



# State of Sustainability Reports 2023, 2024 and 2025

## Climate change and health findings



To receive this document in another format,  
email Climate Health, <[climate.publichealth@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:climate.publichealth@health.vic.gov.au)>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Health, January 2026. (2512431)

ISBN 978-1-76131-693-7 (online/PDF/Word)

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>>

# Contents

---

## **4 Introduction**

- 4 State of Sustainability Report survey samples
- 5 Sustainability Victoria Regions

---

## **6 Climate change: attitudes and perceived impacts**

- 6 Concern about climate change by region
- 6 Level of climate change knowledge by region
- 7 Thinking more about how to live sustainably
- 8 Seeing changes in their environment
- 9 Experienced at least one extreme weather event
- 10 Impacts of extreme climate-driven events on Victorians and their families

---

## **11 Climate change: experience of climate change and health impacts**

- 11 Experience of health conditions linked to climate change, by demographic
- 12 Health impacts of climate change and sources of medical assistance
- 13 Searched for climate and health information

---

## **14 Climate change: attitudes towards climate action**

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

---

## **15 Climate change: attitudes and behaviours about green open spaces**

- 16 Green spaces are widely acknowledged for their wellbeing benefits
- 17 Victorians would like to see more natural open spaces and trees
- 18 Victorians believe it's important to create and maintain healthy urban ecosystems

---

## **19 Climate change: renewable energy**

- 19 Solar take up is higher in the regions
- 20 Clear 'social licence' and community support for climate actions

# 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 Partnerships<sup>1</sup>. 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

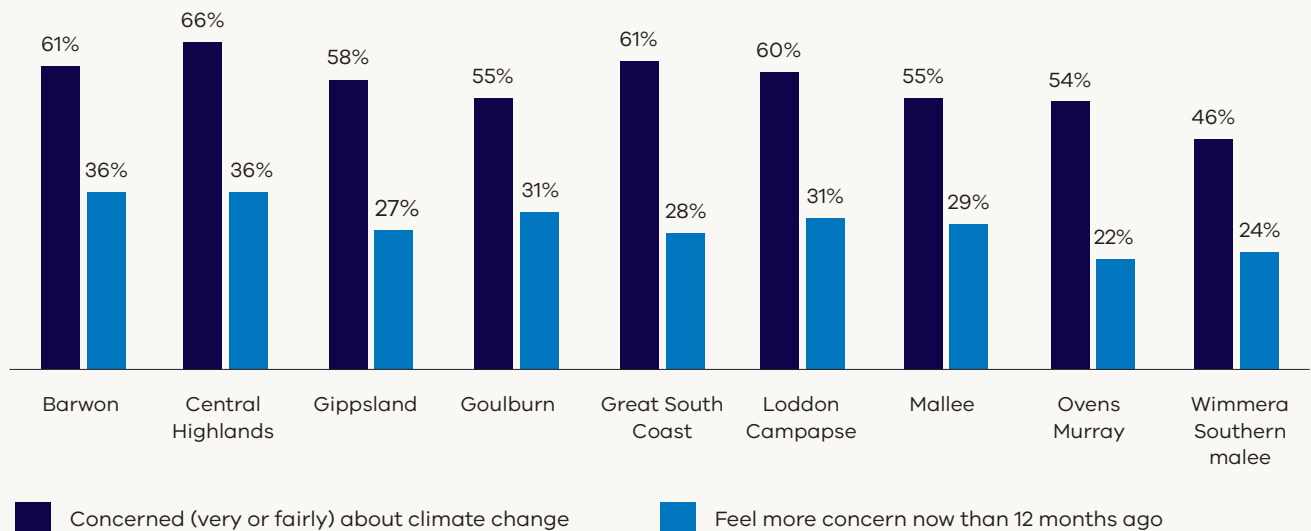
### LGAs in Wimmera Southern Mallee:

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

<sup>1</sup> [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.

