

# **Analysis of Polling**

**Australian attitudes to global warming and the proposed CPRS**

**Conducted by Graham Young  
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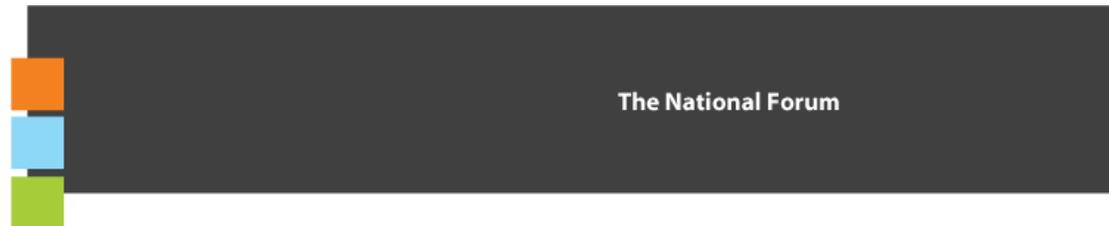
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## ***Introduction***

The National Forum does a quarterly qualitative poll of Australian voting intentions. These polls also include questions on contemporary issues. In October 2009 we polled our readers on the global warming and the Federal Government's propose CPRS. Given the centrality of the issue we included most of the same questions on global warming in our January poll.

The Australian Climate Science Coalition has commissioned us to do a thorough analysis of our results. They are specifically interested in whether views on global warming and associated issues are changing, and to what extent, as well as to better understand what is motivating voters in their beliefs on global warming.

Details of the research follow and I would be happy to answer any questions. I can be contacted by phone or email.

Thanks for the opportunity to do this work.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Young'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'G' and 'Y'.

**GRAHAM YOUNG  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
THE NATIONAL FORUM**

## ***1. Methodology***

An online poll was hosted on The National Forum site from the 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 until the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.

The questionnaire was promoted to our regular panel participants and we received 1737 responses (including some received after the closing time of 5:00 p.m. on the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2010). This is a typical response rate.

Answers were analysed using Excel pivot tables and Leximancer. Leximancer is semantic software developed at the University of Queensland for analysis of qualitative responses.

While the surveys are primarily qualitative, experience over the years has shown that quantitative movements in the responses are generally indicative of quantitative movements in the population at large, even though the panel is not randomly selected.

## **2. Executive Summary**

While a majority of Australians supports action on global warming, the trend is down with the number this year who support action less than last. Support for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme has declined even more dramatically. This would appear to a large part to be caused by the ascent of Tony Abbott to the Liberal Party leadership and his preparedness to argue the case on global warming, as well as the failure of the Copenhagen meeting to make any binding decisions. Other issues, such as the leak of emails from the Hadley Centre and the University of East Anglia (“Climategate”) and factual errors in IPCC reports have also had an effect as well as the increasing prominence of sceptics in the media.

There is also a question of cost. As actual legislation gets closer to being passed respondents are focusing more on the practicalities rather than the theory. While this may not lead to them changing their core view of whether global warming is real and man-made or not, it does appear to lead to them changing their views as to how serious a problem it is, and what ought to be done about it.

The Australian Government finds itself in a position where the public expects it to take action, but does not believe a CPRS is appropriate and is not prepared to devote large sums of money to fixing the problem. That means that a tax is probably ruled-out leaving non-monetary measures such as regulation the only viable approach from a public relations point of view. Doing nothing is not an answer as the majority of voters still expect action. Yet the government appears resolved to once more to have the parliament vote on the CPRS. The government could be fortunate if the parliament votes it down so that they can rethink their approach and develop an approach that does not involve either taxation or a market-based pricing solution.

The research also highlights problems for the Opposition. While it is clear that a substantial proportion of coalition parliamentarians, and their supporters, does not believe that global warming is a problem, this is not the majority view of the community. While community support for action against global warming will probably decline, given the polling trends, between now and the next election, it is unlikely to do so to the stage where the opposition can run a campaign ignoring global warming as an issue. They therefore find themselves having to advocate policies which are acceptable to the broader community, but not so acceptable to their own base. By doing this they must leave the debate about the seriousness of the problem to other parties.

Global warming has moved from being a positive for the government, as it was at the last election, to being an equivocal issue for them, at best. It may even be a net positive for the opposition.

### **3. Analysis of research results**

Judged on our surveys there has been a deterioration in the public belief in global warming and the seriousness of the risks that it poses. This coincides with the change in the Liberal Party leadership, the failure of Copenhagen Summit and the publicity about errors in the IPCC report first initiated by the “Climategate” emails.

Prominent aspects of the research are:

It is a heavily politicised issue with support or opposition dependent substantially on voting intention. This is probably a result of two things. The Liberal vote has experienced a modest increase which could be attributable in part to its change in leader and position on global warming. That increase may be due to people who held similar views changing their vote. There is also an increase in approval of the Liberal Leader from party supporters. This appears to have hardened up the attitudes of some supporters on these issues, making them more likely to feel “strongly” rather than moderately.

While mainstream participants in the debate accept that CO<sub>2</sub> does have an impact on global warming, the increase in resistance to global warming theory is most noticeably from respondents who do not believe that CO<sub>2</sub> has any impact.

There is an increase in uncertainty on the issue with the “unsure” and “neither agree or disagree” (and similar categories) increasing. At the same time there has been little movement in the beliefs of Greens and Labor voters, although they are less likely to be “strong” in their views.

The degree of change increases with the “particularity” of the issue. There is a 5% movement on the issue of whether CO<sub>2</sub> is a greenhouse gas, which increases to 6% on the issue of whether manmade emissions are causing global warming and 8% on the issue of whether global warming will lead to a catastrophe.

While there is still a majority that wants to do something about global warming they are not prepared to pay substantially more than they do now to fight it with around 58% of respondents prepared to pay no more than an additional \$120 per year in electricity bills to combat global warming.

There has also been a significant swing against an ETS with a bare majority of our respondents opposed to it (51%) while only one-third support it.

At the same time a bare majority of 51% also favours action now, irrespective of what other nations do, creating a quandary for the government. To keep public opinion happy, and to be consistent with previous announcements, they need to do something about global warming, but pressing on with the current legislation will not be popular. They therefore need to change tack to something more like the opposition leader's position while not appearing to be beaten. If their move is viewed as a capitulation it will dishearten their heartland vote which is strongly-wedded to the idea of doing something about global warming.

