



YOUNG TERRITORIANS VOICE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

2008 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians

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Please note: The Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians is an independent advisory council. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Office of Youth Affairs or the Northern Territory Government.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CCC&PU	Climate Change Coordination and Policy Unit
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DCM	Department of the Chief Minister
DCC	Department of Climate Change
ECNT	Environment Centre Northern Territory
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NT	Northern Territory
NT Government	Northern Territory Government
OYA	Office of Youth Affairs
Round Table	Northern Territory Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate Change is a global issue that affects us all¹. It is a very complex issue that involves many independent and interconnected issues, impacts and consequences. This report however, does not focus on the debated science surrounding climate change but coincides with the Northern Territory Government developing the first Northern Territory Climate Change Policy.

This project aimed to canvass the Northern Territory to gain an insight into the views, concerns and ideas young Territorians have in regards to climate change. It investigated the understanding, knowledge, level of concern and what behavioural changes young Territorians already have and are were willing to make in the future in regards to climate change. The data collected also provides suggestions on the most effective ways young Territorians indicated would encourage them to become more aware of and engaged in the climate change issue.

Information has been gathered from young people (12 to 25 years of age) living throughout the Northern Territory through a public youth workshop and 360 (475) surveys.

The collated survey data indicates that the majority of young people living in the Northern Territory believe that global warming is happening now and are 'fairly' concerned about climate change.

The qualitative nature of some of this research has also resulted in the disclosure of extra information and suggestions, some of which have been included in this report.

It is hoped that those who access this resource will take note of the most effective ways implicated to increase the level of knowledge, understanding and action of young Territorians in regards to climate change.

Overall, the key findings from the data collected provided the researcher with the basis for the concluding recommendations from this report:

¹ Department of Climate Change, 2008, *Fact sheet: Climate Change – What does it mean?*, available at <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/science/publications/fs-climatechange.html>, [accessed June 2008].

1. Introduce climate change and sustainability into whole Northern Territory school curriculum by providing links into compulsory subjects.
2. Implement programs and activities in regards to the monetary incentives, awards and prizes, and laws and regulations in order to encourage young people to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change.
3. Endeavour to hold 'carbon-neutral' events in the Northern Territory such as 'Bass in the Grass / Dust'.
4. The Northern Territory Government to invest in research and implementation of renewable energy sources and energy efficient technologies and provide incentives for their adoption.
5. The Northern Territory Government to implement 'green' financial incentives and regulate future infrastructure development in the Northern Territory to be 'green', climate appropriate and sustainable (eg. Housing).
6. The Northern Territory Government to upgrade and expand public transport system and bike paths across the Territory.
7. Implement recycling in Alice Springs.
8. Distribute more impartial information about nuclear power through effective engagement measures.
9. The Northern Territory Government to follow up what impact the NT Climate Change Policy has had on youth perceptions and behaviour in regards to climate change.

If the Northern Territory Government is serious about being a leader on tackling climate change they will need to continue to actively engage young Territorians in the areas of climate change preparedness, disaster risk reduction, adaptation and mitigation. Therefore, the recommendations that have been presented in this report should be considered in the development and implementation of the Northern Territory Climate Change Policy and the development of future NT Climate Change related programs to ensure that they reflect the needs, ambitions and rights of the next generation.

INTRODUCTION

This project aimed to investigate a Northern Territory youth perspective in regards to climate change.

This report was compiled as part of a 2008 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians initiative. Members are given the opportunity to undertake a community-based project over a nine-month period to ultimately investigate ways to improve the livelihoods of young Territorians in their region on a topic of interest to them.

A major personal concern to the researcher is the projected impacts of climate change and future environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Northern Territory, Australia and the Earth.

According to the Australian Government Department of Climate Change (2008) climate change is *"the result of changes in our weather patterns because of an increase in the Earth's average temperature. This is caused by increases in greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. These gases soak up heat from the sun but instead of the heat leaving the earth's atmosphere, some of it is trapped, making the Earth warmer. Climate change is also known as global warming."*²

In 2007, the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology released updated projections for future changes to the Australian climate.³ Projections are based on international and Australian climate research and computer modelling. The key projections for the Northern Territory include:

- increased average temperatures
- increased frequency of very hot days over 35 degrees Celsius
- increased frequency of hot spells (3 or more successive days over 35 degrees Celsius)
- increased intensity of tropical cyclones
- sea level rise of 18-59 cm by 2100 (upper limit of sea level rise may be substantially higher than this if present rate of melting of polar ice caps continues or increases)

² Department of Climate Change, 2008, *Fact sheet: Climate Change – What does it mean?*, available at <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/science/publications/fs-climatechange.html>, [accessed June 2008].

³ CSIRO, 2007, *Climate change in Australia*, available at <http://climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/documents/resources/>, [accessed July 2008].

- potential for more significant increases in inundation as a result of storm surges due to higher mean sea level and more intense weather systems
- ocean acidification as a result of increased atmospheric CO₂ (causing severe impacts on corals).

Potential impacts of these projected changes range across the NT environment, society and economy.⁴

The theme for the 2008 United Nations International Youth Day was 'Youth and Climate Change: Time for Action'. The selection of this theme was in recognition of the fact that climate change has already begun to devastate communities and deepen the effects of poverty and hunger. This situation complicates the challenges that youth face. However, young people are increasingly adding their voices to the call for action on climate change.⁵

International Youth Day, held on Tuesday August 12 in 2008, gave the world an opportunity to recognise the potential of youth, to celebrate their achievements, and plan for ways to better engage young people to successfully take action in the development of their societies. It presents a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to rally together to ensure that young people are included in decision-making at all levels.⁶

The United Nations Secretary-General stated in his message for International Youth Day on August 12 2008:

"Though the science of climate change is complex, the facts are simple: our world is heading towards trouble...Left unaddressed, climate change could cause an unravelling of the progress that has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and could also have serious implications for peace and security. Unless we make radical changes in the way we live, by the time the youth of 2008 reach my age, the world may well have become a rather inhospitable place.

⁴ Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, 2008, *Discussion Paper on NT Climate Change Issues*, Department of the Chief Minister, Northern Territory.

⁵ Available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyd2008.htm>

⁶ Available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyd2008.htm>

Today's young people will bear the consequences of climate change, thanks to the unfortunate legacy of their elders.

Yet young people are also well placed to contribute to the fight even now. They are adept at spreading new habits and technologies. They are adaptable and can quickly make low-carbon lifestyles and career choices a part of their daily lives. Youth should therefore be given a chance to take an active part in the decision-making of local, national and global levels. And they can actively support initiatives that will lead to the passage of far-reaching legislation.

We will need the spirit of youth in abundance as the world seeks to embrace cleaner, more sustainable forms of energy, including renewable resources. The transition to a low-carbon economy that we hope young people will see in their lifetimes offers tremendous opportunities. Not least, economic growth that is fuelled by clean energy and technological innovation will create jobs that could help alleviate the dire global problem of youth unemployment.

On this International Youth Day, I urge young people around the world to invest their energies and bright ideas into shaping a safer, more sustainable planet." ⁷

The Minister for Climate Change Paul Henderson stated in his Ministerial Statement on 21 February 2008 that *"Climate change is one of the most critical issues facing the Northern Territory, Australia and the world, and I am determined that my Government will lead by example... It's a complex issue that presents significant challenges and opportunities for the Territory, and we must act now if we are to make a difference".⁸*

The Northern Territory Governments 'Building a Better Future for young Territorians' framework recognises the importance of providing young people with opportunities to become involved in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services. The researcher wanted to give young Territorians a voice in key decisions that would affect their lives and lead the way to a sustainable future for the Northern Territory.

⁷ Available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/iyd2008_sg_english.pdf

⁸ Department of Chief Minister, 2008, *Media release: Government to reduce its carbon footprint – 21 February 2008*, available at <http://newsroom.nt.gov.au/adminmedia/mailouts/3636/attachments/hendo.2102.climate%20chang%20statement.pdf> [accessed March 2008].

The Office of Youth Affairs (OYA) classifies youth in the Northern Territory as people aged 12 to 25 years.⁹ The researcher decided to utilise the development of the first Northern Territory Government Climate Change Policy to enable young Territorians to have a voice in key NT Climate Change Policy decisions that will affect the community in which they live.

