

A FAIR GO FOR ALL: Intergenerational Justice Policy Survey

AN EVERYGEN
RESEARCH PROJECT

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“Australian policymaking is often characterised by short-termism. Despite this, **Australians want more intergenerational policymaking.**”

Our research found that **97%** agree that policies in the present day should take into account the interests of future generations. ”

- Professor Susan Harris Rimmer
Founder of EveryGen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The desire – and need – for intergenerational policymaking has never been greater.

A FAIR GO FOR ALL: Intergenerational Justice Policy Survey 2024

Intergenerational policymaking considers the rights and interests of current and future generations concurrently. While many Australians believe in a 'fair go', this study suggests that Australians are worried our current policy framework is failing to deliver on this promise.

This research sought to understand the extent to which Australian voters care about long-term policymaking, whether politicians and government are matching their expectations regarding long-term policymaking, and what priorities Australian voters see as key issues requiring more intergenerational approaches to policymaking.

We find that:

- 97% believe that policies today should take into account the interests of future generations.
- 81% agree that Australian politicians generally think too short-term when making decisions.
- Three quarters agree that visions for the next 10-20 years are given too little emphasis in the political debate in Australia.
- Australians have the least confidence in

policymakers' skills and knowledge to make policy on AUKUS, artificial intelligence and climate adaptation.

- 78% believe that Australia should establish a Commissioner for Future Generations.

Australians across different demographics had relatively consistent views on long-term policymaking, however there were some key differences:

- Young people have a more positive view of policymakers' skills and knowledge than older generations.
- Older generations tended to rank health a higher priority concern than young people.
- LGBTIQ+ were 20 percentage points more likely than heterosexual people to care about the loss of biodiversity in Australia (63% compared to 43%)
- People with a disability were more than twice as likely to strongly disagree that policymakers have the skills or knowledge to develop long-term policy on housing (20% as compared to 9%) on average.
- Women were much more likely to care about healthcare, wellbeing for children and youth, welfare, and economic reform for environmental sustainability than men were.

HOW WE DID THE RESEARCH



This research was conducted via an online survey methodology using a questionnaire developed by Griffith University (Griffith University Research Ethics Clearance 2024/055). The questionnaire was distributed via email to CoreData's proprietary database of Australians aged 18 and above. The online survey was conducted in February 2024.

In order to minimise potential non-response bias, an entry into a prize draw to win one \$1,000 prepaid EFTPOS or Visa gift card, one of four \$250 GiftPay online gift cards, or one of five \$100 GiftPay online gift cards, was offered as an incentive. Reminder emails were also sent to those who had not opened the original survey email to encourage completions. Cookies and internal data checking were used to reduce potential duplicate and invalid responses.

A total of 1,000 respondents completed the questionnaire, providing reliable and statistically robust insights on the opinions of Australians aged 18 and above. Particular care was taken to ensure a high degree of representativeness of the sample against the Australia population of residents aged 18 above in terms of age and gender.

WHO TOOK PART?

1000 people participated in this research, roughly representative of Australia's voting population.



3% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.



50% identified as female, 49% as male, and 1% as non-binary.



67% described their cultural background as Oceanian, with a further 42% describing their cultural background from Africa, Asia, Europe or the Americas.



89% identified as heterosexual, 10% as LGBTIQ+, and 1% preferred not to say.



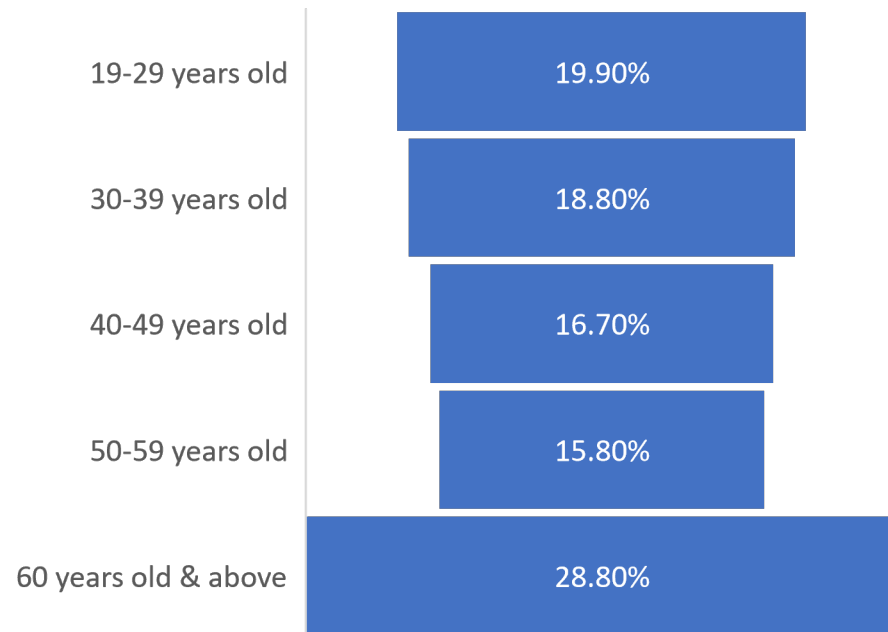
12% of participants reported having a disability



