

The **Conscious Consumer** Report 2021

The Crusading Consumer emerges from lockdown

What it'll mean for corporate-cause collaboration

The changemaker edition
(for non-profits, charities & social enterprises)



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Commissioned by Cavill + Co, Q&A and results prepared by Di Marzio Research.

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1. Introduction

The Crusading Consumer emerges from lockdown

You'd be forgiven for thinking that Australians would have become more self-centred this past year. Whether home-schooling kids while holding down a job, pivoting to prevent their business from collapsing, caring for elderly parents from a distance, dodging (or getting) the virus, watching funerals via video or succumbing to zoom fatigue, no matter what boat we're in, we've all had to weather the seemingly never-ending storm that is the global pandemic.

We've been living - or more accurately, surviving - in a covid bubble: minimal interaction with others, monitoring 'the numbers', with multiple lockdowns and curfews. When our safety is threatened, it's human nature to look inward, to focus on day-to-day survival and caring for immediate dependents.

You might think, then, that Australians have become more self-centred this past year. But you'd be wrong.

Our research has revealed that not only are Australians more concerned about the world, social issues, global warming, and our fellow humans, but they're ready to act on it. The pandemic has afforded the opportunity for deep reflection on what's important, and for many it's been profoundly clarifying. COVID has accelerated The Conscious Consumer movement and a new kind of consumer is emerging from lockdown -

The Crusading Consumer.

crusader

noun

a person who campaigns vigorously for political, social, or religious change; a campaigner.

"**crusaders for early detection and treatment of mental illnesses"**





An analysis of seven significant global Trend Reports¹, reflecting the views of hundreds of thousands of consumers around the world, confirms that this is a global phenomenon.

A 2021 Globescan² study reveals consumer expectation of companies has shifted towards transparency, treating staff well, minimising environmental damage (in that order) over providing products and making a profit.

Global citizens are demanding a systemic reset. To shift the paradigm of business. They want companies and brands to not only address their impact on society and the environment, but also to **be active agents of change**.

Our research³ reveals that almost two-thirds of Australians believe the old model of corporates operating purely for profit is dead; that companies should take responsibility for their impact, and act. And over three-quarters believe corporates should partner with charities to solve social problems in the coming year. All generations agree.



“I have an overwhelming feeling that I can’t do much in the war against environmental degradation and the rise of capitalism. I want to make a positive difference in the world and making small choices about what I buy can make a big impact long term.”

~ Chloe, Gen Y

¹ 'Brave New World, Creative Trends', Dentsu, 2021, 'Covid-19 rapidly reshapes consumer behaviour', PWC 2020, 'Global Consumer Trends', Mintel 2021, 'Business & Society, Social Trends & Corporate Leadership' Globescan 2020, 'Growth – it comes down to experience' Accenture 2020, 'New lives in a Covid world, global consumer trends' Dynata 2021, 'Trends Report' Carat 2021

² Business & Society, Social Trends & Corporate Leadership' Globescan 2020

³ Conscious Consumer Report, 2021, Di Marzio Research/BePartnerReady.com®

The COVID effect

62% of Australians agreed with this statement: “During Covid, I’ve re-evaluated my priorities in life. If I have to buy a product or service, I’m more likely to buy it from a company that’s actually doing some good”⁴

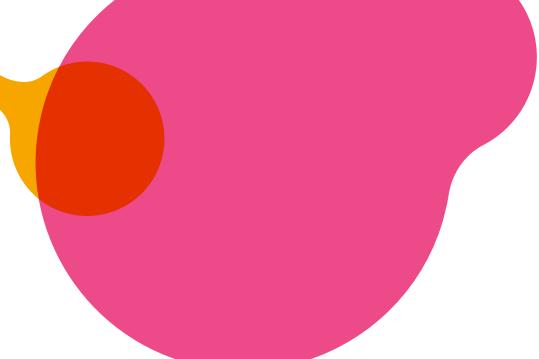
Time in lockdown has certainly given many Australians a rare opportunity to reflect and re-evaluate their priorities, to consider what’s truly important in life. Many have relished the time spent at home with family and pets, enjoyed the opportunity of flexible work hours and seeing the world through new eyes. In contrast, it’s caused a lot of suffering. Casual workers (mostly young people and women) have joined the unemployment queue, while loneliness and depression have skyrocketed.

