



Emotional responses to climate change: A missing link to behaviour?

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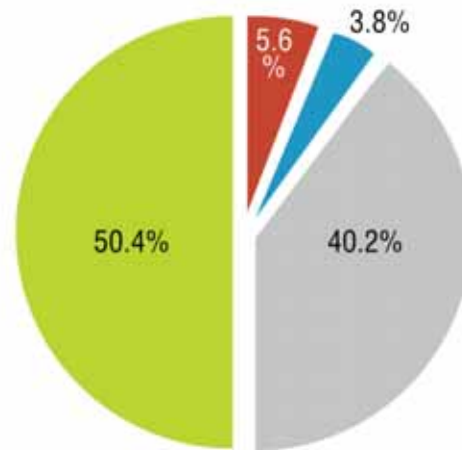


Australian Baseline Survey

- Online survey of **5,036** people across Australia
- Recruited from a research-only internet panel of 300,000+ Australians, using ORU (QSAP gold standard provider)
- Conducted in July – August, 2010
 - Capital City - 55.2%,
 - Regional Town - 29%;
 - Rural Area - 13.2%

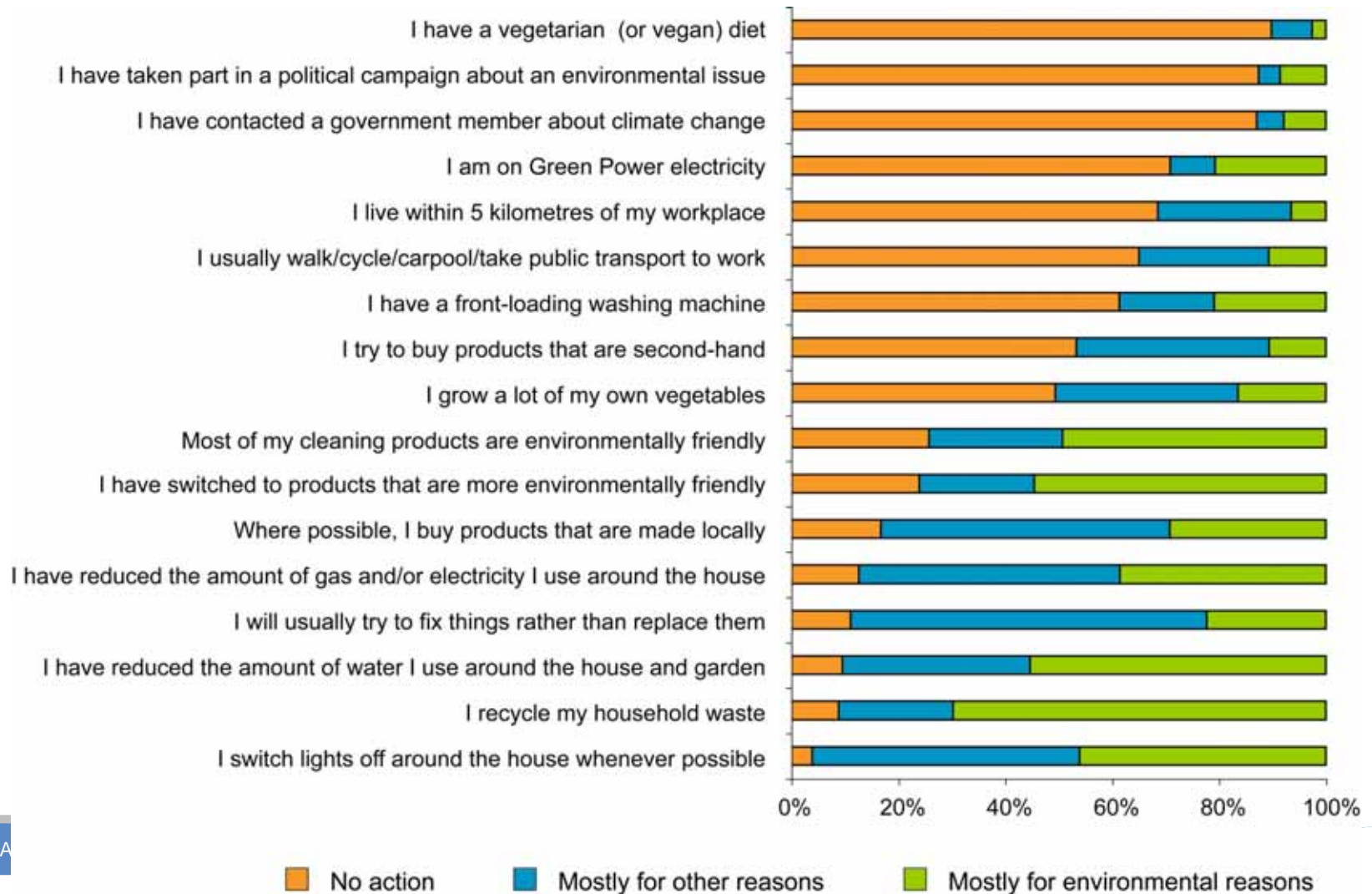
What do people believe?