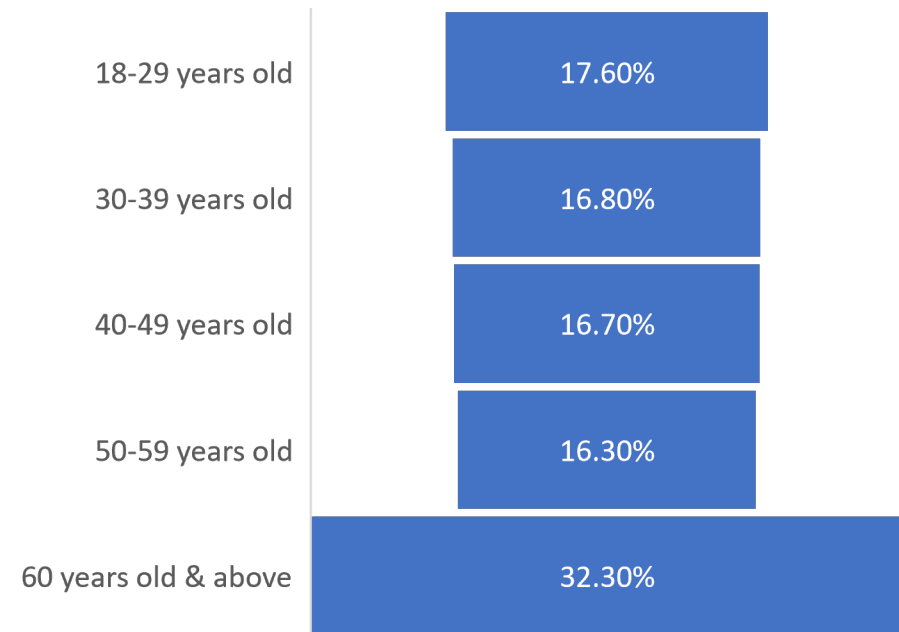
56% of participants were from inner or outer metropolitan areas, and 44% of participants were from regional areas

WHO TOOK PART?

Our study by age



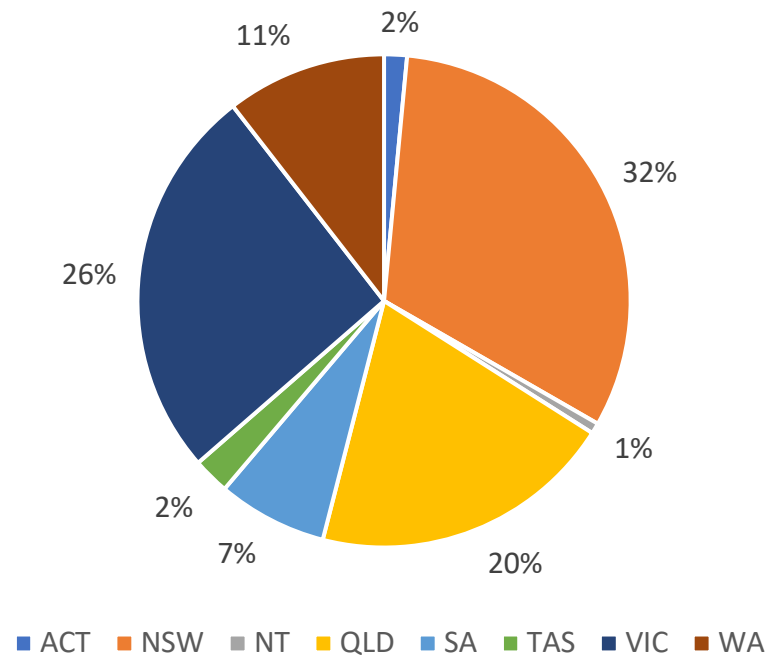
Australian population by age



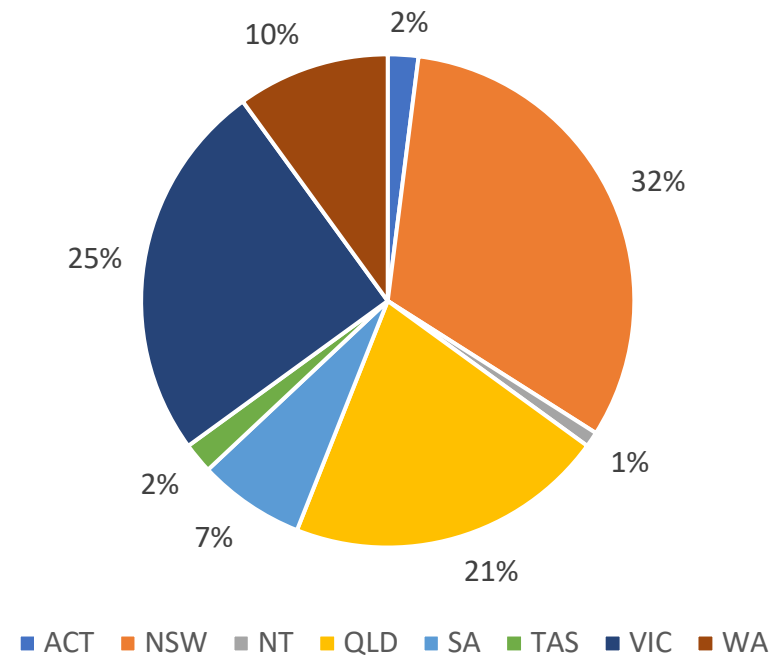
Source: Australian Electoral Commission 2023.

WHO TOOK PART?

Our study by state



Australian voting population by state



Source: Australian Electoral Commission 2023.

