

# Elite happy to spend, battlers beg to differ

Ean Higgins

POLLSTER Michele Levine doesn't shy away from the word elite, arguing Australia has an educated, affluent intelligentsia with quite different views from the battlers.

Ms Levine, chief executive of Roy Morgan Research, yesterday released the results of an unusual survey that compared the opinions of the elite with those of the average Australian.

Among the highlights, it found the elite is not at all fussed about keeping a tight federal budget, and is quite happy for the Rudd Government to spend up big and go into debt.

By contrast, average Australians are far more wary of fiscal adventurism in spending their taxes on long-term projects such as renewing infrastructure.

Roy Morgan Research surveyed 650 Australians in a standard random poll about a wide range of social, economic and political issues. It also surveyed a perfect sample group for the elite: the participants at the Australian Davos Connection Future Summit in Sydney.

Half of the 250 participants, mostly leaders from the political, academic, and business worlds, filled in an anonymous questionnaire on some of the same questions posed in the broader survey. Only 4 per cent of the 125 summiteers who responded said the top priority for government policy over the next decade was



Comparing opinions: Roy Morgan Research chief executive Michele Levine in Sydney yesterday

Picture: Sam Mooy

maintaining a balanced budget with no increase in public debt.

By contrast, 30 per cent of respondents to the general survey identified such fiscal conservatism as most important.

Among the elite, 38 per cent nominated infrastructure as the most important priority, compared with 29 per cent in the broader survey.

Ms Levine said the summiteers were mostly secure and affluent and more inclined to see money spent for the long term, while the general population was worried about more immediate economic circumstances.

"People today are very scared," she told *The Australian* after delivering her presentation.

"The issue of today is very

much formed on global economic problems."

Other Morgan research found that low official unemployment masked the 1.5 million Australians who were underemployed and having difficulty finding more work.

Another finding of the latest survey is that both the general population and the elite are

far more concerned about the environment.

In a similar survey before an ADC summit in 2006, only 8 per cent of the broad survey and 18 per cent of the summiteers nominated the environment as the most important issue; this year, the figures were 30 per cent for the general population and 41 per cent for the elite.



