



State of Sustainability Reports 2023, 2024 and 2025

Climate change and health findings

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Available at [Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing planning: Guidance for local government](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/tackling-climate-change-impacts-health-municipal-public-health-wellbeing-planning) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/tackling-climate-change-impacts-health-municipal-public-health-wellbeing-planning>>

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Introduction

Each year Sustainability Victoria commissions research to track how Victorians think, feel and act in relation to sustainability and climate change.

Sustainability Victoria's multi-year State of Sustainability Report looks at Victorian attitudes, behaviour and actions to living sustainably and the drivers and barriers to action. Sustainability Victoria aims to survey a minimum of 2,500 Victorians aged 16 years and above on their attitudes, behaviours and the actions they're taking to live a more sustainable life.

This document was developed in collaboration with Sustainability Victoria and supplements the 'Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing: Guidance for local government 2024'. It provides additional locally disaggregated data by region from 2023, 2024, and 2025 State of Sustainability reports. Regions in the reports reflect Victorian Government Regional Partnerships established in 2016.

State of Sustainability Report survey samples

State of Sustainability report survey sample size by location

Location	2023	2024	2025
Metro	831	997	1015
Regional	1679	1555	1516
Total	2510	2552	2531

State of Sustainability report survey sample size by regions

Regions	2023	2024	2025
Loddon Campaspe	268	244	245
Gippsland	267	271	244
Central Highlands	244	224	234
Barwon	230	244	269
Goulburn/Hume	205	201	187
Ovens Murray	175	150	153
Great South Coast	145	114	127
Mallee	96	92	99
Wimmera South Mallee	49	68	50

Sustainability Victoria regions

Beyond the Melbourne Metropolitan area, data is classified into 9 regions, based on the Victorian Government Regional Partnerships¹. The Victorian Government Regional Partnerships include the following Local Government Areas (LGA) within their catchment:

LGAs in Barwon:

- Colac Otway Shire
- Greater Geelong City
- Queenscliffe Borough
- Surf Coast Shire

LGAs in Central Highlands:

- Ararat Rural City
- Ballarat City
- Golden Plains Shire
- Hepburn Shire
- Moorabool Shire
- Pyrenees Shire

LGAs in Goulburn/Hume:

- Greater Shepparton City
- Mitchell Shire
- Moira Shire
- Murrindindi Shire
- Strathbogie Shire

LGAs in Great South Coast:

- Corangamite Shire
- Glenelg Shire
- Moyne Shire
- Southern Grampians Shire
- Warrnambool City

LGAs in Gippsland Region:

- Bass Coast Shire
- Baw Baw Shire
- East Gippsland Shire
- South Gippsland Shire
- Latrobe City
- Wellington Shire

LGAs in Loddon Campaspe Region:

- Campaspe Shire
- Central Goldfields Shire
- Greater Bendigo City
- Loddon Shire
- Macedon Ranges Shire
- Mount Alexander Shire

LGAs in Mallee:

- Buloke Shire
- Gannawarra Shire
- Mildura Rural City
- Swan Hill Rural City

LGAs in Ovens Murray Region:

- Alpine Shire
- Benalla Rural City
- Indigo Shire
- Mansfield Shire
- Towong Shire
- Wangaratta Rural City
- Wodonga City