The researcher was unable to find any published material specifically relating to the views of youth in Australia on climate change. The data in this report was collected from young people in urban, rural and remote areas throughout the Northern Territory through the 'Discussion Paper on NT Climate Change Issues' youth briefing session, the 'Youth and Climate Change: time for action' workshop and the 'Young Territorians Voice on Climate Change' survey.

This project research aimed to:

- Investigate the understanding of, attitudes and behaviour towards climate change of youth throughout the Northern Territory, through a public workshop and surveys.
- Identify what methods would possibly be effective in engaging young people in the Northern Territory to better understand climate change and determine whether they are willing to take further actions to reduce their impact on global warming.
- Use data obtained to provide information to the Northern Territory Government in relation to the development and implementation of the first Northern Territory Climate Change Policy.

This research intends to offer an insight into the perspectives of young Territorians in regards to climate change to ultimately enable them to have a say in decision and policy making and as a result be engaged in taking action on climate change. It is not in any way debating the science or reality of the issue.

⁹ Office of Youth Affairs, 2003, *Building a Better Future for young Territorians*, Department of the Chief Minister, Darwin.

METHODOLOGY

Discussion Paper on NT Climate Change Issues Briefing

The researcher attended the Department of Chief Minister's briefing held on Thursday 12 June 2008 to participate and listen to young Territorians views on the NT Climate Change Issues Paper. The topics raised by the young people who attended this briefing assisted in the development of the 'Young Territorians Voice on Climate Change' survey (see Appendix 1). Following the consideration of public submissions and responses to the Discussion paper, the NT Government will release the NT Climate Change Policy in February 2009.¹⁰

'Youth and Climate Change: Time for Action' workshop

To utilise and celebrate the theme of International Youth Day 'Youth and Climate Change: time for action', the researcher held a public 'Youth and Climate Change' workshop in Darwin on Sunday 17 August 2008 for 12 to 25 year olds to hear what young people had to say about climate change. This workshop wouldn't have been possible without the financial support of the Environment Centre NT, who is the non-government environmental group who work to improve environmental protection and management throughout the Territory.

The researcher created flyers that were distributed throughout youth networks in Darwin to invite young people to come along, to hear Al Gore's Climate Change presentation, voice their concerns and engage young Territorians in climate change discussions.

The workshop was held at the Casuarina Shopping Centre Community Room and Prue Barnard, from the Environment Centre NT, kindly attended the workshop to present the Al Gore's Climate Project in order to introduce and generate a greater understanding of the climate change issue.

The young people attending the workshop were then asked to participate in an informal discussion session to canvass their concerns and come up with some ideas or strategies on how to engage young Territorians in taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change. The researcher had prepared a set of strategic questions prior to the workshop to guide the discussion.

¹⁰ Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, 2008, *Discussion Paper on NT Climate Change Issues*, Department of the Chief Minister, Northern Territory.

Lastly, the researcher asked the workshop participants to complete and provide feedback on the draft 'Young Territorians Voice on Climate Change' survey. The researcher was very grateful to these young people for partaking in the workshop and providing insightful and stimulating discussion.

'Young Territorians Voice on Climate Change' survey

From the feedback gathered at the workshop the 'Young Territorians Voice on Climate Change' survey was finalised and approved by the Office of Youth Affairs. The surveys, aimed at young people aged 12 to 25 years, were distributed throughout the Northern Territory.

Surveys were sent to four private Northern Territory schools accompanied by a cover letter to the principal outlining the project. Three schools sent back responses from students. The surveys were also distributed through Northern Territory youth networks online, Non Government organisations, and individuals (such as family and friends) concerned with climate change.

The aim of the survey distribution was to collect as many as possible, therefore the responses provide a comprehensive insight into the perspectives of over three hundred and fifty young Territorians.

The survey was structured with 5 basic themes (refer to Appendix 1):

- Demographics of survey participants
- Personal view of whether climate change is actually an issue
- Personal level of understanding/knowledge of climate change
- Personal level of concern towards climate change
- Actions taken and willing to undertake to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and impact on climate change
- Measures that would encourage young people to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change

Although 3 weeks were allocated for the return of surveys, the researcher received a large number of surveys after the due date.

Once received, the surveys were compiled and the data was sorted into themes and analysed. The demographics of participants were also compared with 2006 ABS Census data.¹¹

¹¹ ABS 2006 Census data

DISCUSSION/MAJOR FINDINGS

1.0 'YOUTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE: TIME FOR ACTION' WORKSHOP

Four youth participants (12 to 25 years old) and four adult participants (over 26 years old) attended the workshop.

Through the discussion session, youth participants identified the following:

1.1 Why participants attended the 'Youth and Climate Change' workshop:

- "To meet other young people who are concerned about climate change" (Male 19)
- "Mainly because climate change is a very big issue not only for our generation but for the coming generations. I believe youth can change the world around" (Male 25)
- "Because climate change is an issue I feel strongly about, but feel I don't know enough about" (Male 17)
- "Because I'm working on climate induced sea level rise stuff, and it's pretty important" (Female 24)



Figure 1.1 Katie Chatto introducing the 'Youth and Climate Change' workshop

1.2 Impacts/effects of climate change young people most concerned about?

- Deforestation
- Hunger / food shortages
- Travel restrictions
- Refugees / displaced people
- Realistic housing
- War
- Water availability and quality
- Diseases
- Extreme weather (floods and cyclones)
- People dying
- Ocean acidification
- Living standards
- Sea level rise (Kakadu and Torres Strait Islands going under water)
- Temperature rise
- Loss of species (animals and plants), biodiversity and natural resources
- Increased poverty
- Developing countries being affected the worst



Figure 1.2 Prue Barnard (ECNT) presenting AI Gore's Climate Project

1.3 What actions need to be taken to reduce the effect of climate change?

- Grow food locally
- Grow organic food
- Eat less meat / go vegetarian
- Highest polluters to be accountable
- Green buildings (like tropical 'Burnett' houses)
- Implement stricter building codes
- Use less fuel
- Use solar power, renewable energy and other energy efficient technologies



Figure 1.3 Workshop participants engaged in the discussion session

1.4 Ideas or strategies that would engage young people in the Northern Territory to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change.

- CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS

Create community awareness and understanding by making Northern Territory Events such as 'Bass in the Grass/Dust' carbon-neutral. Include the extra cost in price of ticket and ensure the offset is legitimate.

- SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL PROJECTS

Implement curriculum-based school projects to engage whole of community to create change such as the 'ruMAD?' program.

- GREEN HOUSING

Implement more 'green loans and rebates' to design 'climate' friendly houses and install solar panels, water tanks and other 'green' climate friendly devices.

2.0 SURVEY

A total of 475 surveys from young Territorians were received. The results of these findings will be altered as only 360 of the 475 surveys have been collated to date (4 December 2008) due to many arriving after the closing date. An extended edition of this report will be completed to include the remaining collected data and compared to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) for representation, so results may vary slightly. The amended survey will then be posted on the Office of Youth Affairs website (www.youth.nt.gov.au) in February 2009.

2.1 Demographics

The demographics of survey participants compared with 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data shows a good cross-section of young Territorians were received.

The 2006 ABS Census places the Northern Territory youth (12 to 25 years of age) population at 21.7% of the total NT population.¹²

2.1.1 Gender of respondents

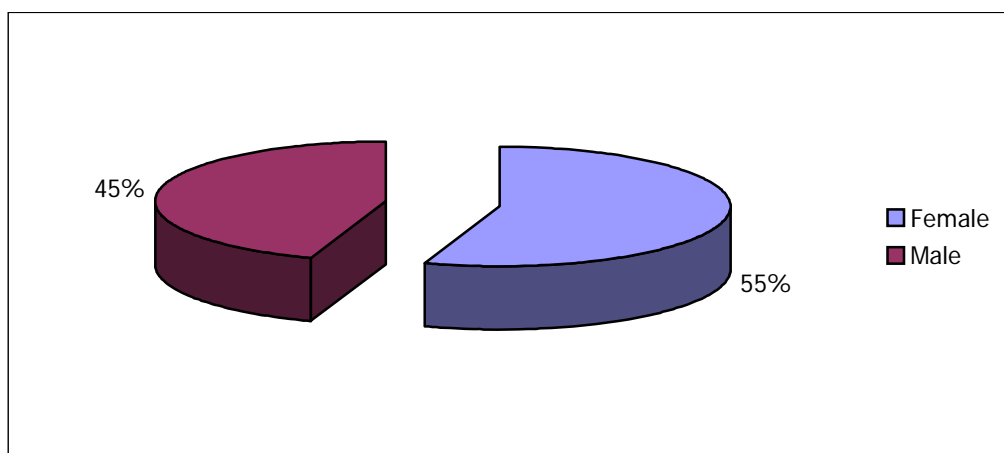


Figure 2.1.1 compares the percentage of male and female survey respondents

¹² ABS 2006 Census data

According to the ABS census (2006), males constitute 48.5% and females 51.5% of Young Territorians (12 to 25 years of age), so female responses were slightly overrepresented.