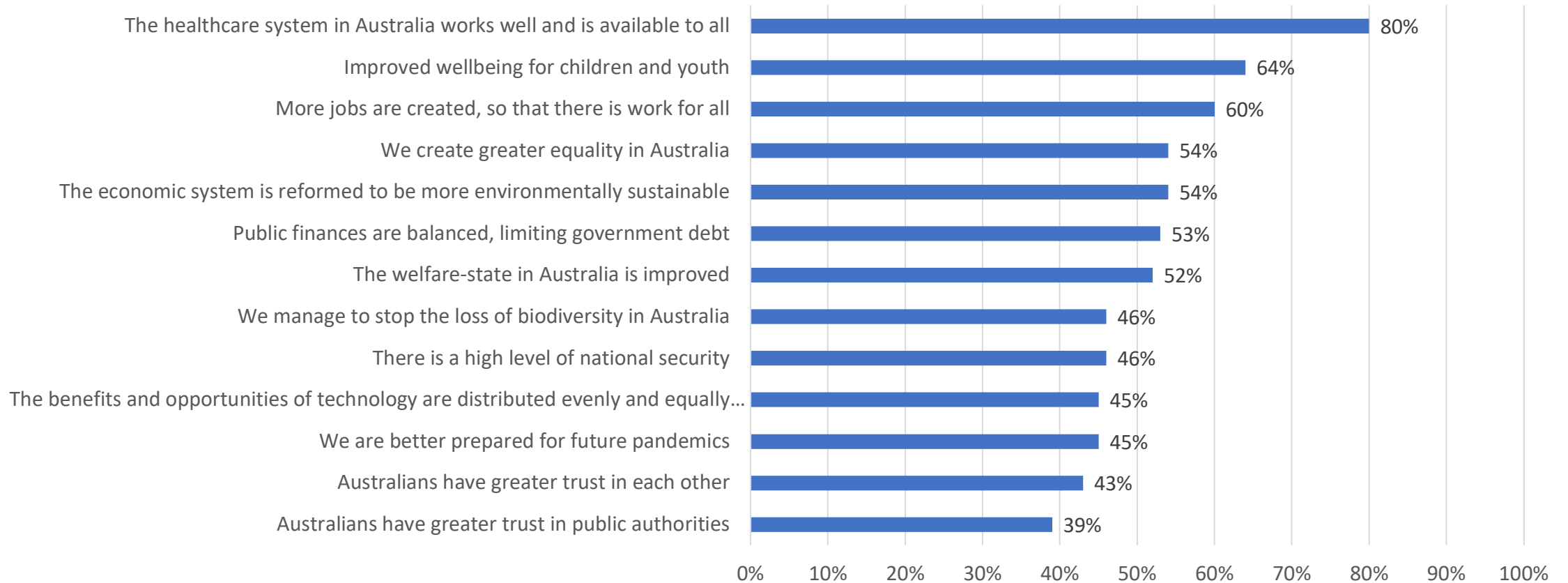
97%

Agreed that the interests of future generations should be taken into account when making decisions on important policies in the present day.

Yet, there were differences across demographics on why this mattered, with **those aged 29 and younger being less likely to select 'healthcare' as a priority** (71% as compared to 80% average), and **those aged 60 years and above much less likely to select improved wellbeing for children and youth as a priority** (56% as compared to 64% average).

The life-stage of Australians impacts the issues they care about in long-term policy.

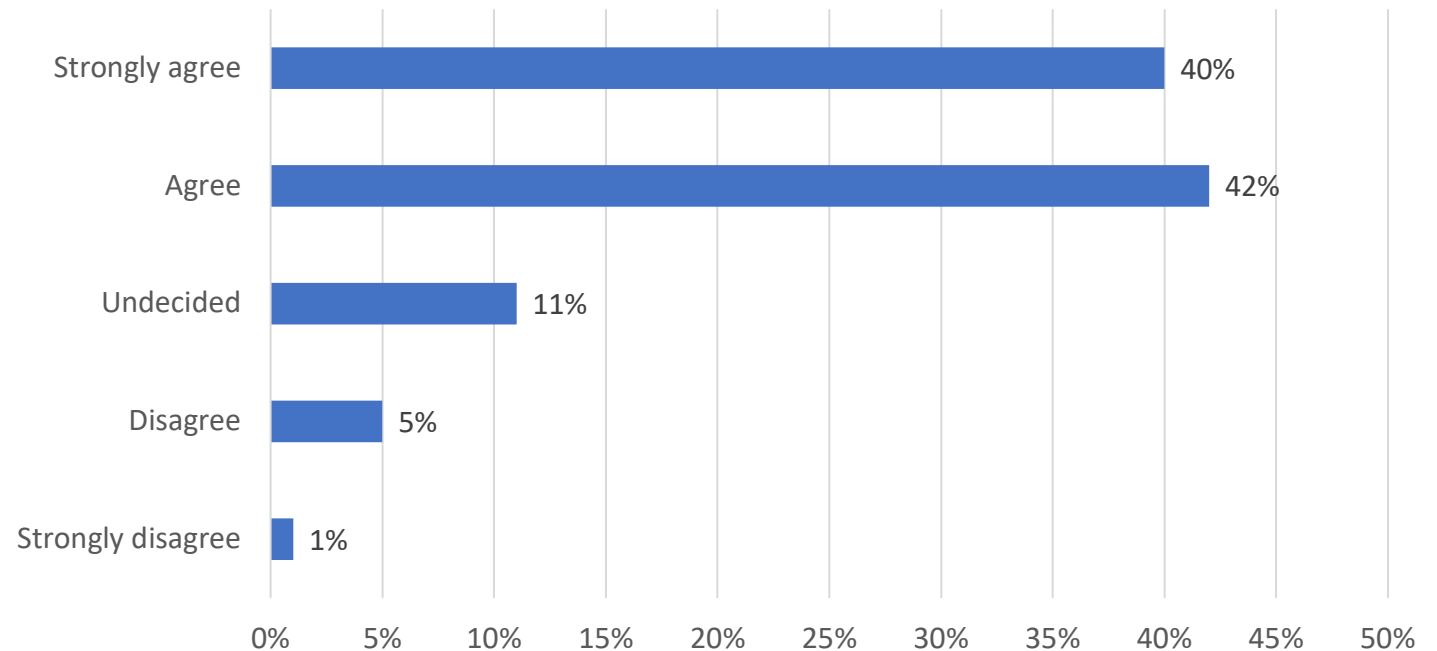
Healthcare, improved wellbeing for children and youth, and more jobs are top priorities among those participants would like to see in Australia in the next 10–20 years



81% of participants agree that Australian politicians generally think too short-term when making decisions

However, **young people are much less likely to strongly agree to this statement** than older people, with only 27% of those aged 29 and younger strongly agreeing compared to 53% of those aged 60 and above.

Responses to: “Australian politicians generally think too short-term when making decisions.”

