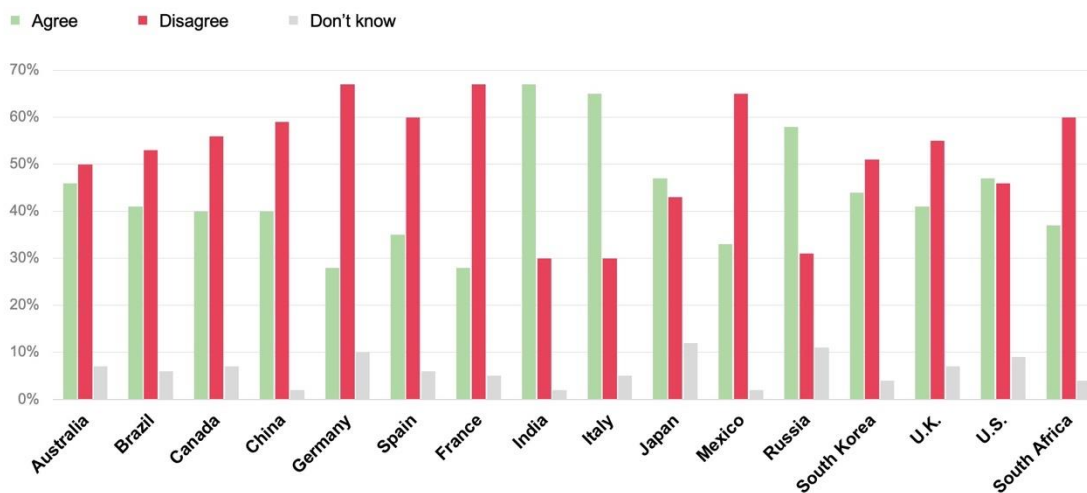


Added to this, there is a view the environment is a personal priority for people with half of the respondents, including Australia, disagreeing that protecting the environment is far down on their list of priorities right now. This sentiment is highest in many European countries including Germany and France (67%), Mexico (65%), Spain and South Africa (60%).

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Those that believe protecting the environment is not a top priority right now are most likely in India (67%), Italy (65%) and Russia (58%). People most divided on this issue are in the U.S. with only 1 percentage point separating those that see it as a top priority from those that don't, followed by Australia and Japan (4).

### Is protecting the environment a low priority right now?



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Protecting the environment is far down my list of priorities right now.

15,951 adults polled in 16 countries from May 21 to 24, 2020



### Environmental threat to health

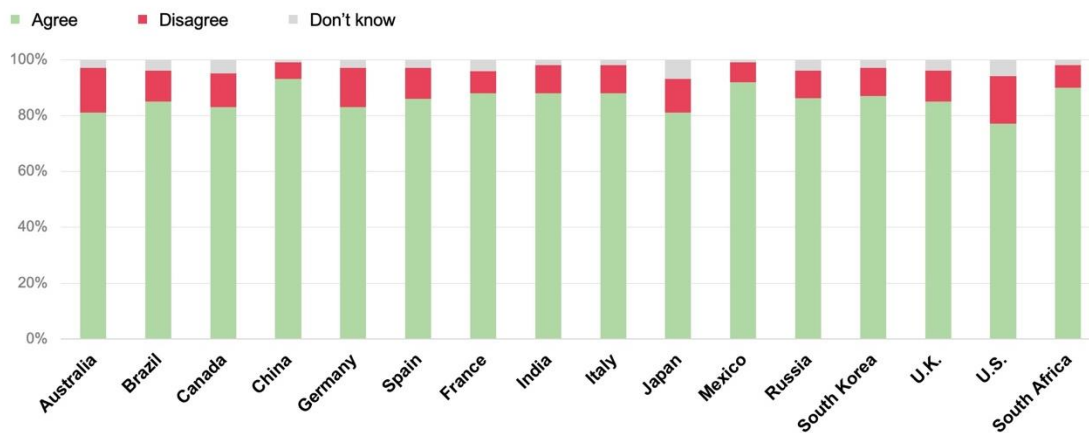
In terms of how seriously people view environmental issues, more than four in five respondents globally say issues such as pollution, degradation of nature, deforestation, overfishing and climate change pose a serious threat to our health and wellbeing today.

