



Youth mental health and climate distress

RESULTS FROM A NATIONAL ORYGEN AND YOUGOV POLL

An Orygen Institute survey Conducted by YouGov



This survey was commissioned by the Orygen Institute and conducted by YouGov.

Methodology

Fieldwork conducted online between 17 April and 1 May, 2023.

A sample of 1000 Australian citizens aged 16-25.

Weighted on age, gender, location, and education.

Weighting efficiency of 89%, effective sample size of 891.

Margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$ on a 50% figure with 95% confidence level.

Key findings

More than three in four young people (76%) are concerned about climate change.



Nearly one-third (30%) say they are "very concerned". Only 6% of young people surveyed said they were not concerned at all.

Two-thirds of young Australians (67%) say climate concerns are having a negative impact on youth mental health.



Young females are particularly aware of the impacts of climate concern on mental health, with 74% reporting a negative impact.

DISTRESS is escalating, and they're talking about it.

- Most young Australians with climate concerns (56%) say they have become more concerned about climate change in the past 12 months.
 Only 12% say they have become less concerned.
- Nearly nine in ten (88%) have discussed their concerns with others.

Young Australians want to see



- Government inaction was the most frequently identified factor impacting young people's mental health.
- 77% of young Australians believe seeing the government take strong action on climate change would be helpful to the mental health of those experiencing climate distress, and more than half (56%) say it would be 'very helpful'

Do you believe the following currently have a positive or negative impact on the mental health of young Australians?

75%

Lack of action by government on climate change



29%

Worrying about the future of the planet



Lack of action by industry and business on climate change



Hearing about extreme weather events



30%

Feeling guilty about not taking enough climate action



40%

Concern about environment policies harming Australia's economy

Very negative or somewhat negative

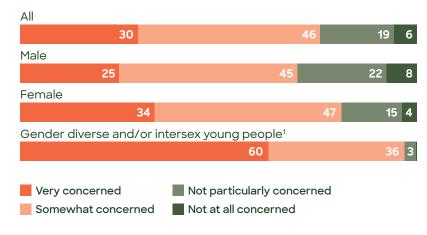
Somewhat positive, very positive, no impact or don't know

Note: answered by young people reporting concern about climate change (n=765).

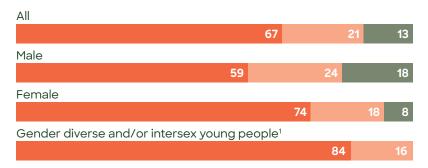


Summary of survey results

How concerned are you about climate change?

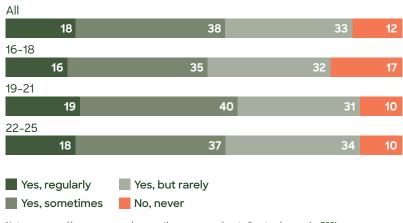


Which of the following is closest to your point of view?



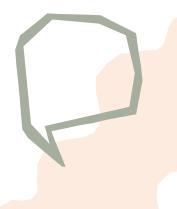
¹ Gender diverse and/or intersex data is based on a limited sample size (n=20) and should therefore be interpreted with care.

Have you ever discussed your concerns about climate change with others?



Note: answered by young people reporting concern about climate change (n=765).

- Concerns about climate change have a negative on the mental health of young Australians
- Concerns about climate change have no impact on the mental health of young Australians
- Concerns about climate change have a positive impact on the mental health of young Australians



Summary of survey results

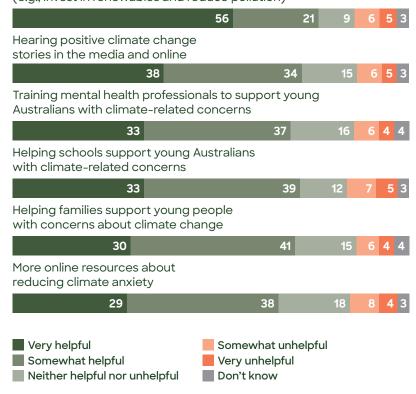
If you had concerns about climate change that were impacting your wellbeing, who are the first 3 people or organisations you would go to for support?

Friends 22 19 A parents or guardian 18 Website or online resources 14 61 A mental health professional (e.g.,psychologist) 64 12 10 A partner 10 8 11 A sibling 10 A helpline (e.g., Kids Helpline Lifeline) 3 6 6 86 Teachers 4 5 5 A doctor 4 4 6 86 School counsellor 3 5 4 88 An app 88 First person or organisation First 3 people or organisations First 2 people or organisations Not in the first 3

Note: young people who indicated that they would talk to someone or that they were worried about climate change (n=873).

How helpful do you believe the following would be for young people who were experiencing anxiety about climate change?

Seeing the government take strong climate action (e.g., invest in renewables and reduce pollution)



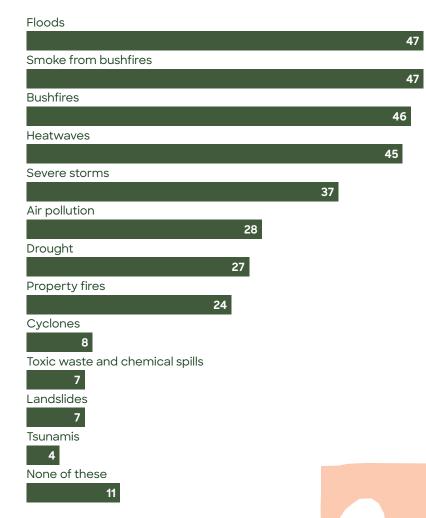
Summary of survey results

If a young person approached a health care professional with anxiety about climate change, which of the following responses do you believe would be most helpful?

Give them resources on how to help the environment (e.g., recycling and environmentally friendly choices)

(e.g., recycling and environmentally friendly choices) 21 38 Acknowledge their concerns about climate change are valid 37 13 Provide ideas about different ways to take climate action (e.g., petitions and protests) 17 13 Teach ways to discuss climate change with others (e.g., their family) 17 59 8 Provide self-help resources and activities 66 Provide ideas about different ways to connect with nature 10 Tell them that climate change will not impact on their life 4 4 4 89 Tell them climate change is nothing to worry about 3 4 3 90 Tell them climate change is not real 3 3 92 Most helpful Top 3 Most helpful Top 2 Most helpful Not in the top 3

Which of these has the community you currently live in experienced in the past 5 years? Select all that apply.





Orygen acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands we are on and pays respect to their Elders past and present. Orygen recognises and respects their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationships to their Country, which continue to be important to First Nations people living today.











FOR MORE INFORMATION

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