We’ve been reminded that we’re all connected – how one action can impact both the people close to us, as well as people on the other side of the world. As we’ve been forced to stay indoors, we have a newfound appreciation of nature, our bush and coastal areas, and we’ve realised how much we impact our environment.

This is also seen globally. The Mintel report 2021 reveals consumers crave human connection more than ever and in the USA 46% of consumers feel giving back is one of the top five values they live by.

We’ve been forced to collaborate in ways never seen before to tackle the global health crisis. Perhaps we’ve seen it as a dress rehearsal for what will be needed when the effects of global warming bites – and why climate change/global warming has become the number one social issue of concern for Australians.





Consumers have embraced change, and they don't want to return to 'normal'. They want a renewed focus for business - where companies not only take responsibility for their impacts on society, but vigorously take action to make things better. **And if businesses do not embrace this role, they will be left behind.** Because consumers have realised they have immense power to catalyse social reform; by leveraging their **skill** - working for companies that align to their values and shunning those that don't; their **wallet** - purchasing products that do good and boycotting those that do harm; and their **voice** - asserting their concerns & influencing those around them, through the power of social media.

Instruments of change

Voice

Social media has helped transfer power from governments and business to everyday Australians. Before it took off around 2008, communication was one way and there were few avenues for consumers to vent, call out bad behaviour and rally their tribe. Now the masses have a megaphone in their hand-held devices, and they're making their voices heard loud and clear. Hashtag Activism brings laser focus to an issue or cause, can gather global momentum like wildfire, putting pressure on governments and business to act and transform. Think #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, #StopFundingHate (UK)⁵, #LoveWins, #LikeAGirl, #FreeBritney, #BanLiveExport, #ClimateStrike, #Dieselgate, #StopAdani, #IceBucketChallenge, #RUOKDay.

⁵ UK grassroots activism protesting the anti-migrant position of UK newspapers.

Skill

A recent study by Microsoft⁶ reveals that the pandemic has made people rethink their career and deeply question the role of work in their lives. More than 40% of the global workforce are considering leaving their job this year. Dubbed ‘the great resignation’, this trend is expected to hit Australia in early 2022. The psychological contract between employer and employee has evolved – employees want flexibility, enriching experiences, a sense of social purpose and to make a meaningful contribution to society. People are no longer willing to barter their lives for material things. If the employer resists, they’ll join the Big Quit brigade. This could result in a boost to the already booming social enterprise sector, as disgruntled employees with an entrepreneurial flair choose to start their own purpose-driven enterprise, or a B-corp, with doing good at its core rather than the peripheral.

Wallet

Many Australians are flexing their muscles at the checkout, a power strengthened by the exponential choice provided by online shopping. More Australians are boycotting companies and brands that have a poor reputation for social responsibility – over one-third say they’ve boycotted in the last year, rising to almost half amongst Gen Z. On the flipside, one-quarter say they’ve switched to brands that support causes in the past year, with over half saying they will do so in the coming year⁷.



“So much has unfolded over the past year globally, a lack of trust in government, corporations and social media platforms. People are angry, people are frustrated, and people are upset. One thing they do have control over is how to spend their dollar.”

~ Sacha, Gen Y

⁶ Microsoft 2021 Work Trend Index: 30,000 people in 31 countries, Edelman Data x Intelligence, January 2021

⁷ Conscious Consumer Report, 2021, Di Marzio Research/BePartnerReady.com®



Consumers using their purchase power for good is a behaviour seen globally. In the UK 20% of consumers say they shop with a retailer that supports a cause they believe in and 47% of Brazilian consumers agree they're prepared to boycott companies who behave unethically⁸.

A Globescan 2021 study reveals that 53%⁹ of global consumers say they've changed their purchase to support a cause.

Another global study by Accenture¹⁰ cites half of Gen Y and Gen Z say they've shifted a portion of their spending away from a company that's disappointed them around a social issue.