### **3.1. Research Summary Quantitative Points**

1. 57% agree that CO2 is a greenhouse gas, while 23% disagree. In October last year the relevant figures were 62% and 23%. There has been a 5 percentage point decrease in the percentage of those who believe CO2 is a greenhouse gas.
2. This result, along with most others, is very strongly polarised with a larger proportion strongly disposed than moderately disposed towards either side of a proposition.
3. The result is heavily correlated with voting intention. 48% of Liberals believe CO2 is not a greenhouse gas, while only 19% do. For ALP voters 86% believe that it is a greenhouse gas while only 3% don't.
4. Significantly fewer Liberals and Independents believe that CO2 is a greenhouse gas now than they did in October last year. This accounts for most of the change in mood.
5. 54% agree and 29% disagree that manmade CO2 emissions are a significant contributor to global warming. 61% of Liberals disagree, an increase of 3% over October, 2009. Only 12% of Liberals agree, a decrease of 6% since October, 2009.
6. Slightly less than half (49%) believe that the risk of catastrophic global warming is real compared to 33% who don't. This is a -8% change since October. 69% of Liberals disagree with this proposition compared to only 8% who do, while only 5% of Labor voters agree and 78% disagree illustrating how partisan the issue is. However, manual analysis of the reasons given by those who answered they "neither agree nor disagree" shows that most of these are negative towards the proposition, which makes the percentage of those who disagree closer to 41% than 33%.
7. The most dramatic change in direction is with respect to the CPRS. Only 33% support it while 51% are opposed. 91% of Liberal voters are opposed to it compared to 11% of Labor voters, while 66% of Labor voters approve and only 2% of Liberals.
8. Despite ALP on-balance support for the CPRS, the net position of ALP voters has changed from 61% in favour to 55% in favour. This is still a strong position but the trend in direction should be of concern to Labor strategists.
9. A small majority - 51% - favours action on climate change now, rather than waiting for the large emitter nations. 42% does not favour action now. This is a heavily polarised issue where most have made-up their mind as to what they think with only 6% neither supporting nor opposing and 2% unsure.

10. 79% of Labor voters support immediate action irrespective of who else is taking action, while 85% of Liberals don't. 71% of Liberals are strongly opposed, while only 38% of Labor voters strongly support.
11. 47% of voters are not prepared to pay any more for their electricity as a way of fighting global warming. 12% would pay up to \$10 per month and a further 11% up to \$20 per month.
12. Our figures on how much extra people are prepared to pay is consistent with other polls run by the Lowy Institute and the Climate Institute with the exception that while all polls show around 56% to 58% unprepared to pay more than an extra \$10 per month, ours is the only one to show such a high proportion who do not want to pay anything at all.
13. The decision to pay nothing appears to be significantly influenced by whether a respondent thinks that CO2 emissions are an issue, which is also a good predictor of how they vote.

### **13.1. Research summary qualitative results**

We asked qualitative follow-up questions after four propositions. These were designed to better understand respondents' perceptions of whether global warming represented an unacceptable risk, what they saw as the arguments for and against implementing a CPRS, and what their thinking was in terms of what they were prepared to pay additional for electricity to combat global warming.

#### **13.1.1. Unacceptable risk**

The qual shows this argument being basically between those who say global warming is an incontrovertible fact invoking recent theory ("the science is settled"), or who invoke the precautionary principle versus those who say history shows it is not a problem or who do a form of cost benefit analysis and oppose taking measures that will adversely impact on the present welfare of people.

"A high school chemistry student can verify the first two. Peer reviewed science (which discovered DNA, antibiotics, gravity, nuclear weapons etc) affirms the third to a very high level of certainty" Male, 35-44, Greens

"As the population increases and the amount of co2 produced and released into our atmosphere increases we are at increased risk of not surviving for many more generations, and then at a lowered life expectancy and enjoyment level." Female, 55-64, Labor

“The so-called "scientific" evidence that CO2 levels are causing increased temperatures have not been proved and there is "proof" that there are several other activities causing climate to change and Man has no control over these. Watch " Decline of Ancient Egypt" which shows how the change in the Atlantic caused massive climate change.” Male, 65-74, Liberal

“Twenty years ago the Greens and the socialist left were telling us we were headed for another Ice Age, now its global warming. I was sceptical about a Carbon Tax / ETS from prior to the last election as apparently all disadvantaged groups would be more than compensated for any costs of a such a scheme and to my mind that is just taxing and redistributing wealth without doing any thing at all for the environment and poor policy as it will reduce the cost of energy for those people making them use more of it while taxing .” Male, 35-44, Liberal

### **13.1.2. Most compelling argument in favour of the CPRS**

When asked what argument they would use to sell the CPRS most respondents were very optimistic appealing to national pride as well as resource security. Another argument was an appeal to the need to do something about all pollution. A summary of the argument in favour would be that “Australia can show the way in implementing a CPRS which is something that can secure our future, as well as ensuring that we do not overly rely on fossil fuels which need to be imported and which are running out. This measure can be used to kick start development of alternative energy sources uniquely suitable to Australia. We also need to deal with pollution, and one way of doing that is to start with a CPRS.”

“Someone has to lead the way. We'll never get every country to do the right thing so Australia should at least be able to fry knowing we have done everything we could.” Male, 35-44, Labor

“The problem is excess atmospheric carbon dioxide and that is mostly associated with burning fuels which create other polluting gasses and particles. We need to reduce atmospheric pollution generally for health reasons and that will as a consequence reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide.” Male, 55-64, Labor

“An ETS encourages investment in technology and development of clean energy sources. It provides the flexibility to increase or reduce annual reduction targets and facilitates, indeed some would argue, it compels moving away from the use of fossil fuels as an energy source.” Male, 75+, Labor

### **13.1.3. Most compelling argument against the CPRS**

Most respondents focused on some factor allied to cost, whether it was the actual cost to individuals or the cost to the economy. There were also concerns that it would have no effect on global emissions, or that it would have no effect on Australian emissions, particularly by giving benefits to polluters.

“It is a nation-destroying, industry-destroying tax based on a false premise, whose proceeds will end up overseas supporting the shopping sprees of African dictators wives and lining Al Gore's pockets, whilst the plebs (i. e the slaes- us) continue to have their taxes increased and their living standards eroded.” Male, 25-34, Liberal

“Because Rudd has bent over to the polluters it has been so watered down as to be effectively useless. Pass a straight unequivocal carbon tax and stand up to the bully boys” Male, 35-44, Greens

### **13.1.4. How much extra would you pay on your electricity?**

Almost half (47%) were not prepared to pay anymore because they didn't believe there was a problem to deal with. The rest made decisions based on what they could afford or what they thought might be needed.

“Because anthropoeic warming is a beat up. there are many other factors that impact climate such as ocean currents, solar etc” Male, 55-64, Independent

“all I can afford on a recurring basis - but it's important that everyone contributes, and understands what they are contributing for. (I'm not happy about any scheme that allows big polluters to buy credits at my expense so that they can continue asbefore)” Male, 55-64, Greens

“I haven't a clue really what is needed but that's only \$600 a year and we could afford that. If more was required to make it effective, so be it. We can't continue living in a fool's paradise” Male, 55-64, Labor



## 5. Demographics

We analysed the responses using two different samples. The first sample is simply the total number of responses. As our respondents tend to be more from the left of the political spectrum than the Australian electorate as a whole this tends to skew our results. We therefore selected a subset of the respondents in proportion to voting intentions in the community at large, as represented in the Newspoll Survey of the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.

