

Monday, 4 November 2019

Environmental issues are seen as the biggest problem facing Australia – for the first time since February 2011

New in-depth research from Roy Morgan shows a record high 41% of Australians regard Environmental problems as the major concern facing Australia – up 17% points since June.

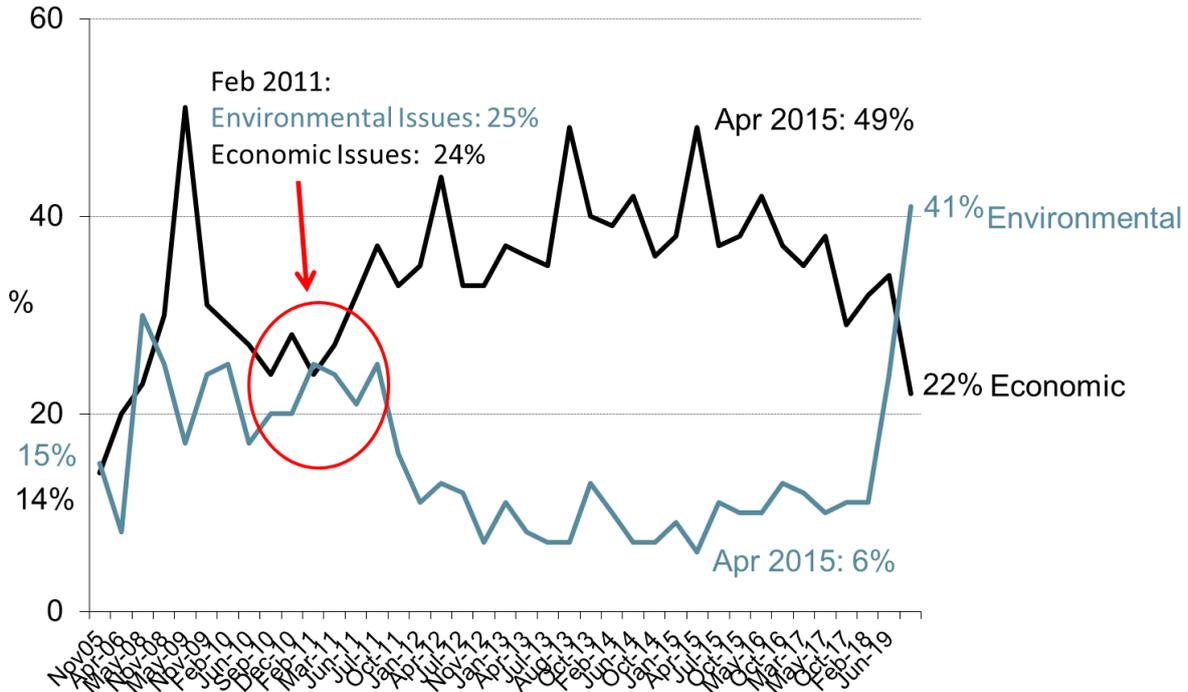
A further 22% (down 12% points) cited Economic problems. This is the lowest level of concern for Economic issues since April 2006, prior to the Global Financial Crisis.

Environmental problems are also clearly regarded as the biggest concern facing the World. An unchanged 46% of Australians mentioned some form of Environmental concern as the most important problem facing the World – nearly three times as many as the 16% who mentioned Economic problems.

This is the first time Environmental problems have topped the list of concerns facing both **Australia** and the **World** since February 2011 when massive floods hit Queensland (and its capital city Brisbane), as well as soon after the devastating Black Saturday bush fires in 2009 that killed over 170 Victorians.

These are the key findings from a special Roy Morgan online survey of 1,054 Australians aged 14+ who were asked: “What do you think is the most important problem facing the **World** today?” and then “What do you think is the most important problem facing **Australia** today?”

Most important problems facing Australia



Source: Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 1,054 Australians in October 2019.

Environmental issues in October 2019 are dominated by concerns about Global warming/Climate change (25%) with the environmental concerns of the Drought (6%) and Water conservation/ Murray-Darling basin water problems (5%) the other key concerns raised.

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The key Economic concerns raised include Economic problems (7%), Unemployment (4%), Poverty and the gap between rich and poor (3%) and Cost of living/Rising prices/ Lack of wage growth (2%).

These further themes emerged:

- 12% of respondents mentioned Social issues including Social apathy/Family breakdowns/ Moral decline, Educational issues, Greed, Crime/Law and Order, Social welfare/Welfare dependency;
- Government, Politics and Leadership issues were mentioned by 9% of Australians;
- Religion, Immigration and Human Rights which includes the contentious issues surrounding asylum seekers and refugees were mentioned by almost 7% of Australians;
- Under 4% mentioned issues surrounding the Energy Crisis, Energy and Power supply, Electricity grid and Fossil fuel.