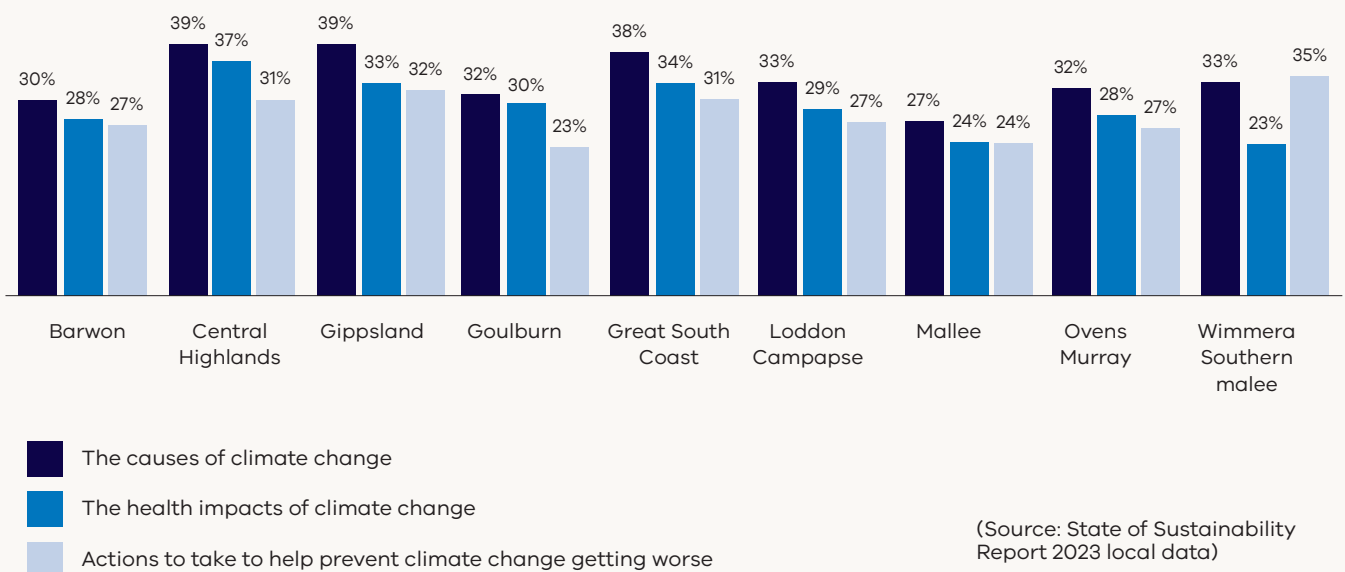
# Climate change: attitudes and perceived impacts

## Concern about climate change by region



(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2024 local data)

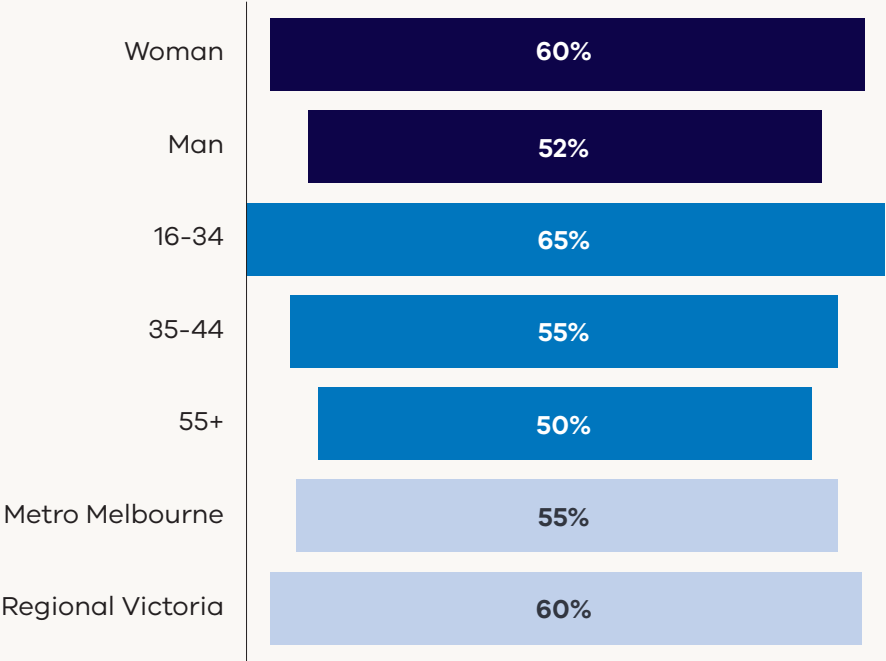
## Level of climate change knowledge by region



(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2023 local data)

## 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 experiences 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