[http://www.newspoll.com.au/image\\_uploads/100103%20Federal%20Voting%20Intention%20&%20Leaders%20Ratings.pdf](http://www.newspoll.com.au/image_uploads/100103%20Federal%20Voting%20Intention%20&%20Leaders%20Ratings.pdf).

We have not adjusted the sample beyond that.

### 5.1. Gender and Age

**Table 1: Gender and age of respondents complete sample**

Age	Female	Male	Grand Total
15-24	0%	1%	1%
25-34	2%	5%	7%
35-44	5%	11%	16%
45-54	6%	13%	19%
55-64	9%	22%	32%
65-74	7%	15%	22%
75+	1%	4%	5%
Grand Total	30%	70%	100%

n=1620

Most respondents are older than 54, with the median age likely to be around 58 years of age.

**Table 2: Gender and age of respondents balanced sample**

Age	Female	Male	Grand Total
15-24	0%	1%	1%
25-34	1%	4%	6%
35-44	4%	10%	14%
45-54	5%	13%	18%
55-64	10%	23%	33%
65-74	7%	16%	23%
75+	1%	4%	5%
Grand Total	28%	72%	100%

n=1157

## 5.2.Respondents by State

**Table 3: State of respondents total sample**

State	Total
ACT	3%
NSW	32%
NT	1%
QLD	29%
SA	6%
Tasmania	2%
VIC	19%
WA	8%
Grand Total	100%

n=1638

As usual in our surveys Queensland is over-represented and Victoria under-represented.

**Table 4: State of respondents balanced sample**

State	Total
ACT	3%
NSW	32%
NT	1%
QLD	32%
SA	6%
Tasmania	1%
VIC	17%
WA	8%
Grand Total	100%

n=1170

### 5.3. Weekly income

Table 5: Weekly income of respondents total sample

Income	Total
\$1-\$39	1%
\$40-\$79	1%
\$80-\$119	1%
\$120-\$159	1%
\$160-\$199	1%
\$200-\$299	5%
\$300-\$399	5%
\$400-\$499	6%
\$500-\$599	7%
\$600-\$699	5%
\$700-\$799	6%
\$800-\$999	9%
\$1,000-\$1,499	25%
\$1,500 or more	28%
Grand Total	100%

n=1338

**Table 6: Weekly income of respondents balanced sample**

Income	Total
\$1-\$39	1%
\$40-\$79	1%
\$80-\$119	0%
\$120-\$159	1%
\$160-\$199	1%
\$200-\$299	5%
\$300-\$399	5%
\$400-\$499	5%
\$500-\$599	7%
\$600-\$699	5%
\$700-\$799	6%
\$800-\$999	10%
\$1,000-\$1,499	23%
\$1,500 or more	30%
Grand Total	100%

n=949

Income tends to be above average with the majority of respondents earning \$1,000 or more a week.

## 5.4.Occupation

**Table 7: Occupation of respondents total sample**

Occupation	Total
Administrative Assistant	1%
Analyst	1%
Architect	0%
Artist/Musician/Actor/Entertainer	1%
Broker/Trader/Advisor	0%
CEO/President/Chairman	1%
CFO/COO/CTO/CIO/CMO	0%
Clergy	1%
Clerical worker	2%
Computer professional	2%
Consultant	4%
Director	3%
Doctor	1%
Educator/Teacher/Professor	8%
Engineer	2%
Entrepreneur	1%
Government official	5%
Health care worker (other than doctor)	3%
Homemaker	2%
I do not wish to answer this question	2%
Lawyer/Judge	2%
Manager	5%
Military Officer	0%

None	1%
Other please nominate	8%
Partner/Principal/Owner	3%
Researcher	2%
Retired	27%
Sales Manager/Account Executive	1%
Scientist	2%
Service provider	1%
Skilled laborer	1%
Student	2%
Supervisor	0%
Technician	1%
Writer/Editor	2%
Grand Total	100%

n=1638

**Table 8: Occupation of respondents balanced sample**

Occupation	Total
Administrative Assistant	2%
Analyst	1%
Architect	0%
Artist/Musician/Actor/Entertainer	1%
Broker/Trader/Advisor	1%
CEO/President/Chairman	1%
CFO/COO/CTO/CIO/CMO	1%
Clergy	1%
Clerical worker	2%
Computer professional	2%
Consultant	4%
Director	3%
Doctor	1%
Educator/Teacher/Professor	8%
Engineer	2%
Entrepreneur	1%
Government official	5%
Health care worker (other than doctor)	3%
Homemaker	2%
I do not wish to answer this question	2%
Lawyer/Judge	1%
Manager	5%
Military Officer	0%
None	1%
Other please nominate	8%
Partner/Principal/Owner	3%

Researcher	3%
Retired	29%
Sales Manager/Account Executive	1%
Scientist	2%
Service provider	1%
Skilled laborer	1%
Student	2%
Supervisor	0%
Technician	1%
Writer/Editor	1%
Grand Total	100%

n=1170

Respondents are overwhelmingly white collar with substantial over-representations of teachers and retirees.

## 5.5.Industry

**Table 9: Industry of respondents total sample**

Industry	Total
Retail Trade	2%
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	0%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4%
Communication Services	3%
Construction	2%
Cultural and Recreation Services	2%
Education	18%
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	2%
Finance and Insurance	4%
Government Administration and Defence	10%
Health and Community Services	10%
Manufacturing	3%
Mining	1%
No industry	18%
Other (Please nominate)	11%
Personal and Other Services	3%
Property and Business Services	3%
Transport and Storage	2%
Wholesale Trade	1%
Grand Total	100%

n=1589

**Table 10: Industry of respondents balanced sample**

Industry	Total
Retail Trade	2%
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	1%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4%
Communication Services	3%
Construction	2%
Cultural and Recreation Services	2%
Education	17%
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	2%
Finance and Insurance	5%
Government Administration and Defence	10%
Health and Community Services	9%
Manufacturing	3%
Mining	2%
No industry	19%
Other (Please nominate)	10%
Personal and Other Services	3%
Property and Business Services	3%
Transport and Storage	2%
Wholesale Trade	1%
Grand Total	100%

n=1132

## 6. Attitudes to Global Warming quantitative analysis

This analysis is based on our samples for October 2009 and January 2010 adjusted to mirror voting intentions as reported in Newspoll.

### 6.1. Would you agree or disagree that increasing amounts of CO2 in the atmosphere will increase earth's temperature?

This question is designed to test belief in the proposition that CO2 is a greenhouse gas.

Table 11: Does atmospheric CO2 increase earth's temperature?

