The Essential Report – Carbon Market Institute

18 March 2025

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Prepared By:	Essential Research
Data Supplied by:	qualtrics

The Research Society

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About this poll

This report summarises the results of a fortnightly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted online from 12th to 17th March 2024 and is based on 1,133 participants.

The weighting efficiency applied to the results at a national level is 81%, which gives an effective sample size of 915. The maximal margin of error at this effective sample size is ±3.2% (95% confidence level).

The full methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of the report.

Note that due to rounding, not all charts necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.

Key Insights

1. Attitudes to action on climate change and reducing emissions are consistent from last year, with no significant change at an overall level

- Over the last 12 months, all repeated questions show consistent distributions of attitudes.
- Demographic trends observed last year remain evident, with generally higher agreement and support for climate change action among the following cohorts:
    - females
    - younger participants
    - those with a university education
    - those living in capital cities
    - Labor and Greens voters

2. Over half of Australians agree that action on climate change requires contribution from all areas of the economy and all viable solutions to be used

- 57% of participants agree that all sectors of the Australian economy should be subject to emissions reduction targets to ensure they contribute their fair share towards a stronger national effort on climate change. Similarly, 56% agree that countries must use all viable solutions available to reduce emissions.
    - Agreement with these statements last year was 59% and 58% respectively.
- The remaining two statements both had majority agreement, but were slightly lower, with:
    - 55% agreement that Australia has a leadership role to play in supporting their Pacific neighbours, particularly those on the front lines of climate change.
    - 52% agreement that developed countries should set stronger climate targets than developing countries.

3. The prevailing sentiment is for businesses to go beyond minimising emissions

- When participants were presented with four options, the majority of participants believe businesses need to do more than just minimising their own emissions, with:
  - 49% believing that businesses should take responsibility for all their emissions now, reducing their own emissions where possible and investing in offsets or credits for the rest (50% last year).
  - 26% believing that businesses should go beyond carbon neutral and invest in ways to become carbon negative, using carbon offsets or credits to support other businesses to reduce their emissions (27% last year).
- 18% think businesses should just do the minimum that is required to reduce their own carbon emissions (17% last year) and just 8% think businesses should have no responsibility to reduce their carbon emissions (6% last year).

4. Businesses are viewed positively if they adopt strong carbon reduction commitments – particularly among women and younger participants

- 61% agree that businesses with strong climate change commitments is a good way for a company to show it cares about Australia's environment and long-term future (no change from last year), while 58% agree with the statement 'I tend to think that a company that has strong climate change commitments is also more sustainable and ethical' (57% last year). There is slightly lower agreement that when possible, they prefer to make purchases from companies that have strong climate change reduction commitments (47%, no change from last year).
- Women are more likely than men to agree with all these statements, and those aged 18-34 have higher agreement than those aged over 55.