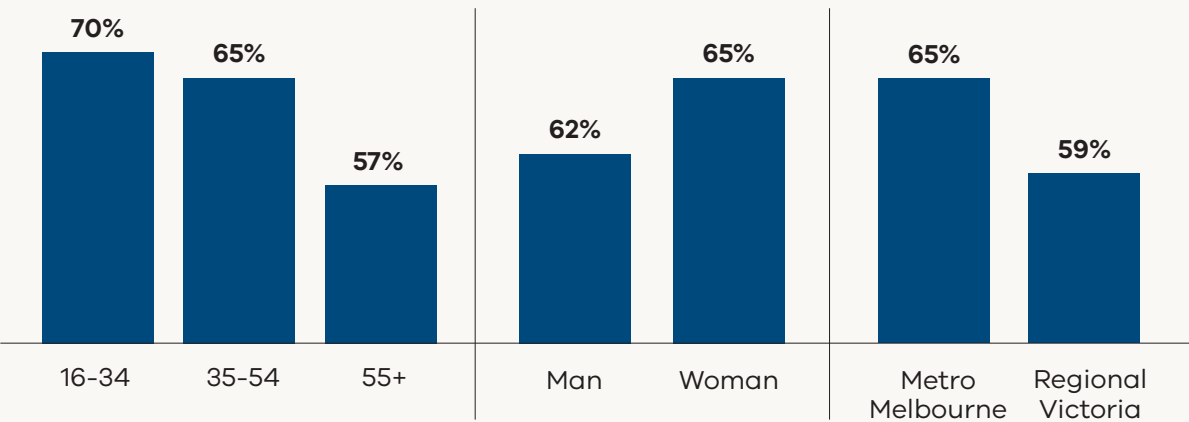
		Actively searched for climate change and health information in the last 12 months
Gender	All	22%
	Man	21%
	Woman	23%
Age	16-34	35%
	35-54	21%
	55+	14%
Region	Metropolitan Melbourne	23%
	Regional Victoria	22%
Speaks language other than English (LOTE)	LOTE speaker	19%
	English only	23%

(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

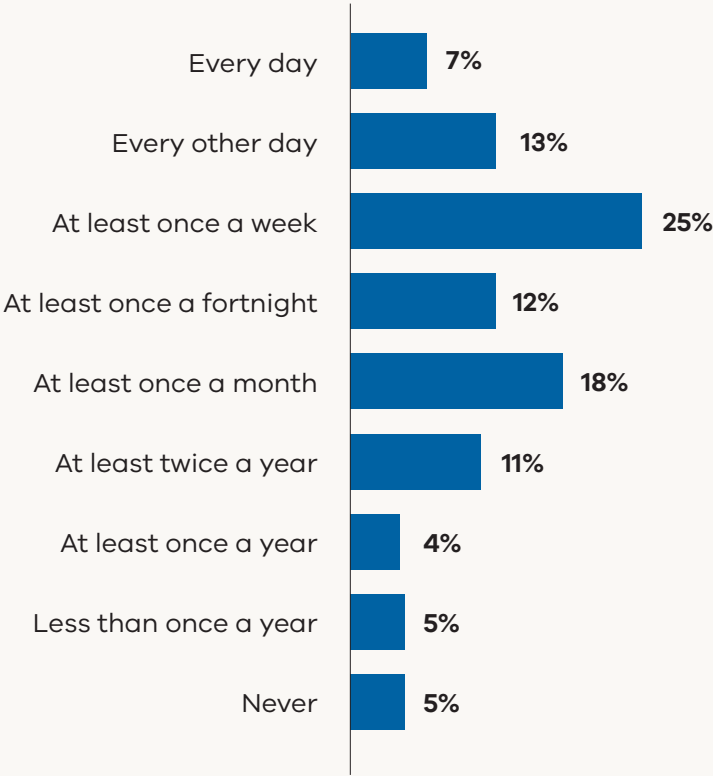


(Source: State of Sustainability Report 2024 local data)

