

Monday, 7 October 2019

A narrow majority of Australians want to develop nuclear power to reduce carbon dioxide emissions

A special online Roy Morgan survey conducted in mid-September finds:

- A narrow majority of 51% (up 16% since July 2011) of respondents say Australia should develop nuclear power to reduce Australia's carbon dioxide emissions. Just over a third 34% (down 24%) say no, Australia shouldn't, while 15% (up 8%) can't say.
- However, without the reference to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, only 45% (up 11% since March 2011) of respondents say Australia should develop nuclear power plants to supply electricity to Australians while 40% (down 21%) say no, Australia shouldn't, and 15% (up 10%) can't say.
- If Australia were to develop nuclear power plants a majority of 58% (down 17% since March 2011) of respondents would oppose a nuclear power plant being built in their area while 42% (up 17%) wouldn't oppose. Of those who wouldn't oppose 23% (up 10%) would be anxious about the nuclear power plant being built and 19% (up 7%) would agree to it being built in their area.
- Just under two-fifths of respondents 38% (up 1% since March 2011) agree that other countries should build nuclear power plants compared to 35% (down 14%) that say other countries shouldn't build nuclear power plants and 27% (up 13%) can't say.
- A record low 50% of respondents (down 9% since March 2011) say that Australia should export uranium to other countries for peaceful purposes compared to just over a quarter, 27% (down 7%) that say Australia shouldn't export and 23% (up 16%) can't say.
- The nation is evenly split on whether to export Uranium to other countries for their nuclear power needs with 41% (down 3% since March 2011) saying that Australia should export uranium to other countries for their nuclear power needs and 41% (down 9%) saying Australia shouldn't export and 18% (up 12%) can't say.
- A solid majority of 69% of Australians support the refining and exporting of radioactive materials mined in Australia for use in the health services industry compared to only 12% who do not while the remaining 19% can't say.

Survey reveals massive gender split on nuclear power and uranium

Although a bare majority of 51% of respondents say Australia should develop nuclear power to reduce Australia's carbon dioxide emissions analysis by gender reveals this level of support is driven by men (65% support) rather than women (38% support).

This same gender split is replicated on all the questions asked as part of this survey.

'If the worries about carbon dioxide are a real problem, many suggest that the cleanest energy source Australia can use is nuclear power. Do you support Australia developing nuclear power to reduce Australia's carbon dioxide emissions or not?'

- Women: Yes (38%) cf. No (40%) cf. Can't say (22%);
- Men: Yes (65%) cf. No (28%) cf. Can't say (7%).

'Do you believe Australia should develop nuclear power plants to supply electricity to Australia?'

- Women: Yes (31%) cf. No (49%) cf. Can't say (20%);
- Men: Yes (59%) cf. No (31%) cf. Can't say (10%).

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‘If Australia were to develop nuclear power plants, would you agree to a nuclear power plant being built in your area, would you feel anxious about it but not oppose it, or oppose a nuclear power plant being built in your area?’

- Women: TOTAL – Would not oppose (28%) cf. Would oppose (72%);
- Men: TOTAL – Would not oppose (55%) cf. Would oppose (45%).

‘In your opinion should other countries build nuclear power plants or not?’

- Women: Yes (21%) cf. No (45%) cf. Can’t say (34%);
- Men: Yes (55%) cf. No (25%) cf. Can’t say (20%).

‘Should Australia export uranium to other countries for peaceful purposes?’

- Women: Yes (35%) cf. No (32%) cf. Can’t say (33%);
- Men: Yes (65%) cf. No (23%) cf. Can’t say (12%).

‘Should Australia export uranium to other countries for their nuclear power needs?’

- Women: Yes (22%) cf. No (52%) cf. Can’t say (26%);
- Men: Yes (61%) cf. No (30%) cf. Can’t say (9%).

‘Do you support the refining and exporting of radioactive minerals mined in Australia for use in the health services industry or not?’