5. The majority of participants understand that climate change is having a direct effect on cost-of-living pressures

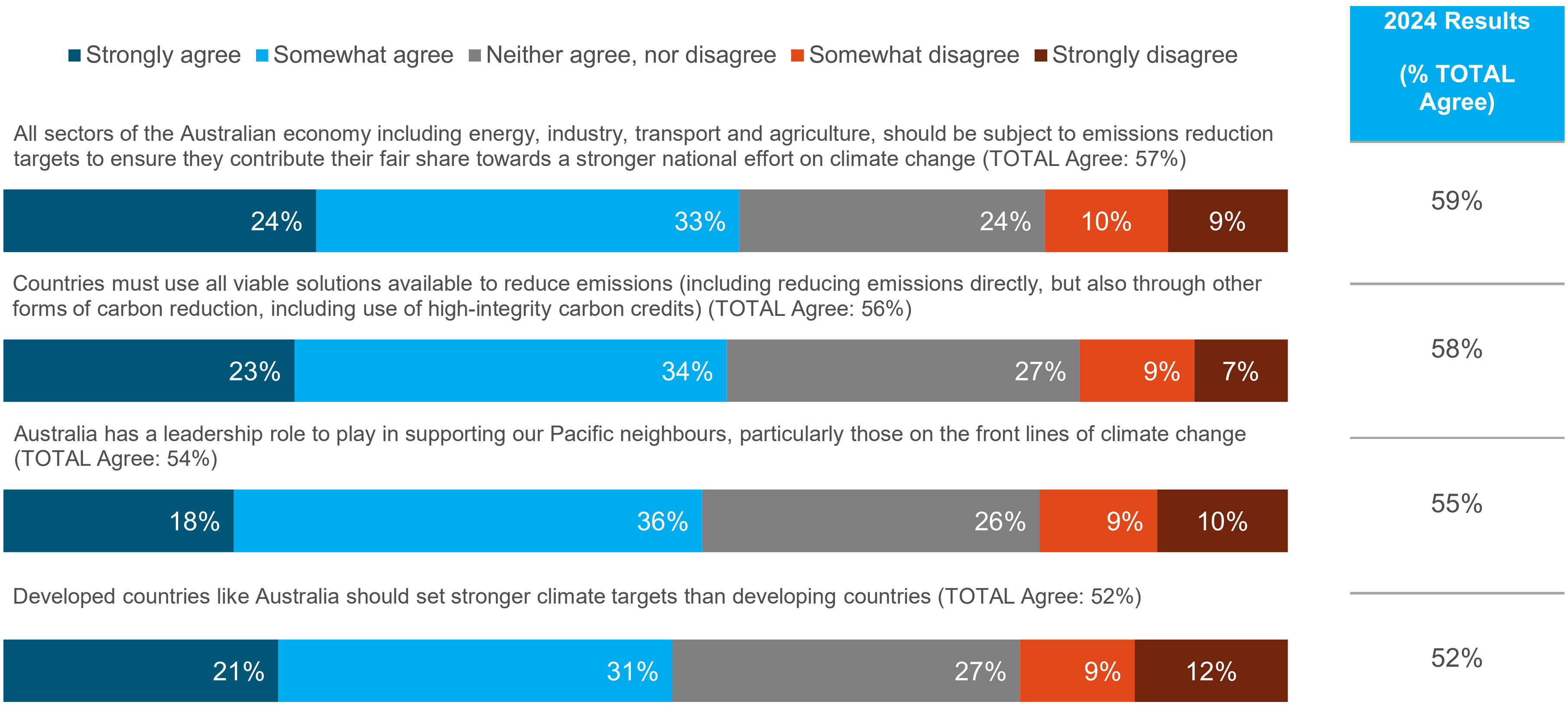
- 62% of participants agree that Impacts of climate change (such as more frequent and severe bushfires and flooding) worsen the cost of living through insurance cost increases and grocery prices, with just 13% disagreeing.
- One-third (33%) agree that they would be more likely to vote for the Coalition in the next federal election if they set a stronger 2035 emissions reduction target.
  - Agreement with this statement was higher among those aged 18-34 (54%), those already considering voting for the Coalition (42%) and those intending to vote Greens (44%).

6. More Australians than not now have confidence in carbon credits but only just under a half believing they make a meaningful contribution toward the effort to reduce the effects of climate change

- 45% are confident (Very confident + Confident + Fairly confident) (43% last year), while 42% are not confident (Not that confident + Not confident at all) (46% last year), with the final 13% unsure (11% last year).
- The level of confidence was higher among:
  - younger participants aged 18-34 (73% confident)
  - those with a university education (62%)
  - Greens voters (61%)

Australia's contribution to combating climate change through carbon emissions

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Australia's contribution to combating climate change through carbon emission reductions