	October	January	Diff
Strongly agree	38%	32%	-6%
Agree	24%	25%	1%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%	12%	3%
Disagree	8%	10%	1%
Strongly disagree	15%	14%	-1%
Unsure	6%	7%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	0%
Total agree	62%	57%	-4%
Total disagree	23%	23%	0%
Net agree	39%	34%	-5%

There has been a significant decline of around 6 points in the percentage of respondents who think that increasing amounts of CO2 in the atmosphere increase earth's temperature. This decline is mirrored in the unadjusted sample as well.

As the table below shows, the movement is largely due to a change in the views of Liberal voters and Independents. There has also been a loss of confidence amongst those who agree with this notion with a decrease of 6 percentage points in those who "Strongly agree" as well as increases in those who "Neither agree nor disagree" and who are "Unsure".

**Table 12: Does atmospheric CO2 increase earth's temperature? (Respondents by voting intention)**

	October	January								
	Greens	Greens	Ind	Ind	ALP	ALP	Lib	Lib	Nat	Nat
Strongly agree	83%	77%	35%	17%	55%	49%	5%	3%	5%	0%
Agree	14%	18%	25%	38%	31%	37%	21%	16%	5%	12%
Neither agree nor disagree	0%	3%	10%	4%	7%	7%	15%	22%	10%	20%
Disagree	1%	0%	5%	9%	2%	2%	18%	20%	21%	27%
Strongly disagree	0%	1%	15%	26%	1%	1%	30%	28%	52%	39%
Unsure	2%	1%	10%	6%	4%	5%	11%	11%	7%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total agree	97%	95%	60%	55%	86%	86%	26%	19%	10%	12%
Total disagree	1%	1%	20%	34%	4%	3%	48%	48%	74%	66%
Net agree	96%	94%	40%	21%	82%	83%	-22%	-29%	-64%	-54%

**6.2. Would you agree or disagree that increasing amounts of CO2 in the atmosphere through man's use of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas are significantly affecting earth's temperature?**

This question is designed to test the proposition that man’s emissions of CO2 are having a substantial effect on the climate.

**Table 13: Are manmade CO2 emissions significantly contributing to global warming?**

	October	January	
Strongly agree	36%	31%	-5%
Agree	22%	23%	1%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%	11%	2%
Disagree	11%	11%	0%
Strongly disagree	17%	18%	1%
Unsure	5%	7%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	0%
Total agree	58%	54%	-4%
Total disagree	28%	29%	1%
Net agree	30%	24%	-6%

Again there is a similar move here to the one above, and it mostly reflects a decline in the percentage of those who believe that CO2 is a greenhouse gas cascading through to this question.

This can most readily be seen in a dissection of this view by voting intention.

**Table 14 Are manmade CO2 emissions significantly contributing to global warming? (Respondents by voting intention).**

	October	January								
	Greens	Greens	Ind	Ind	ALP	ALP	Lib	Lib	Nat	Nat
Strongly agree	81%	74%	35%	17%	52%	48%	5%	3%	2%	0%
Agree	14%	20%	25%	28%	32%	36%	14%	9%	5%	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	2%	4%	5%	15%	8%	7%	15%	16%	5%	20%
Disagree	1%	1%	5%	6%	3%	2%	24%	23%	24%	34%
Strongly disagree	0%	1%	25%	23%	2%	2%	34%	38%	57%	34%
Unsure	2%	1%	5%	11%	4%	5%	8%	10%	7%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total agree	95%	94%	60%	45%	84%	84%	18%	12%	7%	10%
Total disagree	1%	1%	30%	30%	4%	4%	58%	61%	81%	68%
Net agree	94%	92%	30%	15%	80%	81%	-39%	-49%	-74%	-59%

Again, the two groups that have changed substantially are Liberals and Independents. In addition to those in the Liberal group who now don't think that CO2 has an effect, there are others who have changed their mind on how big an effect they think it will have. Support for man's emissions causing warming is still strong across the sample, with very little movement amongst Greens or ALP voters.

### 6.3. Would you agree or disagree that increasing amounts of CO2 in the atmosphere pose an unacceptable risk of a catastrophic change in earth's temperature in the future?

Table 15: Is there a risk of catastrophic climate change?

	October	January	
Strongly agree	34%	30%	-4%
Agree	21%	19%	-1%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%	11%	2%
Disagree	12%	12%	0%
Strongly disagree	19%	21%	2%
Unsure	5%	7%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	0%
Total agree	55%	49%	-5%
Total disagree	31%	33%	2%
Net agree	24%	16%	-8%

There has been a decrease in support for the idea that climate change could be catastrophic. The total number of those who disagree has increased by 2% as has those who are unsure or who neither agree nor disagree.

Again the movement is mostly amongst Liberals and Independents. It should also be noted that a manual analysis (discussed in the qualitative section of this report) of those who “Neither agree nor disagree” shows that 46% of them tend against the proposition, 52% are neutral and only 3% tend towards the proposition. This effectively makes the “Net agree” figure close to 10%.

**Table 16: Is there a risk of catastrophic climate change? (Respondents by voting intention)**

	October	January								
	Greens	Greens	Ind	Ind	ALP	ALP	Lib	Lib	Nat	Nat
Strongly agree	77%	76%	35%	19%	48%	44%	4%	3%	2%	0%
Agree	16%	18%	20%	21%	33%	34%	8%	6%	2%	5%
Neither agree nor disagree	2%	3%	10%	17%	8%	10%	14%	14%	10%	12%
Disagree	2%	0%	10%	2%	4%	4%	26%	24%	12%	29%
Strongly disagree	0%	1%	25%	30%	2%	1%	38%	45%	69%	51%
Unsure	3%	2%	0%	11%	4%	6%	9%	9%	5%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total agree	93%	94%	55%	40%	82%	78%	13%	8%	5%	5%
Total disagree	2%	1%	35%	32%	6%	5%	65%	69%	81%	80%
Net agree	91%	92%	20%	9%	76%	73%	-52%	-61%	-76%	-76%

While the biggest decrease has been in Liberals and Independents, there has also been a significant negative movement in the views of ALP voters on this issue as well.

**6.4. Do you support or oppose the government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (sometimes called an ETS or Emissions Trading Scheme)?**

There has been a significant decrease in support for the CPRS.

**Table 17: Do you support a CPRS?**

	October	January
Strongly support	12%	9%
Support	28%	24%
Neither support nor oppose	14%	13%
Oppose	13%	12%
Strongly oppose	30%	39%
Unsure	4%	3%
Grand Total	100%	100%
Total support	40%	33%
Total oppose	42%	51%
Net support	-2%	-18%

Unlike the previous questions where the numbers of those who were uncertain increased as well as those opposed, in the case of the CPRS almost all of the decrease in support appears to have gone across to opposition. As a result a majority of respondents opposes the CPRS and only a third supports it.