What best describes thoughts about climate change?

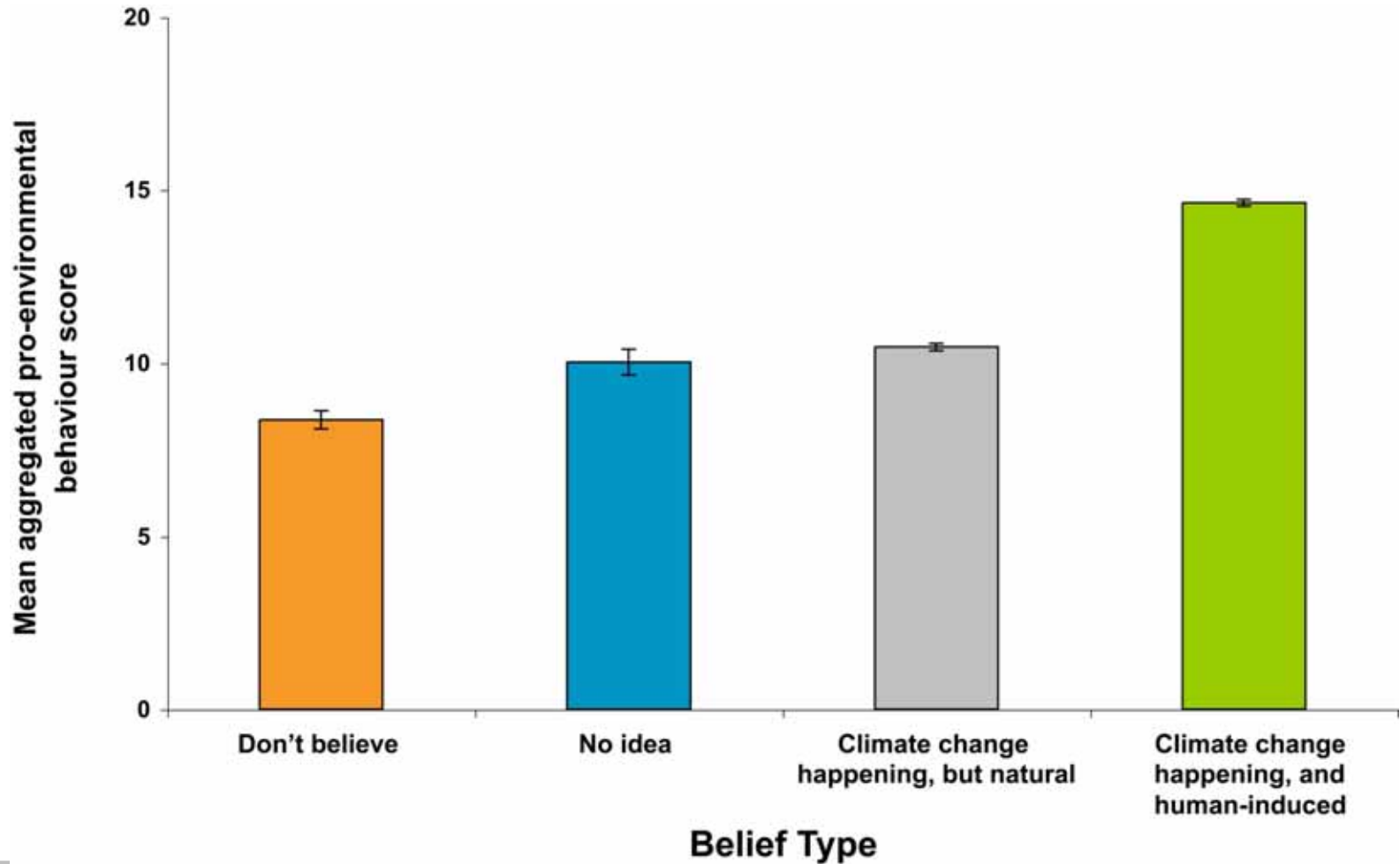


- I don't think that climate change is happening
- I have no idea whether climate change is happening or not
- I think that climate change is happening, but it's just a natural fluctuation in Earth's temperatures
- I think that climate change is happening, and I think that humans are largely causing it

Pro-environmental Behaviours



Belief type and pro-environmental behaviours



Belief (happening AND human induced VS
happening BUT natural)

and **Behaviour** are correlated $r = .402$

=> a lot of the variance in Behaviour is not explained
by Belief

How does climate change make you feel?

Angry _____

Shamed _____

Guilty _____

Fearful _____

Hopeful _____

Powerless _____

Joyful _____

Confused _____

Despairing _____

Excited _____

Bored _____

Irritated _____

What do people *feel* about climate change?

Belief type

Commonest Emotion

I don't think that climate change is happening (n=283)

Irritated

I have no idea whether climate change is happening or not (n=189)

Confused

I think that climate change is happening, but its just a natural variation in Earth's temperatures (n=2,024)

Irritated

I think that climate change is happening, and I think that it has largely been caused by humans (n=2,540)

Fear

Emotions factors

Shame: ashamed, guilt, fearful, angry M = 2.94

Joy: joyful, excited M = 2.16

Irritated: irritated, bored M = 2.73

Confused: confused, despairing, powerless M = 2.83