# 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

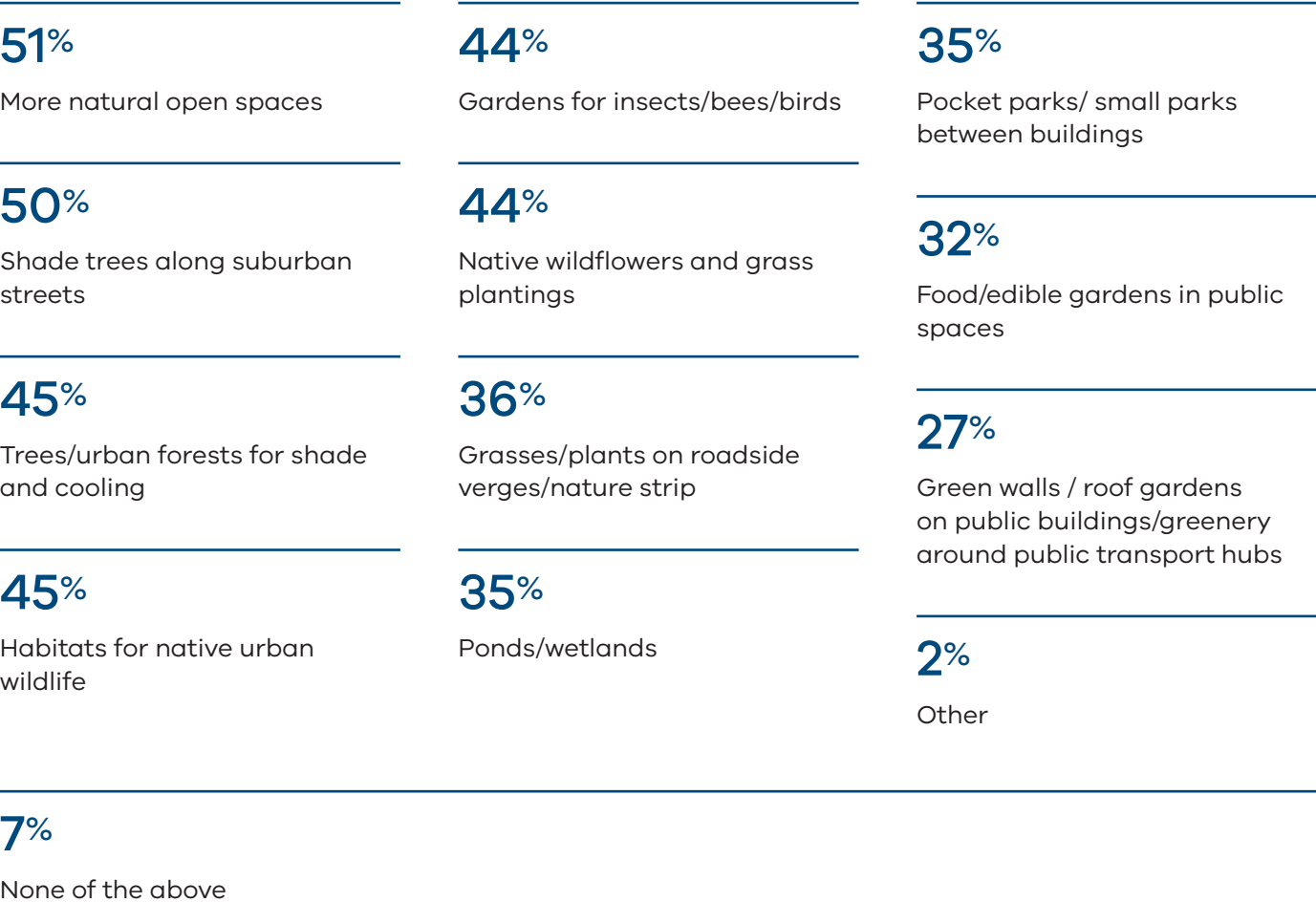
Benefits provided by green spaces	16-34 Years (n=772)	35-54 Years (n=772)	55+ years (n=987)	Man (n=1198)	Woman (n=1326)	Diploma/ Lower (n=1602)	Bachelor Degree (n=653)	Postgrad/ Above (n=276)
Health benefits, places to exercise (76%)	73%	74%	81%	74%	78%	76%	75%	76%
Mental health benefits – places to 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:

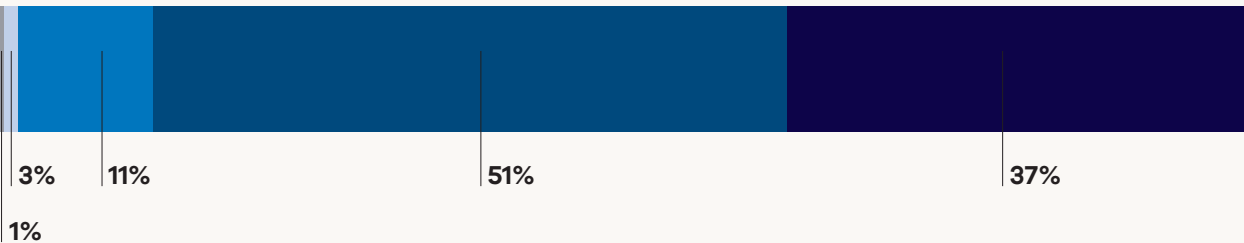


(Source: State of Sustainability report 2025)