2.1.2 Age of respondents

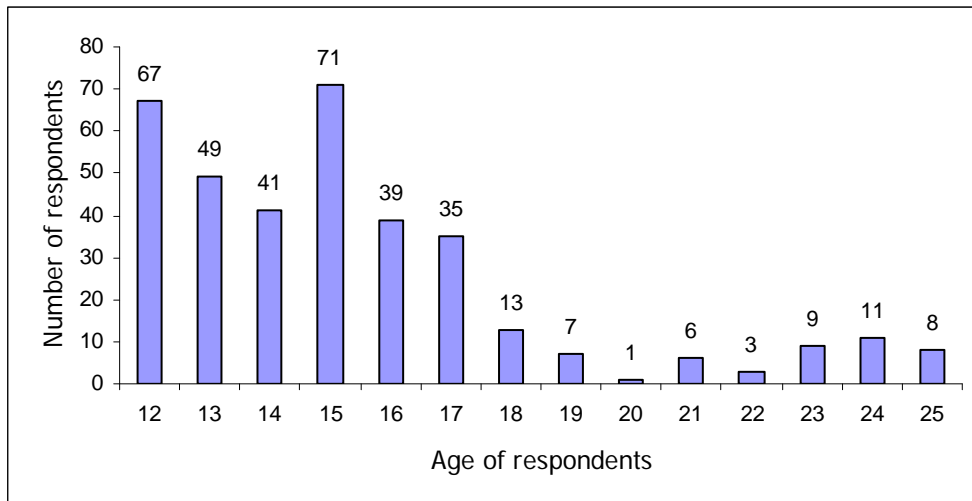


Figure 2.1.2 compares the ages of survey respondents

According to the ABS census (2006), 12-17 year olds constitute 56.6% and 18-25 year olds 43.4% of total youth population, so this is not a representative age sample of young Territorians, however responses were still gathered from across the entire youth age range. A higher percentage of 12-17 year old respondents are as a result of the NT schools assistance to distribute the survey.

2.1.3 Cultural Identity

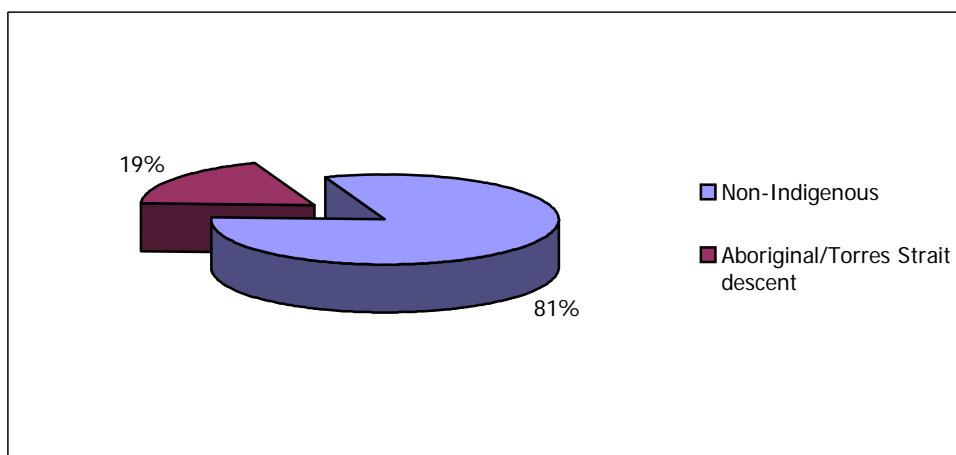


Figure 2.1.3 compares the percentage of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous respondents

According to the ABS census (2006), persons identifying themselves as of Indigenous descent constitute 34% of the Northern Territory youth population, so Indigenous youth are under represented in this report.

2.1.4 Main language spoken at home

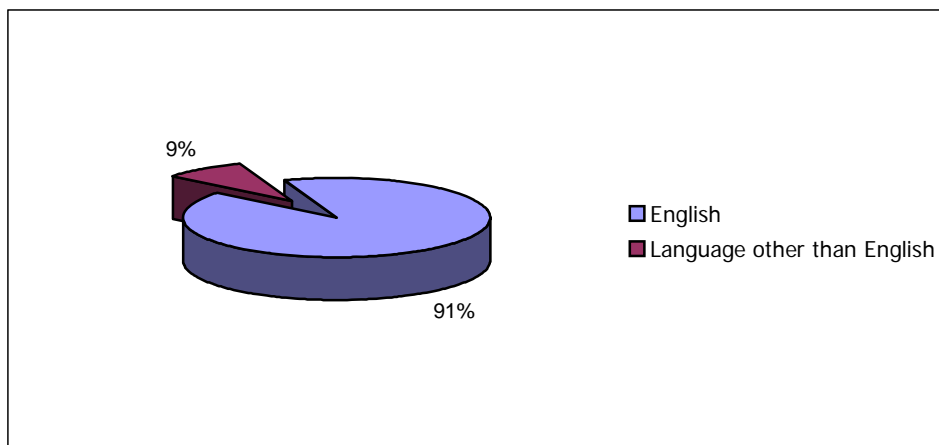


Figure 2.1.4 compares the main language spoken of survey respondents

English was the main language spoken at home for 91% of respondents. Languages other than English cited included: Japanese, Timorese, Portuguese, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Filipino, Chinese, Arabic, Shona, Kiswahili, Bisaya, Tamil, Greek, Norwegian, Dutch, German, Pigeon, Gurindji, Walpirri and Arrente. This result indicates that the survey was comprehensible by young Territorians who spoke English as a second language.