*Future Summit Participants  
compared to the Australian Population*

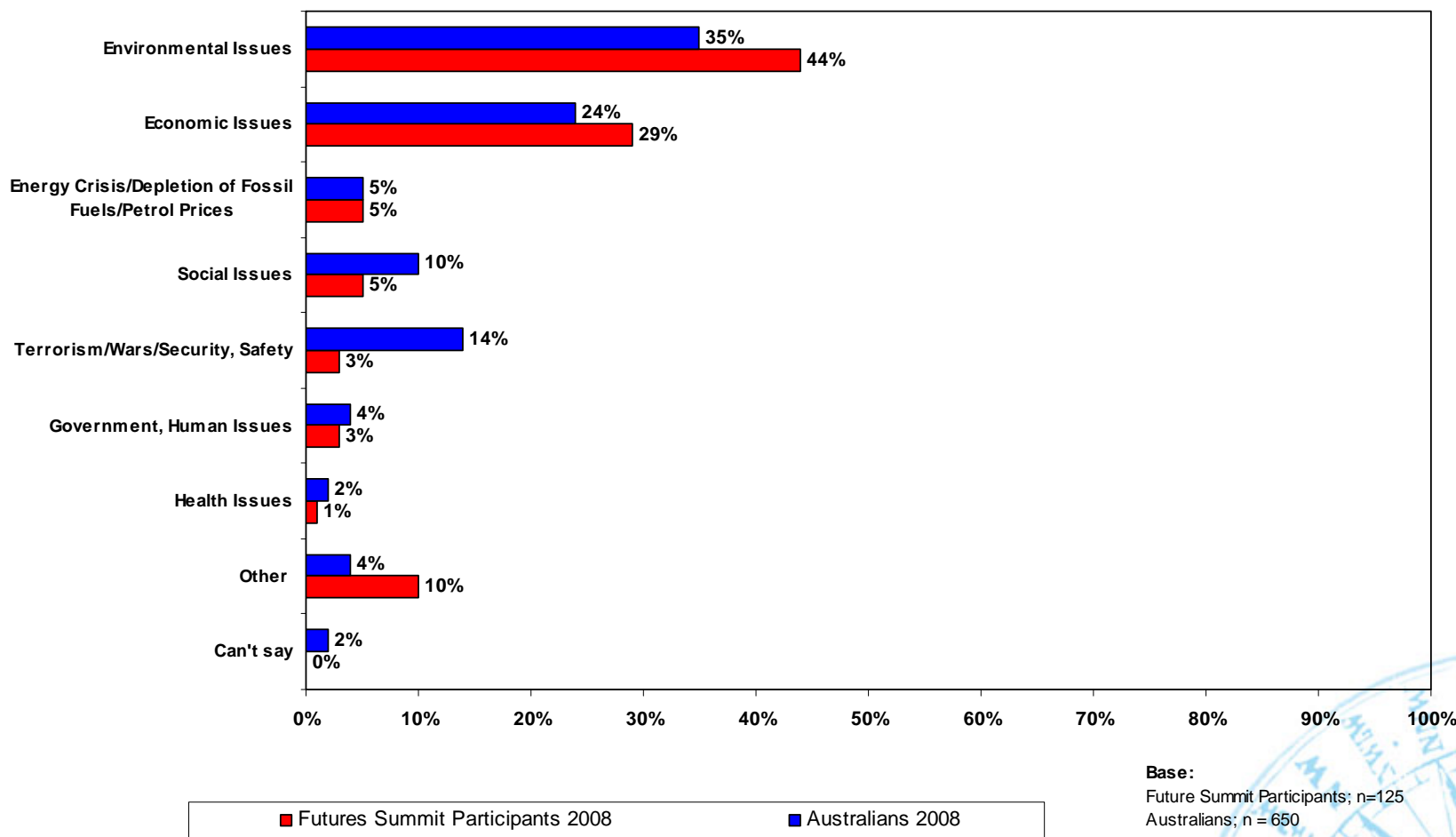
**Future Summit 2008**

**Presented by  
Michele Levine, Chief Executive  
Roy Morgan Research Pty Ltd  
Melbourne, Australia**



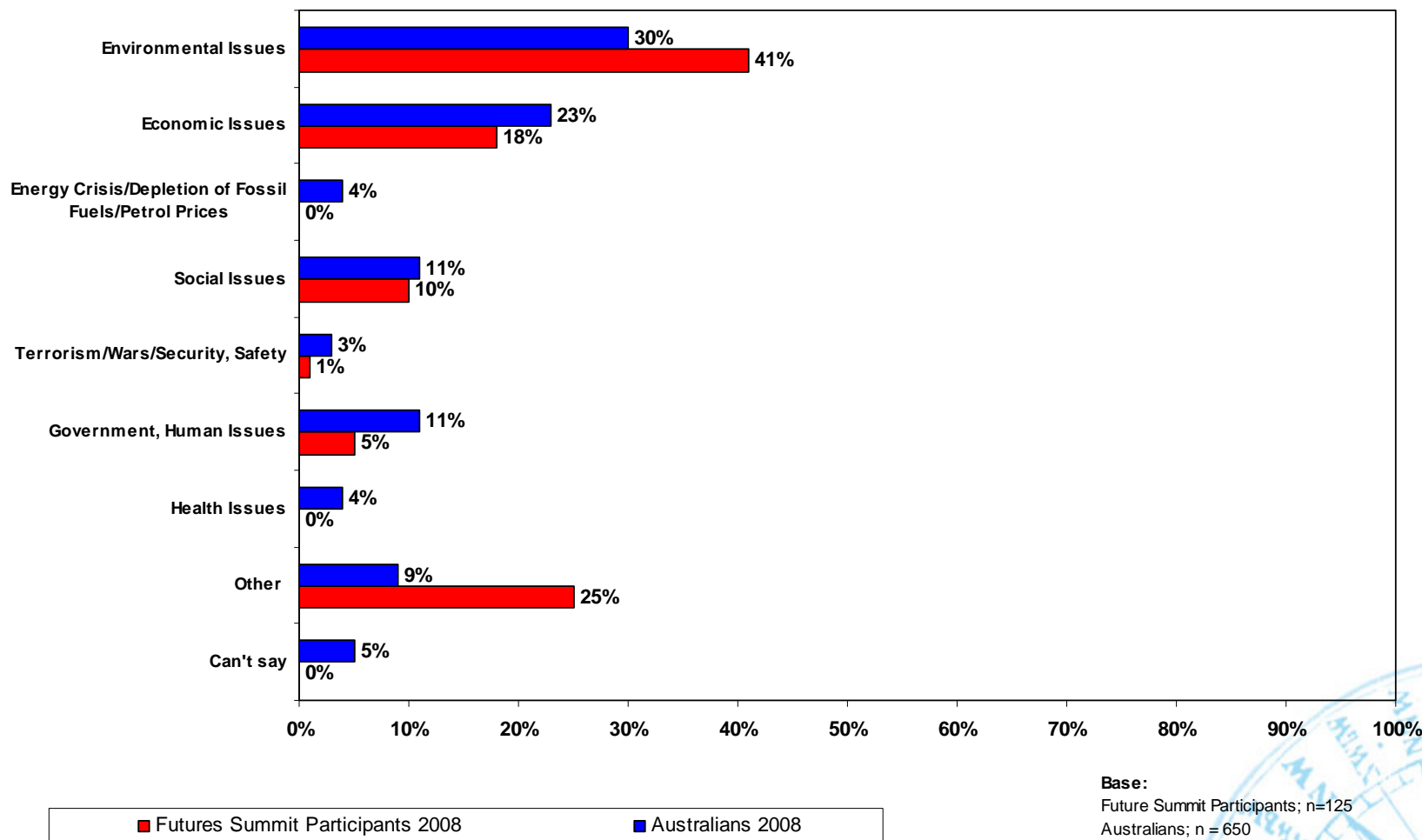
# *“Most important issues facing the world”*

What do you think is the most important problem facing the WORLD today?