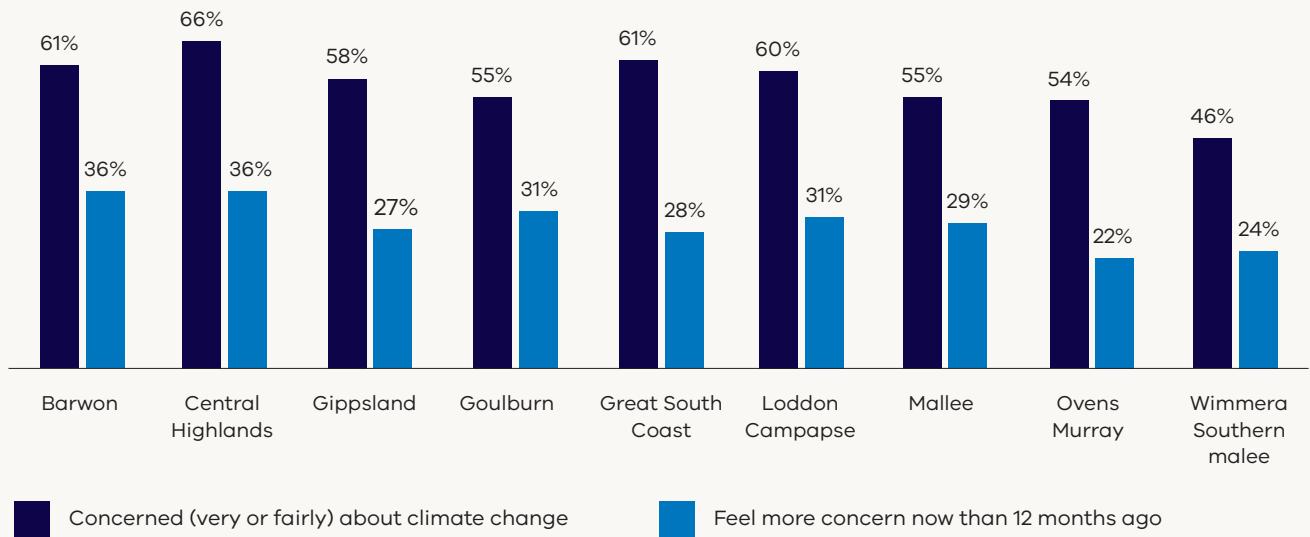
LGAs in Wimmera Southern Mallee:

- Hindmarsh Shire
- Horsham Rural City
- Northern Grampians Shire
- West Wimmera Shire
- Yarriambiack Shire

¹ [Regional Partnerships - Regional Development Victoria](https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-partnerships) <<https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-partnerships>> Through ongoing consultation, the Partnerships ensure regional communities have a greater say about what matters to them, and that the voices of these communities are heard directly at the heart of government.

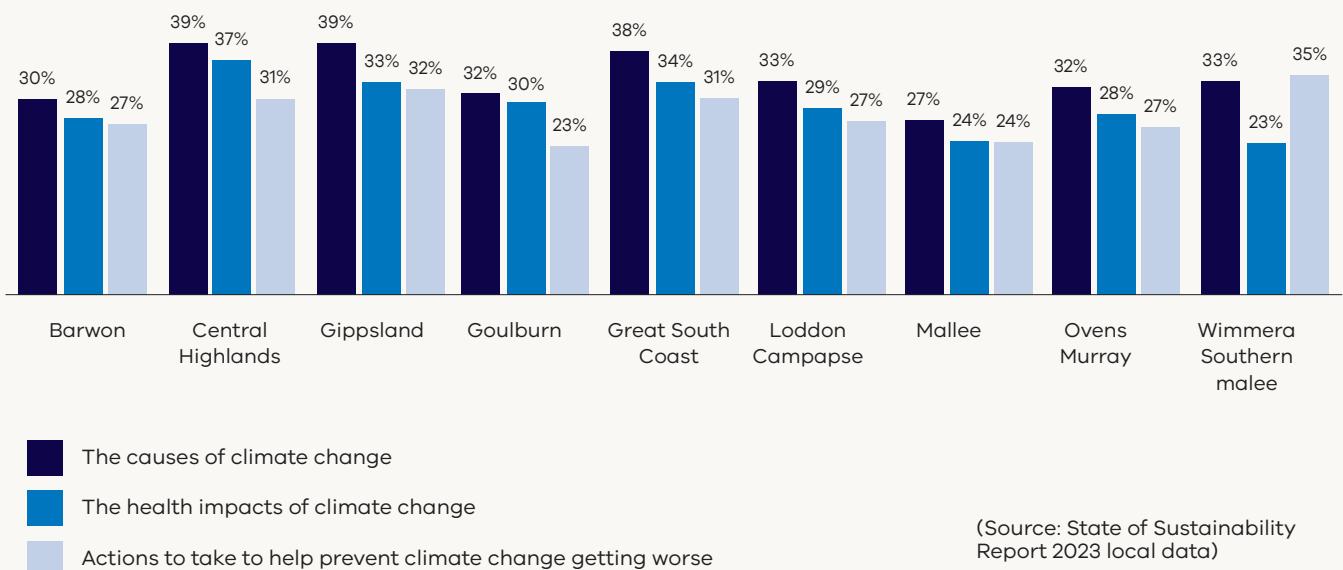
Climate change: attitudes and perceived impacts