2.1.5 Geographical distribution

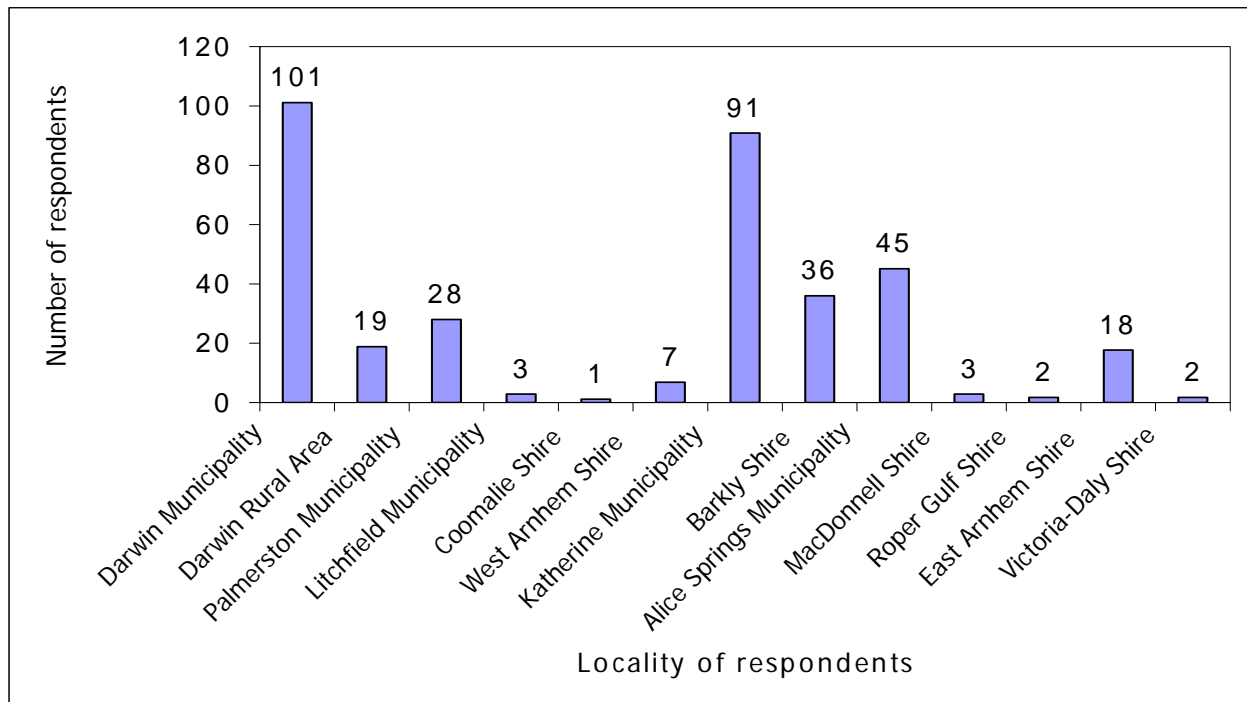


Figure 2.1.5 compares the residential locality of survey respondents

The majority (61%) of respondents came from Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs municipalities however a number (39%) of responses were also gathered from the rural and remote areas throughout the Northern Territory.

2.2 Knowledge of Climate Change

2.2.1 Global warming

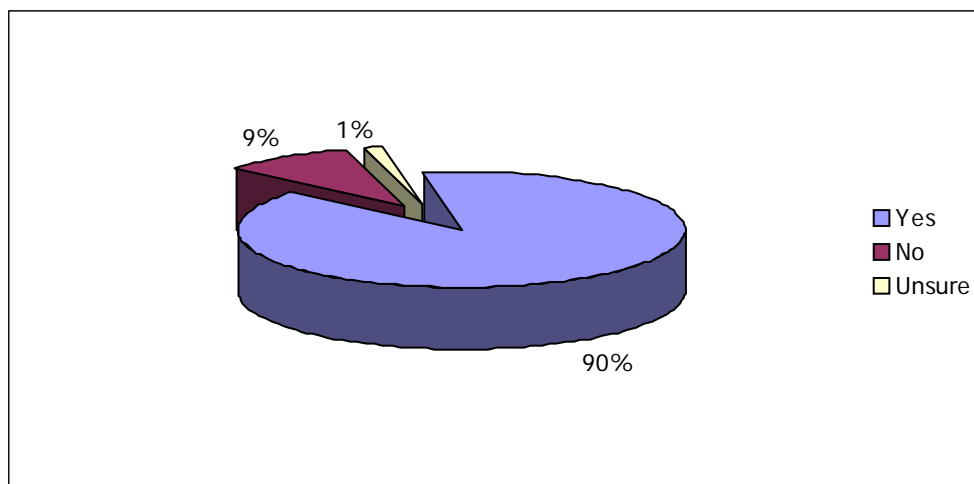


Figure 2.2.1 Percentage of young Territorians who consider global warming to really be happening now.

The majority of respondents believe that global warming is really happening now.

2.2.2 Definition

When participants were asked what the definition of climate change was, the most common response was based on the 'change in the climate and temperature' (either rapid and gradual, hot and/or cold, due to human and/or natural causes).

Other definitions included:

- Temperatures heating up, ice caps melting
- Human pollution, carbon emissions, toxic gases, greenhouse gases
- Don't know
- 'Global warming'
- Changes to ozone layer (hole)
- Natural cycle/phase of earth
- A load of 'crap'
- Severe weather
- Loss of species (polar bears)

Some of the most interesting definitions are as follows:

- *"Mother nature seeking revenge for what humans are doing"*
- *"Killing animals that we could eat"*
- *"Climate change is little more than an excuse to push agendas, a leap of blind irrational faith and manipulating people into doing things through the power of guilt and fear... that is why I hesitate to jump on the global warming and climate change bandwagon"*
- *"Is where the earth warms up and everyone dies"*

2.2.3 Perceived level of understanding

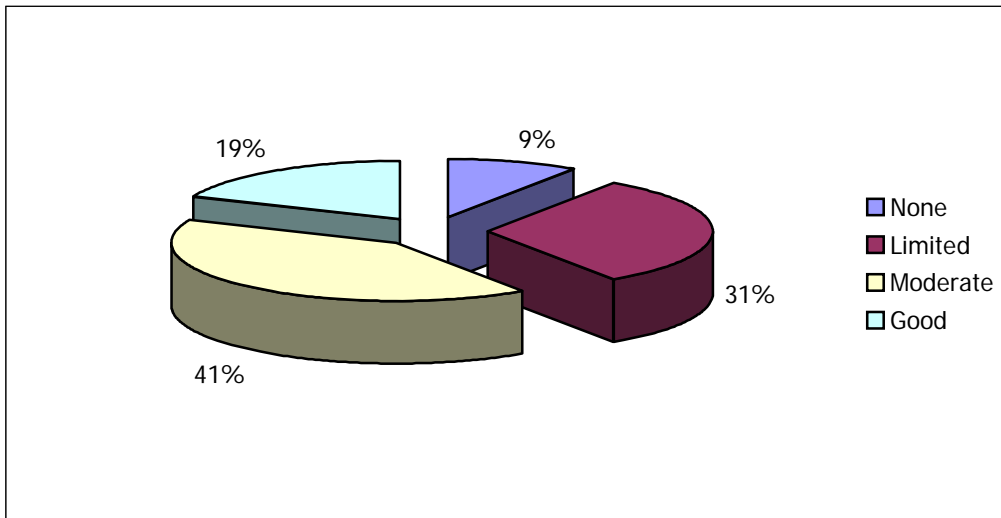


Figure 2.2.3 respondents perceived personal level of understanding of climate change.

The majority (60%) of respondents believe they have a moderate (41%) to good (19%) level of understanding of climate change, while 40% reported limited (31%) or no (9%) understanding.

2.2.4 Learning avenues

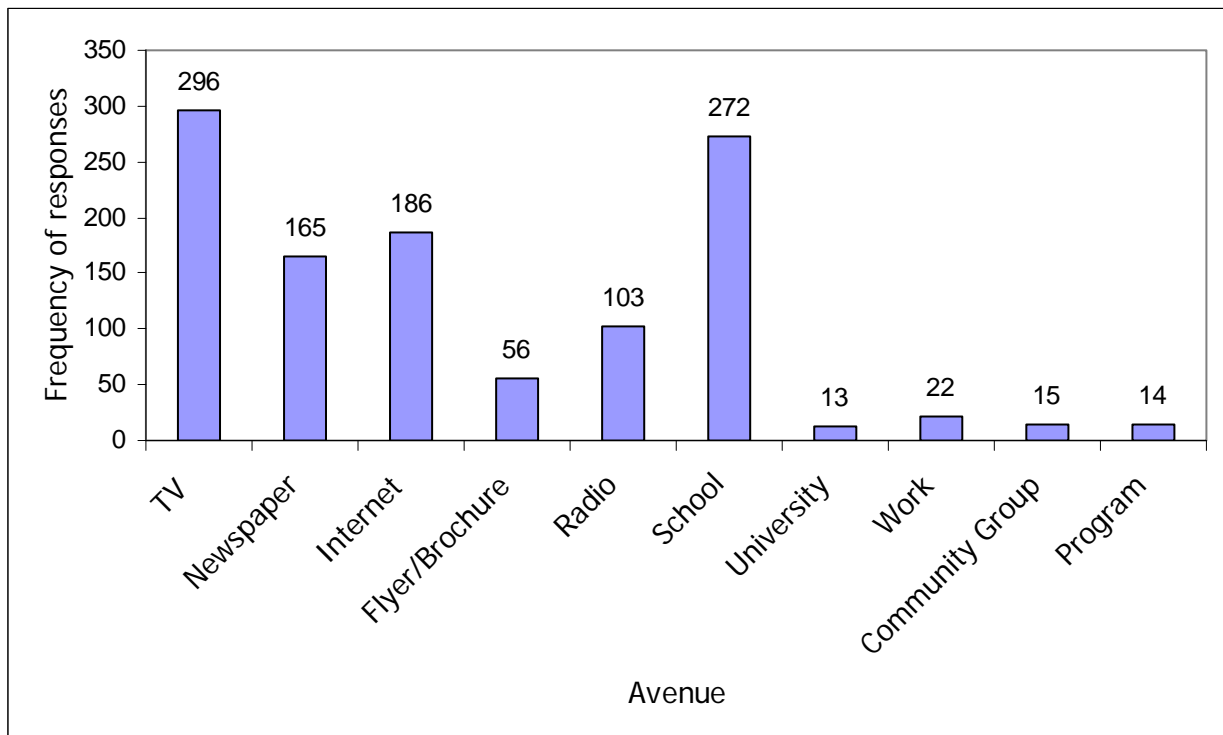


Figure 2.2.4 compares the avenues through which respondents had learnt about climate change.