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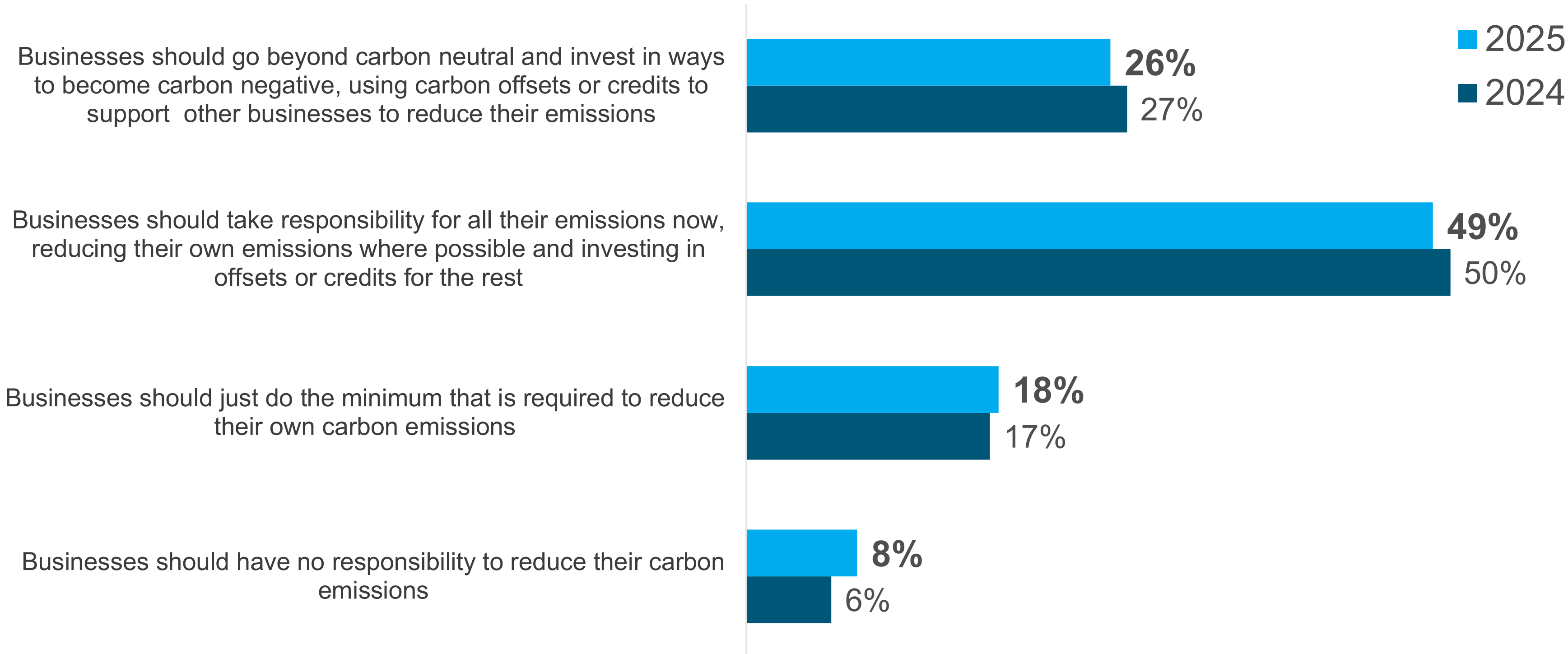
View about the responsibility of businesses and corporations to contribute to emissions reductions

Q Which of the following is closest to your view about the responsibility of businesses and corporations to contribute to emission reductions?



