

# Polling - Safeguard mechanism

*March 2023*

## Key results

During March 2023, the Australia Institute commissioned uComms to poll five seats on the proposed changes to the safeguard mechanism: Bennelong, Goldstein, Mackellar, Moreton and Sydney.

- In all five seats, most residents say the Commonwealth Government should stop new gas and coal projects.
  - In Sydney, 65% say the Government should stop new gas and coal projects, including 40% who say it should also start phasing down existing projects.
  - 60% of Mackellar residents, 54% of Goldstein residents, 53% of Bennelong residents and 51% of Moreton residents say the Government should stop new gas and coal projects.
- In all five seats, more residents agree than disagree that the Government's new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects.
  - In Sydney, 64% agree that the Government's new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects, including 41% who strongly agree.
  - In Mackellar and Goldstein, a majority (58% and 51% respectively) agree that the Government's new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects.
- Across all five seats polled, a small minority of residents (7%–12%) think polluters should be allowed to buy offsets to account for all their emissions.
  - Half or more of residents in all five seats think that polluters should have to directly reduce their emissions, not use offsets (50–56%).
- In the two independent-held seats (Goldstein and Mackellar), there is a clear difference between Liberal and non-Liberal voters, with non-Liberal voters markedly more supportive of the three climate proposals.

## What the Commonwealth Government should do about gas and coal projects

Respondents were asked:

Australia is currently the world's third largest exporter of fossil fuels such as gas and coal. In addition to the coal mines and gas wells that currently exist, there are 116 new additional gas and coal projects under development.

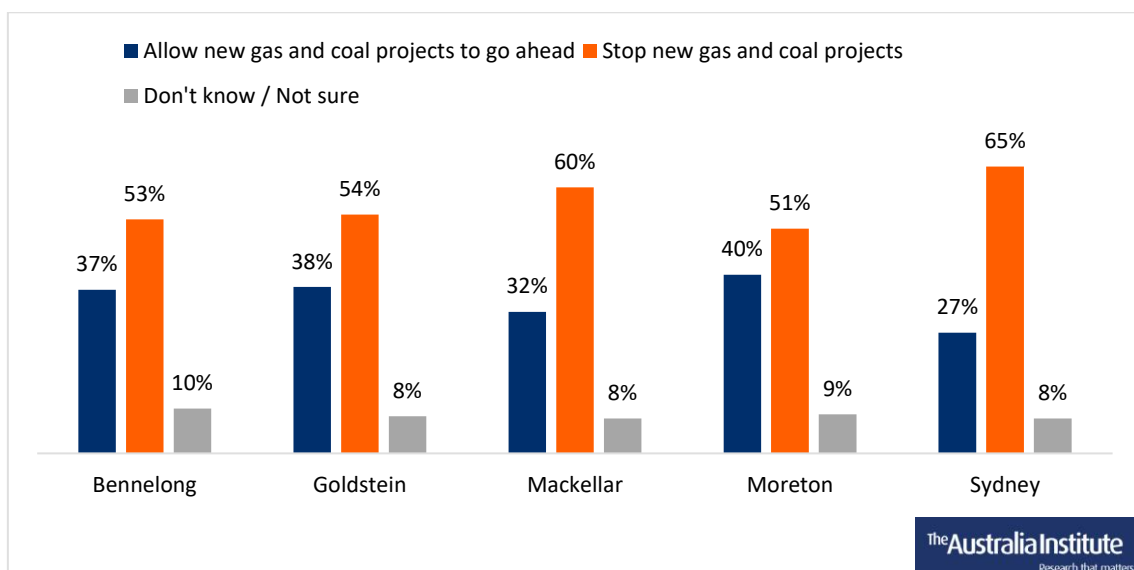
They were then asked what the Commonwealth Government should do:

- Allow new gas and coal projects to go ahead;
- Stop new gas and coal projects but let existing fossil fuel projects continue operating as is;
- Stop new gas and coal projects and start to phase down production from existing fossil fuel projects; or
- Don't know/Not sure.