Respondents stated they learn about climate change most commonly through the television, school and the internet. Participants were able to choose more than one option for this question.

Other learning avenues identified:

- Family / parents
- Friends
- Books / Magazines – GRIND (Darwin City Council)
- DVD's / Movies – 'An inconvenient truth'
- Community groups – Church, Northern Land Council, United Nations Youth Association, Greenpeace, Greencross Australia
- ABC - Behind the News
- Programs – Junior Rangers, OzGreens YouthLEAD, 2020 Youth Summit
- Documentaries
- Debates / forums
- Discussion Paper on NT Climate Change Issues
- Politicians

2.2.5 Measures to increase participants knowledge and understanding of climate change

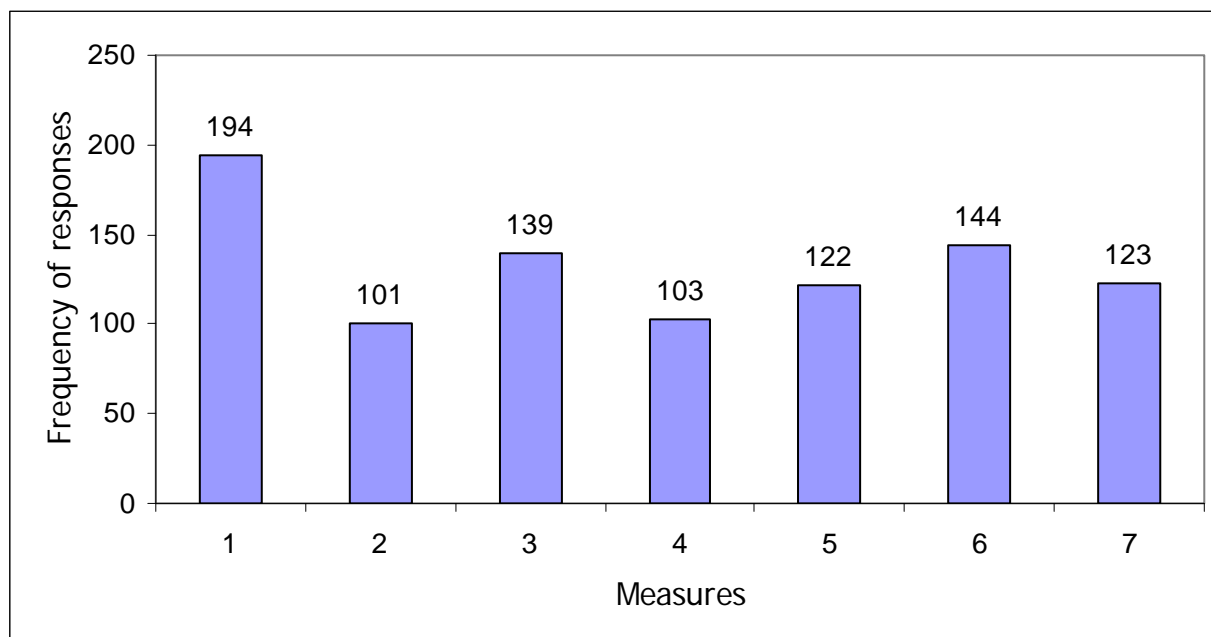


Figure 2.2.5 frequency of measures respondents stated would help increase their level of knowledge and understanding of climate change.

Proposed measures:

- 1 = Compulsory education at school
- 2 = Public education workshops / debates / forums
- 3 = Public education via media (e.g. advertising)
- 4 = Information brochures / pamphlets
- 5 = Talking to family or friends
- 6 = Participating in climate change events
- 7 = Joining an environmental / community / youth group

Respondents stated most commonly that compulsory education in schools, participation in climate change events and public education via media advertising would help increase their level of knowledge and understanding of climate change. Respondents also stated that the measures needed to be hands-on and fun.

Other measures identified:

- Having kid groups (like a kids coolmob)
- Computer and Nintendo learning games
- School fundraising events

- Put it in a hip hop song
- Movies and videos - watching 'An Inconvenient Truth'
- Separate school subject
- Raised in school subjects more (science, studies of society and environment)
- Newspaper articles
- Advertisements on television
- Posters at school
- Surfing the internet
- Reading more
- Word of mouth

Some of the most interesting comments regarding measures are as follows:

- *"I would like to join an environmental group but I don't have the time to do anything else at the moment with school and other commitments"*
- *"Higher interest on my behalf but also a society and school that is more active and interested"*
- *"Agreement of people (on the science) as many people are saying different things"*
- *"Any avenue or structured scenario where climate change is taken from an objective standpoint and all conceivable points of view are explored and the insights and flaws of every point of view are considered (All views have their flaws, no one is perfect)".*
- *"No education, needed it's not a necessity in life"*

2.3 Concern about Climate Change

2.3.1 Level of Concern

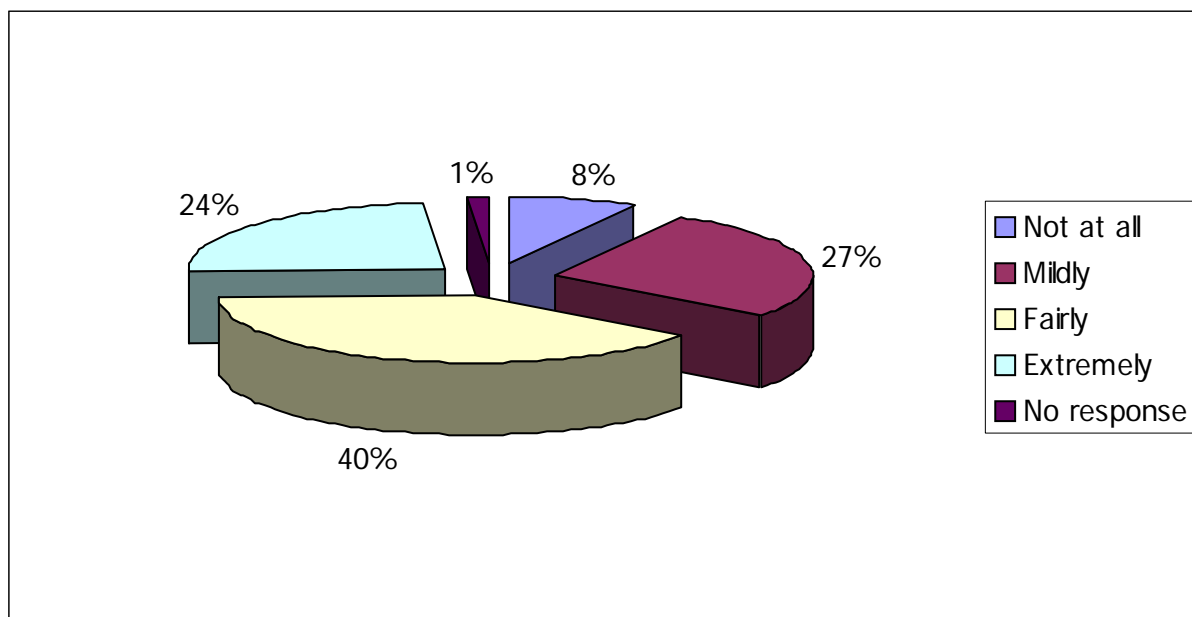


Figure 2.3.1 respondents personal level of concern about climate change.

Respondents stated most commonly (40%) that they are 'fairly' concerned about climate change.

2.3.2 Why/Why not

When participants were asked why or why not they were concerned about climate change the most common responses was based on it 'affecting everyone'.