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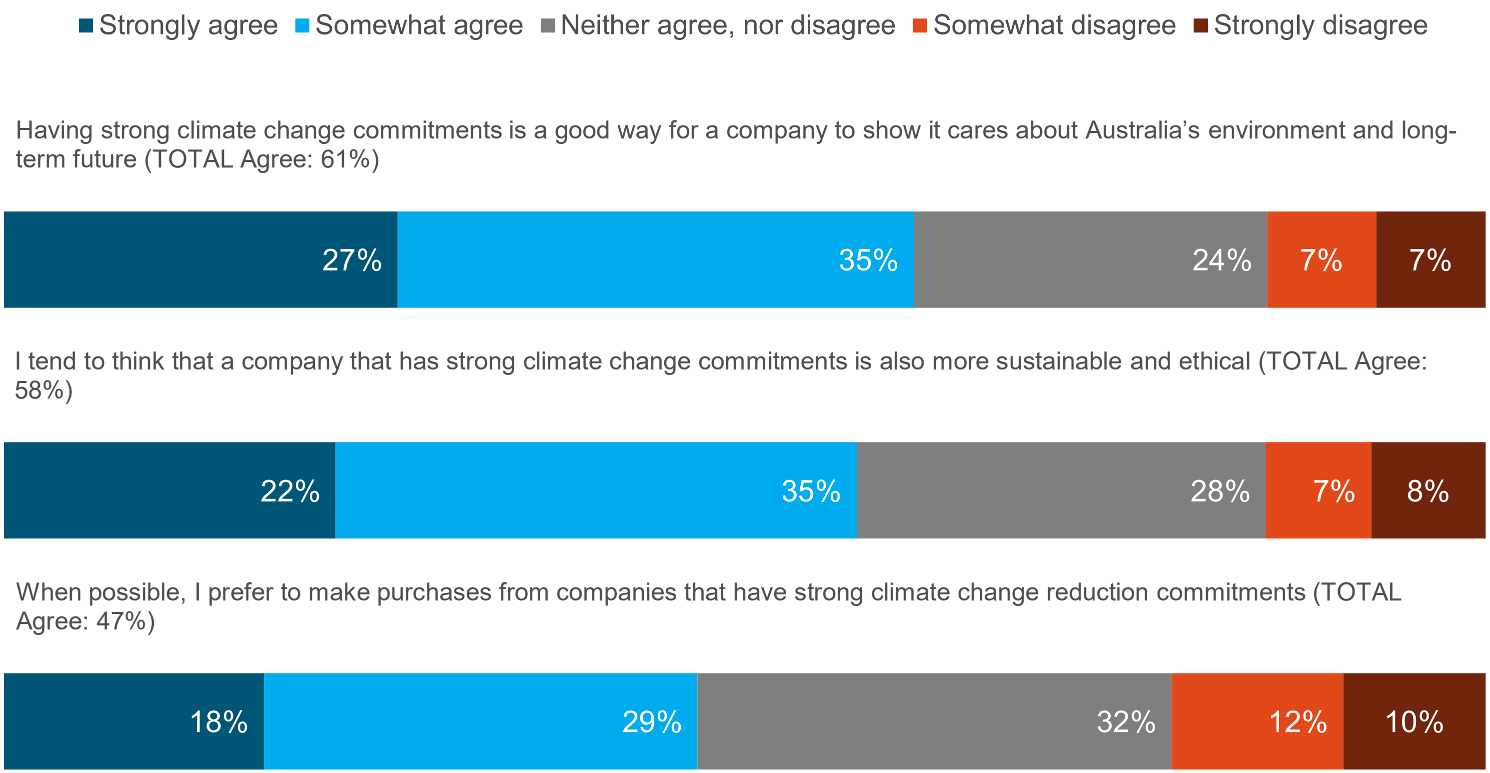
Attitudes toward businesses that adopt strong carbon reduction commitments

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about businesses that adopt strong carbon reduction commitments?