**Table 18: Do you support a CPRS? (Respondents by voting intention)**

	October	January								
	Greens	Greens	Ind	Ind	ALP	ALP	Lib	Lib	Nat	Nat
Strongly support	9%	6%	15%	2%	21%	19%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Support	33%	31%	15%	7%	49%	47%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Neither support nor oppose	25%	23%	5%	20%	17%	18%	10%	5%	0%	5%
Oppose	19%	24%	25%	24%	6%	7%	21%	13%	10%	10%
Strongly oppose	11%	13%	40%	46%	3%	4%	62%	79%	88%	83%
Unsure	4%	3%	0%	2%	5%	5%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total support	42%	37%	30%	9%	70%	66%	4%	2%	2%	2%
Total oppose	29%	37%	65%	70%	9%	11%	82%	91%	98%	93%
Net support	13%	-1%	-35%	-61%	61%	55%	-78%	-89%	-95%	-90%

Support for the CPRS is down in all voting categories (apart from the Nationals). Again the big moves are driven by changes in the Liberal Party vote.

**6.5. How strongly do you support or oppose Australia implementing measures to curb CO2 emissions in the near future before the largest emitting nations - the USA, China and India - agree to curb theirs?**

Despite the findings about a CPRS there is still support for the proposition that Australia should act to curb CO2 emissions even if the largest emitters have not agreed to do so. Most respondents either oppose the idea or support it, with few sitting in the middle or being unsure.

**Table 19: Should Australia adopt measures to curb CO2 emissions irrespective of what the rest of the world does?**

Strongly support	28%
Support	23%
Neither support nor oppose	6%
Oppose	8%
Strongly oppose	33%
Unsure	2%
Grand Total	100%
Total agree	51%
Total disagree	42%
Net agree	9%

n=1190

**Table 20: Should Australia adopt measures to curb CO2 emissions irrespective of what the rest of the world does? (Respondents by voting intention)**

	Greens	Independent	Labor	Liberal	National
Strongly support	71%	26%	38%	4%	2%
Support	21%	13%	41%	7%	15%
Neither support nor oppose	3%	11%	10%	3%	2%
Oppose	2%	9%	5%	14%	10%
Strongly oppose	3%	39%	4%	71%	71%
Unsure	0%	2%	3%	1%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total agree	92%	39%	79%	11%	17%
Total disagree	6%	48%	8%	85%	80%
Net agree	86%	-9%	71%	-74%	-63%

This is the first time that we have polled this question so we do not have comparison figures from October. It is obvious that party affiliation is a strong determinant of a respondent's position.

**6.6. How much more would you be prepared to pay on your household electricity bill to decrease Australia's emissions to levels that the current government accepts are necessary to limit climate change to 2 degrees or less by 2050?**

**Table 21: How much extra for electricity would you pay to limit climate change to 2%?**

Nothing	47%
\$10 per month	12%
\$11 to \$20 per month	11%
\$21 to \$30 per month	9%
\$41 to \$50 per month	8%
\$51 to \$60 per month	3%
\$61 to \$70 per month	1%
\$71 to \$80 per month	1%
\$81 to \$90 per month	0%
\$91 to \$100 per month	2%
\$100+ per month	6%
Grand Total	100%

n=1063

While we do not have any earlier data for this question two other organisations have polled the same question. The Climate Institute asked voters in a number of marginal seats how much they would spend in November 2007, and the Lowy Instituted included a question in their 2008 survey.

**Table 22 How much extra for electricity would you pay to limit climate change to 2%? (Comparison between different polls).**

	CI 2007	Lowy 2008	TNF 2010
Nothing	27%	23%	47%
1-10 per month	30%	35%	12%
11-20 per month	15%	22%	11%
21+ per month	28%	21%	29%
	100%	100%	100%

Our poll shows a greater polarization with a significant increase in those prepared to pay nothing, but in all three polls a similar number of respondents will only pay up to \$10.

This type of polling question is generally used to understand how seriously respondents really take an issue. Based on this it would appear that their perceptions have remained relatively stable over the last three years. Given the fall in support for the global warming propositions, this could be interpreted to say that real support for climate change was never as high as the headline numbers and that if there is a significant cost involved in fighting global warming most Australians would not be prepared to pay it.

## ***7. Australian attitudes to global warming qualitative analysis***

We analysed four qualitative questions to get a better understanding of what is motivating respondents. Paraphrased these questions were:

1. Why would you agree or disagree that increasing amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere pose an unacceptable risk of a catastrophic change in earth's temperature in the future?
2. Thinking about the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, irrespective of whether you support or oppose it, what is the most compelling argument in favour of implementing it?
3. Thinking about the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, irrespective of whether you support or oppose it, in what is the most compelling argument against implementing it?
4. Thinking about how much extra you would pay on your electricity to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, why did you answer that way?

This analysis helps to provide motive to the answers that from the qualitative research.

## **7.7. Why would you agree or disagree that increasing amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere pose an unacceptable risk of a catastrophic change in earth's temperature in the future?**

### **7.7.1. Analysis**

The qual on this question resolves itself to a tussle between “the science” (normally a term used by proponents of global warming) on one side with observations of past history and deep suspicion of the motives of scientists on the other. On both sides there is a level of faith inherent in the positions taken and the positions are entrenched.

We have analysed the qualitative responses using Leximancer. It suggests that the key themes for those who are strongly concerned that Global Warming could be catastrophic are “risk” and “science”. The weak version of their argument is essentially the precautionary principle and the strong position is that the science is settled and a catastrophe is a factual certainty.

Those who disagree are associated with “earth”, “climate” and “people”. The strong version of this argument is that climate has always changed and that there is nothing in the history of the earth to suggest that global warming will be catastrophic (some even suggest it will be beneficial). In fact, the strongest version is that global warming is not actually occurring. The weak version is that whatever the facts the effect of combating climate change will be adverse on people. This last argument is in a way a cost benefit analysis which runs counter to the precautionary principle.

The “Climate Gate” emails and recent reporting of errors in the IPCC reports have definitely had an effect on the credibility of the IPCC science.

It should be noted that a manual analysis of those who “neither agree nor disagree” shows that 52% are genuinely neutral, but 45% lean (sometimes quite heavily) towards the proposition that there is no risk of catastrophic change. This affects the quantitative figures in 6.3.

### **7.7.2. Verbatims**

#### **Climate**

“Instead of seeing large collaborations of meticulous, careful, critical scientists, we instead see a small team of incompetent cowboys, abusing almost every aspect of the framework of science to build a fortress around their “old boys’ club”, to prevent real scientists from seeing the shambles of their “research”. Most people are aghast that this could have happened; and it is only because “climate science” exploded from a relatively tiny corner of academia into a hugely funded industry in a matter of mere years that the perpetrators were able to get away with it for so long.” Male, 45-54, Liberal

“The so-called "scietific" evidence that CO2 levels are causing increased temperatures have not been proved and there is "proof" that there are several other activities causing climate to change and Man has no control over these. Watch " Decline of Ancient Egypt" which shows haw the change in the Atlantic cused massive climate change.” Male, 65-74, Liberal

## **Science**

“A high school chemistry student can verify the first two. Peer reviewed science (which discovered DNA, antibiotics, gravity, nuclear weapons etc) affirms the third to a very high level of certainty” Male, 35-44, Greens

“I've tried to inform myself on this issue by reading widely, talking to friends who are atmospheric scientists, and by attending many seminars and lectures sponsored by the University of Adelaide and featuring scientists from many different disciplines. They seem to be unanimous about the risks being faced.” Male, 65-54, Labor.