Concern about climate change by region



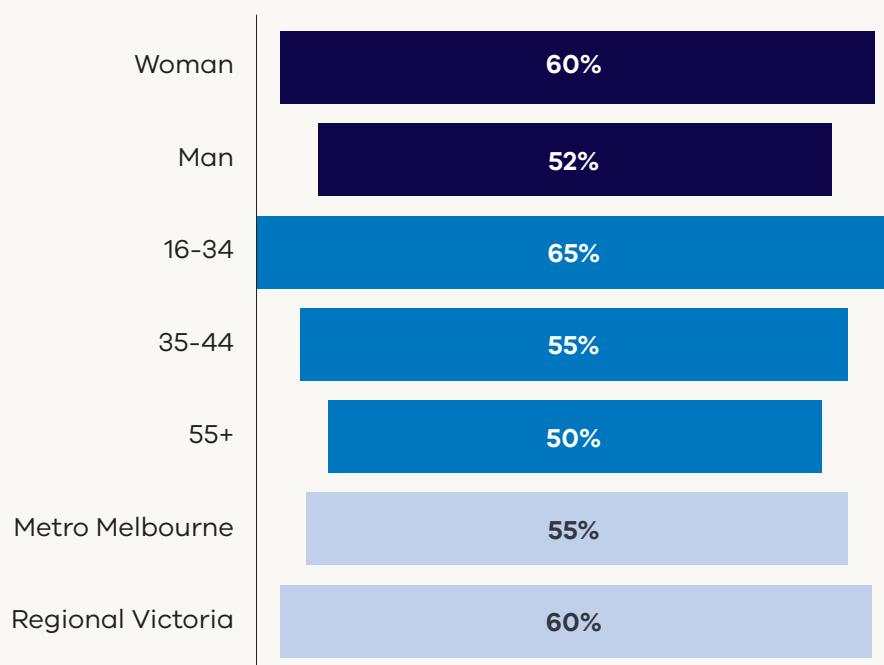
(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2024 local data)

Level of climate change knowledge by region



Thinking more about how to live sustainably

70% of respondents believe that living sustainably is important and 56% are thinking more about how best to do this.



(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2023 local data)

Seeing changes in their environment

9 in 10 respondents are seeing changes in their environment. 86% see changes in the natural environment with 72% of respondents seeing more extreme weather and 59% of respondents seeing more bushfires.

Barwon:

- 84% seeing more extreme weather
- 63% seeing more coastal erosion/sea level change

Central Highlands

- 83% seeing more extreme weather
- 68% seeing more fires

Goulburn/Hume:

- 74% seeing more extreme weather
- 57% seeing more fires

Great South Coast:

- 77% seeing more extreme weather
- 59% seeing more crop failures

Gippsland Region:

- 67% seeing more extreme weather
- 55% seeing more fires

Loddon Campaspe Region:

- 77% seeing more extreme weather
- 59% seeing more fires

Mallee:

- 71% seeing more extreme weather
- 53% seeing more fires

Ovens Murray Region:

- 80% seeing more extreme weather
- 60% seeing more fires

Wimmera Southern Mallee:

- 70% seeing more extreme weather
- 53% seeing more fire

(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2024 local data)

Experienced at least one extreme weather event

83% of surveyed Victorians have experienced at least one extreme weather event in the past 5 years.

Percentage of surveyed Victorians that have experienced extreme weather events

At least one	83%
At least two	66%
At least three	47%
At least four	30%
At least five	30%

The State of Sustainability findings show the higher the number of extreme events experienced, the higher the concern about climate change. Among those who experienced 4 or more events, 78% are concerned compared to 5% who experienced 1 only.

Barwon:

- 63% have experienced heatwaves
- 46% have experienced storms and damaging winds

Central Highlands:

- 60% have experienced storms and damaging winds
- 63% have experienced heatwaves

Goulburn/Hume:

- 84% have experienced flooding
- 70% have experienced heatwaves

Great South Coast:

- 62% have experienced storms and damaging winds
- 51% have experienced heatwaves

Gippsland Region:

- 69% have experienced storms and damaging winds
- 65% have experienced heatwaves

Loddon Campaspe Region:

- 70% have experienced heatwaves
- 56% have experienced storms and damaging winds

Mallee:

- 86% have experienced heatwaves
- 78% have experienced flooding

Metropolitan Melbourne:

- 59% have experienced heatwaves

Ovens Murray Region:

- 81% have experienced heatwaves
- 62% have experienced flooding

Wimmera Southern Mallee:

- 80% have experienced heatwaves
- 53% have experienced bushfires

(Source: State of Sustainability 2024 local data)

Impacts of extreme climate-driven events on Victorians and their families

61% of respondents have experienced heatwaves in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Stress/short-term mental health (31%)
- Illness/physical harm – short term (21%)
- Stress/mental health – long term over 6 months (6%)

53% of respondents have experienced storms and strong winds in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Property damage (48%)
- Stress/short-term mental health (24%)
- Loss of income (9%)

31% of respondents have experienced power outages in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Stress/short-term mental health (41%)
- Loss of income (15%)
- Property damage (13%)

31% of respondents have experienced bushfires and bushfire smoke in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Stress/short-term mental health (36%)
- Illness/physical harm – short term (22%)
- Property damage (14%)

29% of respondents have experienced flooding in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Property damage (34%)
- Stress/short-term mental health (30%)
- Loss of income (12%)

21% of respondents have experienced pest inundation in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Property damage (33%)
- Stress/short-term mental health (27%)
- Stress/mental health – long term over 6 months (13%)

17% of respondents have experienced drought in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Stress/short-term mental health (25%)
- Property damage (12%)
- Loss of income (11%)

12% of respondents have experienced coastal storm surge in the past 5 years. Impacts include:

- Property damage (31%)
- Stress/short-term mental health (27%)
- Loss of income (16%)

(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2025 local data)

Climate change: experience of climate change and health impacts

Experience of health conditions linked to climate change, by demographic

Health condition	Men (n=1198)	Women (n=1326)	16-34 years (n=772)	35-54 years (n=772)	55+ years (n=987)	Metro Melbourne (n=1015)	Regional Victoria (n=1516)
Pollen-related allergies (33%)	28%	37%	35%	38%	26%	33%	34%
Thunderstorm asthma (12%)	11%	13%	16%	13%	8%	12%	14%
Heat stress or heatstroke caused by extreme heatwaves (10%)	9%	11%	17%	10%	4%	9%	12%
Lung complaints from increased air pollution/smoke from fires (e.g. asthma, lung disease) (10%)	8%	11%	12%	9%	8%	9%	11%
Mental illness such as depression or severe anxiety related to climate change / climate-anxiety (9%)	8%	10%	13%	10%	4%	8%	10%
Illness caused by food and/or water contaminated by harmful bacteria or viruses (5%)	5%	5%	10%	4%	1%	5%	6%
Physical/bodily harm from severe storms and/or flooding (3%)	4%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Diseases carried by insects (Ross-river, Barmah forest virus, Buruli ulcer) (3%)	4%	2%	6%	3%	0%	3%	3%
Physical/bodily harm from bushfires (3%)	4%	2%	5%	3%	0%	3%	2%
None of these (52%)	55%	50%	42%	49%	65%	53%	49%

(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2023 and 2025 local data)

Health impacts of climate change and sources of medical assistance

Health condition	Health impact by year		Source of medical assistance for those experienced the health impacts (2025)						
	2023	2025	GP/local medical centre	Pharmacists	Hospitals	Ambulance	Other	Didn't seek medical help	
Pollen-related allergies	38%	33%	24%	41%	6%	3%	1%	40%	
Thunderstorm asthma	15%	12%	29%	21%	17%	7%	3%	41%	
Heat stress or heatstroke caused by extreme heatwaves	12%	10%	25%	12%	19%	8%	0%	56%	
Lung complaints from increased air pollution/smoke from fires (e.g. asthma, lung disease)	12%	10%	43%	20%	23%	8%	2%	25%	
Mental illness such as depression or severe anxiety related to climate change / climate-anxiety	10%	9%	50%	18%	18%	9%	5%	34%	
Illness caused by food and/or water contaminated by harmful bacteria or viruses	6%	5%	50%	28%	26%	5%	1%	19%	
Physical/ bodily harm from severe storms and/or flooding	3%	3%	24%	25%	18%	15%	9%	34%	
Diseases carried by insects (Ross-river, Barmah forest virus, Buruli ulcer)	2%	3%	39%	23%	40%	23%	5%	17%	
Physical/ bodily harm from bushfires	1%	3%	25%	18%	32%	29%	0%	40%	
None of these	49%	52%							

