

Thinking Futures: Psychology and Climate Change

Summary Sheet

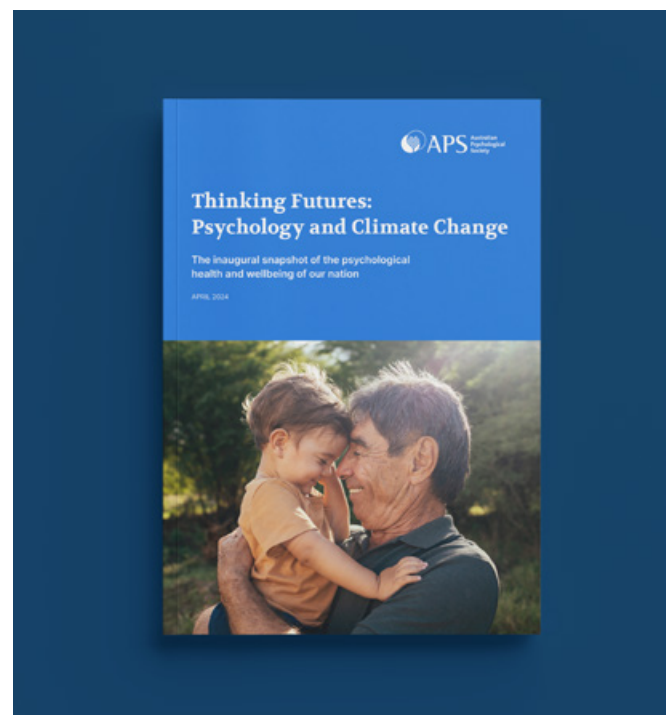
APRIL 2024

Demand for psychology services is at historic levels

Present day issues like the cost-of-living, climate change and natural disasters are of significant concern to many Australians. The growing psychological implications of these issues mean we need to modernise our mental health system to ensure it is equipped to meet current and future challenges.

To better understand these issues and find solutions, we surveyed more than 3,000 community and Australian Psychological Society (APS) members to understand their concerns, challenges, and priorities when it comes to psychology services, mental health and climate change.

Their message was loud and clear. The community and psychologists deeply value affordable and accessible mental health support and expect governments to do much more to ensure cheaper and more effective psychology services for Australians when and where they need it.



Our *Thinking Futures* report shows that we have many ways to improve psychological services and help at-risk communities and groups mitigate and adapt to climate change effectively.

What APS members told us

We asked 1,027 APS members, from psychologists and psychology academics to psychology university students, about their thoughts on the sector and how they think climate change will impact the community and sector in the coming years.

An overwhelming number of APS members believe that climate change poses significant immediate and future risk to the mental health of the Australian community, and want governments to do much more to plan and prepare for this.

Belief that climate change and natural disasters-related mental health issues will increase within the community over the next three years

13%	Very significantly
27%	Significantly
37%	Moderately
21%	Minimally
2%	Not at all

94% of APS members surveyed are concerned about the future impact of climate change on the mental health of the Australian community

Agreement with statement 'Governments need to do more to address the current and projected psychological implications of climate change and/or natural disasters on communities and individuals'?

33%	Strongly agree
39%	Agree
21%	Neither
4%	Disagree
3%	Strongly disagree

APS National Mental Health Survey 2024

Between 30 January – 1 February 2024 the APS commissioned a nationwide online survey to give regular Australians a voice about the mental health issues they are facing. Of the 2,068 people aged 18 years and over who took part in the online survey, many spoke about the barriers to psychology services, and the urgent need to reduce these.

77% of Australians believe natural disaster-affected communities should have more psychological services available to them before and after disasters occur.

Belief that natural disaster-affected communities should have more psychological services available to them before and after disasters occur

30%	Strongly agree
47%	Agree
20%	Neutral
2%	Disagree
1%	Strongly disagree

Cost is the biggest barrier Australians face to accessing psychological care

The biggest barrier faced by the community in accessing psychology services is cost, with 41% of community members saying it was their biggest barrier to accessing psychology services, and 75% listing cost as one of their top three barriers to care.

68% of Australians trust psychologists and recognise they deliver an important community service, and 75% want to see more government investment in growing the psychology workforce and making psychology services more affordable for everyone.

Top three barriers to accessing psychology services

75% Cost

60% Local availability

53% Knowing where to go

95% of Australians think it's important for government to invest in psychology services

75% of Australians would like to see more government investment into increasing the number of psychology graduates

58% Almost two-thirds of Australians think we should be making it easier for overseas qualified psychologists to practise in Australia

About us

The Australian Psychological Society is the peak body for psychology in Australia, representing 27,000 members.

We are committed to improving the lives of all Australians through psychological science and practice. Our priority is to strengthen our impact as an outward-looking, progressive voice dedicated to finding evidence-based psychological solutions to the challenges our communities face.

For more information about the activities and initiatives of the APS, visit us at:

psychology.org.au

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About *Thinking Futures*

Thinking Futures is an annual report from the Australian Psychological Society, seeking to uncover the most pressing issues facing psychologists and the community. The report draws on public and academic resources as well as insights from psychologists and the Australian community.

Visit to learn more:

[psychology.org.au/
thinking-futures-
report-2024](https://psychology.org.au/thinking-futures-report-2024)