The pinnacle of a growing movement

The statistics in this report leave no doubt that the Conscious Consumer is here to stay and not even a global pandemic can dampen their spirits. It's no longer a niche trend, but across all generations and across the globe.

I've been tracking how a company's Corporate Social Responsibility stance and activity influences consumer behaviour for over 20 years. This was long before CSR was even a term, when philanthropy was the primary way for companies to 'give back', and before the climate crisis was taken seriously.



"The irony of this time is that the long-term thinking that our sector needs is most powerful when everything is falling apart. COVID has amplified this paradoxical situation."

**Karl Tischler,
Founder, Marlin Communications**

⁸ Mintel, Global Consumer trends, 2021

⁹ Business & Society, Social Trends & Corporate Leadership' Globescan 2020

¹⁰ Accenture, Growth - It comes down to experience, 2020



In 2018, I published an e-book entitled Talking The Walk¹¹, an analysis of over 26 research reports on CSR-related consumer behaviour with recommendations on how to communicate CSR to the masses. The book focused on Millennials – the most active and vocal Conscious Consumer at the time. In response to a decade of corporate scandals, royal commissions, wage rorts and deceptive environmental claims, I predicted a tsunami of consumer activism in the coming years. The wave has indeed hit our shores, heightened in velocity by the global health & economic crisis. It's an immensely powerful wave, with the strength to wash away decades of stale thinking and out-dated models of doing business.

The opportunity

We – business, non-profits, government, and consumers – have been given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape the role of business. A shift from self-serving capitalism to serving the greater good. An evolved model of business that not only considers people and planet but takes strident action to enhance society. Companies, big and small, will have to adapt to meet the needs of the mainstream Crusading Consumer. Corporate Social Responsibility, and more importantly Corporate Social Action, will be a necessity for business survival.

Find out what this means for changemakers in the non-profit, charity & social enterprise space – page 37.

As the world opens, the health of the economy, as well as its citizens, is at stake. **We're done with just surviving - it's time to thrive.**

It'll take fresh thinking, courageous conversations, radical collaboration and determined action.

¹¹ Free to download [HERE](#)

About this report

Our first Conscious Consumer Report was published in October 2020. It can be downloaded [here](#).

Given such a monumental & tumultuous past year, we decided to check in again to identify the impact of the pandemic on consumer attitudes towards companies and their role in solving social problems. You can see comparisons between the two years' data in the body of this report.

This 2021 Conscious Consumer Report includes the data, alongside my interpretation and insights from interviews with Australians. I've drawn on my experience as a marketer, consultant to some of Australia's biggest companies, my work with thousands of non-profits and 26 years of matchmaking some of Australia's most enduring corporate-cause partnerships.



More resources

For the first time, we have also surveyed consumers in New Zealand, and the changemaker edition of this new report will be available in November 2021, [HERE](#). Add your name to the list, and we'll email it to you when it's released.

If you're reading this and you work for a company, corporate or brand, you'll want to head on over to my other company that serves corporates, Cavill + Co. You'll be able to download the corporate edition [here](#), when it launches in November.

Vox pop

We took to the streets to gain further insight into the statistics. The streets were still empty, of course, so we gathered on Zoom. Some of the most perceptive and incisive verbatim comments are featured in this report. Watch our vox pop video featuring Australian Conscious Consumers, view [HERE](#).

Hailey Cavill-Jaspers
Chief DoGoodologist & Author
October 2021



Thanks to our partners
Marlin Communications
& Di Marzio Research
All these reports are
free to download.

2. On the same page

a) Definition of the Conscious Consumer

Buy or Boycott

Conscious Consumerism is an umbrella term, which simply means having more awareness of how your consumption impacts society at large, and using the power of your purchase to bring about change.

Beyond that, it encompasses a broader range of consumer attitudes and resulting behaviour. A truly dedicated Conscious Consumer will first, before purchasing something new, look to repair, re-purpose or recycle an existing product. They'll shop local because it's made by locals and has minimal packaging.

For those Conscious Consumers choosing to purchase something new, they'll look beyond the label to examine the company behind it. They do research into the background of the manufacturing process, where the product is made, plus the impact the product or service has on the environment and society. Conscious Consumers have an array of resources at their disposal to help them understand how a product or service comes to market – apps like Orange Harp and Done Good, websites like Good on You and Project Just. Conscious Consumers know that their purchase counts – because that purchase funds the company and its activities.