“I have read extensively on the subject, am aware of earth's climate changes through the ages, long before man produced any CO2 and believe the issue has been totally misrepresented and exaggerated by self-interest groups and irresponsible media. The science is not "settled" and much more research that is not compromised by political expectations needs to be carried out free from influence” Male, 65-74, National.

## **Earth**

“As a scientist I recognise the natural climatic cycle of cold + hot, however the earth has continued to heat overall more rapidly over the last 200 or so years (with small chill periods)- corresponds to the increased industrialisation, use of coal etc. Sea level rising, increased frequency of severe weather (heavy snow and cold + increased cyclonic sessions + more severe and frequent droughts” Female, 55-64, Labor

“there is a lot more involved than cO2 in the atmosphere it is partly the natural cycle of the earth partly due to over population partly due to stripping all the trees from the earth partly due to all the roofs, roads and other heat retaining surfaces we have put on the earth”  
Female, 55-64, Liberal

### **Risk**

“As the population increases and the amount of co2 produced and released into our atmosphere increases we are at increased risk of not surviving for many more generations, and then at a lowered life expectancy and enjoyment level.” Female, 55-64, Labor

“99% of scientist agree and we need to start to implement some solutions and manage the risk we are putting the planet and the lives of our children” Male, 35-44, Labor

“I think the science is currently too agenda driven and seems to have been "adjusted". I think the risk is probably very significantly lower than being touted and possibly even just a natural cycle.” Male, 35-44, Liberal

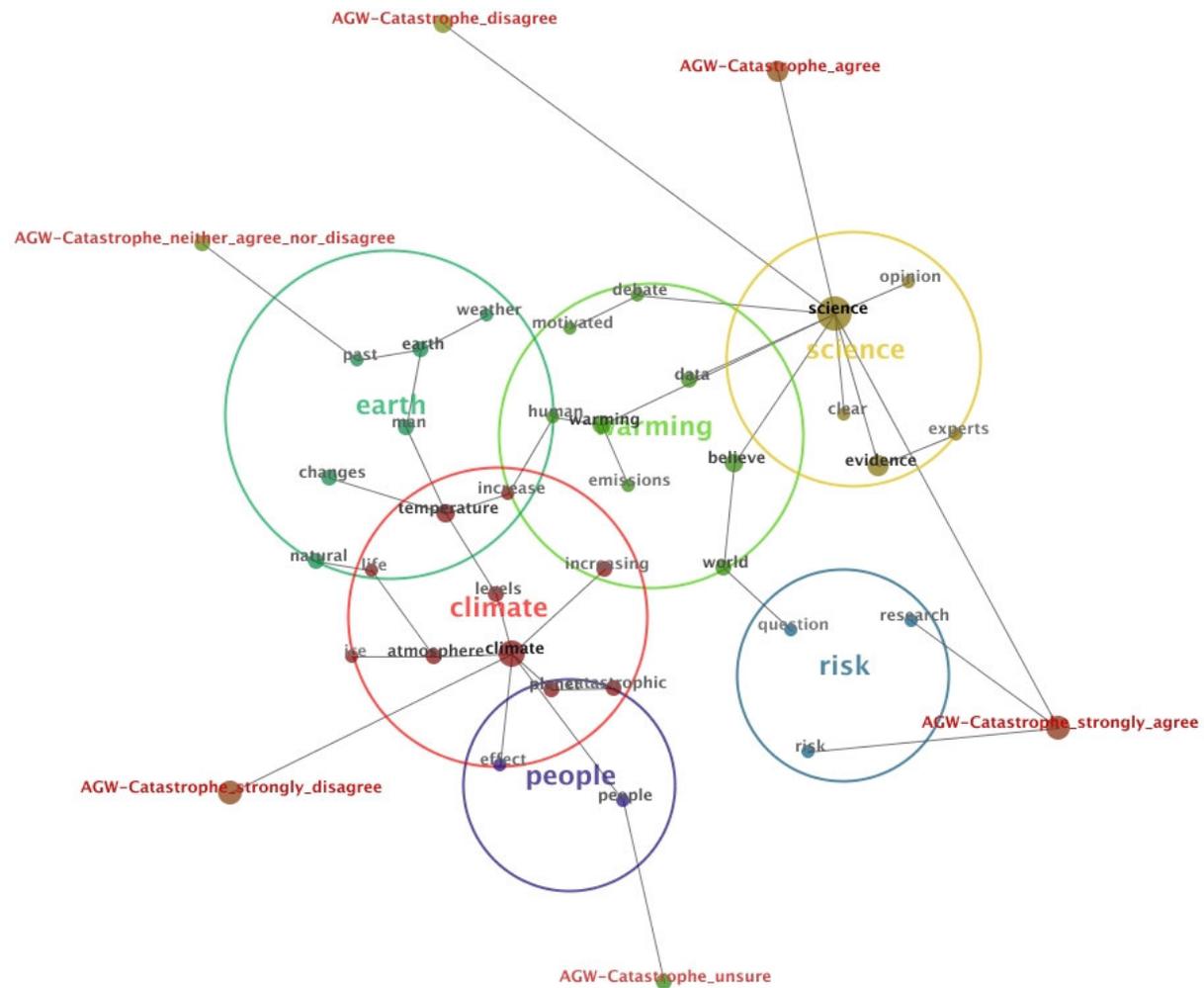
### **People**

“Twenty years ago the Greens and the socialist left were telling us we were headed for another Ice Age, now its global warming. I was sceptical about a Carbon Tax / ETS from prior to the last election as apparently all disadvantaged groups would be more than compensated for any costs of a such a scheme and to my mind that is just taxing and redistributing wealth without doing any thing at all for the environment and poor policy as it will reduce the cost of energy for those people making them use more of it while taxing .”  
Male, 35-44, Liberal

“Thever increasing hotter bushfires, The catastrophic storms, extreme and prolonged high temperatures. All this has resulted in people dying while politicians sit on their hands and say it is a " Big New Tax'.” Female, 55-64, Greens

“Dishonest reporting, showing power station water coolers emitting steam and letting people who do not know better believe it is poluting the air.” Male, 75+, Liberal.

Figure 1: Leximancer map of agreement with proposition that global warming will be catastrophic



## **7.8. Thinking about the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, irrespective of whether you support or oppose it, what is the most compelling argument in favour of implementing it?**

### **7.8.1. Analysis**

Surprisingly most of the responses were not specifically about the science of global warming. The themes that Leximancer detected which tend to be associated with proponents of a CPRS were “Australia” and “Future”. “Energy” was shared with opponents, as was “Pollution” while “Tax” was generally associated with opponents only. Encompassed in the term “Australia” were ideas of national pride and showing the way. So the appeal was to national patriotism. “Future” aligns with its common meaning. “Energy” was about diversifying energy sources, and also with dealing with a perceived shortage of fossil fuels in the near future.

