



**Insight for Business
& Government**



Illawarra Environmental Attitudes Survey October 2009

In summary, Illawarra residents ...

- 62% agreed that climate change will have a direct impact on their lives in the next 20 years.
- 55% agreed that the actions of the average person can have a big impact on slowing climate change.
- 52% indicated they were prepared to pay more for electricity if it was generated from renewable sources such as solar or wind.
- 66% supported the introduction of a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.
- Residents were divided on whether the benefits of the coal industry outweigh the negative impacts to the region. That is 37% agreed that the benefits outweigh the negative impacts to the region, 36% were indifferent and 22% disagreed with the statement.
- Residents were also divided on the acceptability of nuclear energy as an alternative to coal based energy for Australia, with 31% indicating it was acceptable, 30% indifferent and 29% indicating it was not acceptable.

Data collection

The survey was administered on the IRIS computer aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system in early October as part of the quarterly IRIS omnibus survey.

Survey area

Illawarra Statistical Division (SD), that is Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven and Wingecarribee Local Government Area's.

Sample selection

A telephone-based survey, aiming to secure a response from 300 permanent residents from the Illawarra SD. Respondents also had to be aged 18 years or older to qualify for an interview.

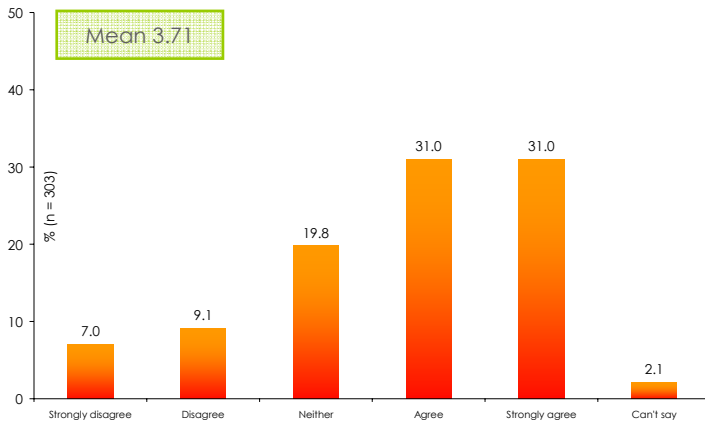
Data handling

Recorded responses were statistically weighted by the age and sex distribution of people aged 18 years and over living in the Illawarra SD.

Climate change

A large majority of Illawarra residents either agreed (31.0%) or strongly agreed (31.0%) that climate change would have a direct impact on their lives in the next 20 years.

Figure 1: Climate change will have a direct impact on my life in the next 20 years.



The statement recorded a mean agreement score of 3.7 indicating that, on the whole residents believed that climate change would have an impact on their life.

Further analysis by age and sex revealed that there were no significant differences.

Figure 1a: Climate change will have a direct impact on my life in the next 20 years – Mean score by sex.

