

Green intentions not matched by action: survey

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The survey found nine in 10 respondents recycle household waste. (ABC News: Giulio Saggin)

A survey of attitudes to the environment has found that Australians are deeply concerned about global warming but are only prepared to change their behaviour in small ways.

The Australian National University poll revealed two in five people believe global warming is the most serious threat facing the planet, ahead of population growth, terrorism and HIV/AIDS.

Three in five believe drought and declining rainfall are the greatest environmental threats while a similar number say the Federal Government is doing too little to protect the environment.

Professor Ian McAllister says nine in 10 respondents recycle household waste but just three in 10 use public transport.

"They were less prepared to take more major steps for example to limit their use of cars to use public transport more frequently, and we also found that they were more likely to pay personally to protect the environment," he said.

"Particularly things like paying more for water, a large majority of people were prepared to do that."

The survey shows while many Australians are concerned about global warming that does not translate into widespread support for an emissions trading scheme.

Professor McAllister says just over half of those surveyed were in favour of an emissions trading scheme.

"There needs to be a much greater debate about the pros and cons of the emissions trading scheme so ordinary voters are more informed about the whole issue," he said.

"It's also the case that most people believe that the Government isn't doing enough more generally in this area and that's obviously something that the Government should try and address."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/10/29/2403987.htm>