# “Most important issues facing Australia”

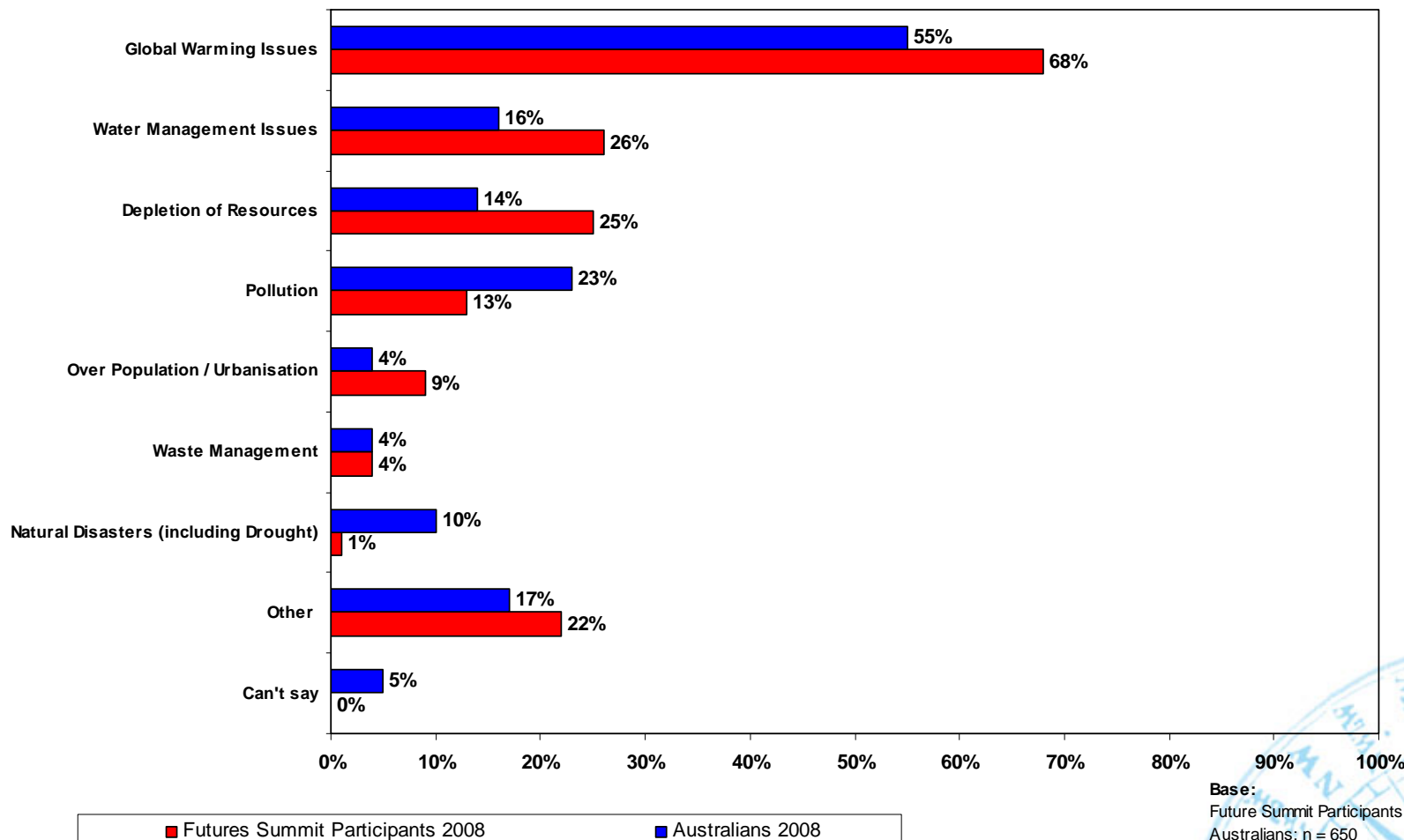
What do you think is the most important problem facing AUSTRALIA today?