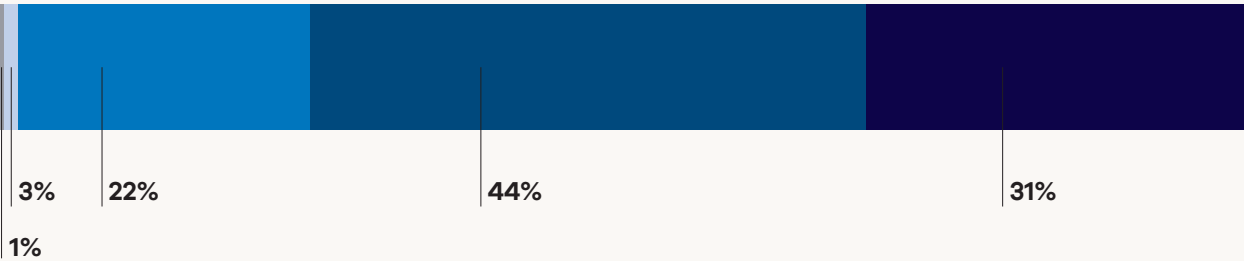
## Victorians believe it’s important to create and maintain healthy urban ecosystems

### 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



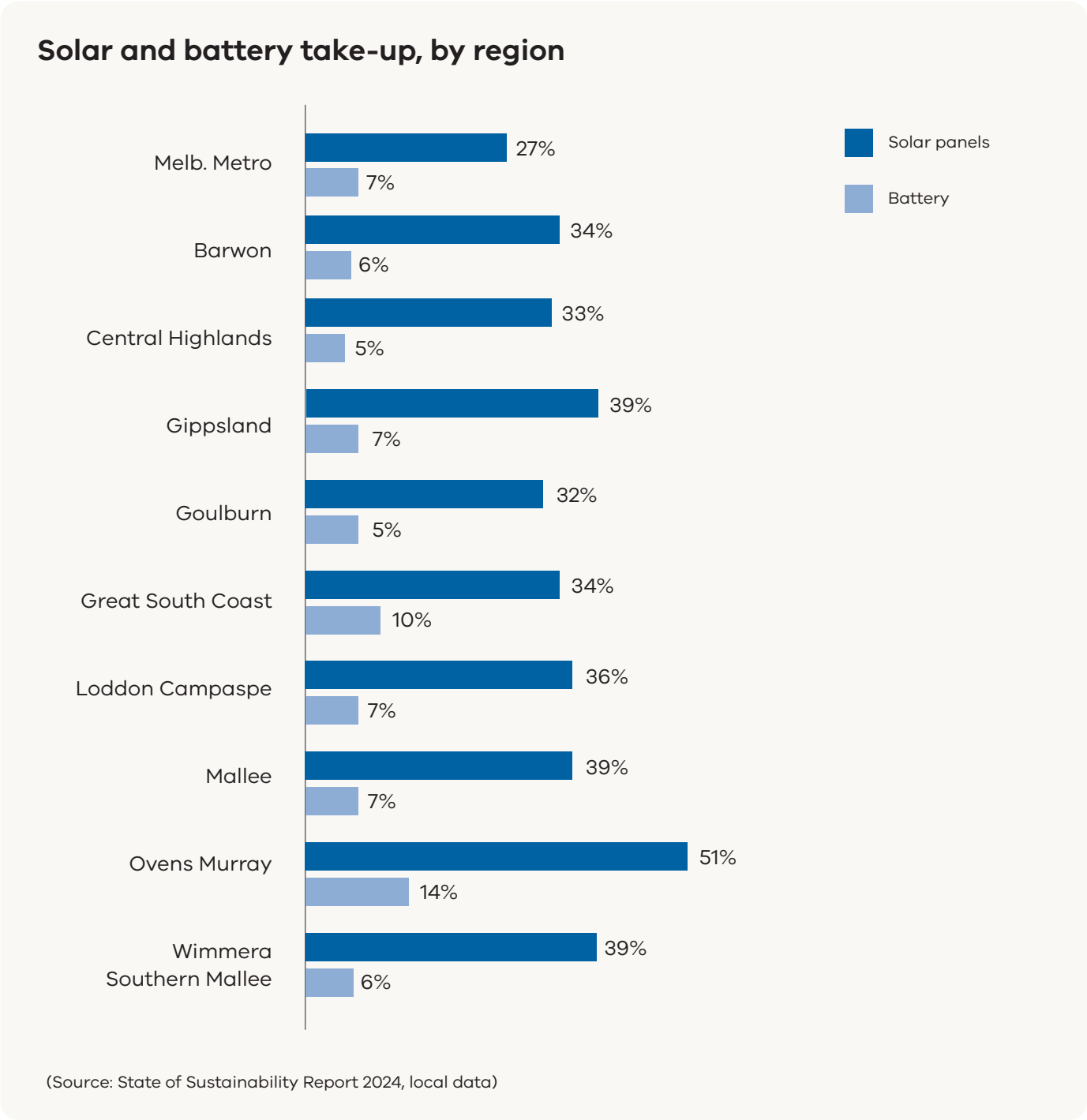
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