This discerning mindset can result in an array of behaviours.

Positive behaviours such as:

- supporting companies that align with their ethics and values
- purchasing brands that are more sustainable and have less environmental impact
- buying Australian and locally made
- investing in companies with strong ethics and values
- buying brands that do no harm to people or animals

- backing companies that recycle, use green energy, and minimise waste
- applauding companies that communicate honestly and with radical transparency
- doing business with corporations and brands that stand up for social issues they care about
- switching to brands that partner with - and support - charities
- actively promoting and recommending favourite companies and brands to family, friends and social media followers

The other side of the coin includes behaviour that has a negative impact on companies and brands such as:

- boycotting companies that contradict their ethics and values
- shunning brands that plunder the planet
- avoiding brands made – and profiting – overseas
- banning brands that do harm to people or animals
- boycotting companies that use non-renewable energy
- exposing companies that are deceptive or misleading
- ignoring companies that don't care about issues they care about, not participating in solving social problems, not supporting charities
- actively protesting against, petitioning and strongly criticising disliked companies and brands to family, friends and social media followers.



"I try to be a conscious consumer in all of my purchases. My son has put a ban on anything containing palm oil coming into our home."
~ Leisel, Gen X



“I think my generation are increasingly boycotting because they’re fed up with all the fake news. We’ve had all this time to reflect on it, and we’re mad!”

~ Tyrone, Gen X

Minimalism

There is also a growing minimalist movement buoyed by campaigns such as The Year of Less, Buy Nothing and the Marie Kondo trend of decluttering – in an effort to save money, reduce waste and improve your surroundings. This has expanded during the pandemic, in part due to shops - other than essentials - being closed, and anxiety around spending. People have had to make do with what they have. In contrast, Australians have been big spenders on home DIY¹² - due to extended periods at home, there's been substantial nesting going on.

Employment

Conscious Consumers are realising that they also have the power to influence corporate behaviour, by choosing who they work for. Gone are the days when a 20-year career with a single corporation was the ultimate dream. More and more talented Australians are opting to work for companies with a proven track record in social responsibility, for purpose-driven enterprises or even starting their own company with doing good at its core. B2B Companies that don't have 'consumers' but who are keen to attract the brightest Australian talent are not immune to the Conscious Consumer movement either.

According to a global study by Microsoft, an estimated 40% of employees are planning to quit their jobs post pandemic¹³. This is in part due to employer inflexibility but also, employees are looking for greater fulfilment.

Whilst these are both important trends, for the purposes of this study we do not include minimalism or employment as part of our definition, as we are looking at consumers that actively purchase products and services and what influences that purchase.

¹² [Australians spending a record \\$1b a month on their homes, Sydney Morning Herald, 16 May 2021. Stats from ABS.](#)

¹³ [The Great Resignation, Forbes, July 2021. Microsoft 2021 Work Trend Index](#)



b) The Generations

This study reveals the attitudes of Australian consumers - from Builders, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Y and the Zed's. Here's what it means:

Builders

Aged 75+ (in 2021), born 1946 or before

Baby Boomers

Aged 57-74 (in 2021), born 1946-1964

Gen X

Aged 41-56 (in 2021), born 1965-1980

Gen Y (Millennials)

Aged 26-40 (in 2021), born 1980-1994

Gen Z

Aged 11-25 (in 2021), born 1995-2009

Gen Alpha

Aged 11 and under (in 2021) Born 2010 and after

If you'd like more detailed information on what makes the different generations tick, download our free e-book 'The Generations' [here](#).

c) How we did it

We conducted an online omnibus survey, with a sample of people 18+, resembling the population by gender, age, state & location (sample sourced via reputable online research panel Dynata www.dynata.com).

Sample size 1,002 across Australia.

Commissioned by Cavill + Co, Q&A and analysis by Di Marzio Research.

Metro/non-metro split 76:24, Male/Female split 49:51, resembling Australian population.

Field dates 27-30 August 2021.

Publication date: 29 October 2021.