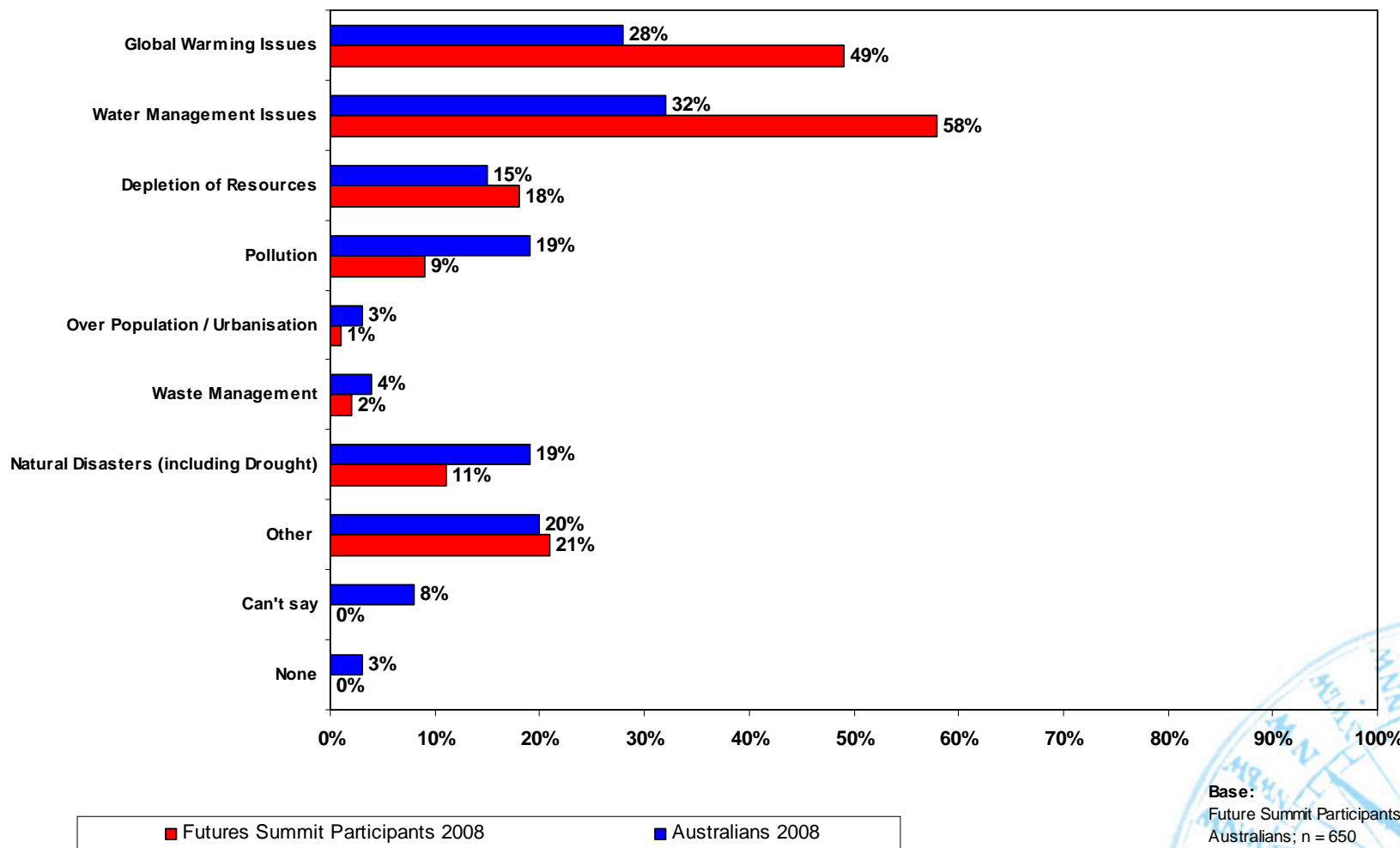
# *“Most important environmental issues facing the world”*

What do you believe are the important ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES facing the WORLD today?



# *“Most important environmental issues facing Australia”*

What do you believe are the important ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES facing AUSTRALIA today?



Base:  
Future Summit Participants; n=125  
Australians; n = 650



## *“Which media main source of information”*

### Future Summit Participants

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Newspapers	38%	40%	38%
Internet	34%	36%	38%
TV	8%	10%	11%
Magazine	2%	2%	2%
Radio	15%	7%	11%