Other responses included:

- Environmental issues
- Loss/extinction of species (animals and plants)
- Effects getting worse
- Impacts happening now
- No effects currently occurring
- World ending
- Future destroyed
- Kids / future generations
- Don't know that much about climate change

- Don't care
- Death of human race
- If no action is taken
- Getting too hot or cold
- Health
- Sea level rise
- Not own / others responsibility
- Air pollution
- Natural process
- Lack of knowledge

Some of the most interesting comments regarding participants concerns are as follows:

- *"I am concerned more about the attitudes surrounding it. People won't believe or put it first. Big companies don't care"*
- *"Because it does not seem to affect my life, though it affects animals' extinction"*
- *"Because it may make extinct the human population"*
- *"Because there are other people who care about it so why should I"*
- *"If climate change continues the next generations of kids don't have as much chance"*
- *"Because I think the world is beautiful and doesn't deserve this sort of punishment"*
- *"Because my children's children and many generations to come will suffer for what we have done"*
- *"Because I am young and I shouldn't be worried about it"*
- *"Climate change is an inevitable part of the evolution of the earth. It was going to happen anyway, we made it occur sooner"*
- *"General public lacks knowledge on the issue"*

2.4 Actions

2.4.1 Actions currently undertaken

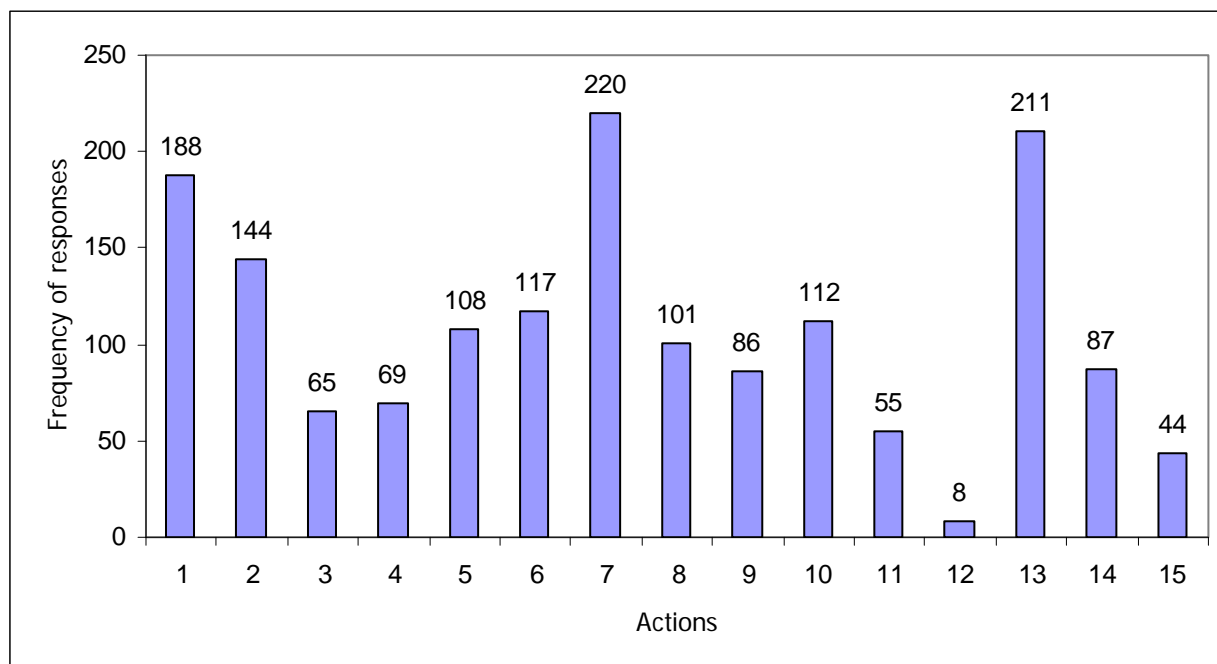


Figure 2.4.1 Frequency of responses to actions young Territorians are currently undertaking to reduce their impact on climate change.

Proposed Actions:

1 = recycle and reuse

2 = buy energy saving / efficient appliances

3 = eat less meat

4 = build / improve house to suit climate

5 = buy locally grown organic food

6 = buy new things less often

7 = use less electricity at home (switch off)

8 = plant more native trees

9 = buy or use a smaller car

10 = fly less often

11 = use energy from renewable sources

12 = use energy from nuclear power sources

13 = walk, ride bike or catch the bus instead of driving car

14 = talk to family and friends about changing their behaviour

15 = vote for politicians who will take action on climate change

Respondents stated most commonly that they have already taken the following three actions to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change: using less electricity at home (switching off); walk, riding bike or catching the bus instead of driving a car; and recycling and reusing.

Interestingly 'use energy from nuclear power sources' marked as a current action as nuclear power is not currently available in the Northern Territory. This may indicate that this question or what nuclear power is may not have been fully understood by the survey respondents.

Other actions mentioned and comments made:

- *"We cannot recycle in Alice Springs"*
- *"I don't litter"*
- *"Changed all light bulbs in the house to energy saving ones"*
- *"Did that dark (earth) hour thing for fun"*
- *"Conserve water"*
- *"Use shopping bags instead of plastic"*

2.4.2 Actions willing to undertake in the future

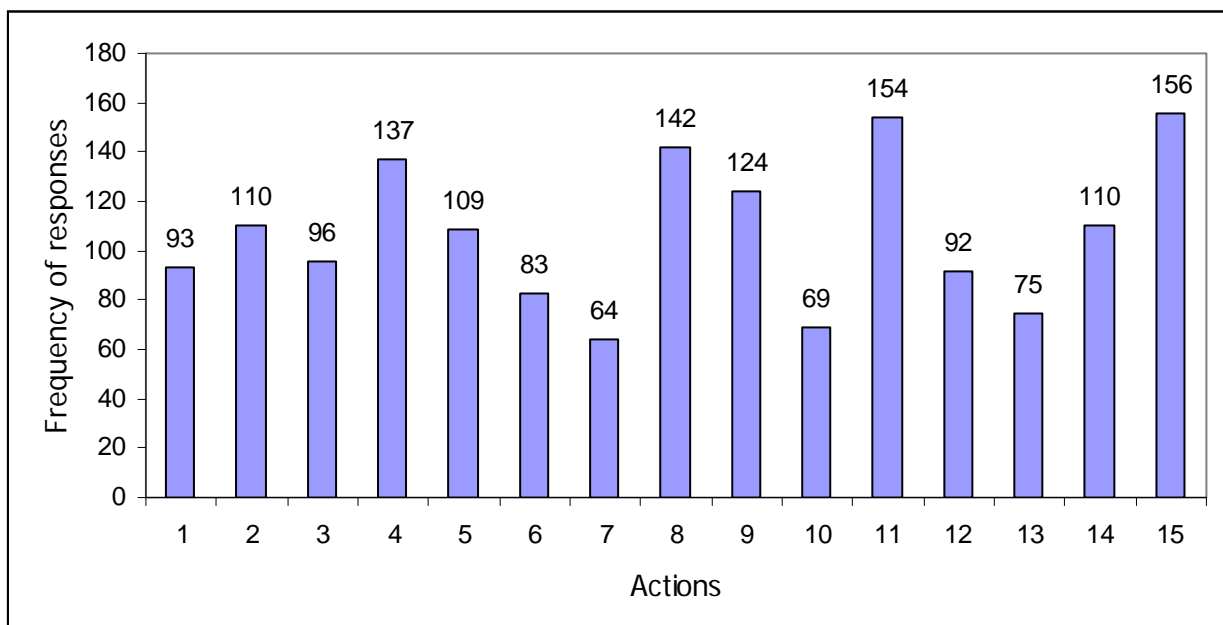


Figure 2.4.2 Frequency of responses regarding actions young Territorians would be willing to undertake in the future to reduce their impact on climate change.