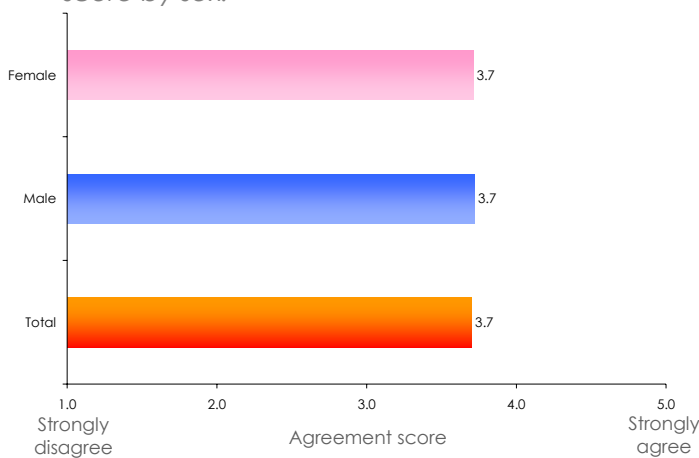
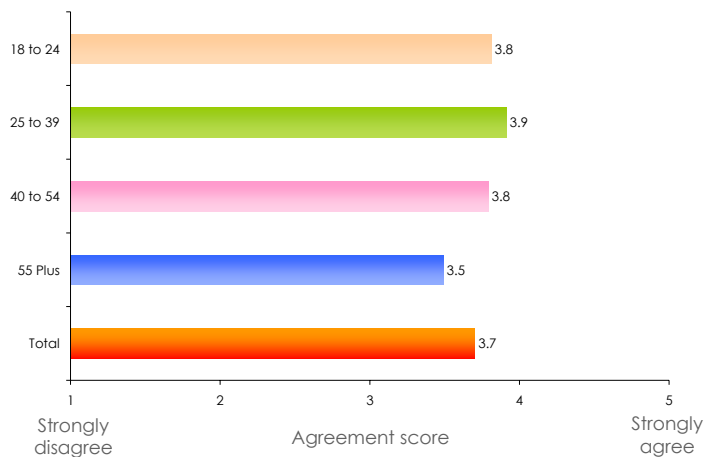
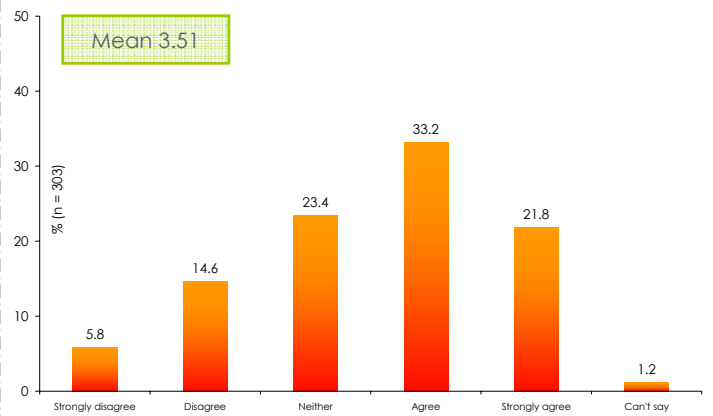


Figure 1b: Climate change will have a direct impact on my life in the next 20 years – Mean score by age.



Residents were asked whether they thought the actions of the average person had a big impact on slowing climate change. Results showed that one third of all residents agreed (33.2%), while a further one in five (21.8%) strongly agreed with the statement.

Figure 2: The action of the average person have a big impact slowing climate change.



The statement recorded a mean agreement score of 3.5 indicating that residents generally believe that the actions of the average person can have an impact on slowing climate change.

Further analysis revealed that females were much more likely to agree with the statement regarding the average person and their role in slowing climate change.

Figure 2a: The action of the average person have a big impact slowing climate change – Mean score by sex.

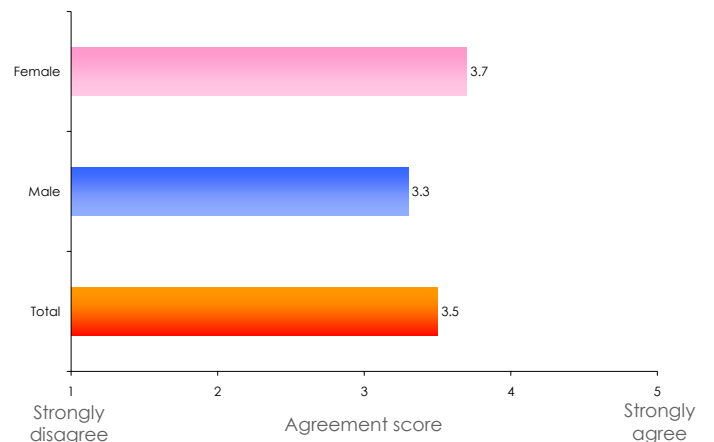
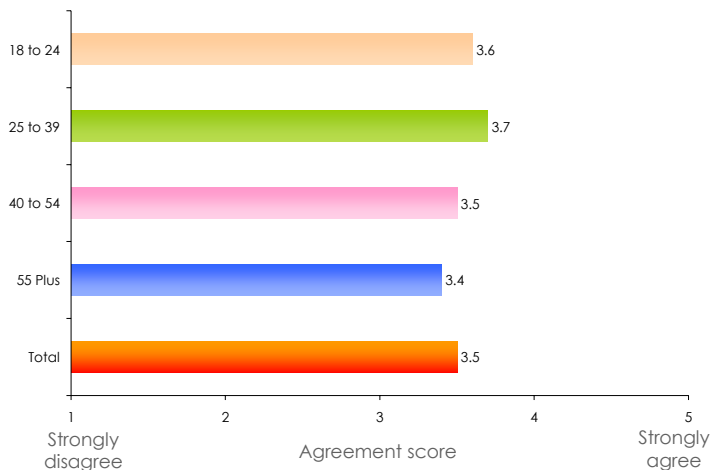


Figure 2b: The action of the average person have a big impact slowing climate change – Mean score by age.



