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World Issues, Australian Issues and Australian Infrastructure Challenges

Paper prepared by
Gary Morgan, Executive Chairman
Michele Levine, Chief Executive
Roy Morgan Research Pty Ltd

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Today, the majority of Australians (52%) see terrorism, wars and security issues as the most important problems facing **the world**. Environmental issues rank third (at 12%) behind economic issues (16%) as world problems.

Terrorism and security issues also top the list as most important issues facing **Australia**, albeit mentioned by fewer people (21%). For Australia, environmental issues at 15% are just ahead of economic issues at 14%.

An estimated 2.4 million Australians (14.5%) believe when it comes to global warming, "*it is already too late*", while 67% (11 million) agree "*if we don't act now it will be too late*", 13.5% (2.2 million) consider "*concerns are exaggerated*" and 5% can't say. These views are echoed by opinion leaders and special interest groups surveyed by Roy Morgan.

While global warming (and issues associated with global warming) is seen as the most important environmental issue facing **the world** today (56%), for **Australia** water conservation/management/drought is ahead (mentioned by 43%) of global warming (26%).

Water conservation also easily tops the list of things the Federal Government should be doing more about (mentioned by 80%) ahead of Illegal Drugs (63%). The majority of Australians believe the Government is doing enough on the issues of Terrorism in Australia (54%), a Tsunami-like disaster (52%) and HIV or Aids (51%).

Water conservation/management also ranked highly (second) as an important **infrastructure challenge** facing Australia today among **opinion leaders and special interest groups** surveyed by Roy Morgan for the National Infrastructure Investment Leaders' Summit.

The public transport system was seen as the most important **infrastructure challenge** facing Australia (39%) followed closely by water conservation/management (33%), the rail system (freight) (18%), alternative energy resources (17%) and upgrading national highways (16%).

AUSTRALIA
Roy Morgan Research Pty.
Ltd.
A.B.N. 91 007 092 944

USA
Roy Morgan International
Ltd.
Fed. ID No. 52-2147612

UK
Roy Morgan International
Ltd.
Company No. 3978314

NEW ZEALAND
Roy Morgan Research Pty.
Ltd.
A.B.N. 91 007 092 944

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Issues Facing The World and Australia

Respondents were first asked: “*Firstly, 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?*”

This latest Roy Morgan Survey shows that Australians view problems facing the world and Australia today differently. Fifty-two percent of respondents believe Terrorism /Wars/Security, Safety is the most important problem facing **the world** today, with 16% of respondents saying Economic issues followed by 12% Environmental issues.

Twenty-one percent of respondents believe Terrorism/Wars/Security, Safety is the most important problem **facing Australia**, 15% Environmental issues, 14% Economic issues and 12% think Government and Human issues.

Most important problem facing	The World (%)	Australia (%)
Terrorism	46	19
Wars and conflicts	6	2
Total Terrorism/Wars/Security, Safety	52	21
Poverty; the gap between the rich & poor	10	4
Economic Problems	3	6
Unemployment	*	2
Over Population	1	*
Globalisation / Fairer world trade	1	1
Total Economic Issues	16	14
Religion, Religious fundamentalism	2	1
Water conservation	1	8
Global warming	4	2
Other Environmental issues	7	4
Total Environmental issues	12	15
Petrol prices	1	6
Energy crisis	1	1
Depletion of fossil fuels	*	1
Total energy crisis/Depletion of fossil fuels/Petrol prices	2	8
Bird Flu	*	1
Other health issues	1	5
Total Health issues	2	6
Crime	*	*
Corruption	*	*
Greed, Materialism	1	*
Drugs and Drug Abuse	*	1
Educational issues	*	2
Total Social issues	3	4
Human rights	*	1
Refugees, Refugee and asylum problems	-	1
Immigration, immigration policy	-	1
Government, Politics, Political system	1	9
Intolerance	1	*
Total Government, Human Issues	2	12
Other	8	14
Can't say	1	5

* Less than 1%

Environmental Issues Facing The World and Australia

Respondents were then asked: “Next about Global Environmental issues. What do you believe are the important Environmental issues facing the world today? Which others? Any others?” and “Next about Australian Environmental issues. What do you believe are the important Environmental issues facing Australia today? Which others? Any others?”