In all five seats, most residents say the Commonwealth Government should stop new gas and coal projects.

- In Sydney, 65% say the Government should stop new gas and coal projects, including 40% who say it should also start phasing down existing projects.
- In Mackellar, 60% say the Government should stop new gas and coal projects, including 33% who say it should also start phasing down existing projects.
- 54% of Goldstein residents, 53% of Bennelong residents and 51% of Moreton residents say the Government should stop new gas and coal projects.

**Figure 1: What Commonwealth Government should do about gas and coal projects**

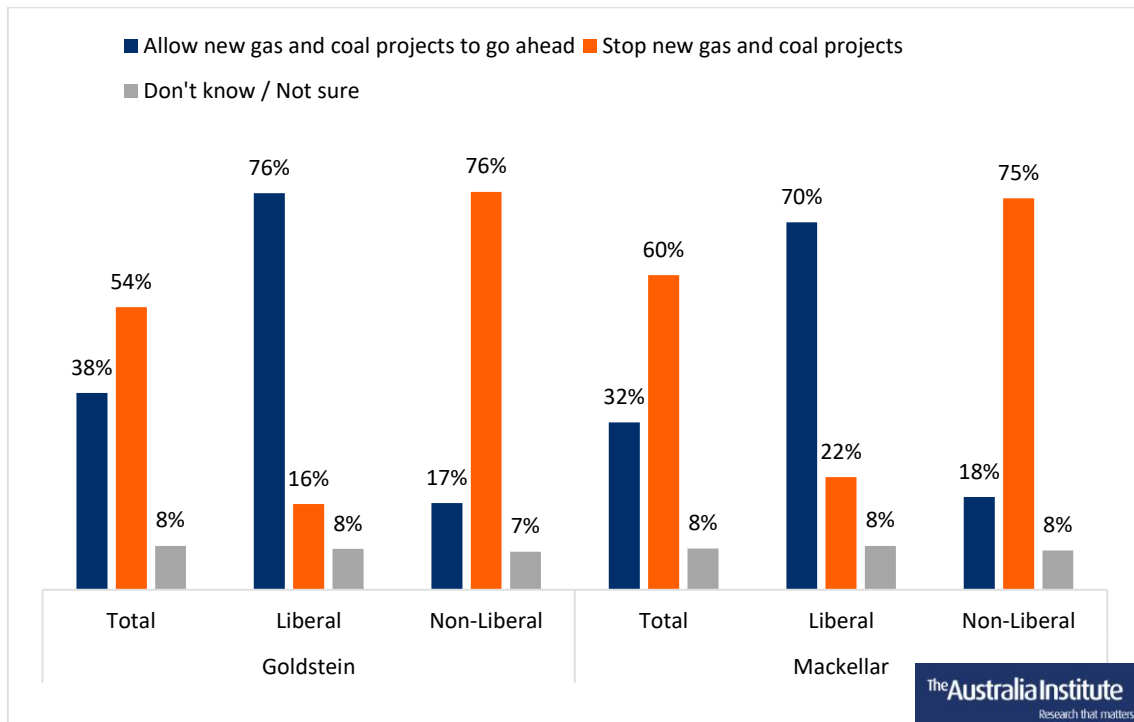


Note: The “Stop new gas and coal project” figures combine the results for “Stop new gas and coal projects but let existing fossil fuel projects continue operating as is” and “Stop new gas and coal projects and start to phase down production from existing fossil fuel projects”.

Splitting the Liberal and non-Liberal vote in the two independent-held seats reveals a striking difference between the attitudes of Liberal voters and those who intend to vote for the independent MP, Labor, the Greens or Other.