Proposed Actions:

- 1 = recycle and reuse
- 2 = buy energy saving / efficient appliances
- 3 = eat less meat
- 4 = build / improve house to suit climate
- 5 = buy locally grown organic food
- 6 = buy new things less often
- 7 = use less electricity at home (switch off)
- 8 = plant more native trees
- 9 = buy or use a smaller car
- 10 = fly less often
- 11 = use energy from renewable sources
- 12 = use energy from nuclear power sources
- 13 = walk, ride bike or catch the bus instead of driving car
- 14 = talk to family and friends about changing their behaviour
- 15 = vote for politicians who will take action on climate change

Respondents stated most commonly that the following four actions they would be willing to undertake in future to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change: vote for politicians who will take action on climate change; walk, ride bike or catch the bus instead of driving car; plant more native trees; and build / improve house to suit climate.

There were some conflicting and particularly interesting comments made about the use of energy from nuclear power sources:

- *"NEVER nuclear"*
- *"I would be more than willing to use nuclear power if people would stop scare-mongering that nuclear power = nuclear weapons and actually consider it a viable option. Coal kills thousands in China every year because of fumes! Replace coal with nuclear and immediately we'll start seeing a healthier environment"*
- *"Use energy from nuclear power sources when they develop technology"*
- *"Sorry but NO WAY nuclear power, there's way more viable choices!!!"*

Other actions cited and comments made were as follows:

- *"We cannot recycle in Alice Springs"*
- *"Start to raise a lot of money and give it all to a really good charity that will help with climate change and put the earth back the way it was and keep it that way forever"*
- *"Turn off car in traffic jam"*
- *"Nothing incredibly drastic, simple things are fine but not driving a scooter in the wet season"*
- *"Less burning of plastic"*
- *"Use a water saving shower device"*
- *"To try to run house and car completely on renewable resources"*
- *"Teach others"*
- *"Drive less"*
- *"Get more buses and better bike paths"*
- *Small things like using a clothesline instead of dryer (most energy consuming appliance in the household) and they need to turn up the air-con to about 26-28 degrees in shopping centres"*

2.5 Measures that would encourage reduced impact on climate change

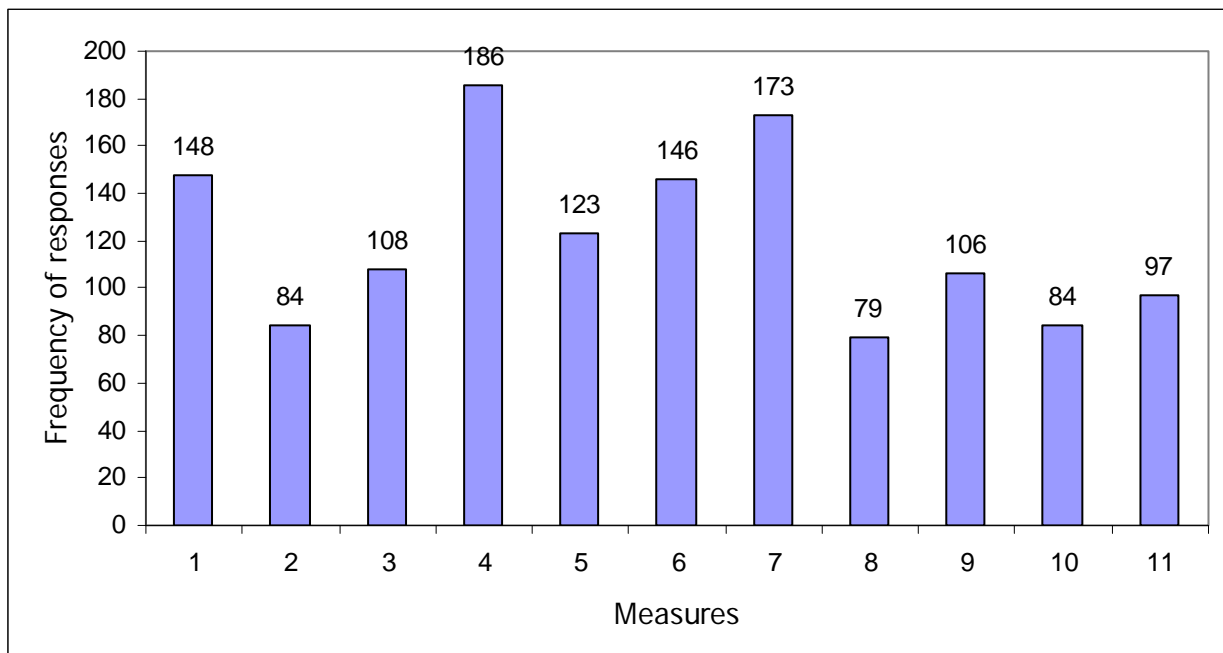


Figure 2.4.3 Frequency of responses to measures that encourage young Territorians to reduce their impact on climate change.

Proposed measures:

- 1 = Compulsory education at school
- 2 = Public education workshops / debates / forums
- 3 = Public education via media (e.g. advertising)
- 4 = Monetary incentives
- 5 = Fines
- 6 = Laws and regulations
- 7 = Awards and prizes
- 8 = Talking to family or friends
- 9 = Participating in climate change events
- 10 = Joining an environmental / community / youth group
- 11 = Getting a job in a company that adopts sustainable practices

Respondents stated most commonly that the following four measures would encourage young Territorians to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change: monetary incentives; awards and prizes; compulsory (fun and interactive) education at school; and laws and regulations.

Particularly interesting comments made about using renewable energy sources are as follows:

- *“More solar power and environmentally friendly electricity”*
- *“Pay higher prices to have the option of using ‘green energy’ to supply my electricity for the house eg. Alternative energy sources; wind, hydro etc”*
- *“In Germany (not sure about other countries but probably there too) they have a system where average people can put solar cells on top of their roofs and then can sell any extra back into the grid at a certain rate, that seems to be going well so maybe a system like that too”*
- *“Solar panels cost too much for anyone but the upper class to even consider. If the government rebate were a reasonable tax write off as a compensation for putting up solar panels that would be the way to go. The current measures in place mean that anyone who might consider it are not rewarded and the reward scheme is capped at a certain earning (i.e. people don’t get it if they earn over a certain amount). The problem here is that the cap is so low that people on those wages cannot even dream of solar panels. Fix the scheme for*

solar panels so that it is reasonable and that would encourage almost the entire middle class to consider it"

- *"Having more readily available 'green' energy alternatives being able to recycle items through council rubbish services"*

Other measures mentioned and comments made were as follows:

- Design a car that when in motion re-powers itself
- Get rid of plastic bags
- Clean up days
- Planting trees
- *"Compulsory Carbon Footprint tax per household to increase awareness and hits people where it hurts. Money to go to Environmental organisations or Climate Change Research"*
- *"Learn what it is"*
- *"Comprehensive and supportive evidence, by all scientists, and proved methods of positively affecting the current trends."*
- *"Only some education at school but not compulsory"*
- *"Maybe different jobs/shops could have yearly awards and prizes on how "environmentally friendly" and how much effort is being made to help the environment to stop climate change"*
- *"Rules and laws aren't the answer to everything, there are many laws now that control our every move and the people whom break those rules are still doing so and the rest of us are being punished. I believe that public education, school workshops and climate change events are the way to go"*
- *"Serious ads not those cartoon things, get people worried like those sponsor a dying orphan campaign"*
- *"I am trying to get a job in a construction company which follows sustainable principles"*
- *"The only way to answer this would be to lie - the youth of today are too concerned with their everyday comforts"*
- *"Need to simplify the issue, there are too many words/definitions related to it; so make it simple/understandable/memorable"*

CONCLUSION

This focus of this report was to investigate the perspectives of youth (12 to 25 years of age) in the Northern Territory in regards to climate change. From the data collected the researcher was able to identify major concerns and possible actions and measures that could be addressed to increase young Territorians understanding of climate change and encourage them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change.

The researcher obtained relevant data through participating in the youth briefing of the 'Discussion Paper on NT Climate Change Issues', holding a 'Youth and Climate Change: time for action' workshop in Darwin and through distributing the 'Young Territorians Voice on Climate Change' survey to various schools, organisations and individuals in urban, rural and remote areas in the Northern Territory.

This research indicates that there are many gaps in the understanding and awareness of young Territorians on climate change. However, it also highlights some of the challenges and opportunities for the Northern Territory in regards to engaging young people in tackling climate change.

In light of the information obtained through the consultation with young Territorians it appears young Territorians believe that global warming is currently occurring and a majority are fairly concerned about climate change and the wide range of effects it may cause.