Australians also view the important Environmental issues facing the world and Australia today differently. Fifty-six percent of Australians believe Global Warming issues are one of the most important Environmental issues **facing the world** today, with 27% believing Pollution followed by 18% Energy crisis, Depletion of fossil fuels/Natural resources.

However 43% of respondents believe Water conservation, Water management or Drought is the most important Environmental issue **facing Australia** and 26% think Global Warming.

Important Environmental issues facing	The World (%)	Australia (%)	
Global warming	35	13	
Greenhouse effect, Greenhouse gases	15	7	
Climate change	5	3	
Ozone layer	5	2	
Melting of Polar ice caps	3	*	
Extinction, Loss of species	2	2	
Reduction in habitable land	1	2	
Introduction of non-native species	-	1	
El Nino	*	*	
Total Global Warming Issues	56	26	
Pollution (unspecified)	14	10	
Air pollution	8	6	
Water pollution	5	5	
Cars, Exhaust from cars	3	3	
Smog	*	*	
Total Pollution	27	22	
Recycling	3	4	
Nuclear waste	2	2	
Toxic waste	*	1	
Landfill	1	1	
Plastic bags	1	1	
Total Waste Management	7	7	
Water conservation, Water management	8	27	
Erosion	*	*	
Salinity	1	11	
Total Water Management Issues	9	35	
Total Water Management Issues (Inc. Drought)	12	43	
Drought	4	12	
Hurricanes, Cyclones	1	*	
Famine	1	-	
Bushfires	-	*	
Earthquakes	*	-	
Flooding	*	-	
Tsunami, Tidal waves	-	-	
Total Natural Disasters	7	13	
Energy crisis, Depletion of Fossil Fuels	10	6	
Depletion of Natural resources	9	6	
Total Depletion of Resources	18	12	
Over Population	4	2	
Urbanisation	*	1	
Total Over Population / Urbanisation	4	3	
Logging forests or Deforestation	11	15	
Mining	-	2	
Bird Flu	*	-	
Other	9	10	(Respondents could give more than one issue)
Can't say	8	9	* Less than 1%
None	-	2	

Problems Associated with Global Warming

Respondents were then asked: “Next about Global warming. From what you know or have heard, what problems are associated with Global warming?”

Australians think Climate or Atmospheric change (46%) is one of the most important problems associated with Global warming, with 31% mentioning Melting of the Polar Ice Caps and 23% Rising sea levels.

Problems Associated with Global Warming	(%)
Climate change, Atmospheric change	46
Melting of polar ice caps	31
Rising sea levels	23
Reduction in habitable land	6
Greenhouse effect, Heating up of planet, Thermal blanket	2
El nino	1
Rising sea temperatures	1
Total Climate Change	69
Hurricanes, Cyclones	6
Flooding	5
Drought	3
Tsunami, Tidal waves	2
Earthquakes	1
Bushfires	1
Total Natural Disasters	13
Pollution	13
Depletion of ozone layer	7
Loss of species	2
Skin cancer	2
Fossil fuels	2
Deforestation, Cutting down trees	2
Natural phenomenon, Cyclic event, Always happens	2
UV radiation	1
Over Population	*
Water conservation	1
Other	7
Can't say	11

(Respondents could say more than one problem associated with Global warming.)

* Less than 1%

View About Global Warming

Respondents were then asked: “Which of the following is closest to your view about Global Warming?”

Men were more likely than women (20% cf 7%) to believe concerns about the Environment are exaggerated.