- Three in four non-Liberal voters (76% in Goldstein, 75% in Mackellar) say the Government should stop new gas and coal projects.
- Only one in five Liberal voters (16% in Goldstein, 22% in Mackellar) say the Government should stop new gas and coal projects.

**Figure 2: What Commonwealth Government should do about gas and coal projects, independent seats**



## The Government’s new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects

Respondents were told:

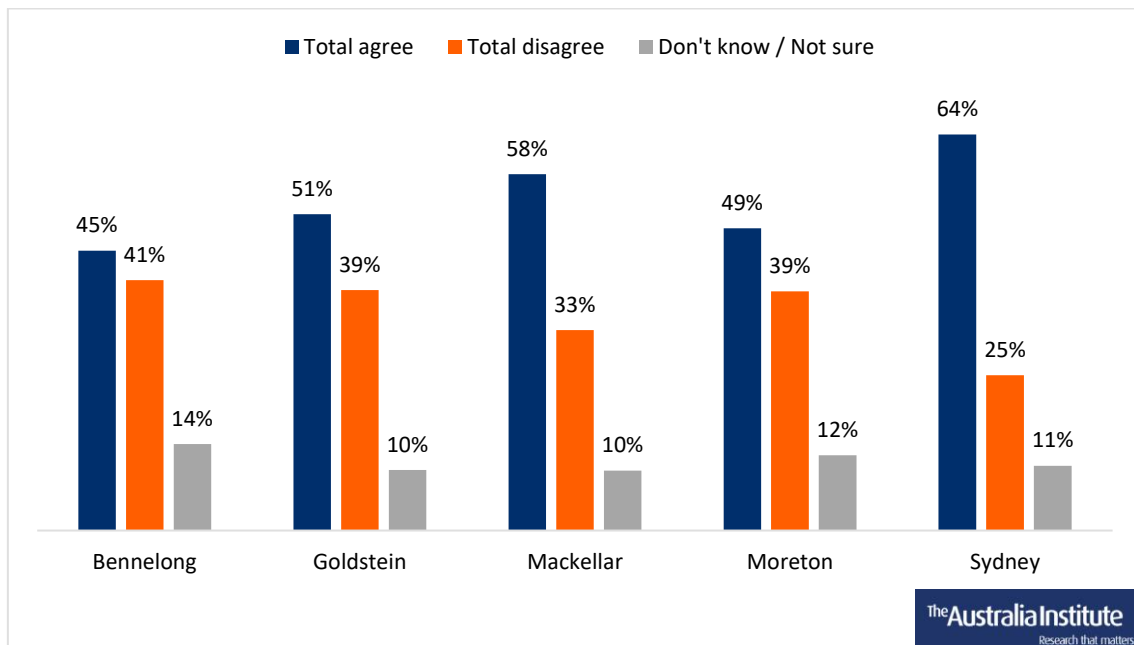
The Federal Government has committed to reducing Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions by 43 percent by 2030 and it is introducing new laws known as the safeguard mechanism to help achieve this.

They were then asked whether they agree or disagree that “The Government’s new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects.”

In all five seats, more residents agree than disagree that the Government’s new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects.

- In Sydney, 64% agree that the Government’s new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects, including 41% who strongly agree.
- In Mackellar and Goldstein, a majority (58% and 51% respectively) agree that the Government’s new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects.