# *“Views on climate change or global warming”*

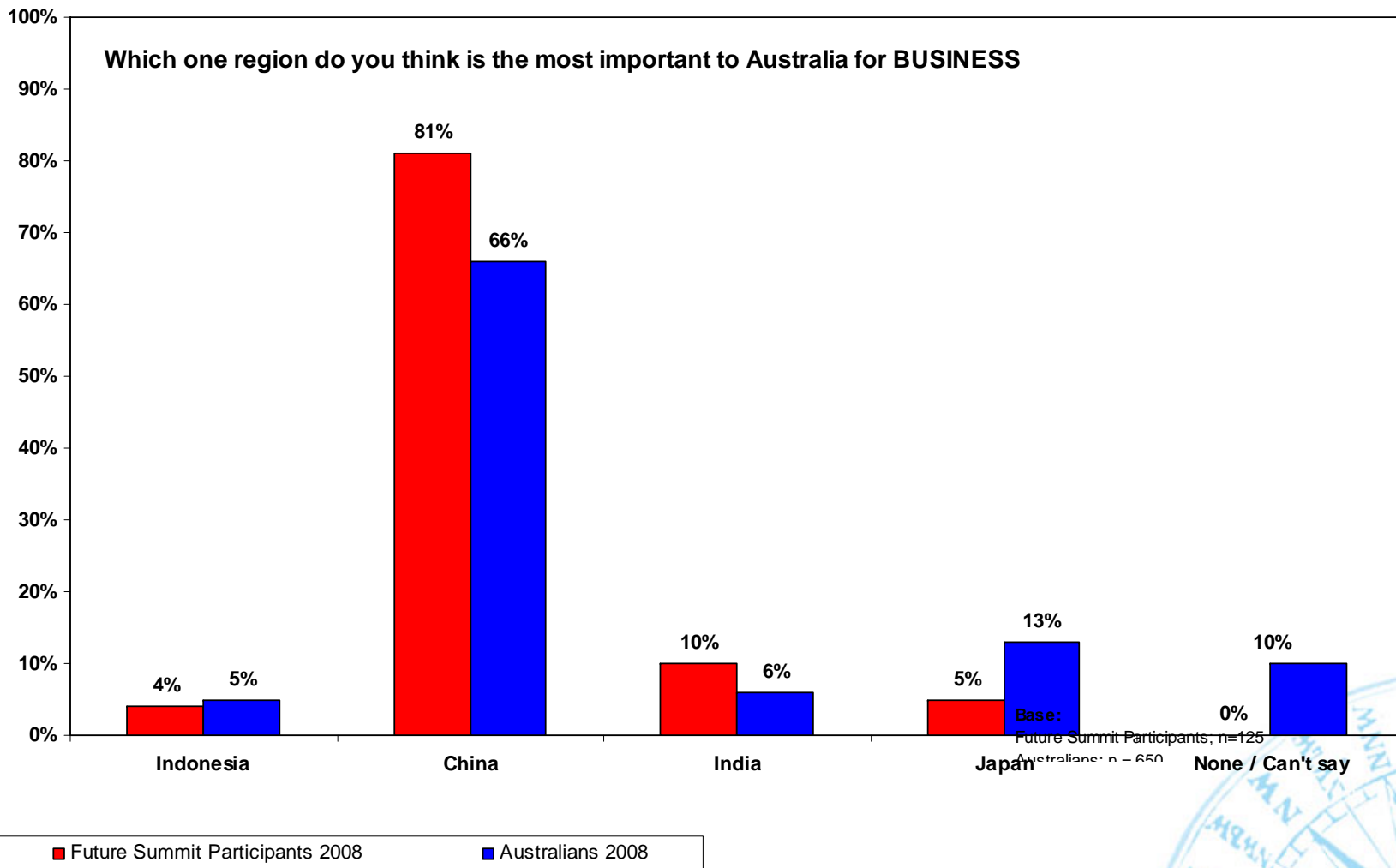
	<u>Future Summit Participants</u>		<u>Australians</u>	
	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
Concerns are exaggerated	8%	10%	12%	19%
If we don't act now it will be too late	76%	77%	71%	64%
It is already too late	16%	13%	14%	14%
Can't Say	-	-	3%	3%

\*Question was previously asked as: "Which of the following is closest to your view of global warming?"

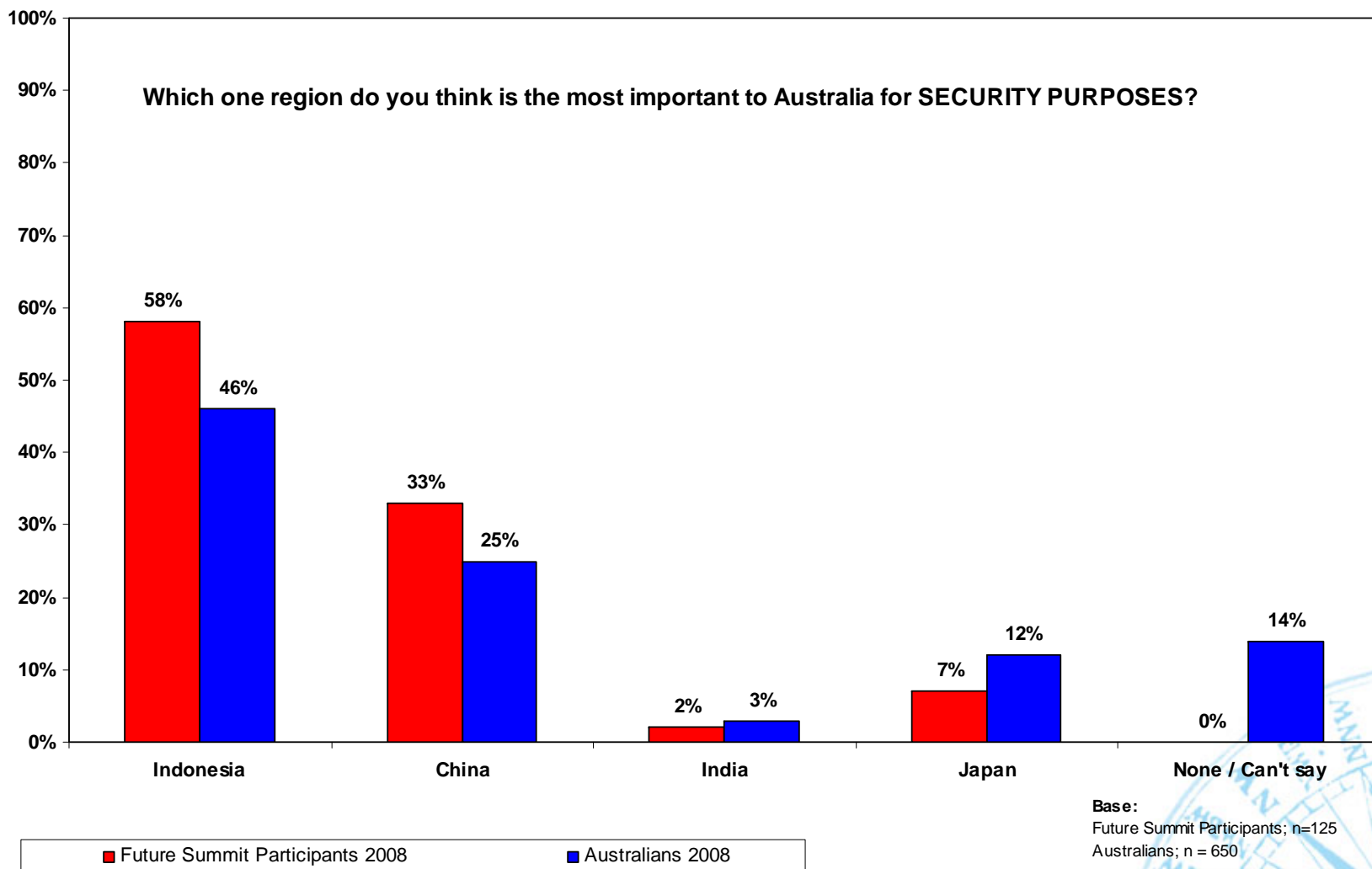




# *“Regions most important for Australia for business purposes”*

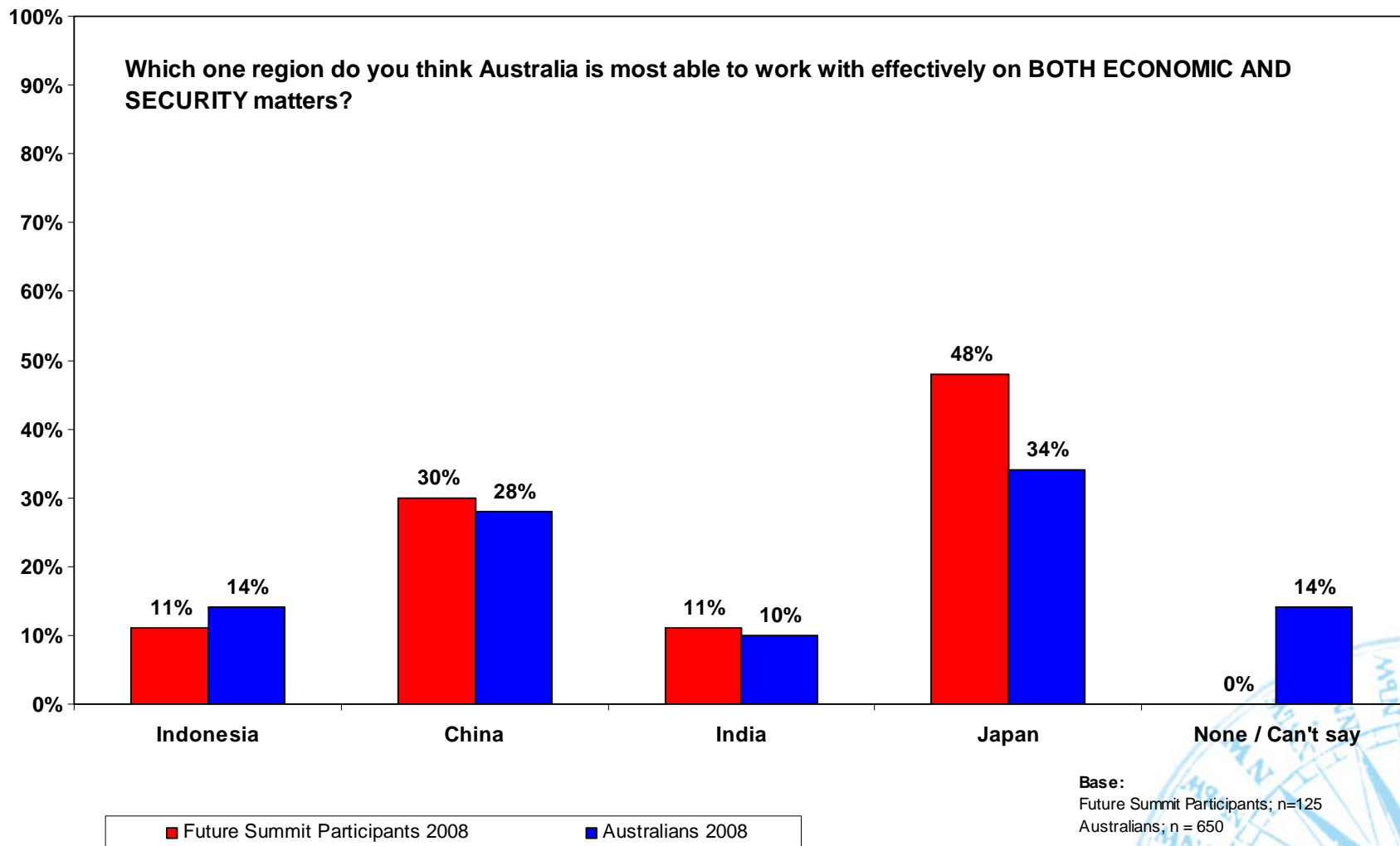


## *“Region important to Australia for security purposes”*

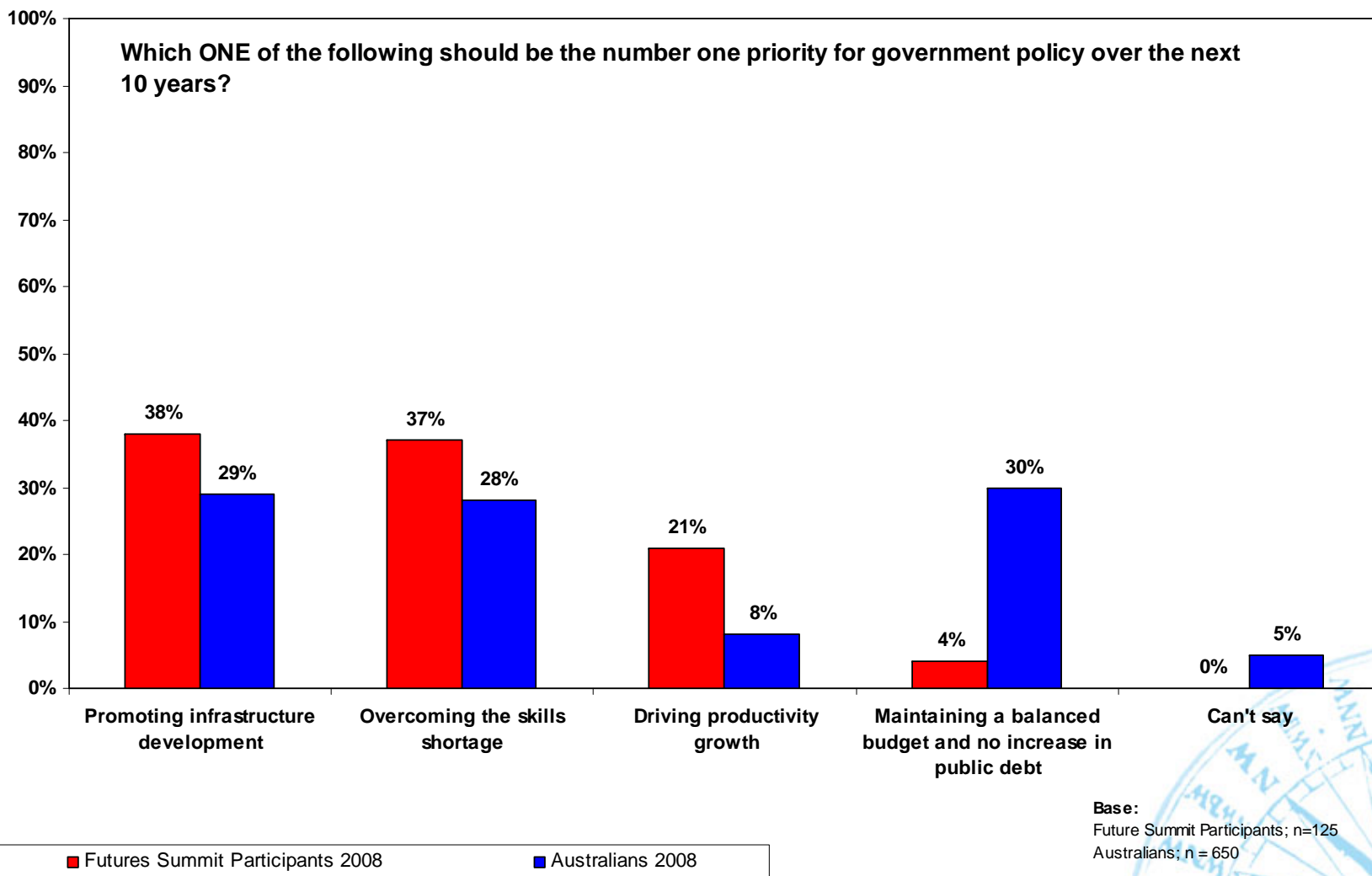




# *“Countries Australia able to work effectively with for economic and security matters”*



# *“Number one priority for Government policy over the next 10 years”*





### Appendix 1 “What do you think is the most important problem facing the world /Australia today?”

	THE WORLD					AUSTRALIA				
	Future Summit Participants			Australians		Future Summit Participants			Australians	
Most Important Problem Facing Australia / The World	2006	2007	2008	2006	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2008
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Terrorism	4	4	1	20	4	-	-	-	6	1
Wars and conflicts	2	6	2	11	10	-	1	1	2	2
Security, Safety	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Relations with other countries	6	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	-
<b>Total Terrorism/Wars/Security/Safety</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>
Economic problems/ interest rates/ inflation	2	2	2	1	8	9	2	7	2	18
Industrial relations reforms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Poverty, The gap between rich and poor	21	14	19	16	11	6	1	7	4	3
Unemployment	-	-	-	*	1	1	-	-	5	1
Over-population	2	3	6	1	3	-	-	2	*	1
Insufficient population growth/Ageing population	-	1	-	-	-	3	3	2	-	-
Globalisation/Fairer world trade	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	-	2	-
Infrastructure	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	-
<b>Total Economic Issues</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>
Water conservation	1	1	2	1	3	5	14	11	3	-
Climate Change / Global warming	18	34	24	5	18	9	26	22	1	7
Famine	-	1	3	2	4	-	-	-	-	-
Drought	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	4
Management / Mismanagement of Natural Resources (water)	-	2	6	-	-	-	1	3	-	13
Other environmental issues	7	9	9	6	10	4	9	5	4	6
<b>Total Environmental Issues</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>
Petrol prices	-	-	-	*	2	-	-	-	1	2
Energy crisis	3	1	3	1	2	2	-	2	*	1
Depletion of fossil fuels	2	1	2	*	1	2	-	-	*	1
<b>Total Energy Crisis/Depletion of Fossil Fuels/Petrol Prices</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
Bird flu	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other health issues	1	1	1	3	2	-	1	-	9	4
<b>Total Health Issues</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>
Corruption	2	-	-	*	1	-	-	-	*	-
Greed, Materialism	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	*	1
Drugs and drug abuse	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	2	2
Educational issues	-	1	-	1	1	2	3	3	2	2
Crime	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	1
Youth issues	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	2
Anger/Violence/Aggression	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	*	-
Social apathy/Family breakdowns/ Selfishness/Moral decline	1	-	-	2	2	12	-	-	3	3
Lack of social cohesion / social disconnection	-	1	2	-	-	-	3	4	-	-
Indigenous disadvantage	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	2	-	-
Cultural development	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Social Issues</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
Government, Politics, Political system	9	1	3	2	1	15	3	5	7	3
Religion, Religious fundamentalism	5	3	-	5	1	-	-	-	2	-

**Appendix 2 “What do you think are the most important environmental issues facing the world / Australia today?”**

<b>Important Environmental Issues Facing the world / Australia</b>	<b>THE WORLD</b>					<b>AUSTRALIA</b>				
	<b>Future Summit Participants</b>			<b>Australians</b>		<b>Future Summit Participants</b>			<b>Australians</b>	
	<b>2006 %</b>	<b>2007 %</b>	<b>2008 %</b>	<b>2006 %</b>	<b>2008 %</b>	<b>2006 %</b>	<b>2007 %</b>	<b>2008 %</b>	<b>2006 %</b>	<b>2008 %</b>
Global warming	44	29	18	35	27	20	13	10	13	10
Greenhouse effect, Greenhouse gases	11	10	14	15	11	2	5	8	7	6
Climate change	15	34	35	5	18	12	26	29	3	11
Ozone layer	1	-	-	5	3	3	1	-	2	2
Melting of polar ice caps	2	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	*	1
Extinction, Loss of species	15	4	6	2	3	8	2	9	2	1
Reduction in habitable land	1	1	8	1	1	1	1	6	2	1
Introduction of non-native species	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	1	1
El Nino	-	-	-	*	*	-	-	-	*	*
<b>Total Global Warming Issues</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>
Pollution (unspecified)	6	4	9	14	9	4	1	2	10	6
Air pollution	1	1	2	8	12	2	-	1	6	8
Water pollution	1	1	2	5	3	1	1	3	5	5
Cars, Exhaust from cars	-	-	1	3	4	-	1	2	3	4
Smog	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	-	*	*
<b>Total Pollution</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>
Recycling	1	-	2	3	2	2	-	1	4	2
Nuclear waste	1	-	1	2	1	-	1	-	2	1
Toxic waste	1	-	2	*	1	2	-	-	1	1
Landfill	1	-	-	1	*	-	-	-	1	*
Plastic bags	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	*
<b>Total Waste Management</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
Water conservation, Water management	14	10	26	8	15	43	40	57	27	29
Erosion	1	1	-	*	*	2	2	-	*	1
Salinity	2	-	-	1	1	17	1	4	11	3
<b>Total Water Management Issues</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Total Water Management Issues (Inc. Drought)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>46</b>
Drought	-	-	1	4	7	5	7	11	12	18
Hurricanes, Cyclones	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	*	*
Famine	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	*
Bushfires	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	1
Earthquakes	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	*
Flooding	-	-	-	*	1	-	-	-	-	1
Tsunami, Tidal waves	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Natural Disasters</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>
Energy crisis, Depletion of fossil fuels	12	3	13	10	9	9	3	10	6	7
Depletion of natural resources	7	6	7	9	6	6	3	2	6	6
Energy sources	4	1	7	-	2	6	3	10	-	3
<b>Total Depletion of Resources</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>
Over population	4	3	9	4	4	-	1	1	2	3
Urbanisation	2	-	-	*	1	3	1	-	1	1
<b>Total Over Population / Urbanisation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
Logging forests or deforestation	11	3	9	11	7	10	2	4	15	7
Mining	-	1	-	-	*	-	1	-	2	1
Bird flu	-	-	-	*	*	-	1	-	-	-
<b>Other</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Can't say</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

(Respondents could give more than one issue)

\* Less than 1%

- Notes: I. Includes: Land care, unsustainable farming practices, too many chemicals – 3%; Household waste – 1%; Wars and its environmental effects – 1%; Nuclear proliferation/selling uranium overseas – 1%.
- II. Includes Murray River – 5%; Land care, unsustainable farming practices, too many chemicals 5%; Household waste – 2%; Destruction of Great Barrier Reef – 1%.

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