World Wide Views on Global Warming

THE WORLD WIDE VIEWS AUSTRALIA STORY
SUMMARY

ON 25 & 26 SEPTEMBER 2009, 105 AUSTRALIANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE HAD THEIR SAY ON INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION.

World Wide Views on Global Warming is the first-ever global citizens' consultation on climate change.

It was initiated by Danish Government agencies with direct links to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 15) in Copenhagen and endorsed by the Australian Government.

In December 2009, Australia will take part in the biggest international summit on climate change ever held. The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 15) in Copenhagen comes twelve years after the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, which was the first international effort to put in place legally binding greenhouse emission reductions. Now, the stakes are much higher. The science on climate change points to the need for more pressing and deeper emissions reductions. The decisions made by negotiators in Copenhagen will influence the everyday lives of people across the world, as well as those of future generations.

World Wide Views on Global Warming (World Wide Views) is a world-first, global, democratic process initiated by the Danish government agencies the Danish Board of Technology and the Danish Cultural Institute. Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water endorsed the event in Australia through a letter of support and a video message to participants.

Australians want a binding global climate deal at COP15 with deep emissions reduction targets.

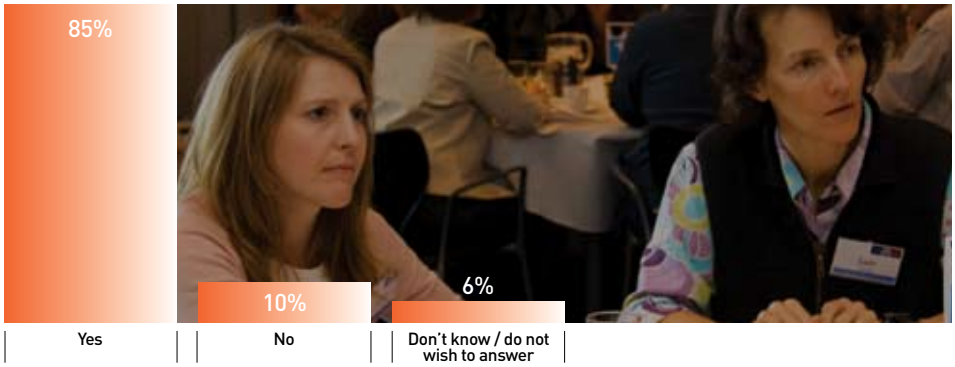
What Australian participants said:

- 98% are concerned about climate change and three quarters are very concerned.
- They believe a binding global climate deal at COP15 is urgent and 94% said the Australian Government should give high priority to joining it.
- 89% support emission reduction targets within or above the IPCC-recommended range of 25%-40% by 2020 – almost a third support targets of more than 40%. The Australian Government's proposed emissions reduction target range is between 5% and 25%.
- Participants recognise the need for equity in the global climate response. They say countries least responsible and least able to pay should have lower targets and be supported by those most responsible and most able to pay.
- Three quarters of Australian participants support higher fossil fuel prices to help address climate change.
- There is overwhelming support for a global financial system to generate funds for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries that Australia would contribute to.

Australian participants said...

Having been presented with various assessments of climate change and its consequences, to what extent are you concerned about climate change?

Should a global financial system be instituted in order to generate funds for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries?



On the same day around the world, citizens from 38 countries met to discuss the same questions.

Their views will be given to negotiators for the world climate talks in Copenhagen.

The 38 nations represented in World Wide Views include all the major players in climate change politics and many of the world's most populous nations. In total, 4,400 people around the world voiced their opinions. This was a world first – a linked, global citizen consultation process using deliberative methods. Climate negotiators from each of the 38 participating countries will receive the results from their own citizens' meeting before attending the Copenhagen climate talks.

Global citizens want urgent, equitable action and courageous leadership on climate change.

What participants around the world said:

- They want their leaders to take responsibility and lead the way.
- A majority of participants want an ambitious climate deal now, deep greenhouse gas emission reductions, higher prices on fossil fuels and clear limitations on temperature increase.
- There is consensus support for the idea of a global financial system to generate funds for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Recommendations and results give the sense of a global community desiring common outcomes – urgent, equitable action and courageous leadership.
- World Wide Views demonstrates how ordinary people can agree on fundamental concepts, when they are given the opportunity to discuss an important issue with access to good information, despite national, cultural and personal differences.

World Wide Views Australia was supported by the public and private sector.

The University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) is the Australian partner in the international World Wide Views Alliance. UTS delivered the Australian event with the support of other project sponsors (PricewaterhouseCoopers, National Australia Bank, WWF Australia and the Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria), organisations and individuals. Many people volunteered their time to make it happen including the 105 citizens who travelled to Sydney, more than 50 facilitators and logistics staff who contributed their skills. The event sponsors and supporters represented business, government and NGOs.

World Wide Views represents the considered views of ordinary people.

Participants had the opportunity to learn about the issues and to discuss their views with fellow citizens before voting. It engages at a deeper level than a poll.

World Wide views aims to:

- **Empower** ordinary citizens to give their preferences for international policy and action on climate change.
- **Inform and influence** COP15 by presenting the views of ordinary citizens on the fundamental concerns being tackled by all nations.
- **Demonstrate** and establish deliberative forms of public participation in countries all around the world.

Participants in Australia spent a day and a half deliberating on crucial climate issues, then voting, providing a group answer to pre-set questions and making recommendations to political leaders. Over the course of 48 hours, 37 other nations held exactly the same process, providing a global set of answers on climate change. Participants in the event met with their peers face-to-face, received information about the issues and discussed what they think before they put forward their views. This makes the process quite different and much more considered than a poll.

In Australia, 105 participants came together in Sydney from right across Australia – from Cairns in Queensland, Eltham in Victoria, Mornington in Tasmania, Broome in Western Australia, Kapunda in South Australia, and Humpty Doo in Northern Territory. Australian citizens were randomly selected to match demographic quotas in the categories of gender, geographic location, age, ethnicity, income, education, household composition and employment status. The group was truly diverse, representing a broad cross-section of Australian society. Participants did not need any prior knowledge of the issues or science of climate change. They were not selected based on their opinions on climate change; for example, professionals in the subject were specifically excluded from being participants.

World Wide Views is the first-ever global scale deliberative democracy event.

It builds on decades of experience in Denmark and a growing global trend of similar processes being used to inform policy. World Wide Views sets a new benchmark and paves the way for future global citizens' dialogue.

Citizens' consultation forms a regular part of Danish democratic decision-making. The Danish government has decades of experience and technological innovation in deliberative processes to engage citizens in political decision-making.

THE NUMBER ONE RECOMMENDATION WRITTEN AND VOTED FOR BY THE AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPANTS IS:

"Commit confidently at COP15: Act now to limit warming below 2°C through a legally binding global agreement. Develop new technology in an ethical and accountable process. The need for leadership, education and technical advances is paramount."

As hosts of COP15 in December 2009, and based on the Danish model of democracy, the Danish Government has been proactive in seeking the views of ordinary people around the world to feed into the negotiations. The Danish Minister for Climate and Energy, Ms. Connie Hedegaard, is a formal Ambassador for the World Wide Views project.

World Wide Views is a truly ground-breaking event. Although similar processes have been conducted in many countries, deliberative democracy has never before been attempted on a global scale. It is fitting that the focus of this world-first event is climate change, an issue affecting everyone on the planet.

Feedback from Australian participants has been overwhelmingly positive:

World Wide Views was a learning opportunity, a chance to hear diverse views, and a way to have a say on a serious global issue.

Feedback from participants over the course of the two days included an official exit survey, revealing:

- People participated in the event to be involved in decision-making on climate change, to learn about the issue and to take part in a global citizen deliberation regardless of topic.
- Most participants supported the recommendations of the event and an overwhelming majority felt that the recommendation developed by their group reflected an open and thoughtful discussion based on diverse views from a diverse group of people.
- Participants felt the event was a good investment of their time, was well run, followed good process and made a meaningful contribution.

Participants felt privileged to be involved in this ground-breaking project.

They see the opportunity for processes like this to be used for future policy making.

World Wide Views on Global Warming shows us that there is a place in Australia for decision-making forums in which people have the opportunity to speak respectfully with a truly diverse group of otherwise unconnected citizens. There are strong benefits of open dialogue. People enjoy hearing other points of view, and they can work together to generate proposals on complex policy issues relevant to all.

World Wide Views gives Australian negotiators a unique insight into what a diverse group of Australian citizens think about crucial issues to be discussed at COP15.

Citizens' views from this event are being passed on to those taking part in international climate negotiations in Denmark in December 2009, where all countries are mapping out a course of action on climate change. The Danish government's support and endorsement of the event provides a direct link to the Copenhagen negotiations. In Australia, this summary and in-depth results are being provided directly to the Australian Government policy makers and climate negotiators so that they can take the views of ordinary Australians with them to Copenhagen.

"Once you get an event that is big enough, once you get an event that is global enough, there is hope that the political leaders will hear some of the discussions and some of the outcomes and that maybe we will have an effect"

World Wide Views Australia participant

"The most interesting thing I did today was just hearing what everyone else has got to say and seeing that there is such a sense of urgency and commitment and interest in this topic from everyone across Australia"

World Wide Views Australia participant

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A full report is also available. For more information and full Australian results visit **www.wwviews.org.au** or the Institute for Sustainable Futures website www.isf.uts.edu.au

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