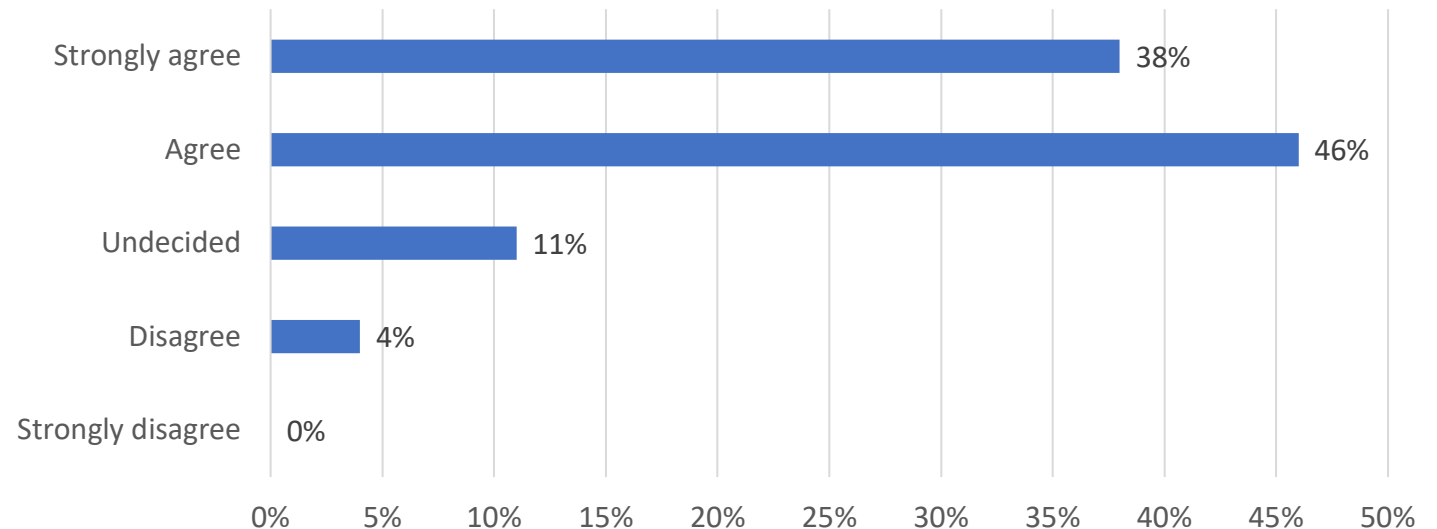


84% of participants agree that political decisions in Australia are often characterised by short-term measures instead of creating sustainable solutions for the future

Whilst this is a resounding majority, **young people are less pessimistic** about this than older people.

Young people aged 29 years and below are much less likely to strongly agree (26%) to this statement, whilst those aged 60 and above are much more likely to strongly agree (48%), as compared to the average (38%). Those aged 30 to 39 years old are much more likely to be undecided, with almost 1 in 5 undecided (19% as compared to 11% average).

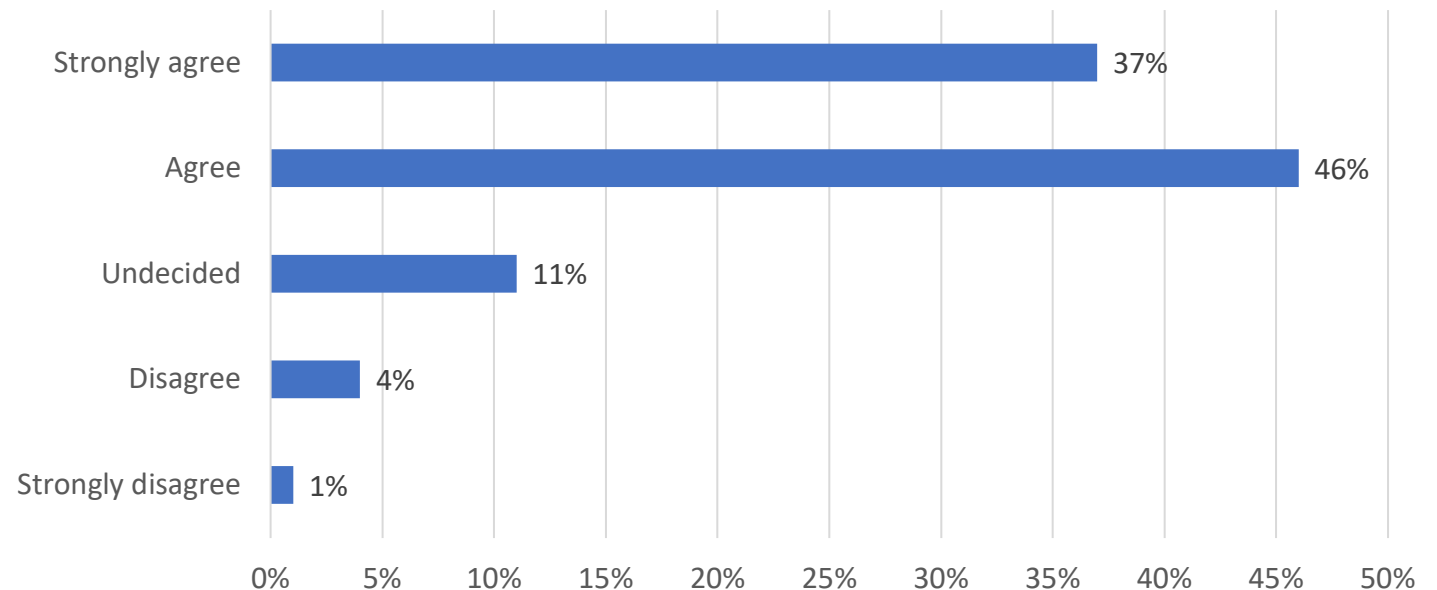
Responses to: “Political decisions in Australia are often characterised by short-term measures instead of creating sustainable solutions for the future in the next 10-20 years”



83% of participants are worried that as a society, we won't solve the political problems that require a longer-term perspective

There were no significant variations in responses across all demographics analysed for this question, **highlighting high levels of agreement** across gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity, experience of disability and rural/urban divides.

