



MEDIA RELEASE

Double the Australians buy green despite increased doubts about human impact on climate change

November 25, 2009: The number of Australians buying 'green' products in an effort to reduce their personal emissions has nearly doubled to 47 per cent, compared to 24 per cent in 2008, according to the latest Ipsos-Eureka Climate Change Survey.

Ipsos-Eureka, Head of Sustainable Communities and Environment Unit, Poppy Wise said: "The emergence of green purchasing as the key action Australians take to reduce their emissions is significant. We could be seeing an awakening of people power in the form of purchasing, in the face of falling confidence in the Australian and global leadership in regard to reducing emissions."

"Encouragingly, this result could mean the Australian population is beginning to accept emissions reduction as an area of personal responsibility, not just a political responsibility. Of course, the explosion in all sorts of product and service categories of 'green' options could also be a factor in these results."

The survey also uncovered a shift in climate change denial with more Australians accepting its occurrence. The number of Australians doubtful about climate change dropped from 32 per cent in 2008 to 28 per cent in 2009.

"It's not surprising acceptance of the phenomenon of climate change is increasing, given the year we've had in 2009," said Wise.

"Climate change has been all over the national media with the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), we've experienced several catastrophic extreme weather events and, internationally, the issue has been getting a lot of attention, with the Copenhagen summit occurring in December."

Interestingly, though, the survey also revealed a significantly increasing proportion of Australians believe nature, rather than mankind, is the main cause of climate change.

This year 66 per cent named 'human activities' as the main cause compared with 80 per cent in 2008.

"If this signals the start of a growing trend, it is of concern, as labelling climate change as a natural cycle abrogates personal and political responsibility to reduce dangerous carbon emissions," Wise added.

The Ipsos-Eureka's Climate Change Survey also highlighted that in the countdown to the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, many Australians believe both a global deal on emissions reduction and a national system to reduce emissions, CPRS or the equivalent, are both important steps to effectively manage climate change.



However, confidence in the national and international leadership to achieve these outcomes is not strong.

Also, in a year marked by the global economic downturn, it is not surprising that concern regarding climate change overall has slipped compared to previous years. The proportion of Australians who rated climate change as an environmental issue that they would address if in government dropped to 45 per cent, down from 55 per cent in 2008 and 64 per cent in 2007.

This drop in concern is reflected in similar surveys internationally, indicating 2009 has been a year of economic rather than environmental focus.

Environmental issues which are top of mind for Australians are highly visible in a day to day context, such as water shortages, waste and air quality tend to be of more immediate concern for Australians rather than climate change.

“This reflects the complexity of climate change as an issue. For now, the climate change threat is largely intangible and the effects are likely to be felt more strongly by generations to come rather than in the present day,” added Wise.

The Ipsos-Eureka Climate Change Survey took place this year in August and has been conducted annually since 2006, with each wave surveying more than 1000 adults nationally. All data collection is conducted by specialist fieldwork agency I-View.

The survey, released on the eve of the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, is the fourth annual survey of its kind by Ipsos-Eureka.

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About Ipsos

Ipsos Australia is one of the world's leading survey-based marketing research firms. Founded and run by market research professionals, Ipsos interprets, simulates, and anticipates the needs and reactions of consumers, customers and citizens – locally, nationally and around the world. Ipsos has a direct presence in more than 50 countries globally and conducts research in more than 100.

About Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute

The Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute brings together a highly qualified team dedicated to using research to improve community outcomes. The aim of the organisation is to produce publishable research to high standards in consultation with experts in their field. The team focuses on providing thought leadership and acting as a non-partisan think tank and sounding board.

Being part of Ipsos, one of the world's largest market research companies, means the institute can draw upon expertise from comparable countries around the world in conjunction with contributing skills and experience from across the region.

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