	I think that climate change is happening BUT it's just a natural variation	I think that climate change is happening AND I think it's due to human activity
Shame	2.533	3.383
Joy	2.290	2.035
Irritated	2.993	2.410
Confused	2.791	2.901
Behaviour	11.836	16.507

	Shame	Joy	Irritated	Confused	Belief	Behaviour
Shame	--	.028	-.161	.426	.485	.418
Joy		--	.229	.154	-.164	-.060
Irritated			--	.179	-.313	-.307
Confused				--	.073	.036
Belief					--	.402
Behaviour						--

Predicting behaviour – from belief, then emotion

Model	Variables	R	R ²	beta
1	beliefs	.402	.161	.402
2	emotions	.513	.263	
	belief			.201
	confused			-.113
	joy			.021 (ns)
	irritated			-.172
	shame			.328

Predicting behaviour – from emotion, then belief

Model	Variables	R	R ²	beta
1	emotions	.485	.236	.402
	confused			-.124
	joy			.002 (ns)
	irritated			-.215
	shame			.424
2	beliefs	.513	.263	
	confused			-.113
	joy			.021 (ns)
	irritated			-.172
	shame			.328
	belief			.201

Conclusions

- Behaviour trumps beliefs
- Beliefs about climate change predict behaviour, but modestly
- Emotional reactions are under-researched in this area
- Four separate emotional response domains are identified, more or less independent of each other
- Two emotional responses (shame, irritated) are as strongly linked to behaviour as beliefs are; two (joy, confused) are not.
- Clunky mediation analysis suggests emotional responses largely account for the relationship between beliefs and behaviour.

- Emotional responses precede beliefs?

Thank you for your attention.