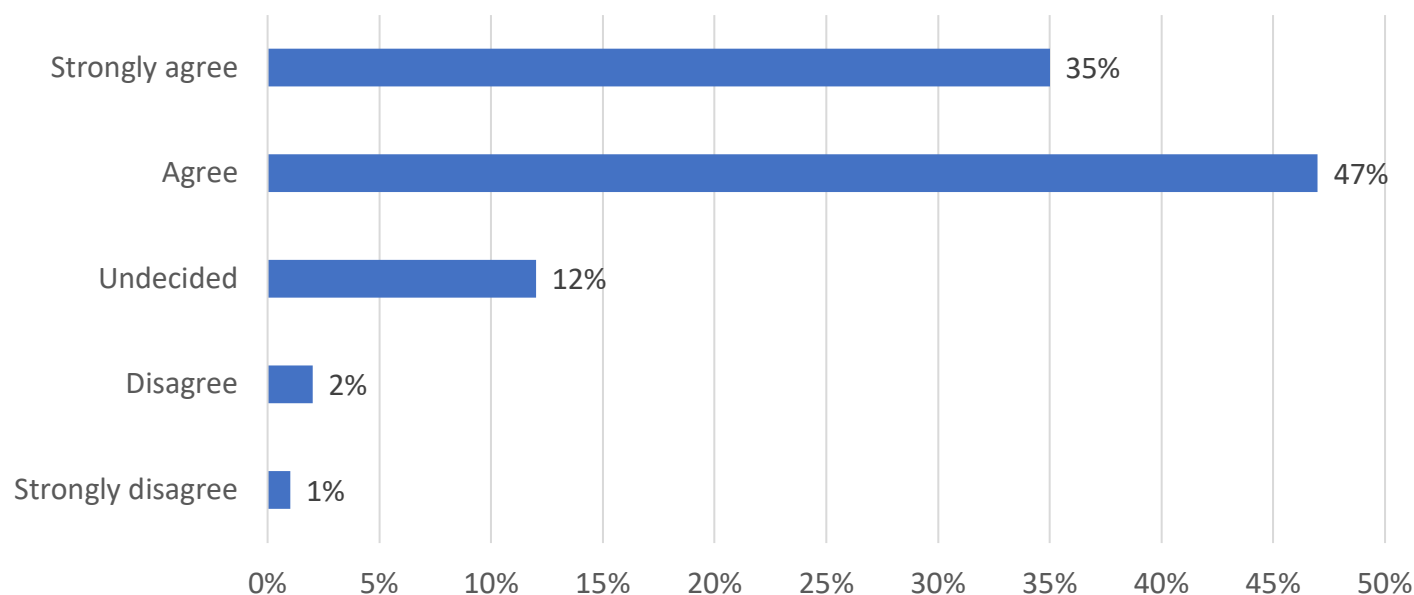
Responses to: "I am worried that as a society, we won't solve the political problems that require more long-term perspective."



82% of participants agree it would positively impact their perception if a political party presented concrete long-term visions for the future

Responses indicate that political parties that present concrete **long-term visions for the future** would be well-supported by voters of all backgrounds.

Responses to: “It would positively impact my perception if a political party presents concrete long-term visions for the future in the next 10-20 years.”

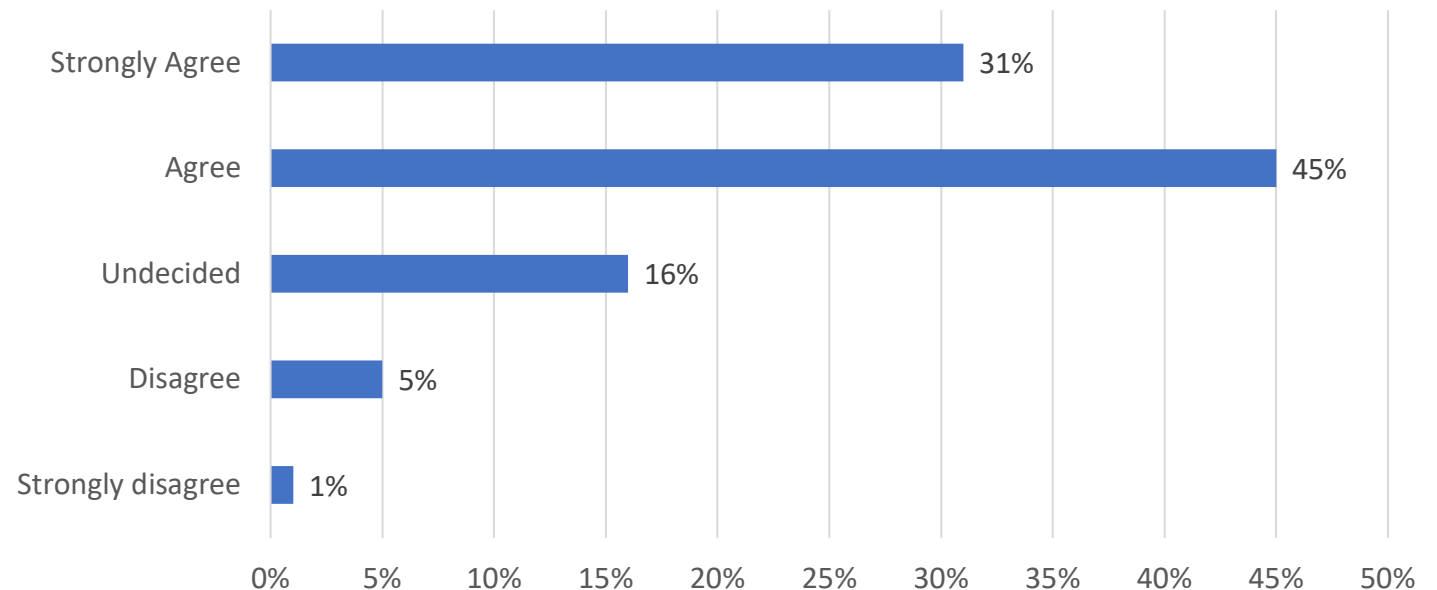


Three quarters of participants agree that visions for the next 10–20 years are given too little emphasis in the political debate in Australia

Young people are much less likely to believe that long-term visions are given too little emphasis, with only 68% agreeing to this statement as opposed to 84% of those aged 60 and above agreeing.