“Pollution” tended to conflate dealing with CO<sub>2</sub> with dealing with all sort of pollution either as a related, or separate matter. So some saw CO<sub>2</sub> as a pollution, which makes eliminating it an absolute good. Others saw pollution as something that needed to be dealt with and that dealing with CO<sub>2</sub> would either reinforce other efforts or be a part of the total effort.

“Tax” was associated with those who were strongly opposed, mostly because they could not bring themselves to give an argument in favour of a CPRS as required by the question. There are two aspects to the theme. One is that a CPRS is just another tax; the other that a carbon tax would be preferable to a trading scheme.

A summary of the argument in favour would be that “Australia can show the way in implementing a CPRS which is something that can secure our future, as well as ensuring that we do not overly rely on fossil fuels which need to be imported and which are running out. This measure can be used to kick start development of alternative energy sources uniquely suitable to Australia. We also need to deal with pollution, and one way of doing that is to start with a CPRS.”

## **7.8.2. Verbatims**

### **Australia**

“Someone has to lead the way. We'll never get every country to do the right thing so Australia should at least be able to fry knowing we have done everything we could.” Male, 35-44, Labor

“Australia is a major exporter of coal and its prosperity relies on coal export revenues. Our procrastination justifies that of too many others but, conversely, our taking the initiative weakens their reticence” Male, 55-64, Labor

### **Pollution**

“It is obviously clear the wheater extremes are getting hotter and colder and pollution is on the increase. We need to care for our environment, don't see why we have to pay for it though.” Female, 35-44, Labor.

“The problem is excess atmospheric carbon dioxide and that is mostly associated with burning fuels which create other polluting gasses and particles. We need to reduce atmospheric pollution generally for health reasons and that will as a consequence reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide.” Male, 55-64, Labor

### **Energy**

“How about Australia actually taking a leading role, this is the DRIEST continent on earth, with the exception of Antarctica (or what's left of it). Let's put our money into (free) solar/wind/tidal/geothermal energy instead of continuing to rely on coal, be it "clean" or otherwise, instead of continuing to bolster the huge petrochemical/automotive industries.” Male, 45-54, Labor

“An ETS encourages investment in technology and development of clean energy sources. It provides the flexibility to increase or reduce annual reduction targets and facilitates, indeed some would argue, it compels moving away from the use of fossil fuels as an energy source.” Male, 75+, Labor

### **Tax**

“I strongly support measures to reduce carbon emissions -especially in so called 'advanced' societies - but I oppose the creation of the trading scheme which turns them into another product which can be bought & sold for profit - I fear the creation of derivatives market in this - prefer a tax, the proceeds of which to be used for carbon reduction & research etc & assisting low income people pay the higher prices need to be charged for energy etc - higher prices are essential as that is the only way people will reduce consumption” Female, 65-74, Labor

“Contrary to general belief, we would not be the first to take steps. Nevertheless there is ample evidence that some sort of tax on carbon will be applied and we may as well start in anticipation to minimise the impact if and when full implementation is forced on all governments.” Male, 55-64, Labor

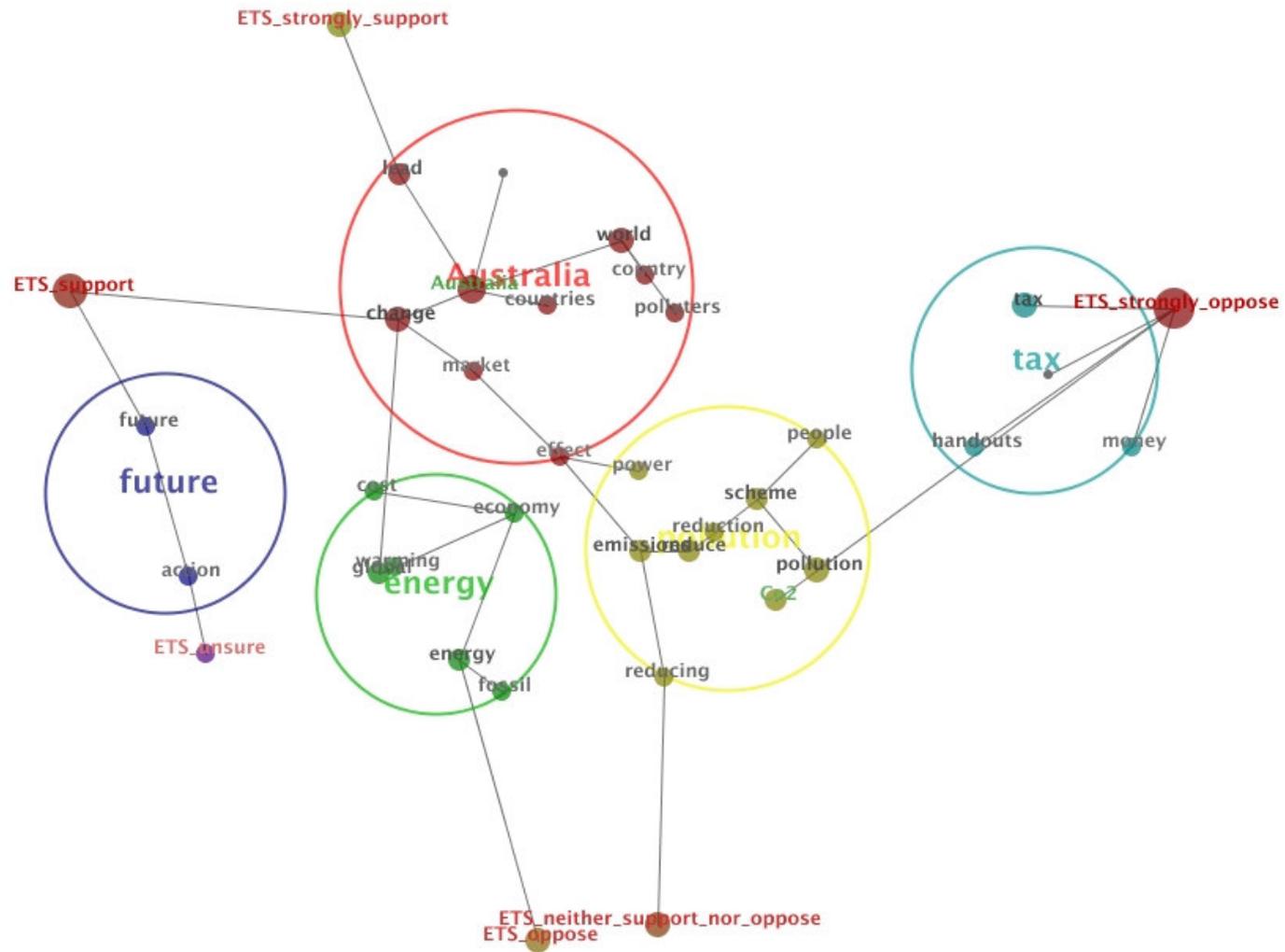
“Something must be done now -if the cap has the effect of reducing any emissions it must be put in place as soon as possible. I would prefer a carbon tax scheme, as I believe that this would be more effective, but it looks as though other countries are going with an ets scheme so it seems sensible to do the same - however all countries need to do more on top of these schemes to reduce emissions.” Female, 35-34, Labor