(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2023 and 2025 local data)

Searched for climate and health information

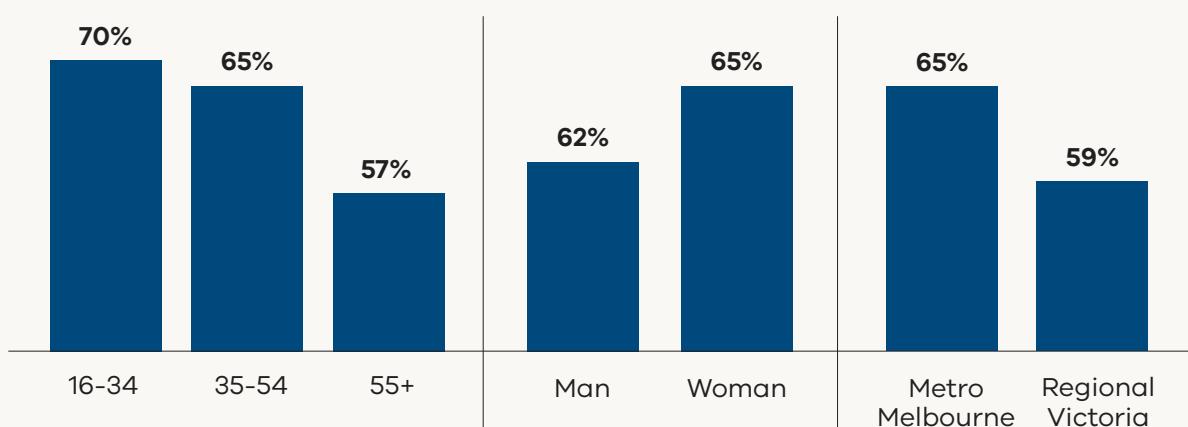
Actively searched for climate change and health information in the last 12 months		
	All	22%
Gender	Man	21%
	Woman	23%
Age	16-34	35%
	35-54	21%
	55+	14%
Region	Metropolitan Melbourne	23%
	Regional Victoria	22%
Speaks language other than English (LOTE)	LOTE speaker	19%
	English only	23%

(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2023 local data)

Climate change: attitudes towards climate action

Respondents perceiving climate change to be an issue that requires urgent action now

Perceives climate change to be an issue that requires urgent action now, by age, gender and location

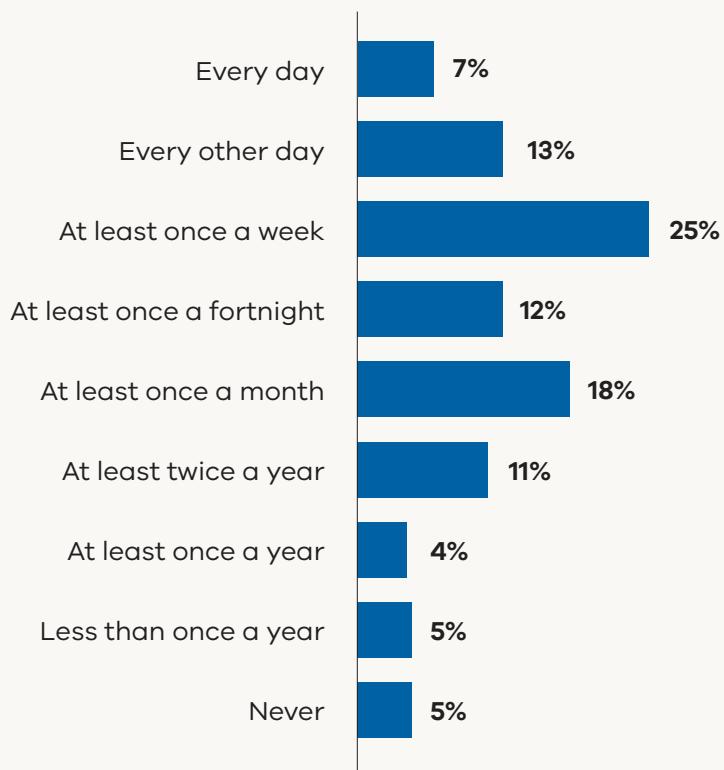


(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2024 local data)

Climate change: attitudes and behaviours about green open spaces

93% of respondents have access to a green/open space near their home.
Young Victorians (16-34) are more likely to spend time in nature weekly (51%).
45% of respondents spend at least on day a week in nature.