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)

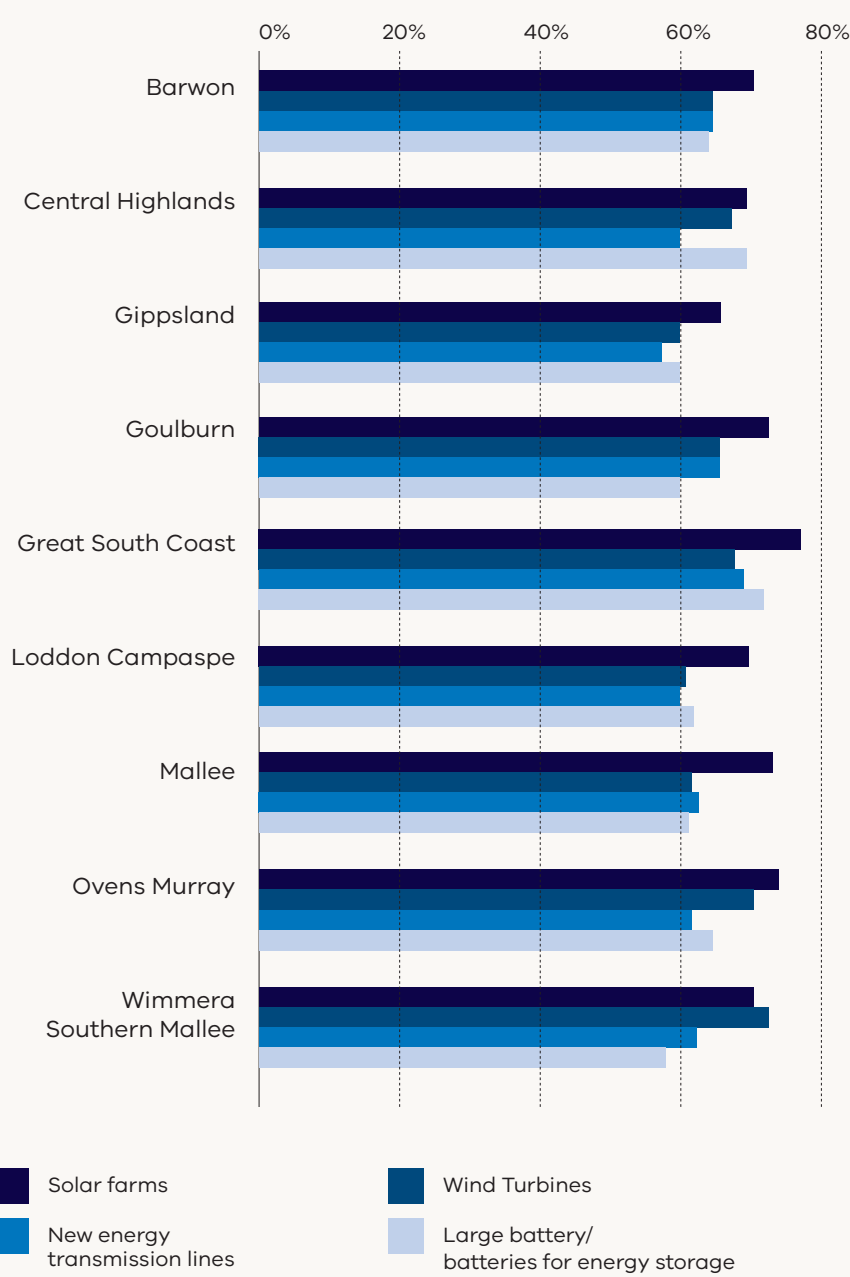
# Climate change: renewable energy

## Solar take up is higher in the regions



# Clear ‘social licence’ and community support for climate action

Support for renewable energy infrastructure in local area, by region



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

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)