## **Future**

“if we want future generations to be able to enjoy this planet's wildlife, flowers, rivers, forests, blue skies, the stars at night, and the opportunity to breathe easily, we must take action now.” Female, 65-64, Labor

“Not only future generations, our children and theirs, but in ten years , even people like myself of 50 years will be afflicted by climate change. It is childish and selfish to say we won't do anything until you do!” Male, 45-54, Labor

Figure 2: Leximancer map of best arguments in favour of the CPRS



## **7.9. Thinking about the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, irrespective of whether you support or oppose it, in what is the most compelling argument against implementing it?**

### **7.9.1. Analysis**

Most of the arguments against come down to the price to be paid. To those most strongly opposed to the CPRS “Tax” is the most persuasive. They are also concerned about “Money” which relates to the huge financial industry that is going to be based on the CPRS and the inherent unreliability of financial markets as demonstrated by the Global Financial Crisis. “Cost” is a theme that is associated with those who are ambivalent about the scheme and refers to the cost to industry and the impact on the country. Those who oppose the CPRS and those who strongly support it both refer to the “Economy”. These groups are also associated with concerns that it will have virtually no effect on “Global” emissions. CPRS supporters are also concerned that the CPRS just allows “Polluters” to do what they like via special deals.

Based on the assumption that simple negative propositions are easier to sell than complex positive ones, the negative case here would seem to be much stronger than the positive one.

### **7.9.2. Verbatims**

#### **Tax**

“It is a nation-destroying, industry-destroying tax based on a false premise, whose proceeds will end up overseas supporting the shopping sprees of African dictators wives and lining Al Gore's pockets, whilst the plebs (i. e the slaes- us) continue to have their taxes increased and their living standards eroded.” Male, 25-34, Liberal

#### **Cost**

“The cost verus the tiny reudtcion we may effect is jts not worth itFurther and this is important until they can publically agree a definition of what Climate Change means then they should leave it alone. At the mone tthe IPCCdefitnino eans AGQ + Naturalbut when WOngets a talk it can mean, AGW + Natural: AGW, or just Natural” Male, 65-74, Liberal

## **Money**

“Wall St. Carbon credits are a financial instrument intended to be traded on international markets to establish value. Prior to the GFC that may have had some merit, now however we know that Wall st sent the world broke while making food and oil unaffordable to many using borrowed money and driven by simple greed.” Male, 65-74, Liberal

## **Economy**

“The CPRS scheme is nothing more than a super over-riding tax, which will add massive costs to every aspect of our productive economy and provide absolutely no advantage to anyone other than the Labor politicians and party and union parasites and hangers on they have parachuted into every bureaucratic and government funded organisation available as rewards for faithful service in the prosecution of their . ongoing class war.” Male, 65-74, National

## **Polluters**

“Because Rudd has bent over to the polluters it has been so watered down as to be effectively useless. Pass a straight unequivocal carbon tax and stand up to the bully boys” Male, 35-44, Greens

## **Global**

“Australia's emissions will have virtually no effect on global emissions by ourselves. Crippling our economy with a tax on energy (effectively) and doing nothing tangible for the environment strikes me as a futile and suicidal policy.” Male, 25-34, National



## **7.10. Thinking about how much extra you would pay on your electricity to reduce CO2 emissions, why did you answer that way?**

### **7.10.1. Analysis**

Of the 47% of respondents who were not prepared to pay more, most didn't believe that global warming existed, or that man was the cause of global warming, or that we could do anything about it. They therefore refused to pay anything because they didn't believe it could have any effect on climate.

When looking at the responses of others the questions mainly centred on what they could afford, or what they thought it was worth. Given that almost half were not prepared to pay any more, and these were also likely not to believe in global warming, then the balance of the sample was always likely to want to pay as much as what they thought they could afford or fixing the problem was worth.

What the qualitative research here demonstrates is that even those who believe do a cost benefit analysis on the proposals. It also suggests that the percentage of the community that is practically sceptical of global warming is the 47% who are not prepared to pay any more than they do now.

### **7.10.2. Verbatims**

#### **Nothing**

“Because latest research has debunked the IPCC mantra that rising man-made CO2 emissions is causing global warming. The average global temperature has declined over the last decade yet CO2 emissions have steadily increased.” Male, 55-64, Liberal

“Because anthropogenic warming is a beat up. there are many other factors that impact climate such as ocean currents, solar etc” Male, 55-64, Independent

### **Up to 10**

“all I can afford on a recurring basis - but it's important that everyone contributes, and understands what they are contributing for. (I'm not happy about any scheme that allows big polluters to buy credits at my expense so that they can continue asbefore)” Male, 55-64, Greens

“People on limited incomes cannot afford more than that.” Female, 55-64, Greens

### **11 to 20**

“Realistically, I personally could probably afford to pay (but would have to give up some luxuries); but much more than that and many poorer people or families might have difficulties.” Female, 55-64, Labor

“I could afford more but am aware that a large section of Australian society would not be able to make extra payments so I have tempered my response due to this” Male, 25-34, Labor

### **21 to 30**

“I'd be proud to make a contribution to something SO important for the future of the human race on the planet” Female, 55-64, Labor

“Because it is enough to make a difference while still affordable for most people. [BUT THE QUESTION IS DISINGENUOUS SINCE IT AVOIDS MENTION OF THE FACT OF COMPENSATION FOR MOST PEOPLE UNDER THE PROPOSED SCHEME]” Male, 65-74, Labor

### **31 and up**

“I can well afford this amount now and you can't breath or eat money anyway.” Female, 55-64, Labor

“I haven't a clue really what is needed but that's only \$600 a year and we could afford that. If more was required to make it effective, so be it. We can't continue living in a fool's paradise” Male, 55-64, Labor

“I certainly think we need to pay more for the utilisation of natural resources generally, and incentives need to be developed to increase rate of 'green' energy uptake” Male, 55-64, Greens

“I believe it is imperative that warming is limited to less than two degrees (although the government's targets are too low to achieve this!)and think that this is worth incurring financial hardship to achieve.” Male, 25-34, Greens

“The problem is huge; the cost to averting temperature change must be significant in order solve the problem; and not solving the problem will be more costly too - economically, environmentally, socially, and humanitarianly.” Male, 35-44, Democrats