A huge thank you to our partners Di Marzio Research (Paul Di Marzio) and Marlin Communications (Karl Tischler) for their valued support and contribution.

Thanks also to the BePartnerReady.com® team for bringing it all together so quickly: communications whizz Georgia McIntosh, Kate Perkins for video content, designer Rachael Hammond and researcher Danni Price.

We're incredibly grateful for our vox-poppers who provided invaluable insights to the statistics. Thanks also to Carmel Horvath & Kate Bailey at Coles, Kate Scrutton at Heart Foundation and Scott Dare at Me Bank for the partnership stories.



Questions were prefaced with the script below to provide context:

This set of questions is about the corporate sector in Australia which can be defined as comprising large public and private companies with 200 or more employees selling products or services (rather than small, local businesses).

We'd like to ask you about the role played by the corporate sector in Australia in helping to address societal (social) problems, the way in which they support charities and causes and how they communicate this. COVID-19 has exacerbated some of these problems, e.g. mental health and unemployment. Yet many organisations that are helping those most in need (i.e. charities and non-profits) have been impacted due to fewer donations and not being able to fundraise through events.



“I’m seventh generation indigenous Australian, and we have a real connection with stewardship with country and land, and we look after it because we’re part of it. It’s our responsibility. So conscious consumerism is a huge part of me, because you reap what you sow.”

~ Alison, Gen X



3. Snapshot

Attitudes on behaviour:



Over two thirds of Australian consumers believe that corporates only care about profit and will do anything to get it



Three quarters of Australian consumers agree it's time Corporate Australia stepped up and showed leadership in solving social issues



Just under two thirds believe Corporate Australia (of all the institutions) has the greatest potential to solve societal problems



Over three quarters of Australian consumers believe corporates should partner with charities to solve social problems, in the coming year



Just under three quarters agree the old model of corporates operating purely for profit is dead. Companies should take responsibility for their impact and take action



Just under two thirds agree that during Covid they've re-evaluated priorities and are more likely to buy products and services from companies doing good



Over one third have actively boycotted a company or brand in the past year, due to its poor social responsibility



Over one quarter **have** actively switched brands, because of its support of a charity, in the past year



Over half say they **will** switch brands supporting a charity, in the coming year (rising to over 4 in 5 saying possibly)



The top 6 causes that prompt consumers to switch brands are: climate change (23%), mental health (20%), healthcare and medical research (19%), environmental conservation (18%), support and care for vulnerable people (17%) and animal rescue/care (17%)



Conscious Consumerism has reached a tipping point; it is now a mainstream attitude driving consumer behaviour, with consistent agreement across the most active consumer generational segments (Z, Y, X and Baby Boomers).

Attitudes on communications:



Almost three quarters of Australian consumers agree they're more likely to believe a company's support of a cause if they can see the tangible social impact



Almost three quarters of Australians agree a company's cause activity is more genuine if they're partnered with a charity



Over two thirds of consumers agree its good when a company helps to amplify a topical cause, but must show genuine commitment or it's just woke washing/PR stunt

4. Full results

Note: most of the results were consistent across all generations and locations. Statistically significant differences are provided where they exist.

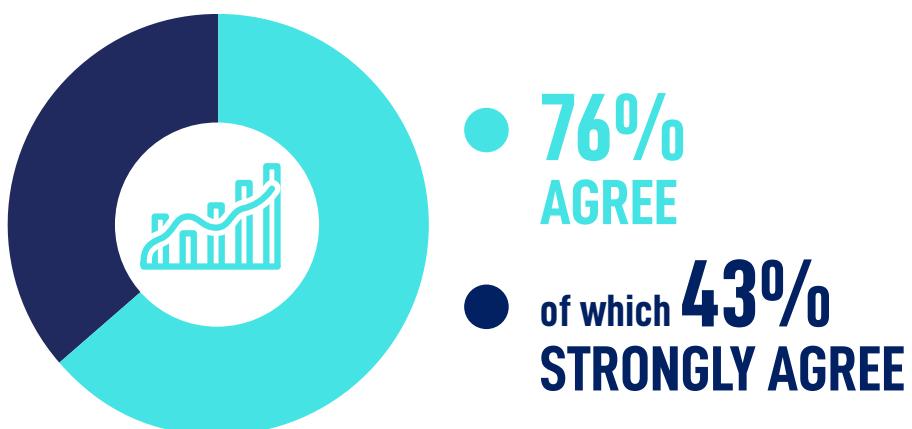
BEHAVIOUR

CHANGING ROLE OF CORPORATES IN SOCIETY



"It's time Corporate Australia stepped up and showed both moral and practical leadership in solving society's problems."