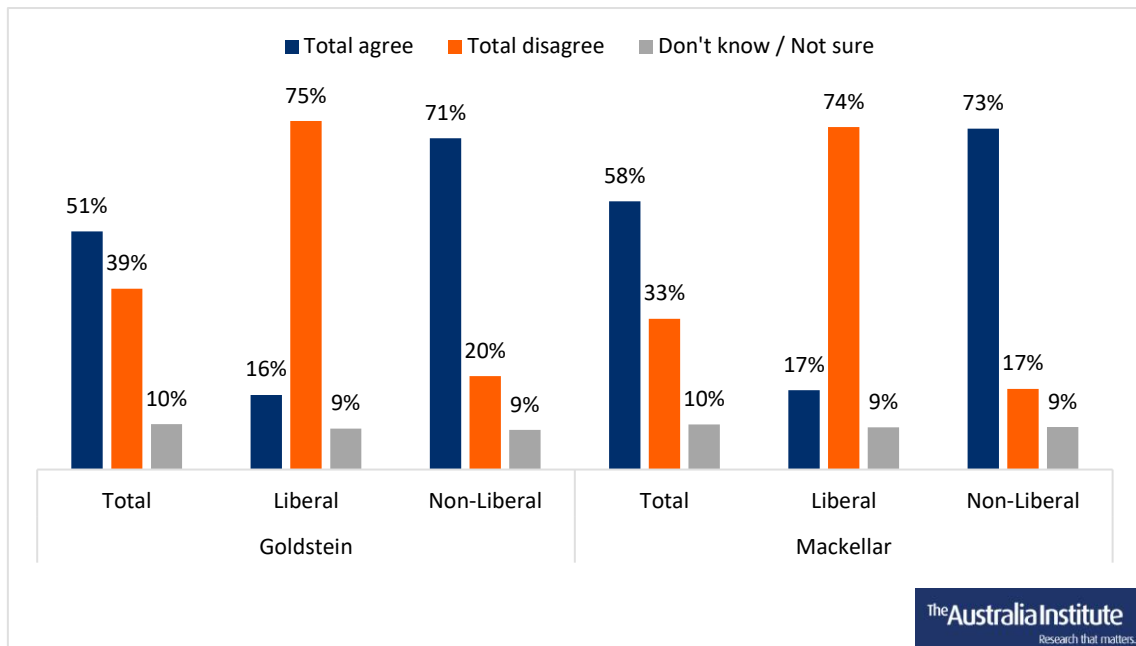
**Figure 3: The Government’s new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects**



In the independent-held seats of Goldstein and Mackellar, seven in 10 non-Liberal voters (Goldstein 71%, Mackellar 73%) agree that the Government's new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects.

Three in four Liberal voters (Goldstein 75%, Mackellar 74%) disagree.

**Figure 4: The Government's new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects, independent seats**



## Polluting projects and carbon offsets

Respondents were told:

The Federal Government’s proposed new climate change laws will allow polluting projects to choose between directly reducing their emissions and buying carbon offsets.

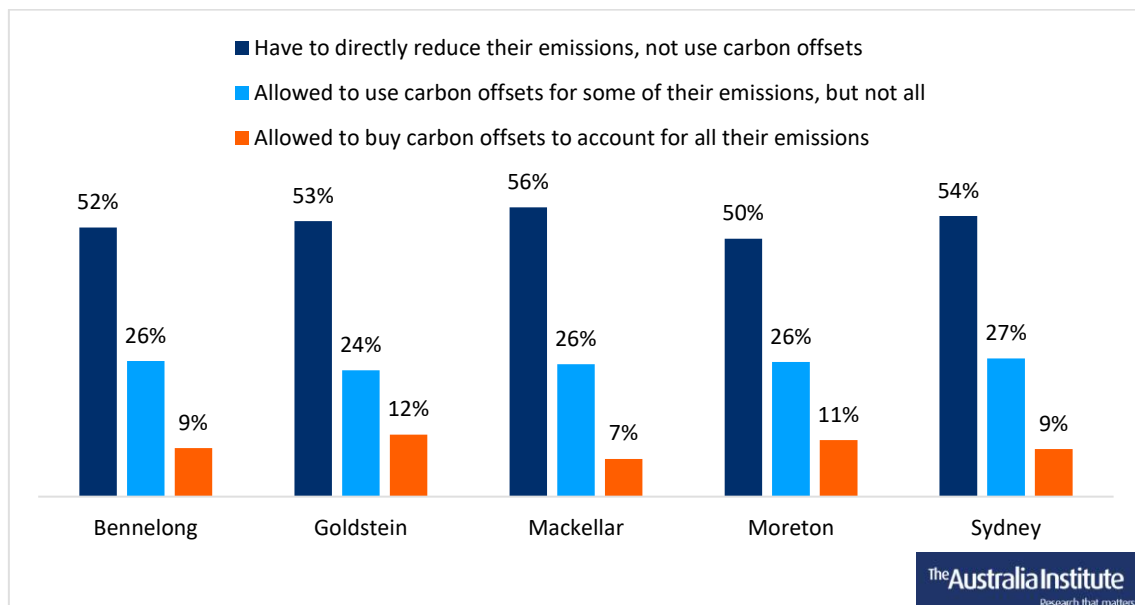
Then were then asked which of the following statements was closest to their view:

- Polluting projects should have to directly reduce their emissions, not use carbon offsets;
- Polluting projects should be allowed to use carbon offsets for some of their emissions, but not all;
- Polluting projects should be allowed to buy carbon offsets to account for all their emissions; or
- Don’t know/Not sure.

Across all five seats polled, a small minority of residents (7%–12%) think polluters should be allowed to buy carbon offsets to account for all their emissions.

- Half or more of residents in all five seats think that polluting projects should have to directly reduce their emissions, not use carbon offsets (50–56%).
- About one in four residents think that polluting projects should be allowed to use carbon offsets for some of their emissions, but not all (24–27%).

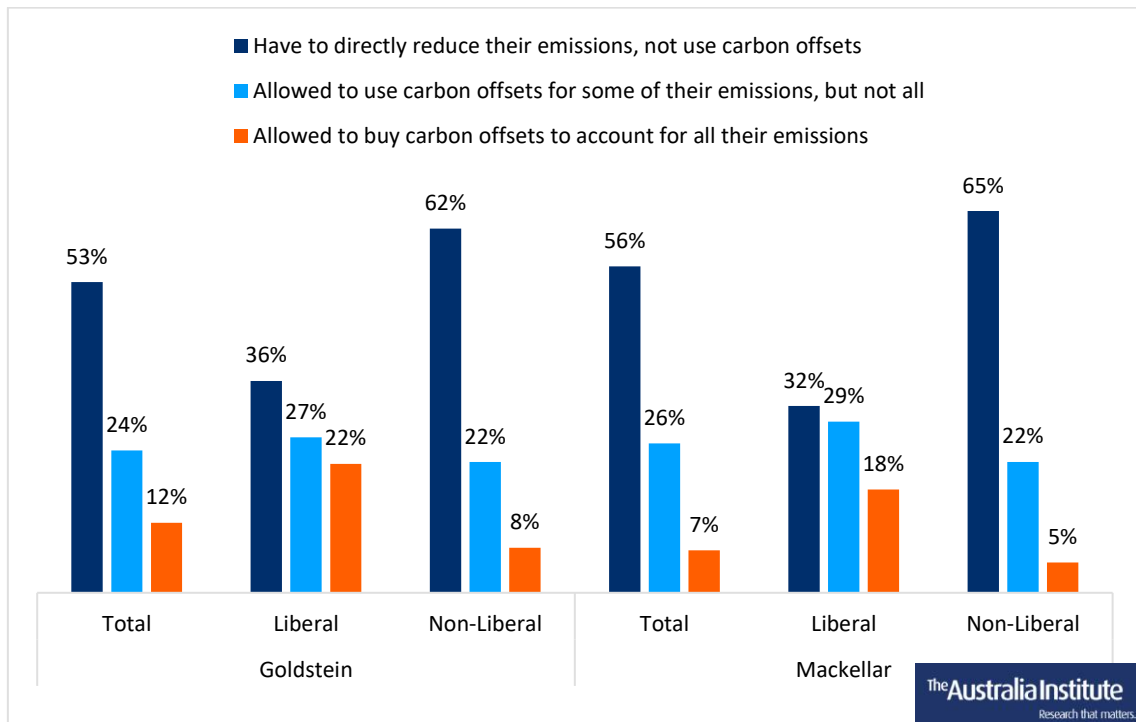
**Figure 5: Polluting projects and carbon offsets**



In independent seats, allowing polluters to buy carbon offsets to account for all of their emissions was the least popular option among both Liberal and non-Liberal voters.