Frequency of spending time in nature



(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2025)

Green spaces are widely acknowledged for their wellbeing benefits

Benefits provided by green spaces, by demographic

Benefits provided by green spaces	16-34 Years (n=772)	35-54 Years (n=772)	55+ years (n=987)	Man (n=1198)	Woman (n=1326)	Diploma/ Lower (n=1602)	Bachelor Degree (n=653)	Postgrad/ Above (n=276)
Health benefits, places to exercise (76%)	73%	74%	81%	74%	78%	76%	75%	76%
Mental health benefits – places to relax, unwind, be in nature (74%)	67%	74%	79%	69%	79%	74%	71%	74%
Improved air quality (66%)	64%	64%	68%	63%	68%	63%	69%	73%
Social gathering spaces (63%)	62%	59%	68%	58%	68%	65%	60%	54%
More beauty (60%)	55%	60%	65%	57%	63%	60%	61%	60%
Ecological benefits – providing habitat for animals to live, increasing biodiversity (57%)	51%	54%	65%	53%	60%	57%	56%	60%
Reducing heat, providing cool, shady places in summer (47%)	41%	44%	57%	45%	50%	46%	46%	56%
Reducing carbon from the air/reducing greenhouse gas emissions (45%)	40%	42%	53%	44%	45%	44%	45%	52%
Improved water quality (24%)	28%	22%	22%	25%	22%	22%	27%	31%
Other (1%)	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
None of these (2%)	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%

(Source: State of Sustainability report 2025)

Victorians would like to see more natural open spaces and trees

Types of urban green space (if any) that respondents would like to see / like to see more of:

51%

More natural open spaces

50%

Shade trees along suburban streets

45%

Trees/urban forests for shade and cooling

45%

Habitats for native urban wildlife

7%

None of the above

44%

Gardens for insects/bees/birds

44%

Native wildflowers and grass plantings

36%

Grasses/plants on roadside verges/nature strip

35%

Ponds/wetlands

35%

Pocket parks/ small parks between buildings

32%

Food/edible gardens in public spaces

27%

Green walls / roof gardens on public buildings/greenery around public transport hubs

2%

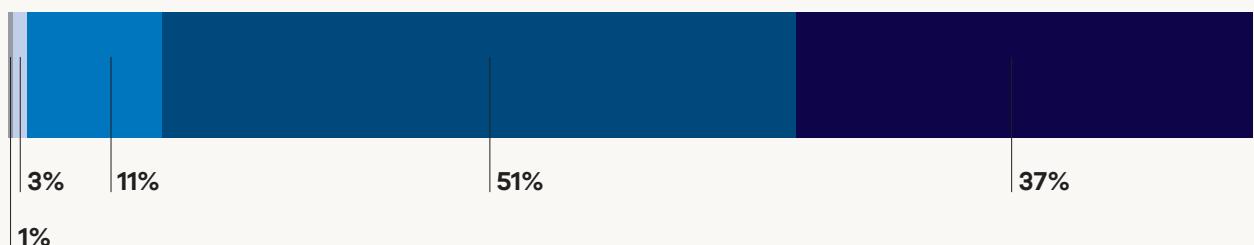
Other

(Source: State of Sustainability report 2025)

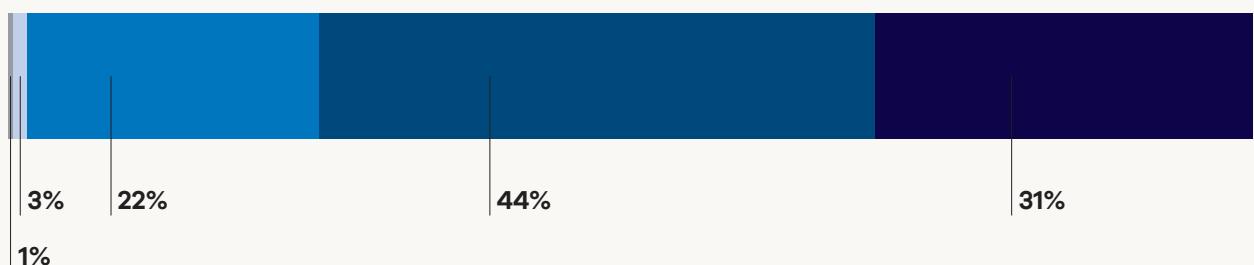
Victorians believe it's important to create and maintain healthy urban ecosystems

Attitudes about urban greening

It is important to create and maintain healthy urban ecosystems and thriving biodiversity in our cities and towns.