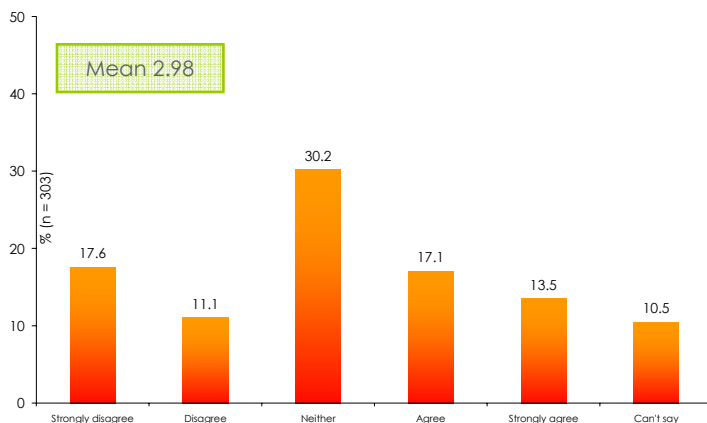
Support for nuclear energy

The opinions amongst residents regarding the acceptability of nuclear energy as an alternative to coal based energy for Australia is relatively divided.



Just under one in three residents (30.6%) agreed (agree and strongly agree) that nuclear energy was acceptable, compared to 28.7% that disagreed (disagree and strongly disagree). About one in three residents (30.2%) were undecided.

Figure 3: Nuclear energy is an acceptable alternative to coal based energy in Australia.



The statement on nuclear energy achieved a mean score of 2.98 (i.e. closest to 3, neither agree nor disagree), highlighting the uncertainty amongst residents with regards to using nuclear energy as an alternative.

Further analysis showed that female residents were less likely to agree than males, that nuclear energy was an acceptable alternative to coal based energy.

Figure 3a: Nuclear energy is an acceptable alternative to coal based energy in Australia - Mean score by sex.

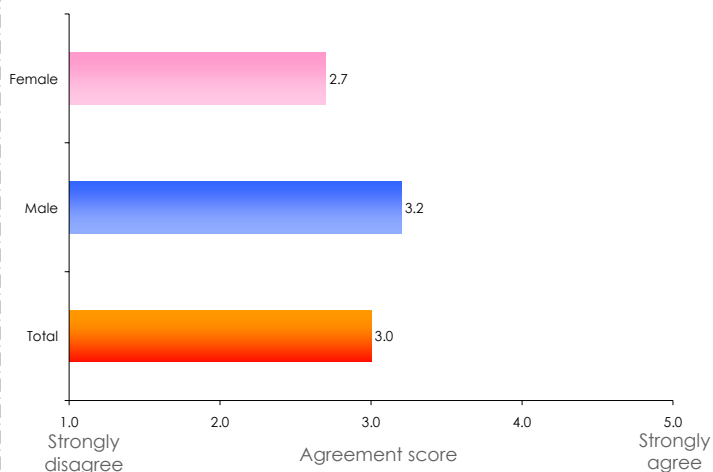
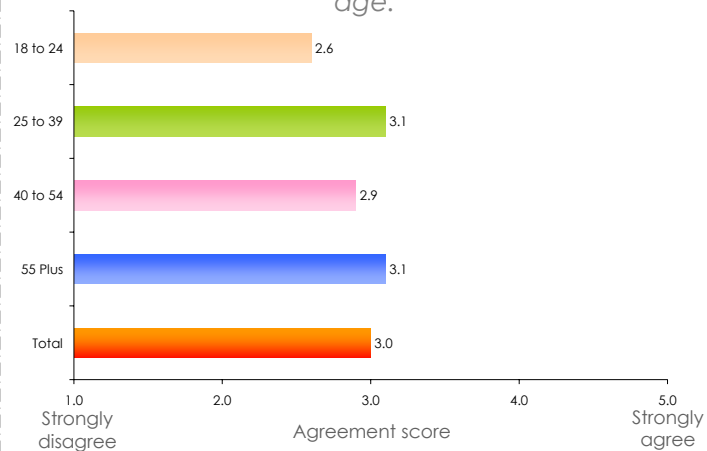