- Women: Yes (56%) cf. No (17%) cf. Can’t say (27%);
- Men: Yes (82%) cf. No (9%) cf. Can’t say (10%).

Gary Morgan, Executive Chairman, Roy Morgan says:

“Australian views on nuclear power have changed significantly over the last eight years with a majority of 51% now supporting the development of nuclear power in Australia to reduce carbon dioxide emissions – up a significant 16ppts from July 2011.

“However, support drops to only 45% in favour of developing nuclear power plants if reducing carbon dioxide emissions isn’t mentioned as a reason to consider this form of energy generation.

“The survey does reveal a striking difference between the views of women and men on the issue of nuclear power. Clear majorities of men are in favour of all seven questions asked whether developing nuclear power, exporting uranium or the refining and exporting of radioactive materials mined in Australia for use in the health services industry.

“The situation is reversed for women with minorities of women supporting the development of nuclear power and exporting uranium. There is a bare majority of 56% that do support the refining and exporting of radioactive minerals for use in the health services industry though – the only question that elicits a positive response from a majority of women.

“This stark divide between the two sexes indicates the difficulty facing any policy-maker attempting to develop an on-shore nuclear power industry in Australia. The issues surrounding nuclear power are incredibly divisive – even within households.

“The Australian Workers’ Union recently announced a split with Labor on the issue and came out in support of developing nuclear power plants in Australia to provide reliable base-load power without the carbon dioxide emissions of fossil fuel powered electricity generation.

“The results of this special survey into nuclear power suggest that the AWU, or indeed any Government looking to develop nuclear power plants in Australia, must do much more work to convince the public of the benefits of the technology.”

This special online survey on Australian attitudes to Global Warming was conducted from September 11-15, 2019 with an Australia-wide sample of 1,006 Australians aged 18-64 years old. In addition to undertaking customised surveys Roy Morgan conducts in-depth personal interviews with over 1,000 Australians a week and over 50,000 Australians each year in their homes as part of the Roy Morgan Single Source Survey.

The Roy Morgan Single Source survey collects detailed quantitative and qualitative data including responses to hundreds of attitudinal statements which covers topics of [environmental concern](#) such as [recycling, eco-tourism and travel](#), [environmentally friendly products](#) and [more](#).

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Uranium & Nuclear Power in Australia

Question 1:

“Should Australia export Uranium to other countries for peaceful purposes?”

	All Australians										
	Aug '77	Sep '77	Jul '78	Apr '79	Jul '82	Jul '83	Nov '83	Apr '84	Jun '91	Mar '11	Sep 11-15, 2019
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, export uranium	59	57	59	54	66	66	66	65	62	59	50
No, don't export uranium	28	30	27	32	25	26	23	29	31	34	27
Can't say	13	13	14	14	9	8	11	6	7	7	23
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	Sep 11-15, 2019	Gender		Age			
	All Australians	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, export uranium	50	35	65	38	51	48	57
No, don't export uranium	27	32	23	22	27	31	27
Can't say	23	33	12	40	23	20	16
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	Sep 11-15, 2019	City/Country		States					
	All Australians	Capital Cities	Country Areas	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, export uranium	50	49	53	52	45	45	56	57	45
No, don't export uranium	27	28	27	25	31	32	18	17	46
Can't say	23	23	20	23	24	23	26	26	9
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

Question 2:

“Should Australia export Uranium to other countries for their Nuclear Power needs?”

	All Australians		Gender		Age			
	Mar '11	Sep 11-15, 2019	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, export uranium	44	41	22	61	35	42	39	47
No, don't export	50	41	52	30	38	39	44	41
Can't say	6	18	26	9	27	19	17	12
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	All Australians	City/Country		States					
	Sep 11-15, 2019	Capital Cities	Country Areas	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, export uranium	41	40	45	42	37	40	49	47	29
No, don't export uranium	41	42	39	42	45	44	31	26	61
Can't say	18	18	16	16	18	16	20	27	10
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

Question 3:

“Do you believe Australia should develop nuclear power plants to supply electricity to Australia?”