Those 60 years and older are much more likely to strongly agree to this statement (43% as compared to 31% average).

Responses to: “I believe that visions for the next 10-20 years are given too little emphasis in the political debate in Australia.”



The top policy area
Australians believe
policymakers have the skills
or knowledge to develop
policy on for the benefit of
future generations is
education.

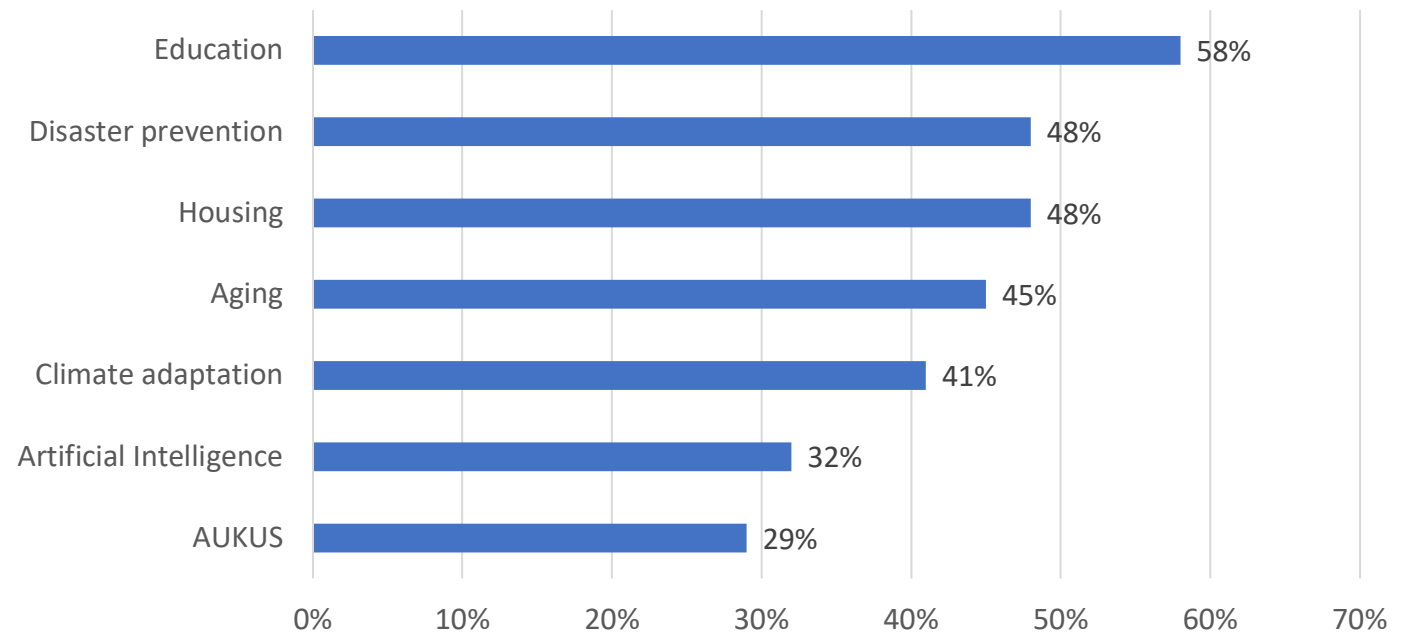
Unfortunately, **this is the only
area of policy** that a majority of
participants agree policymakers
have the skills or knowledge to
develop long-term policy on.

Australians have the least confidence in policymakers' skills and knowledge to develop policy on **AUKUS, artificial intelligence** and **climate adaptation**

Young people (aged 29 and below) are **more optimistic than any other age group** when it comes to assessing the skills and knowledge of policymakers in areas of artificial intelligence, housing and education.

Men are **almost twice as likely** to agree that policymakers have the skills and knowledge to make long-term policy on AUKUS than women.

To what extent do you agree that policymakers have the skills or knowledge to develop policy regulating the following areas for the benefit of future generations?



SINCE 2015, THERE HAS BEEN A **FUTURE GENERATIONS COMMISSIONER** IN WALES



Appointment of
a dedicated Future
Generations
Commissioner



Moratorium on major
road projects due
to environmental
concerns



National transport
strategy focused on
active travel and public
transport



Plans for publicly owned
energy company to
reduce reliance on global
markets and address
cost-of-living pressures



New purpose-driven
curriculum, moving away
from traditional exams to
develop well-rounded
and innovative citizens