Young Territorians indicated that the inclusion of climate change in school curriculum, climate change related events and public education via media (advertising on television, or information on the internet) would be most effective in enabling young people in the NT to learning more about and gain a greater understanding of climate change.

Young Territorians also indicated that the most effective measures of encouraging young people to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change would be to implement monetary incentives; awards and prizes; compulsory (fun, interactive and engaging) education at school; and laws & regulations. As these actions have shown to be a

high probability of being implemented by young Territorians they should be considered in the NT specific climate change adaptation, mitigation, policies and strategies.

Overall there appears to be a desire for increased opportunities to learn about and take action in regards to climate change it is therefore essential that this information is available through the effective youth engagement measures mentioned in this report.

The Northern Territory Government should be applauded for developing a Climate Change Policy for the Northern Territory to address this critical global issue. However, if the Northern Territory Government is serious about being a leader on tackling climate change they will need to continue to actively engage young Territorians in the areas of climate change preparedness, disaster risk reduction, adaptation and mitigation. Therefore the recommendations that have been presented in this report should be considered in the development and implementation of the NT Climate Change Policy and for the development of future NT Climate Change related programs to ensure that the Northern Territory Climate Change Policy reflects the needs and ambitions of the next generation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the information gathered during the research process the researcher has compiled a number of recommendations for the Northern Territory Government to assist in engaging young people living in the Northern Territory to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change. The recommendations are in no order of preference and in many cases are interlinked.

Recommendation One

Introduce climate change and sustainability into whole Northern Territory school curriculum by providing links into compulsory subjects. Relevant and engaging climate change linkages based on latest scientific data in the school curriculum and the implementation of curriculum-based community projects to engage whole of community would assist to increase young Territorians understanding and level of knowledge of climate change.

Recommendation Two

Implement programs and activities in regards to the following initiatives in order to encourage young people to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change.

- Monetary incentives
- Awards and prizes
- Laws and regulations

Recommendation Three

Endeavour to hold 'carbon-neutral' events in the Northern Territory such as 'Bass in the Grass / Dust'.

Recommendation Four

The Northern Territory Government to invest in research and implementation of renewable energy sources and energy efficient technologies and provide incentives for their adoption.

Recommendation Five

The Northern Territory Government to implement 'green' financial incentives and regulate future infrastructure development in the Northern Territory to be 'green', climate appropriate and sustainable (eg. Housing).

Recommendation Six

The Northern Territory Government to upgrade and expand public transport system and bike paths across the Territory.

Recommendation Seven

Implement recycling in Alice Springs.

Recommendation Eight

Distribute more impartial information about nuclear power through effective engagement measures.

Recommendation Nine

The Northern Territory Government to follow up the impact of the NT Climate Change Policy on youth perceptions and behaviour in regards to climate change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. 'Young Territorians Voice on Climate Change' survey



YOUNG TERRITORIANS VOICE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Are you a young person (12-25years) and living in the Northern Territory? If so, we need your help! By completing these survey questions you will assist in gathering information on what youth in the Northern Territory think about climate change. Here is an opportunity to have your voice heard! This information is confidential and only collated results will be presented and published.

Please return complete form by **12 September 2008**.

1. **What is your gender?**
 Male Female

2. **What is your age (years)?** _____

3. **Do you identify yourself as Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander?**
 Yes No

4. **What is the main language spoken at home?**
 English Other (please specify): _____

5. **In which suburb /community /town in the Northern Territory do you live?**

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability (please mark boxes).

6. **Do you think global warming is really happening now?**
 Yes No

7. **What is climate change?** (please comment)

8. **Please rate your level of understanding of climate change.**
 (please mark box) {1: none, 2: limited, 3: moderate, 4: good}

1	2	3	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. **Where have you learnt about climate change?**
 (please mark as many boxes as you think appropriate – if none go to Q10)
- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flyers / Brochures | <input type="checkbox"/> Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community groups (please specify) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programs (please specify) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |

10. What would help to increase your level of knowledge and understanding of climate change?(please mark as many boxes as you think appropriate)

- Compulsory education at school
- Public education workshops / debates / forums
- Public education via media (e.g. advertising)
- Information brochures / pamphlets
- Talking to family or friends
- Participating in climate change events
- Joining an environmental / community / youth group
- Other (please specify) _____

11.

a. How concerned are you about climate change? (please mark box)

{1; not at all, 2: mildly, 3: fairly, 4: extremely}

1	2	3	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Why are or why aren't you concerned about climate change?

(please comment)

12. What actions have you taken in your life to reduce your impact on climate change? (please mark as many boxes as you think appropriate)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Already doing now</i>	<i>Willing to do in the future</i>
Recycle and Reuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy energy saving / efficient appliances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat less meat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Build / improve house to suit climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy locally grown organic food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy new things less often	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use less electricity at home (switch off)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plant more native trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy or use a smaller car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fly less often	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use energy from renewable sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use energy from nuclear power sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk, ride bike or catch the bus instead of driving a car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talk to family and friends about changing their behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vote for politicians who will take action on climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What would encourage you to reduce your impact on climate change?

(please mark as many boxes as you think appropriate)

- Compulsory education at school
- Public education workshops / debates / forums
- Public education via media (e.g. advertising)
- Money rewards
- Fines
- Laws and regulations
- Awards and prizes
- Talking to family or friends
- Participating in climate change events
- Joining an environmental / community / youth group
- Getting a job in a company that adopts sustainable practices
- Other (please specify) _____

14. If you had a chance to talk to the Northern Territory Minister for Climate Change what would you like to say? (please comment)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire ☺

If you have any further questions or would like further information regarding this project or survey, please contact the Office of Youth Affairs.

Office of Youth Affairs
Department of Health and Families
GPO Box 40596
Casuarina NT 0810

Telephone: 08 8999 3862
Free Call: 1800 652 736
Fax: 08 8999 3883
Email: oya@nt.gov.au

Please print this survey on recycled paper.

EVALUATION

Research

One of the major limitations of this research was that even though climate change is a current global issue it is also a very complex and uncertain topic. The workshop discussions and survey questions did not cover all aspects of the climate change debate. Instead the workshop and survey was purposely tailored to be comprehensible by and relevant to the target audience.

There is a large amount of current research (of various standards) on climate change both accepting and rejecting the issue. However the researcher was unable to find other published research on Australian 'youth perspectives' of climate change to compare the collected data with.

The low number of youth participates in the 'Discussion Paper on NT Climate Change Issues' briefing and the 'Youth and Climate Change: time for action' workshop might be explained through the data collected in Sections 2.2.5 and 2.5. This research shows that most Young Territorians would rather be engaged in the issue through other measures. The workshop might have engaged more participants if the researcher had targeted it to an organised group rather than open it to the public.

If this research was to replicated in the future, I would suggest limiting participant responses to Question 9, 10, 12 and 13 in the survey to the most relevant 3 for each column to possibly gain a more focused response.

The number of surveys completed and returned was far greater than the researcher was expecting. The researcher is very grateful to all the schools, organisations and individuals who distributed the survey and to the young people who completed the survey – the report would not have been possible without your input and assistance.

Data entry

Due to receiving many surveys well after the due date, it took a longer amount of time to enter and analyse the data. A huge thanks to the staff at the Office of Youth Affairs for all your assistance.

Time constraints

Due to the complexity of the subject, the survey took some time to refine. The researcher needed to consult with a range of individuals on the subject matter to ensure that the broad target audience would comprehend the questions.

Many of the completed surveys were still being received after the due date, which prevented the researcher from being able to collate the all the survey data in time to collate the report for the Minister's presentation. The extra data will be incorporated added to this report before being made public.

Accessing Respondents

The research may not be 'representative' of young people living in the Northern Territory, however given time, distribution and financial constraints the researcher opted instead to gather as many responses as possible. Gathering additional survey data from males, people

over 18 years of age, people who identify as indigenous and young people living in rural and remote areas might enable a closer 'representative' sample.

Future

The finalised report, including the additional data yet to be incorporated into the results, will be published on the Office of Youth Affairs website www.youth.nt.gov.au in February 2009.

There are many aspects of the research undertaken in this report that are worth acknowledging, exploring further and taking note of. The researcher is very proud to have produced and completed this report and looks forward to observing future developments in the Northern Territory regarding to tackling climate change.