In Australia, 81% agree with this sentiment.

This sentiment is highest again in the developing countries of China (93%), Mexico (91%), South Africa (90%), India and Italy (88%). Meanwhile, the U.S. has the highest number of people that disagree with this threat at 17%, followed by Australia (16%).

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### Do you think environmental issues pose a serious threat to your health?



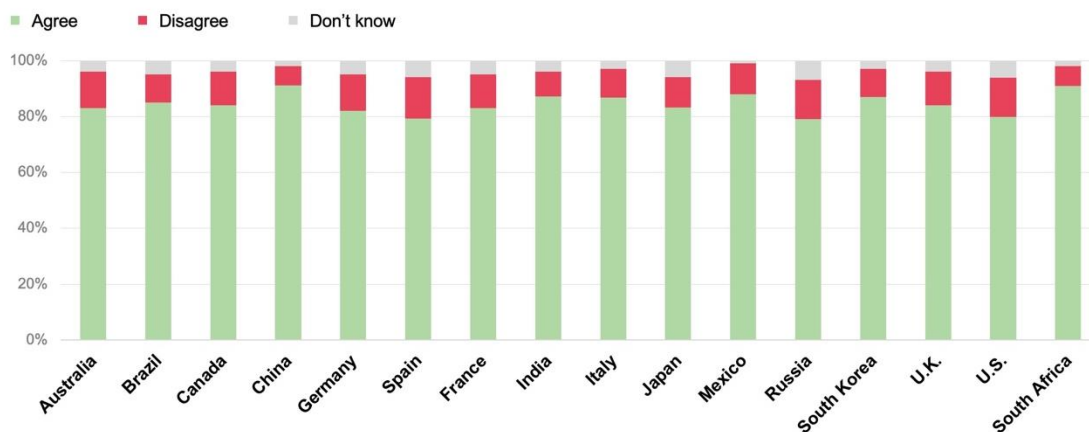
Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Environmental issues - pollution, degradation of nature, deforestation, overfishing, climate change pose a serious threat to our health/well-being today.

15,951 adults polled in 16 countries from May 21 to 24, 2020



Overall, people feel a strong responsibility to ensure their generation does not destroy the planet for the next generation, and the figure is 81% in Australia. Agreement with this sentiment is close to 80% and over in all of the countries with China (92%) and South Africa (91%) at the top.

### Do you think you have a responsibility to ensure your generation does not destroy the planet?



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
I have a responsibility to ensure my generation does not destroy the planet for the next generation.

15,951 adults polled in 16 countries from May 21 to 24, 2020





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### About the Study

These are the results of an Ipsos survey conducted May 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 on the Global Advisor online platform among 15,951 adults aged 18-74 in Canada and the United States and 16-74 in Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United Kingdom. Where available, tracking results from previous studies conducted through March and April, as well as selected results from February, are referenced by date.

The sample for this study consists of approximately 1,000 individuals in each country. The samples in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, South Korea, the U.K. and the U.S. can be taken as representative of these countries' general adult population over age 16 or 18 (as above) and under the age of 75. The sample in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia, and South Africa is more urban, more educated and/or more affluent than the general population and should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of the population. The data is weighted so that each market's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.

Where results do not sum up to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses. The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website ([www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)).

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### About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest market research company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP [www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)

A new Ipsos poll conducted in 14 countries shows widespread support for government actions to prioritise climate change in the economic recovery after COVID-19 with 65% globally agreeing that this is important. For Australia, 57% agreed climate change should be prioritised in the economic recovery actions.

Furthermore, the survey finds that 71% of adults globally agree that, in the long term, climate change is as serious a crisis as COVID-19. While the majority of Australians (59%) agree climate change is as serious a crisis as COVID-19, this is well below the global average.