2021



All generations are consistent in agreement.

Builders are below average with 69%.

NSW are a little above average at 80%.



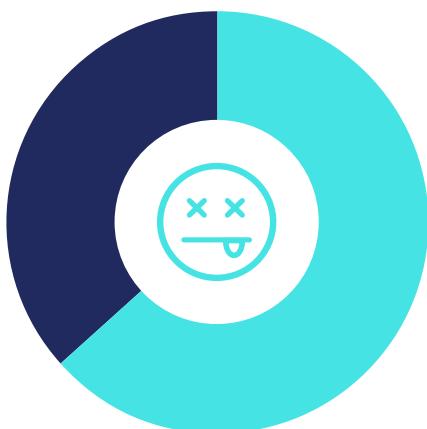
"Build back better. Blah, blah, blah. Green economy. Blah blah blah. Net zero by 2050. Blah, blah, blah. This is all we hear from our so-called leaders. Words that sound great but so far have not led to action. Our hopes and ambitions drown in their empty promises."

~ Greta Thunberg, Gen Z



"The old model of corporates operating purely for profit is dead. Companies should not only take responsibility for their impact on humans & the environment, but also take action to make things better."

2021



- **71%**
AGREE
- **of which 41%**
STRONGLY AGREE

Intriguingly Builders are above average at 83%, although it must be said that the sample size was relatively small (48 people). Millennials came in at 73%.



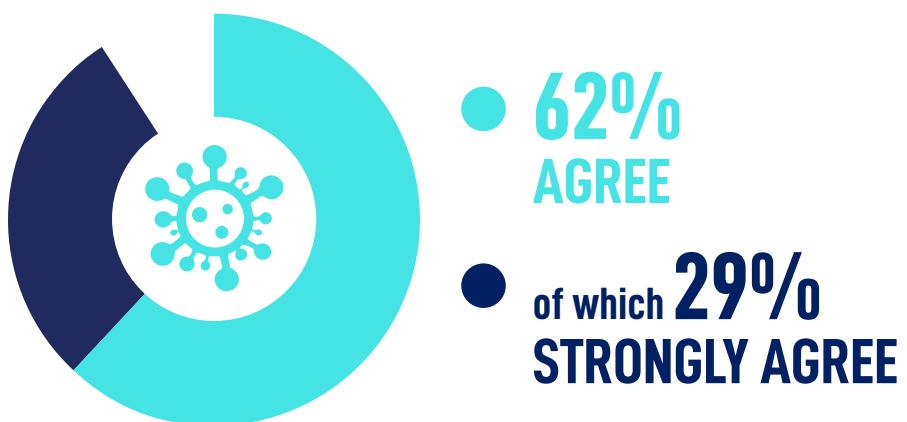
"The performance of Western capitalism in recent decades has been deeply problematic. It's not irretrievably bound to fail; but it does need to be rethought."
~ **Economist Michael Jacobs, author, 'Rethinking Capitalism'**

THE COVID EFFECT



"During Covid, I've re-evaluated my priorities in life. If I have to buy a product or service, I'm more likely to buy it from a company that's actually doing some good"

2021



Females are slightly above average at 65%, and males slightly below at 59%. Millennials are significantly above average with 71% agreeing with this statement, with Gen Z not far behind at 69%.



"It was a real watershed moment when the grandchildren came along. I became tremendously concerned about the world that they're going to inherit. I've become a real climate activist – we have an electric car, buy in bulk from biodynamic farmers, switched to an ethical super, avoid fast fashion and anything made overseas"

~ Jackie, Baby Boomer

CORPORATES SHOULD PARTNER WITH CHARITIES



"In the coming year, I believe Corporates should partner with charities to help solve societal issues and get Australians back on their feet."