2024 Results (% TOTAL Agree)
61%
57%
47%

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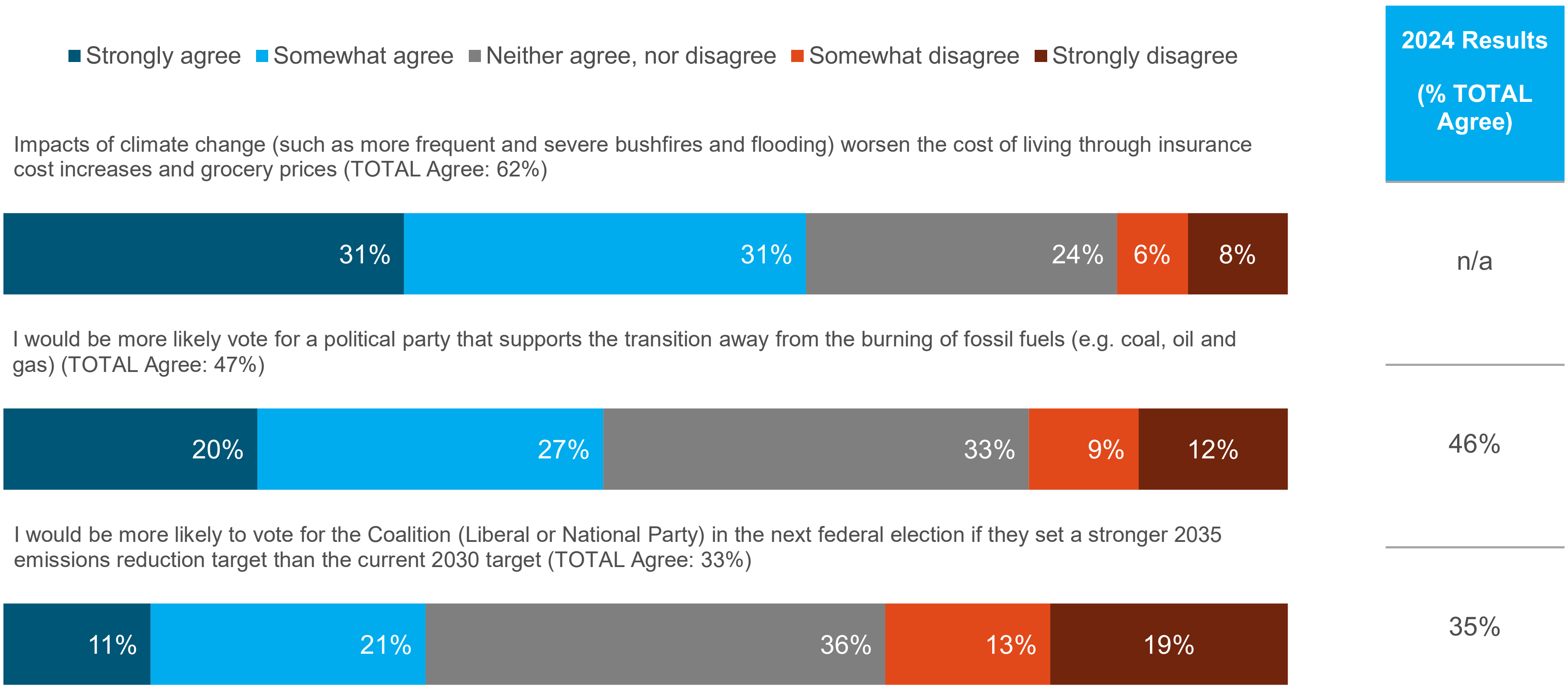
Attitudes toward the leadership role of political parties in reducing carbon emissions and addressing climate change

Q Given that both major parties support achieving net zero emissions by 2050, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the leadership role of political parties in reducing carbon emissions and addressing climate change?