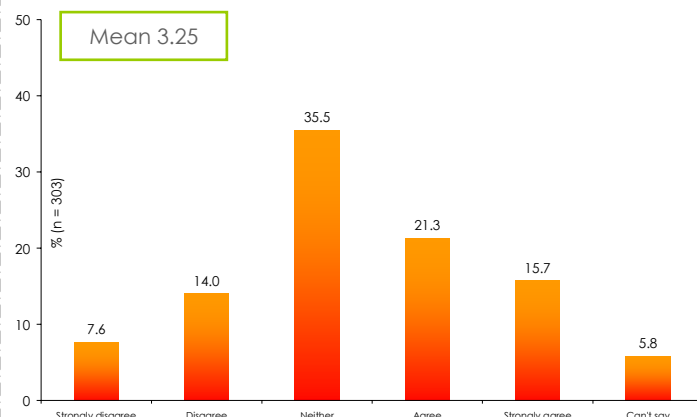
Figure 3b: Nuclear energy is an acceptable alternative to coal based energy in Australia - Mean score by age.



Support for the coal industry

When asked whether the benefits of the coal industry for the local region outweigh the negative impacts, 37% believed it did; that is 21.3% agree and 15.7% strongly agree.

Figure 4: The benefits of the coal industry for our region outweigh the negative impacts.



The statement on the benefits of the coal industry achieved a mean score of 3.25 (i.e. closest to 3, neither agree nor disagree).

Residents from the 40 to 54 year age group were less likely to agree that the benefits of the local coal industry outweigh the negative impact, compared to the other age groups.

Figure 4a: The benefits of the coal industry for our region outweigh the negative impact – Mean score by sex.

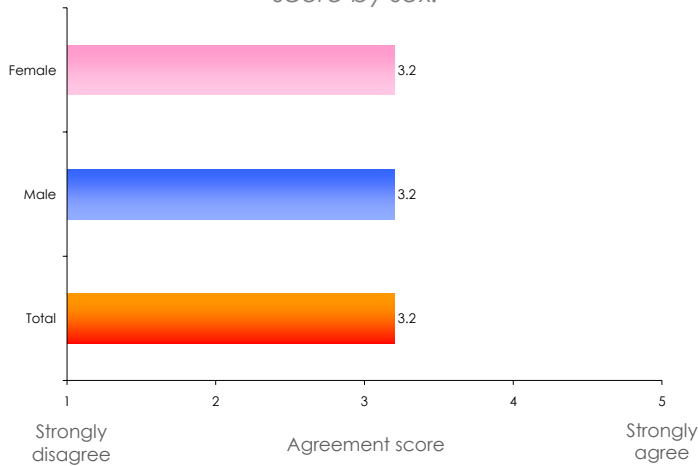
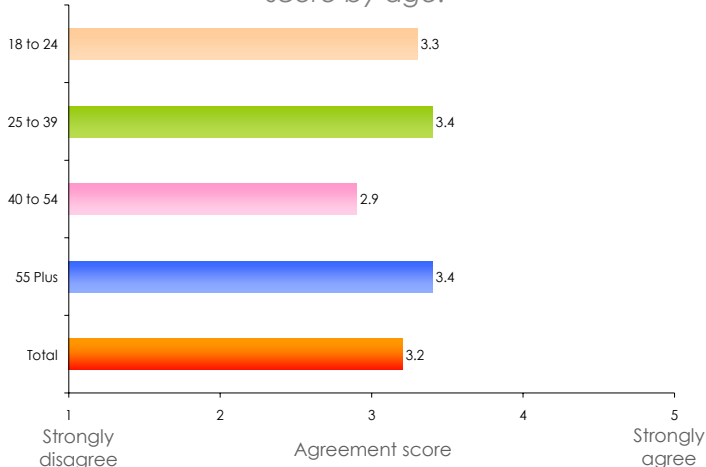