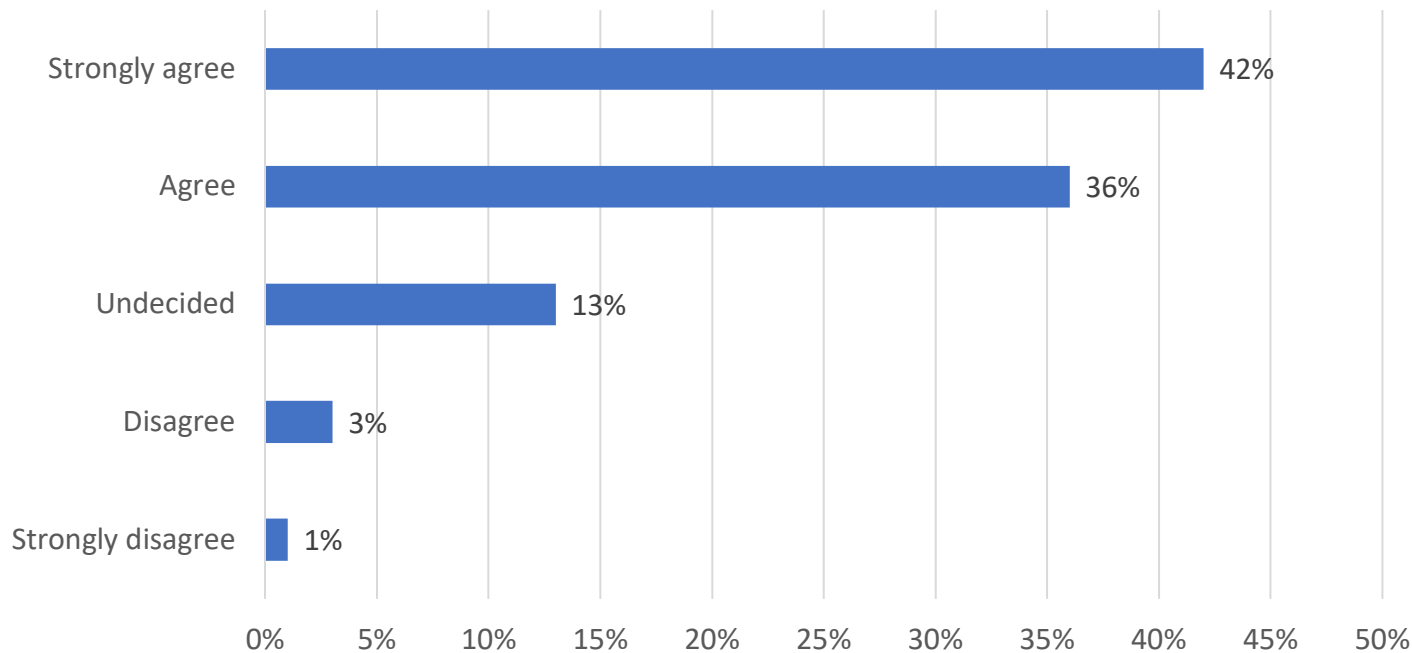


New waste strategy,
Beyond Recycling,
prioritising a circular
economy

**Wales is the first
government in the
world** to legally
create a position
for protecting
future generations

Nearly 8 in 10 respondents believe we should establish a Commissioner for Future Generations (or similar) in Australia

To what extent do you agree that a similar initiative should be introduced in Australia?



Respondents from the Northern Territory, South Australia and New South Wales demonstrated the highest levels of support (100%, 83% and 82% respectively), whilst those from Tasmania demonstrated the lowest levels of support (63%). Even so, in all states and territories, a **majority were supportive of such an initiative.**

There are 5 big priorities that Australians care about regarding the future.



POPULATION AGEING

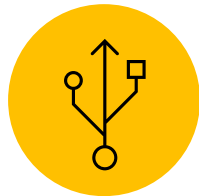
"My long term health" – 71-year-old male, QLD

"Health and well being as I mature" – 66-year-old female, VIC

"Healthcare for a growing aging population" – 29-year-old female, NSW

"Unsustainable healthcare system due to ageing population" – 32-year-old female, NSW

"Enough taxes to pay for the ageing health needs." – 73-year-old male, VIC



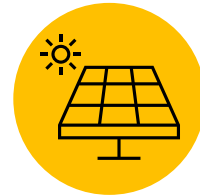
TECHNOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

"AI taking overtaking jobs." – 75-year-old female, NSW

"The world getting control of the Internet and social media in particular." – 80-year-old male, WA

"Too much reliance on technology" – 50-year-old female, NSW

"Development in technology to provide us with advances in healthcare, education and more." – 29-year-old female, VIC



CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE NET ZERO TRANSFORMATION

"Get the climate under control. The rising temperature needs action now. Rising sea levels spell doom." – 76-year-old male, QLD

"Global warming & people not having enough to eat" – 83-year-old male, VIC

"the government is refusing to approach policies to move towards sustainable energy and fuel because they make so much money from coal and oil and seem uncaring to the costs this will bring to future generations." – 23-year-old nonbinary person, VIC



RISING DEMAND FOR CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

A need for "more healthcare professionals" – 32-year-old female, QLD

"Fixing the healthcare system and increasing access to bulk-billing and affordable specialist care." – 60-year-old female, QLD

"Fixing Medicare and Centrelink" – 70-year-old female, QLD

"a robust health system, robust education system, maintenance of a professional and independent public service to support our democratic system" – 69-year-old male, QLD



GEOPOLITICAL RISK AND FRAGMENTATION

"Climate change, and international tensions." – 27-year-old female, VIC

"Establishing a strong defence system and managing resources well" – 75-year-old male, SA

"Peace in the Middle East, war in Ukraine" – 76-year-old male, WA

"crime, world wars, global tensions, climate change, border tensions, terrorists, rouge nations, etc., etc." – 77-year-old male, SA

Gender differences in immediate and future concerns were minimal, yet women were more likely to be concerned about gender equality.

- Housing was slightly less prominent for men, but cost of living was similarly prevalent across genders.
- “Wokeness” was only spoken about by men (e.g. in response to the question about what do you see as long-term priorities, “eliminating Woke garbage, political correctness”).
- Women were more concerned with gender quality when compared to men, non-binary, and transgender people. Even so, gender equality and related terms were only mentioned in 3% of responses. Of these responses, 75% of the responses from women saw it as a long-term priority with 25% seeing it as something in the future that worries them.

Intergenerational policymaking is well-supported across all demographics analysed.

Our observations

- Whilst we might have expected there to be bigger differences between what rural and urban Australians thought about intergenerational policymaking, we found there were no statistically significant differences.
- Topics like education and climate change are seen as areas of policymaking that are a 'natural' fit for taking an intergenerational approach, yet it was clear that these are not the only long-term policy domains that matter to Australians.
- The more positive perspectives young Australians held towards policymakers and long-term policy was surprising to us. However, we attribute this in part to young people trusting that – surely – policymakers have got more skills, expertise and political will than they have in reality.

