



## Sustainable Actions Index – Australian foreword

### **From little things, big things grow.**

This is the clear message of *The Deloitte Sustainable Actions Index* which shows, when it comes to the everyday behaviours of people on climate, small shifts in thinking add up to big changes in action.

**Our report is a unique undertaking, tracking the individual actions of 23,000 people across 23 countries to paint a picture of their attitudes to sustainability and how these translate into action. It is critically important that we look at this – and look at it now. Because people are at the heart of driving the change we need to tackle the climate crisis.**

Not only does this happen through collective action but, as our report shows, through cumulative changes in attitude and behaviours. That is, the sustainable behaviour of one person influences another, creating a chain reaction that drives a broader sentiment shift in society.

This is optimistic news when we look to decarbonisation. Our study examined behaviours that exist across three core dimensions of people's lives: personal choices, workplace concerns and citizen actions.

What was once our most divisive issue is now something almost all of us agree on. Seventy-two percent of respondents describe climate change as an emergency. Not only has polling, protests and personal anecdotes been telling us this for years, but in Australia our recent experience of extreme weather events has brought to life the consequence of decades of climate inaction.



## Why has climate change become such a driver for our global community?

Because a person's lived experience drives their perspectives and shapes their behaviours. Our research makes this clear: individuals who have recently experienced a climate-related event are more likely to take their own sustainable actions.

**Furthermore, momentous, life-changing occasions make people more likely to take stock of their own actions and how they are shaping their future. And those with a considerable stake in the future – who have children – are more anxious about climate change, with 63% noting their concern compared to 55% of those without children.**

It is little surprise that the picture that emerges of a "sustainability standard-setter" has demographics drawn from these personal events: a female, 25-44 years old, high income, with at least one child at home, and who has experienced at least one climate event in the last six months.

Importantly, our findings showed that those concerned with the climate emergency are not without hope. The report drawing a strong link between action and optimism with 72% of sustainability standard setters saying they are optimistic about the world's climate prospects.

Taken together the report sends a strong message that for many in our community climate action is no longer optional. For organisations this will mean that employees, customers, and citizens will be increasingly demanding it.

This not only impacts the way we navigate our lives but also our workplaces. Now more than ever, employees expect their employers to be acting sustainably.

Employers who don't enable their staff to live their sustainability values will be the biggest losers in our current 'war for talent'.

Further, understanding the drivers of action and the trade-offs that individuals are making in their own behaviour can help leaders understand how to manage risk and capture massive opportunities as we decarbonise our economy. It also suggests a way forward, hinged around a single key question: what can your organisation do to help consumers action their sustainability values?

Whether it's big, bold shifts or smaller steps, we hope this report helps your organisation on the next phase of your own climate journey.



**Will Symons**

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