Total all people aged 14+ **Analysis by Region and State**

	October 5/6							
	2005	Men	Women	14-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Concerns are exaggerated	13	20	7	17	18	8	13	15
If we don't act now it will be too late	67	62	72	73	68	69	68	63
It is already too late	15	13	16	10	10	18	15	15
Can't say	5	5	5	-	4	5	4	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Victorians (23%) were more likely than any other state to believe that concerns about the environment are exaggerated.

Total all people aged 14+ **Analysis by Region and State**

	October 5/6	Capital	Country						
	2005	Cities	Areas	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA/NT	WA	Tas
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Concerns are exaggerated	13	15	11	8	23	12	15	12	8
If we don't act now it will be too late	67	67	66	70	61	67	62	71	73
It is already too late	15	13	17	17	11	15	17	15	8
Can't say	5	5	6	5	5	6	6	2	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Is The Australian Government Doing Enough?

Respondents were then asked: “Some people say the Australian Government is doing enough on issues which concern Australia, while others say not enough is being done. As I say each issue please say if you think the Australian Government is doing enough or if you think it should be doing more to prepare Australians for;

- A Tsunami-like disaster
- A major earthquake
- Bushfires
- Water conservation
- Bird flu
- HIV or AIDS
- Terrorism in Australia
- Illegal drugs in Australia

The majority of Australians believe the Australian Government should be doing more in the areas of Water conservation (80%) and Illegal Drugs in Australia (63%).

The majority of Australians believe the Government is doing enough on the issues of Terrorism in Australia (54%), a Tsunami-like disaster (52%) and HIV or Aids (51%).

Australian Government Doing Enough?	No, Should Be Doing More	Yes, Doing Enough	Can't say
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Water conservation	80	18	2
Illegal drugs in Australia	63	30	7
Bushfires	47	49	4
Terrorism in Australia	41	54	5
A Tsunami-like disaster	37	52	11
HIV or AIDS	37	51	12
Bird flu	35	46	19
A major earthquake	33	50	17

Infrastructure and Planning

Respondents to the Roy Morgan Opinion Leader and Special Interest Group Survey were asked: “Thinking specifically about infrastructure and planning. Most people agree that Australia needs to be planning for the long term future and that infrastructure is critical. What do you see as the most important infrastructure challenges facing Australia? Please answer in as much detail as possible.”

Important infrastructure challenges facing Australia	(%)
Public transport system	39
Water conservation / Usage and storage / Recycling / Desalination	33
Rail system (for freight)	18
Alternative energy resources/Renewable or environmentally friendly	17
Upgrade roads / National highway	16
Health care system	13
Education/Schools	12
Telecommunications	9
Port facilities and airports (improvements for trade)	9
Urban sprawl / Loss of green belts due to urbanisation	7
Decentralisation/Spreading the population to rural and regional areas	6
Increase of electricity supply / Build more power stations	4
Stop privatisation and keep our assets publicly owned	4
Affordable housing / Government assistance in house purchasing	3
Reduce pollution / Protecting the environment	3
Less Government interference ie. three layers of Government	2
Technology innovations and investment	2
Taxation / Fairer tax system	1
Social welfare improvements	1
Immigration / Refugees / Detention centres	1
Increase employment	1

(Respondents could say more than one problem associated with Infrastructure.)

The special telephone Roy Morgan Survey was conducted on the evenings of October 5/6, 2005, with 663 respondents aged 14 and over Australia-wide.

The sample of 1,942 people for the infrastructure question was drawn from the ‘top end’ of Roy Morgan Single Source - a well constructed Australia-wide sample of people of income \$80,000+ or in the top occupational categories or have a degree, and included booster samples from Henry Thornton Readers, Crikey! Readers, Australian Institute of International Affairs Members and Marcus Oldham Associates.

For further information:

Gary Morgan: Office (03) 9224 5213 Mobile 0411 129 094 Home (03) 9419 3242
Michele Levine: Office (03) 9224 5215 Mobile 0411 129 093 Home (03) 9817 3066