

Strong support for conservation and landcare job creation initiatives as Australians increasingly struggle to find work: new polling results

17 August 2020

Media Release

More than four in five Australians (**83%**) think the Morrison Government should fund practical environmental initiatives like tree planting, weed removal and river restoration to keep people in regional communities employed while Australia recovers from the economic impacts of COVID-19, according to a recent poll.

The polling comes off the back of data showing that there has been a **134%** increase in people actively looking for work through the Federal Government's [JobActive](#) program over the first six months of 2020. There were 1.4 million people looking for work in the second quarter of 2020, which is an increase of 821,000 people compared to the final quarter of 2019.

Funding practical environmental work came in as the second most popular (**75% support**) out of 12 options for keeping people in regional communities employed, second only to increasing funding for training and apprenticeships (78%).

The polling, conducted by Dynata and commissioned by the National Landcare Network, found that three quarters (**76%**) of Australians are concerned about the health of the country's forests, rivers and wildlife, with a similar number (**74%**) agreeing that economic stimulus funding should be used to help communities and the environment recover from the bushfires and drought.

"Australians are overwhelmingly supportive of COVID-recovery initiatives that can keep people in work while also helping damaged landscapes recover," said **Jim Adams, CEO, National Landcare Network**.

"They see that practical initiatives to help plant trees, restore degraded river systems and eradicate noxious weeds and feral animals are an ideal way to help improve our landscapes while also ensuring communities survive this tough period."

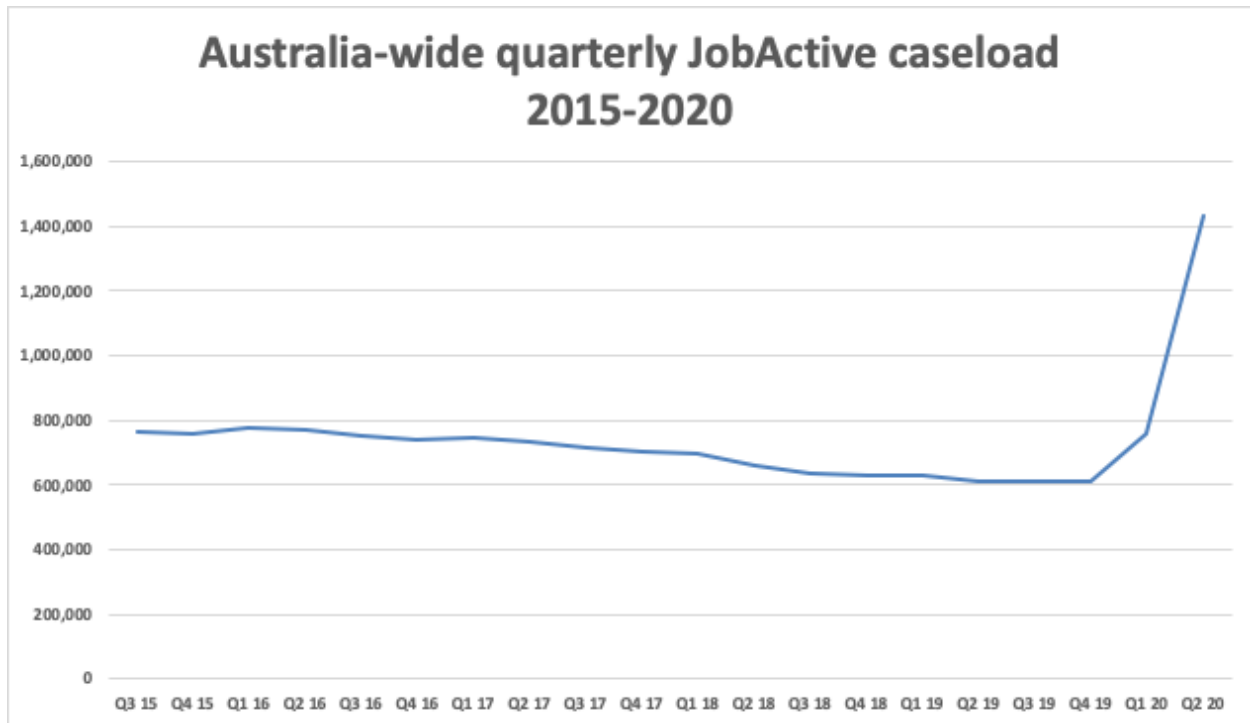
"Even with JobKeeper, data released by the federal government shows there has been a sharp increase in people looking for work in all parts of Australia," said **Pepe Clarke, Deputy Director of the Pew Charitable Trusts Outback to Oceans program**.

"Given the clear evidence of people struggling to find work, it would be great to see the Federal Government responding to this strong public support for funding practical conservation and land management work while the economy recovers," said Mr Clarke.

In order to keep people employed while Australia recovers from the impact of COVID-19, an alliance of more than 70 conservation and farming organisations is calling on state and federal governments to fund thousands of jobs undertaking practical conservation activities like planting trees, removing weeds and restoring rivers.

Several state governments have already responded, announcing new landcare and conservation programs designed to get people back to work.

The Dynata polling was conducted on 20-21 July across a sample of 1009 respondents Australia-wide.



Source: Australian Government (2020), Labour Market Information Portal, www.lmip.gov.au

Detailed JobActive data can be provided on request. This data shows which regions across the country have seen the largest increases in people looking to access the program in the last six months.

For more information, contact:

Edwina Cameron from the Pew Charitable Trusts on 0408 203 922.

Polling results – conservation, land management and economic recovery

Polling conducted by [Dynata](#) (20-21 July) for the National Landcare Network (n=1009 respondents).

How concerned are you about each of the following?

Percentage concerned (very concerned / somewhat concerned)	National	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
The health of Australia's forests, rivers and wildlife following the drought and bushfires	76%	77%	76%	72%	73%
Increasing unemployment if the JobKeeper wage subsidy payments end in September	80%	82%	84%	74%	75%
The impact of COVID-19 on employment in rural and regional areas over the next two years	80%	83%	83%	76%	78%
The impact of COVID-19 on employment in capital cities over the next two years	84%	86%	86%	81%	83%
The long-term economic impacts of COVID-19 on tourism and hospitality workers	84%	87%	83%	84%	80%
The sustainability of agriculture in Australia	72%	74%	71%	71%	70%

How do you think the Federal Government should keep more people in regional communities in work while Australia recovers from the economic impacts of COVID-19?

Percentage support (support / strongly support)	National	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Funding for training and apprenticeships	78%	78%	77%	80%	78%
Funding practical environmental jobs like planting trees, removing weeds and restoring rivers	75%	79%	73%	71%	74%
Building, upgrading and maintaining roads	74%	74%	70%	77%	71%
Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency	71%	72%	72%	65%	72%
Providing income tax cuts	67%	69%	67%	63%	63%
Providing direct cash payments to households	61%	66%	61%	56%	40%
Extending JobKeeper wage subsidies	61%	67%	67%	53%	41%
Funding airlines to maintain regional services	60%	64%	60%	59%	52%
Increasing welfare payments for unemployed people	56%	66%	58%	47%	42%
Supporting the gas industry by building gas pipelines	51%	51%	53%	52%	43%
Subsidising private home construction and renovation	47%	46%	54%	46%	36%
Supporting the mining industry by reducing environmental regulations	44%	45%	43%	49%	39%

In order to keep people employed while Australia recovers from the impact of COVID-19, conservation and farming organisations are asking State and Federal Government to fund tens of thousands of jobs undertaking practical conservation activities like planting trees, removing weeds and restoring rivers.

Would you support government investment this program?

Response	National	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Strongly support / Support	83%	86%	81%	81%	86%
Oppose / Strongly oppose	6%	4%	6%	9%	5%
Don't know / Not sure	11%	11%	11%	11%	9%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Percentage agree (Strongly agree / Agree)	National	NSW	VIC	Queensland	WA
Economic stimulus funding should be used to help communities and the environment recover from the recent bushfires and drought.	74%	78%	73%	71%	61%
Federal Government should take more action to protect and restore Australia's forests, rivers and wildlife.	70%	73%	67%	65%	65%
Governments should spend more money now to support economic recovery even if it means increasing government debt.	68%	72%	71%	64%	58%
We should prioritise rebuilding the economy over longer term issues like the environment.	58%	63%	57%	54%	57%
I would be more likely to vote for a party that takes strong action to protect and restore Australia's forests, rivers and wildlife.	57%	62%	57%	52%	49%
I trust the Morrison Government to take strong action to protect Australia's forests, rivers and wildlife.	49%	50%	50%	50%	43%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Federal Government funding for jobs undertaking practical conservation activities like planting trees, removing weeds and restoring rivers, as part of broader economic recovery measures:

Percentage agree (Strongly agree / Agree)	National	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Would provide much needed work for people in regional areas impacted by the economic impacts of COVID-19	77%	79%	76%	75%	71%
Would provide meaningful work for people without a trade or other specialised skills	76%	76%	75%	75%	74%
Would put money directly into the pockets of workers in exchange for useful work	76%	80%	72%	73%	72%
Would deliver lasting benefits for Australia's forests, rivers and wildlife	75%	77%	72%	74%	75%
Would improve the long-term sustainability of agriculture in Australia	74%	73%	75%	74%	74%
Would help workers to feel positive and connected with their local community	73%	76%	70%	72%	73%