	All Australians			Gender		Age			
	Sep '79	Mar '11	Sep 11-15, 2019	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, develop nuclear plants	52	34	45	31	59	37	43	41	55
No, don't develop nuclear plants	35	61	40	49	31	47	36	45	34
Can't say	13	5	15	20	10	16	21	14	11
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	All Australians	City/Country		States					
	Sep 11-15, 2019	Capital Cities	Country Areas	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, develop nuclear plants	45	44	47	51	43	42	46	46	14
No, don't develop nuclear plants	40	42	36	34	45	44	35	30	81
Can't say	15	14	17	15	12	14	19	24	5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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Question 4:

“If Australia were to develop nuclear power plants, would you agree to a nuclear power plant being built in your area, would you feel anxious about it but not oppose it, or oppose a nuclear power plant being built in your area?”

	All Australians			Gender		Age			
	Sep '79	Mar '11	Sep 11-15, 2019	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Would agree to it being built in my area	20	12	19	8	29	17	17	19	21
Anxious, but would not oppose it	24	13	23	20	26	26	26	19	23
TOTAL Would not oppose it	44	25	42	28	55	43	43	38	44
Would oppose it being built in my area	56	75	58	72	45	58	57	62	56
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	All Australians	City/Country		States					
	Sep 11-15, 2019	Capital Cities	Country Areas	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Would agree to it being built in my area	19	17	22	21	17	16	16	20	10
Anxious, but would not oppose it	23	23	22	24	21	21	26	35	4
TOTAL Would not oppose it	42	40	44	45	38	37	42	55	14
Would oppose it being built in my area	58	60	56	55	62	63	58	45	86
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

Question 5:

“In your opinion should other countries build nuclear power plants or not?”

	All Australians		Gender		Age			
	Mar '11	Sep 11-15, 2019	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, build nuclear plants	37	38	21	55	32	39	37	41
No, don't build nuclear	49	35	45	25	41	34	37	31
Can't say	14	27	34	20	27	27	26	28
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	All Australians	City/Country		States					
	Sep 11-15, 2019	Capital Cities	Country Areas	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, build nuclear plants	38	38	38	42	36	37	38	35	17
No, don't build nuclear plants	35	35	36	29	38	41	36	27	55
Can't say	27	27	26	29	26	22	26	38	28
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

Question 6:

“If the worries about carbon dioxide are a real problem. Many suggest that the cleanest energy source Australia can use is nuclear power. Do you support Australia developing nuclear power to reduce Australia’s carbon dioxide emissions or not?”

	All Australians			Gender		Age			
	June '11	July '11	Sep 11-15, 2019	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, develop nuclear power	36	35	51	38	65	52	51	47	55
No, don't develop nuclear power	59	58	34	40	28	26	33	39	33
Can't say	5	7	15	22	7	22	16	14	12
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	All Australians	City/Country		States					
	Sep 11-15, 2019	Capital Cities	Country Areas	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, develop nuclear power	51	51	51	55	47	49	56	55	40
No, don't develop nuclear power	34	34	34	28	38	38	34	27	55
Can't say	15	15	15	17	15	13	10	18	5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

Question 7:

“Do you support the refining and exporting of radioactive minerals mined in Australia for use in the health services industry or not?”

	All Australians	Gender		Age			
	Sep 11-15, 2019	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	69	56	82	59	69	67	77
No, not	12	17	8	16	11	13	10
Can't say	19	27	10	25	20	20	13
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	All Australians	City/Country		States					
	Sep 11-15, 2019	Capital Cities	Country Areas	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	69	68	72	71	66	65	69	73	73
No, not	12	13	11	11	15	16	6	10	10
Can't say	19	19	17	18	19	19	25	17	17
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience in 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%
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2