In urban green spaces, native Australian plants are better than introduced plants



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

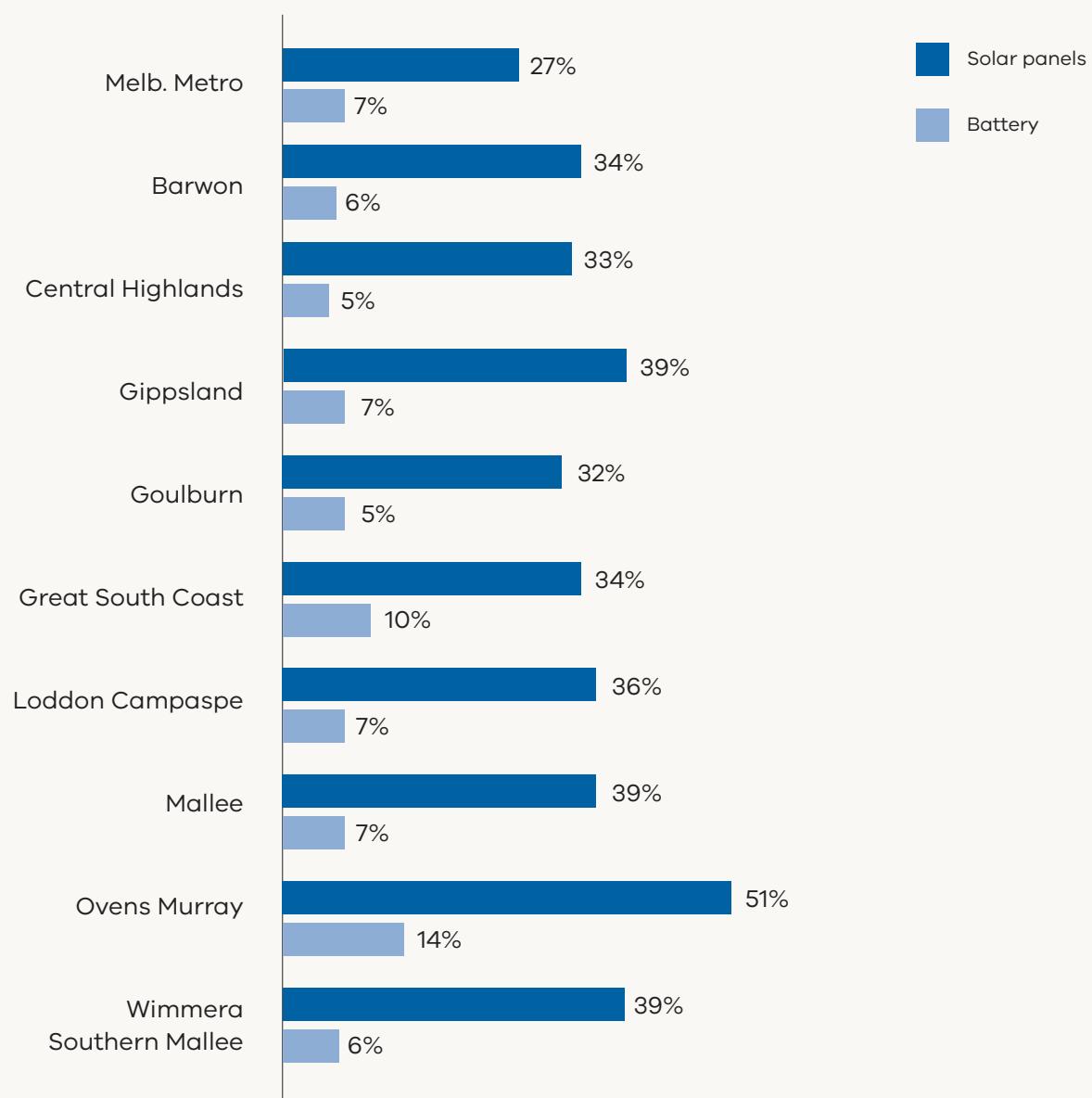
Young Victorians (16-34) are less likely to rate 'Strongly Agree' (30%) compared to people aged 35-44 (38%) and people aged 55+ (41%).