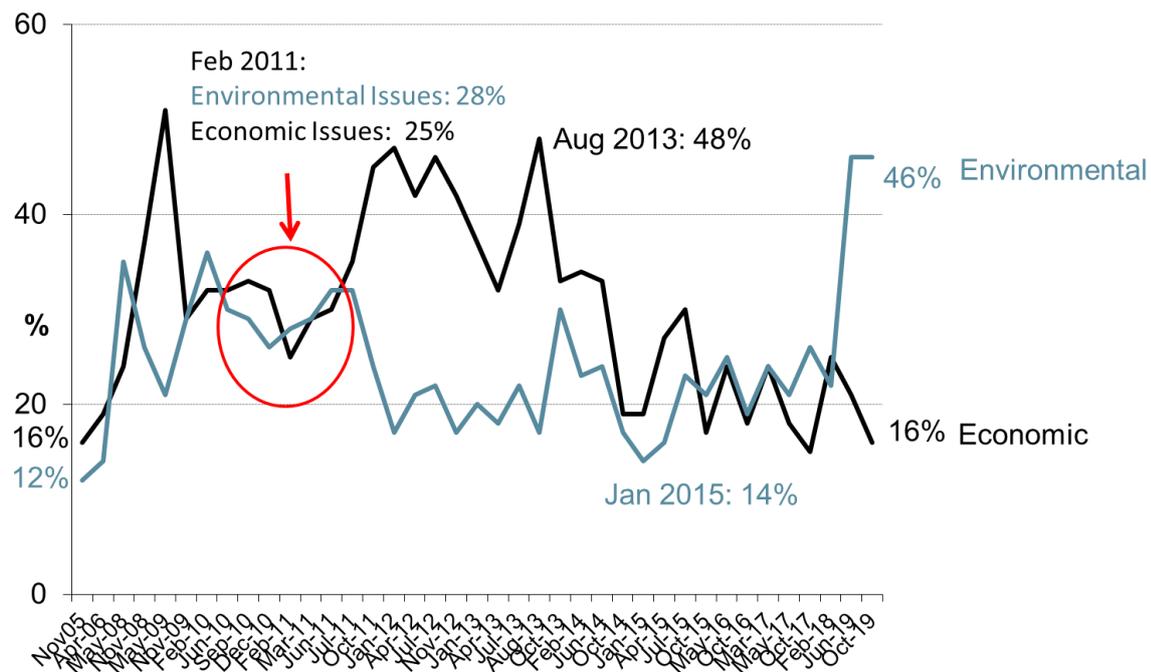
Global warming and Climate change dominate global concerns

When considering the wider **World** quantified thematic analysis of the verbatim responses of a nationally representative sample of 1,054 Australians found the Environment mentioned by just under 46% of Australians, led by the issue of Global warming (36%) and including Pollution/Rubbish, Famine/Food shortages, Water conservation/Murray-Darling water problems was the primary theme to emerge.

A further 16% of Australians mentioned Economic issues led by Poverty and the gap between rich and poor (5%) and Over-population (5%). A further 6% mentioned concerns including Economic problems, Cost of living issues, Unemployment and Globalisation/ Fairer world trade and trade wars.

Other themes to emerge include a range of Social issues mentioned by 13% of respondents including Social apathy, Moral decline, Family breakdowns, Crime, Law and order, Drugs and drug abuse, Education and Social welfare. Government/Leadership problems and Terrorism/War/Security problems were each mentioned by 9% of respondents.

Most important issues facing the World



Source: Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 1,054 Australians in October 2019.

Michele Levine, Chief Executive Officer Roy Morgan, says:

“Environmental concerns have come to the fore in recent weeks as significant global protests including the Global Climate Strike in late September, the Extinction Rebellion protests in several Australian cities and internationally as well as the passionate UN address by Swedish teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg has grabbed attention, and headlines, around the world.

*“In Australia, it means Environmental concerns are now regarded as the most important problems facing both the **World (46%)** and **Australia (41%)**. This is the first time for over eight years Australians have thought so prominently about the environment.*

“Concerns about Global warming and Climate change are the most prominent issue mentioned but there is also significant concern about the Drought and water conservation and management in the parched Murray-Darling Basin that is widely referred to as the biggest problems facing Australia. Over 10% mentioned either of these.