Results suggest australians would like, and would embrace, more intergenerational approaches to policymaking.

Our recommendations

- Legislate for a Commissioner for Future Generations or similar
- Make improvements to intergenerational reporting (e.g. the Intergenerational Report)
- Introduce a Budget Statement for Future Generations
- Adopt resilience strategies at all levels and in all departments of government
- Engage party caucus committees in intergenerational justice policy
- Introduce a body, group of experts, and/or set of criteria to independently evaluate legislation against intergenerational justice
- Leverage existing foundations in legislation to protect interests of current and future generations

Australian and global leaders' agree

"As First Nations people we govern, make decisions and determine the actions we take today based on intergenerational considerations that account for the health of people and the environment—the Countries we all depend on. We see the present as tied to the past and the future in a constant cycle of regeneration, where all actions affect lives and beings across the deep expanse of time. I believe Australians hold much in common about the need to construct policies today that speak to this First Nations worldview of intergenerational thinking, care and responsibility. Policy-making needs to be responsive to the concerns and aspirations of all age groups if we are to construct societies that meet our diverse needs as a nation, and to ensure that we can care and nurture our planet, now and far into the future."

– **June Oscar AO, Chair Wiyi Yani U Thangani Institute**

"A worthy life is one that leaves a legacy for future generations that is better than the legacy one received from one's parents. This responsibility was once limited to one's own family. In the 21st century this moral responsibility to future generations is globalising."

– **Peter Ellyard, Futurist and Strategist**

"With multiple crises of climate change growing wealth inequality and lack of housing for younger people, citizens are recognising that endemic short termism in governments is hanging the next generation out to dry. There is a desperate need to address this by ensuring governments are required to take decisions which consider future generations. I've been pleased to share our experience of doing this in Wales in many parts of Australia over the last year and I believe that Australia is well positioned to be a leading country in putting the needs of future generations at the heart of decision making"

– **Sophie Howe, former Commissioner for Future Generations, Wales**

More attention to intergenerational justice in policymaking is critical

"These results speak to a truth that I have experienced first-hand over the last 3 years, witnessing the increasing imperative and appetite for a future-ready approach to leadership and policymaking in Australia. There is an undeniable demand for leaders to take bold and courageous action to redefine our approach, cultivating a shared future that makes a fair go for all possible."

– **Taylor Hawkins, Foundations for Tomorrow**

"One of the most striking results to me is the high levels of support across all Australians of political parties who demonstrate visions for more long-term policymaking. This should give political parties of all stripes the confidence that long-term, intergenerational policymaking is a no-brainer and a 'win-win' for governments and the public alike."

– **Dr Elise Stephenson, Deputy Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at the ANU**

"The Government is thinking hard about a Future Made in Australia this Budget, but we need to think even more broadly than that - gender policy, climate policy, disaster prevention, early childhood strategies, diplomatic resolution of conflict in our region, health workforce planning, urban planning. Futures are created by choices made today. Are we thinking hard enough about those choices in Australia? How do we change the incentives to only think short term that dominate our governance frameworks?"

– **Professor Susan Harris Rimmer, EveryGen and Griffith Law Futures Centre**

About the authors

This research was led by Professor Susan Harris Rimmer, Dr Elise Stephenson and Taylor Hawkins, and supported by EveryGen.



PROFESSOR SUSAN HARRIS RIMMER

Founder of the EveryGen coalition and Professor, Griffith Law Futures Centre



DR ELISE STEPHENSON

Deputy Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at the Australian National University



TAYLOR HAWKINS

Managing Director of Foundations for Tomorrow, a non-profit advancing the protection of future generations

EVERYGEN PARTNERS



futureantics



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RAISE
OUR
VOICE



ABOUT EVERYGEN



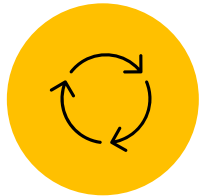
Convened by Griffith University involving cross-institutional support from Australia



Promotes policy research and action on intergenerational equity and justice



Uses evidence-based research to influence the policy agenda



Advocates for a Future Generations Act in Australia



Collaborates with government and business leaders to ensure policy decisions protect the interests of future generations



Committed to making sustainable development the organising principle of government

Australia must take an active role in the **emerging global movement** advancing an intergenerational lens on policy development

OUR WORK



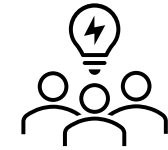
EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE

- Youth collaboration – workshops, education
- Clearly articulate intergenerational issues
- Build opportunities to exercise agency



INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT

- Identify key decision makers across all sectors
- Build partnerships with government and business
- Lead policy research on intergenerational equity



INCLUSIVE COLLABORATION

- Advisory board of connectors and high-profile people
- Working groups and consultative steering groups
- Diverse partnerships

EVERYGENSUPPORTED A NEW PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Areas of focus

- Intergenerational justice
- Environmental integrity
- Democratic health
- A clean and just energy transition

- Over 20 senators and MPs committed to securing Australia's long-term prosperity
- Co-chaired by MPs Bridget Archer, Zaneta Mascarenhas and Sophie Scamps (pictured)
- Dialogue on protecting the interests of future generations in Australia's national agenda
- Multi-partisan approach to policy discussions



VISITED BY FORMER WALES FUTURE GENERATIONS COMMISSIONER

The world's first Future Generations Commissioner, **Sophie Howe** led high-profile interventions in Wales in transport planning, education reform and climate change.

Named by Big Issue Magazine as **one of the UK's leading Changemakers**, Sophie also represented Wales at the UN, the OECD and other international forums.

Visited Australia in 2023, Sophie addressed multiple events, including an Intergenerational Equity Summit, and met with political and community leaders to promote the need for policy focused on future generations.