(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2025)

Climate change: renewable energy

Solar take up is higher in the regions

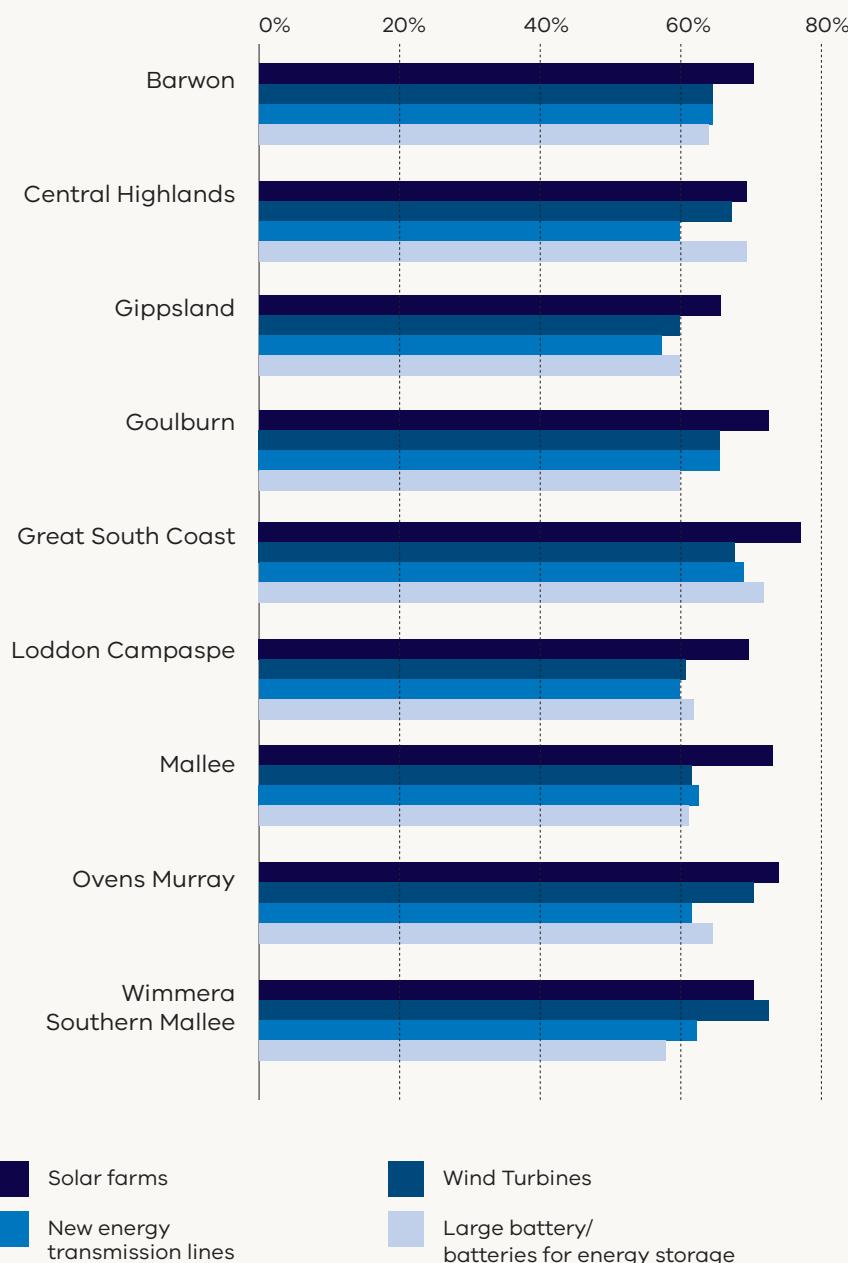
Solar and battery take-up, by region



(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2024, local data)

Clear 'social licence' and community support for climate action

Support for renewable energy infrastructure in local area, by region



Attitudes that underpin the social licence:

- It's cheaper to act on climate now than pay the price later (69%)
- Victorians need to shift away from fossil fuels (65%)
- Climate change requires urgent action now (67%)
- Tackling climate change in Victoria creates new job and investment opportunities in clean energy (68%)

(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2024, local data)