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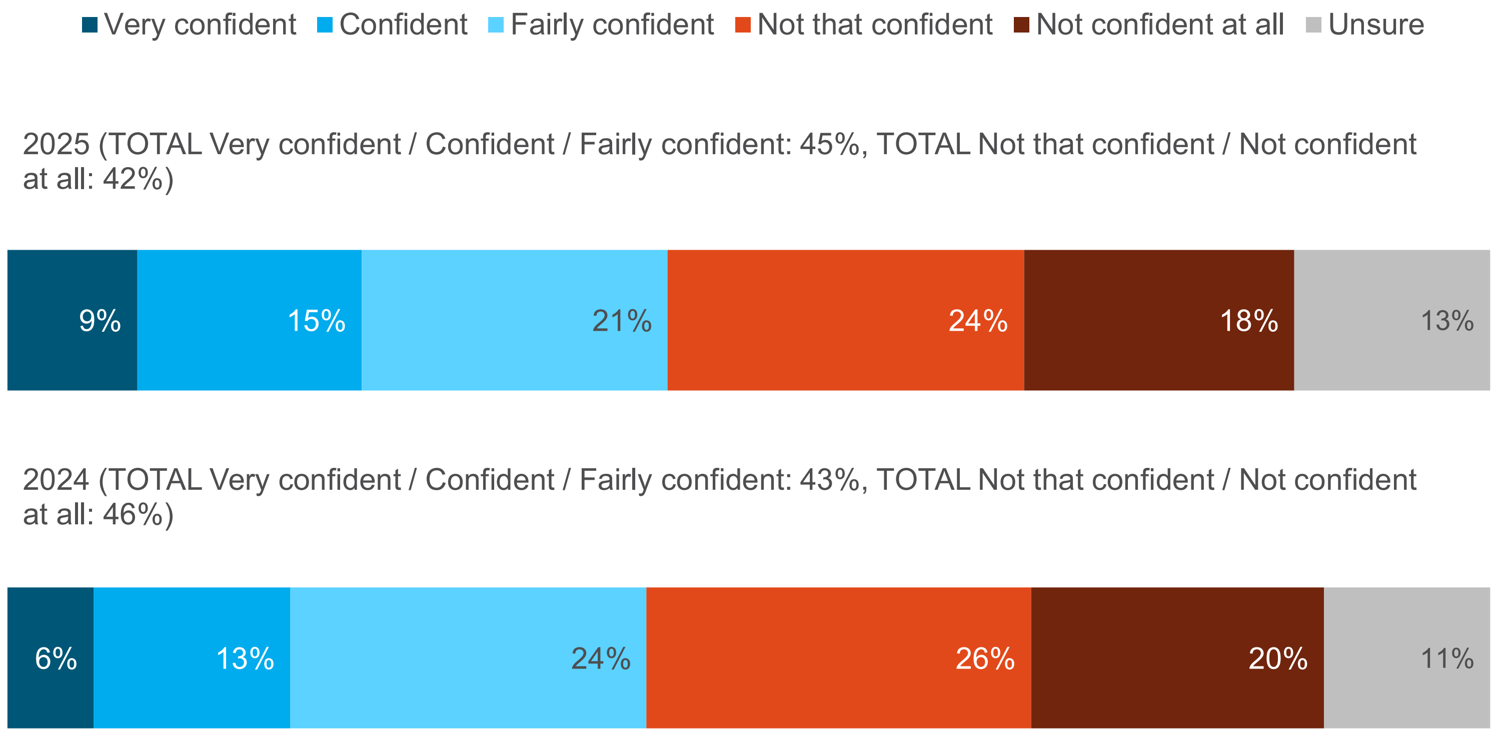
Level of confidence that purchasing carbon credits will make a meaningful contribution to the effort to reduce the effects of climate change

Q To what extent do you have confidence that the carbon credits you purchase as an individual (e.g. offsetting the emissions of an airplane flight by contributing to a tree planting project) will make a meaningful contribution to the effort to reduce the effects of climate change?



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Appendix: Household income definitions*

TOTAL: Lower Income	Up to $51,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
TOTAL: Mid Income	$52,000 to $103,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
TOTAL: High Income	More than $104,000 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a fortnightly online omnibus run by Essential Research with sample provided by Qualtrics from online panels.

The online omnibus is active from the Wednesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. The target population is all Australian residents aged 18+. Participants were invited to participate and completed the survey online without an interviewer present and incentives were offered for participation.

The response rate varies each week, but usually delivers 1,000+ interviews. Quotas are applied to be representative of the target population by age, gender and location.

RIM weighting is applied to the data using information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The factors used in the weighting are age, gender, location, education and party ID.

Information for the weighting efficiency, effective sample size and margin of error for each poll (from June 2021) can be found here:

Each fortnight, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses issues that are topical, and a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated regularly (such as political preference and leadership approval), while others are unique to each week and reflect current media and social issues. Full text for standard voting and regular political preferences can be found in the link above. No questions were asked prior to these questions which have material influence on results.

Participants not eligible to vote in federal elections (either for age, residency or other reasons) are excluded from voting intention. Eligible participants are able to select ‘Unsure’ for voting intention. They were then asked a ’leaner’ question which also included an ‘Unsure’ option. Participants answering ‘Unsure’ are NOT excluded from published results, or any subsequent questions. 2 party preferred (2PP) calculations use stated preference. Preference flows from previous federal and state elections are only used for participants answering ‘Unsure’ for stated preference.

All Essential Research staff hold Research Society membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour. This research is compliant with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards.