

12 June 2019

## **Three simple questions help evaluate community attitudes to sustainability**

How do you know if a community is ready for a sustainable, low carbon future? The [Low Carbon Readiness Index \(LCRI\)](#) can help Australians find out.

Developed and tested by the [CRC for Low Carbon Living \(CRCLCL\)](#), the LCRI acts as a litmus test to evaluate initial attitudes, then plan for and monitor future behaviour change.

According to CRCLC researchers, Dr Léan O'Brien (University of Canberra) and Professor Yoshihisa Kashima (University of Melbourne), it is a case of asking three simple questions.

"When you ask a group of people these questions and take the mean response it tells you whether or not they are already aiming to achieve low carbon living," Dr O'Brien said.

"We designed the LCRI to identify the level of personal motivation to reduce household emissions and predict people's general level of engagement in low carbon behaviours and it can be used in several different ways by both survey practitioners and policy makers," she said.

"If people are motivated then you can focus on helping them achieve a greener lifestyle, and if not, you can try and create that motivation, or focus on persuading people to behave in low carbon ways for other reasons, like cost efficiency and convenience."

Importantly, the LCRI provides a baseline to compare future survey results, for example after a low carbon living community education campaign or new policy has been introduced.

The three LCRI questions are:

1. I work hard to reduce my greenhouse gas emissions whenever possible
2. I feel very good when I am successful in reducing my greenhouse gas emissions
3. I would feel very bad if I failed to reduce my greenhouse gas emissions

They are scored on a 5-point scale (strongly disagree; disagree; neutral; agree, strongly agree) with the LCRI measure being the average of the three.

Professor Kashima said they validated the LCRI as a predictor of low carbon behaviours in terms of summary measures of self-reported low carbon behaviours and actual level of energy consumption.

"For behaviours we asked participants to report on their possession of low carbon infrastructure and performance of low carbon routines and we came up with six different behaviour types: solar, energy efficient appliances, efficient temperature system, efficient car, temperature curtailment and green travel and payments," he said.



“We then examined if the LCRI could predict people’s activity with these behaviour types, finding that people who were higher in the LCRI were more likely to have greater activity in each of the low carbon behaviour types,” said Professor Kashima.

For energy consumption they surveyed 96 adults already participating in a CSIRO study called the ‘Residential Buildings Study’ who had tracking devices in their homes to record actual consumption. Based on previous research they adjusted for number of residents, floorspace, income and previous power consumption and found that LCRI still predicted household energy consumption.

CRCLCL CEO Professor Deo Prasad said the research was one of the Centre’s many research projects focussed on encouraging low to zero carbon living throughout Australian industry and society.

“The LCRI is another beneficial tool to add to the suite of resources that the CRCLCL has created during its seven-year life, which will help guide individuals, industry and communities on how they can lower their carbon footprint and mitigate climate change,” said Professor Prasad.

Media Contact:

**CRC for Low Carbon Living**

Fran Strachan E: [fran.strachan@unsw.edu.au](mailto:fran.strachan@unsw.edu.au)

M: +61 429 416 070 or

Sharon Kelly E: [s.kelly@lowcarbonlivingcrc.com.au](mailto:s.kelly@lowcarbonlivingcrc.com.au)

M: +61 414 780 077

**About the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Low Carbon Living:** The CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRCLCL) is Australia’s only research and innovation hub committed to lowering carbon emissions in the built environment sector. The CRCLCL is on target to meet its founding goal of lowering Australia’s residential and commercial carbon emissions by 10 mega tonnes by 2020, through the development of advanced construction materials and the development of social, technological and policy tools. It officially closes at the end of June 2019.