- Fewer than one in 10 non-Liberal voters (Goldstein 8%, Mackellar 5%) think that polluting projects should be allowed to buy carbon offsets to account for all of their emissions.
- One in five Liberal voters (Goldstein 22%, Mackellar 18%) think that polluting projects should be allowed to buy carbon offsets to account for all of their emissions.
- Most non-Liberal voters (Goldstein 62%, Mackellar 65%) think that polluting projects should have to directly reduce their emissions, not use carbon offsets.

**Figure 6: Polluting projects and carbon offsets, independent seats**



## Detailed results

Detailed results for each seat poll were published separately. In the independent-held seats, the non-Liberal total for each question was calculated by the Australia Institute based on each party's share of voting intention.

**Australia is currently the world's third largest exporter of fossil fuels such as gas and coal. In addition to the coal mines and gas wells that currently exist, there are 116 new additional gas and coal projects under development.**

**Which of the following do you think the Commonwealth Government should do:**

Goldstein

	<i>Total</i>	Liberal	Non-Liberal
<b>Allow new gas and coal projects to go ahead</b>	38%	76%	17%
<b>Stop new gas and coal projects but let existing fossil fuel projects continue operating as is</b>	27%	13%	34%
<b>Stop new gas and coal projects and start to phase down production from existing fossil fuel projects</b>	27%	4%	42%
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	8%	8%	7%

Mackellar

	<i>Total</i>	Liberal	Non-Liberal
<b>Allow new gas and coal projects to go ahead</b>	32%	70%	18%
<b>Stop new gas and coal projects but let existing fossil fuel projects continue operating as is</b>	27%	16%	29%
<b>Stop new gas and coal projects and start to phase down production from existing fossil fuel projects</b>	33%	6%	46%
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	8%	8%	8%



The Federal Government has committed to reducing Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions by 43 percent by 2030 and it is introducing new laws known as the safeguard mechanism to help achieve this.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“The Government’s new climate laws should include a ban on new gas, coal and oil projects.”

Goldstein

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Non-Liberal</i>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	29%	6%	42%
<b>Agree</b>	22%	10%	29%
<b>Disagree</b>	21%	37%	11%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	18%	38%	9%
<b>Don’t know/Not sure</b>	10%	9%	9%

Mackellar

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Non-Liberal</i>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	34%	6%	46%
<b>Agree</b>	24%	11%	27%
<b>Disagree</b>	19%	40%	9%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	14%	34%	9%
<b>Don’t know/Not sure</b>	10%	9%	9%

The Federal Government’s proposed new climate change laws will allow polluting projects to choose between directly reducing their emissions and buying carbon offsets.

Which of the following is closest to your view?

Goldstein

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Non-Liberal</i>
<b>Have to directly reduce their emissions, not use carbon offsets</b>	53%	36%	62%
<b>Allowed to use carbon offsets for some of their emissions, but not all</b>	24%	27%	22%
<b>Allowed to buy carbon offsets to account for all their emissions</b>	12%	22%	8%
<b>Don’t know/Not sure</b>	11%	15%	8%

Mackellar

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Non-Liberal</i>
<b>Have to directly reduce their emissions, not use carbon offsets</b>	56%	32%	65%
<b>Allowed to use carbon offsets for some of their emissions, but not all</b>	26%	29%	22%
<b>Allowed to buy carbon offsets to account for all their emissions</b>	7%	18%	5%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	11%	21%	7%