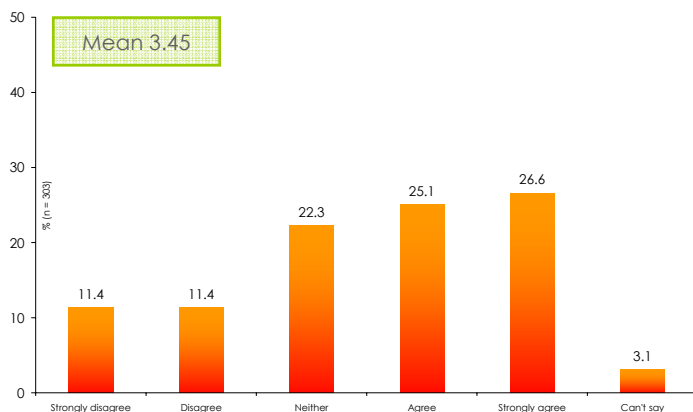
Figure 4b: The benefits of the coal industry for our region outweigh the negative impact – Mean score by age.



Paying more for Green power

Over half of all residents either agreed (25.1%) or strongly agreed (26.6%) that they would be prepared to pay more for electricity if it was generated from renewable sources such as solar, or wind.

Figure 5: I would be prepared to pay more for electricity if it was generated from renewable sources such as solar or wind.



The statement on paying more for electricity if it was generated from renewable sources achieved a mean score of 3.45 (i.e. closest to 3, neither agree nor disagree).

Figure 5a: I would be prepared to pay more for electricity if it was generated from renewable sources such as solar or wind – Mean score by sex.

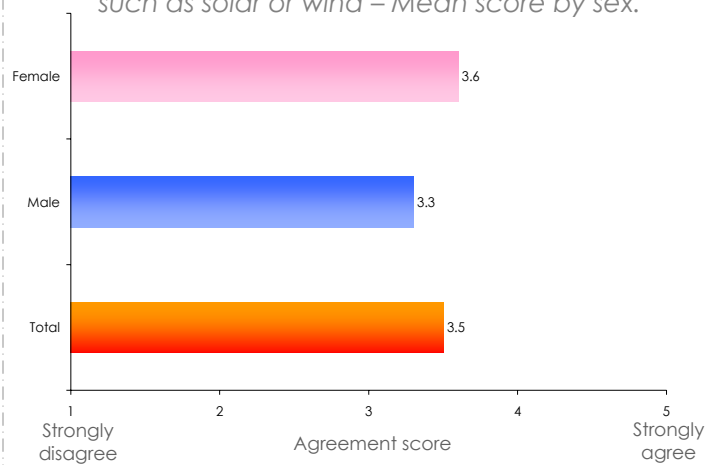
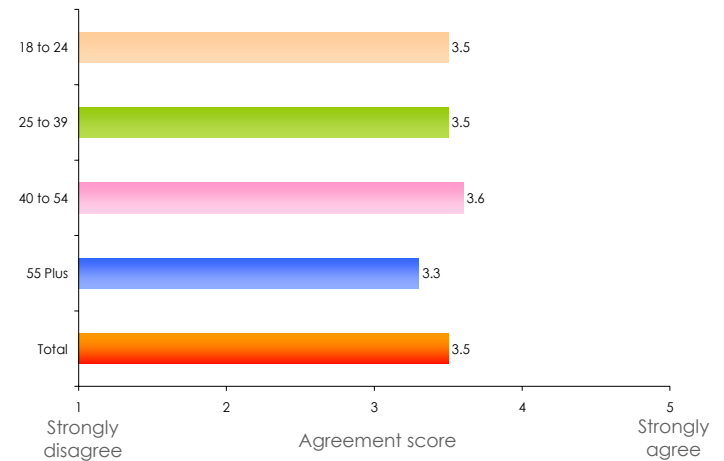


Figure 5b: I would be prepared to pay more for electricity if it was generated from renewable sources such as solar or wind – Mean score by age.



Carbon Reduction Scheme

Two thirds of residents were either somewhat in favour (42.7%) or strongly in favour (23.6%) with the introduction of a carbon pollution reduction scheme.

Further analysis found that residents 40 years plus were less in favour of a carbon pollution reduction scheme, compared to those aged 18 to 39 years.

Figure 6: Are you in favour or against the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme?