The survey was conducted online among more than 28,000 adults between April 16<sup>th</sup> and April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

A second Ipsos survey commissioned for Earth Day found that while climate change remains the most important environmental issue for citizens globally, they are no more likely to say they plan to make changes to their own environmental behaviours than they were six years ago. The second survey was carried out online among more than 20,000 adults across 29 countries between Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Key Australian findings include:

- Climate change remains the most important environmental issue to **Australians**. Two-in-five (42%) cited it as one of the three most important environmental issues facing the nation. This was consistent with the global trend; climate change is the number one environmental issue globally too (37% identified it as a top issue).
- Also of concern to **Australians** are dealing with the amount of waste we generate (37%); future energy sources and supplies (29%); wildlife conservation (25%); and overpopulation (24%).
- Globally, other environmental issues that are important to citizens are air pollution (33%) and dealing with the amount of waste we generate (32%), followed by deforestation (26%) and water pollution (25%). Concern for the top four issues has increased since two years ago.

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- A majority of the public globally (68%) agrees that if their governments do not act now to combat climate change, they will be failing their citizens. **Australians** feel similarly, 65% agreed Government inaction on climate change would be failing citizens.
- More than half of **Australians** (55%) say they would be put off from voting for a political party whose policies do not take climate change seriously.

Comparison of this year's findings highlight changing environmental priorities for Australians. In 2018, future energy sources and supplies was a top-three environmental concern for Australians (40% identified it as a top environmental issue, compared with 29% this year). Climate change was the third most commonly mentioned issue for Australians in 2018 at 35%; and is the number one environmental issue this year, up by 7 points to 42%.

Of all the countries' citizens surveyed in 2020, Australians placed the greatest concern on wildlife conservation. A quarter (25%) of Australians identify it as a top-three issue compared with an average of 15% globally. It is likely this concern has been shaped by the loss of Australian wildlife during the bushfire crisis over summer. However, concern was also relatively high in 2018 compared with the rest of the world. In 2018, 22% of Australians selected this issue (14% globally).

Across a range of environmental behaviours, as many as two fifths globally feel they are already contributing as much as they possibly can by undertaking specific behaviours. Australians feel they are already doing much to limit their impact on climate change including recycling (54% report they are already doing as much as they possibly can); saving energy at home (e.g. through insulation, 43% already doing as much as they possibly can); and saving water at home (40% already doing as much as they possibly can).

Australians are divided on whether the environment should have to endure some setbacks in order to help the economy to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. Half (50%) agree that the Government should focus on helping the economy to recover first and foremost, even if that means taking some actions that are bad for the environment. Two-in-five (41%) disagree.

**Ipsos Australia Public Affairs Director, Jennifer Brook**, said: "It's not surprising Australians feel conflicted about the potential of environmental sacrifices for economic recovery. In another of our monthly Ipsos Issues Monitor surveys, we have seen the environment get pushed out as the number one issue facing the nation at the start of 2020 to be replaced by healthcare, the economy and unemployment.

"These three issues have all experienced a dramatic surge in concern during the coronavirus pandemic. At the beginning of the year, it was the bushfire crisis that put the environment at the top of the list, but clearly COVID-19 is driving concern about these other issues at the moment.

"Despite the environment taking a back seat compared with other current issues, it's still important to people. There is strong support among the public for a green economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The importance of staying at home as much as possible is having major impacts on our consumption and travel patterns at present. What remains to be seen is how sticky these behaviour changes are as the economy opens up again in post-pandemic life."



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### Technical notes

- The findings come from two surveys conducted by Ipsos on the Global Advisor online platform.
- One is a 14-country survey conducted April 16-19, 2020 among 28,029 adults aged 18-74 in Canada and the United States and 16-74 in Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia and Spain. The sample consisted of approximately 2,000+ individuals in each of the 14 countries.
- The other is a 29-country survey conducted February 21 - March 6, 2020 among 20,590 adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Turkey and aged 16-74 in 23 other markets. The sample for this survey included approximately 1000+ individuals in each of Australia, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland), France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S.; and approximately 500+ individuals in each of Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, India, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, and Turkey.
- The precision of Ipsos online polls are calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.1 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 4.5 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.
- 17 of the 29 countries surveyed online generate nationally representative samples in their countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and United States). Brazil, China, Chile, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey produce a national sample that is more urban & educated, and with higher incomes than their fellow citizens. We refer to these respondents as "Upper Deck Consumer Citizens". They are not nationally representative of their country.
- Weighting was employed in both surveys to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to the most recent country Census data, and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe.

More information at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-au/two-thirds-citizens-around-world-agree-climate-change-serious-crisis-covid-19-ipsos-survey>

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