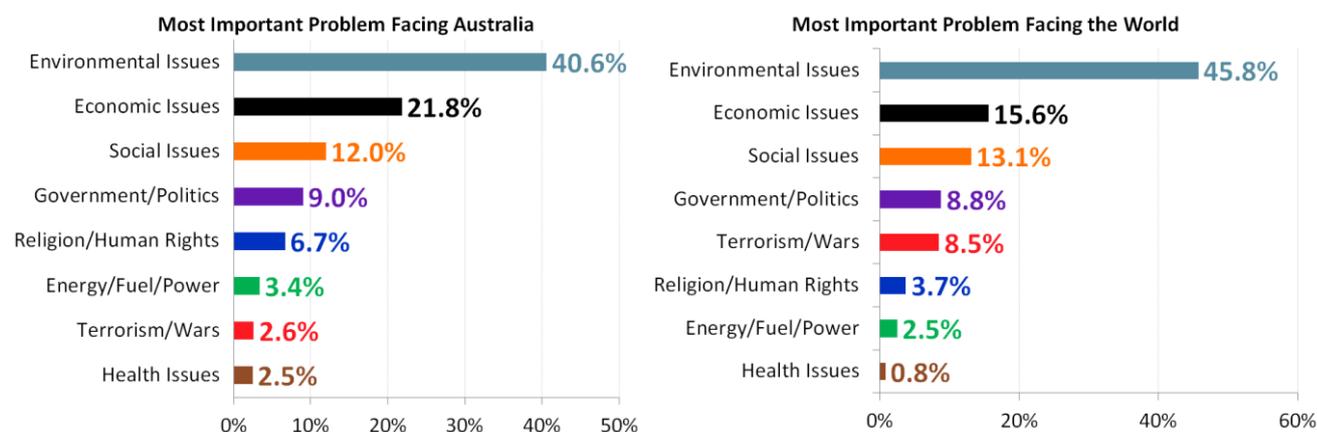
“The return of the Environment as a leading issue heading into 2020 is interesting as only one State is facing an election over the next year and that is Queensland. Queensland is of course home to the giant proposed (and approved) Adani-Carmichael coal mine which played a pivotal role in swinging votes to the L-NP at this year’s Federal Election.

“Will it play a key role in another election in 12 months’ time?”

The research was conducted in Australia online during mid-October 2019 with a nationally representative sample of 1,054 men and women aged 14 or over. Respondents were asked: “What do you think is the most important problem facing the **World** today?” and “What do you think is the most important problem facing **Australia** today?”

These findings come from a special Roy Morgan study of Australians’ attitudes towards issues facing **Australia** and the **World** in the future. The research conducted was both **qualitative** (in that people were asked to use their own words) and **quantitative** (in that the ‘open-ended’ responses were analysed and ‘coded’ so that the results could be counted and reported as percentages).

Comparison of leading concerns Facing Australia and the World – October 2019



Source: Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 1,054 Australians in October 2019.

A full breakdown of what each broad category comprises can be viewed below.

More information about the breakdown of these issues amongst different age groups, genders, states and regions, generations and Roy Morgan’s leading market segmentation tools are available for purchase.

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan’s data, please contact:

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The main themes highlighted cover a wide range of specific issues listed here.

Economic Issues: Financial problems, Cost of living, Rising prices, Money issues, Unemployment, Taxation (General), Mining Tax, Other Taxes, Poverty, The gap between rich and poor, Economic problems, Housing affordability, Homelessness/Lack of housing, Over-population, Globalisation, Fairer world trade and others.

Religion/Human Rights: Religion, Religious fundamentalism, Human rights, Refugees, Asylum seekers, Boat people, Refugee and asylum problems, Detention of refugees, Immigration/Immigration policy, Intolerance, Racism, Racial tension, Aboriginal issues/health/rights, Multiculturalism, Integration and Assimilation and others.

Government/Politics: Government, Politics, Leadership, Political system, Government spending, Courage to lead, Lack of vision, Politicians, Scott Morrison, Anthony Albanese, Barnaby Joyce, Boris Johnson, Brexit, Donald Trump, other politicians and others.

Social Issues: Social apathy, Family breakdowns, Selfishness, Moral decline, Social welfare, Welfare dependency, Youth issues – Homelessness, apathy, discipline, Drugs and drug abuse, Education, Crime, Law and order, Anger, Violence, Aggression and others.

Environmental Issues: Global warming, Climate change, Water conservation, Drought, Murray-Darling Basin, Pollution, Rubbish, Famine, Food shortages, Cutting down rainforests, Desertification, Concerns about Global warming/Climate change are exaggerated and other Environmental issues.

Energy/Fuel/Power: Energy crisis, Energy infrastructure, Power stations, Power supply Energy supply, Power crisis, Coal-fired power stations, Renewable energy, Wind-power, Solar-power, Electricity prices, Sustainable management of natural resources, Depletion of Fossil fuels, Petrol prices.

Terrorism/Wars: Wars, Conflicts, Middle East, North Korea, Iraq, Syria, ISIS, Hong Kong, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Terrorism, Terrorists, Al-Qaeda, Bombings, Shootings, Security, Safety, World peace, UN.

Health Issues: Hospitals, Private health insurance (PHI), Health cover, Aged care, Disability care, Health system, General Health services and other health-related issues.

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2