2021



- 76% AGREE
- of which 43% STRONGLY AGREE

2020



- 71% AGREE
- of which 35% STRONGLY AGREE

We can see an increase in agreement here, especially with those that 'strongly agree' - an increase of 8 percentage points. Millennials are above average at 80%, and Builders are above that at 85% (although it must be stated that the sample size of Builders was 48 people, so small).



"The older generations are more attuned to these issues because they've been part of the problem. It's our generations that have created the situation that the younger generations are now living with, and are going to have to resolve"

Linda, Baby Boomer



"It's no surprise to see Millennials above average here but what IS intriguing is the Builders! Whilst this is a small sample, it's not a one-off random result, many statistics in this report show Builders have become more conscious and activist. Our Boomers & Builders vox pop provides some insight as to why this may be the case"

Georgia McIntosh, Chief Communicator
BePartnerReady.com®

Purchase with purpose

A brilliant example of a brand-aligned partnership is ME Bank, who have a pink everyday transaction account card that contributes 1c to the cause of breast cancer research, every time it's used. The campaign theme is 'Buck it Forward' where cardholders are invited to turn every transaction into action with ME's Pink Buck card. To date the card has generated over \$1M for the National Breast Cancer Foundation, and it's ME's most popular debit card.

The Cause-Related campaign is an extension of ME's 17-year relationship with the National Breast Cancer Foundation which also encourages staff to participate in – and fundraise for – the Mother's Day Classic. This shows that they have been committed to the cause for a very long time, demonstrating to customers that this is a genuine partnership, and not a case of band wagoning.

What makes this partnership exceptional is ME Bank's unconventional (for a bank) communications. Their catchy writing and tone are refreshingly down to earth, such as 'Give purpose to every purchase' and 'Buck it forward'. Prior research has shown that consumers resonate with, and are motivated by, causes and outcomes - not dollars. Yet too many Cause-Related campaigns focus on the dollar contribution, not the difference made. ME's approach makes the customer the hero and reveals where the money goes by showcasing real scientists, real projects and real outcomes (written in digestible plain English that's also uplifting). That's great CSR comms, right there.



More info [HERE](#)



“We’re very conscious about products that farmers are using – especially fertilizers that go into the soil. And that runs out into streams and rivers and ends up running out in the sea. And we have lots of sea and river pollution, green algae’s and that all comes from stuff that farmers use in the main but council’s are using it too. In the Sunshine Coast the council have stopped using Roundup. In America there was a \$10m lawsuit against the company after numerous deaths. It’s dangerous stuff but you can still buy it here!”

~ Svein, Builder

**Watch our
voxpops with
Builders & Boomers
[HERE](#)**



“The most spectacular failures in corporate history didn’t stem from companies whose widgets didn’t work. Their downfall was a failure in their corporate social responsibility, whether it’s environmental degradation, workforce exploitation or customer deception. Whatever the issue, it’s brought down the largest of companies. So it’s time to change. Shareholders are now demanding accountability. Consumers are now demanding accountability. And we’re demanding that the companies that we do business with reflect the values that we hold.”

~ Linda, Baby Boomer

Heart & Impact

In 2020, Coles partnered with the Heart Foundation to support Australians' aspirations to become healthier and more active. They launched the Coles Health Hub, a one-stop online portal offering practical information & solutions around exercise, diet & nutrition, mental health and most importantly, motivation.



This partnership couldn't have come at a better time, as many Australians struggled to maintain their health goals during the challenging series of lockdowns. Coles brought on board sporting legends, including AFL star player James Podsiadly, to provide inspiring videos and motivational messaging as part of a 28-day crusade where health food products in Coles were reduced by 50%. News Corp helped to amplify the message even further by running a #RejuveNation campaign across print and digital media.

This is a brilliant example of a partnership where two giants, bringing their unique strengths, came together for the betterment of Australians.

The Heart Foundation's recommended heart-healthy eating patterns are based on clinical evidence and inform their extensive library of heart-healthy recipes; Coles has the extensive reach through its media placement and day to day customer interactions, to get the information into the hands of the people who are hungry for practical, no-nonsense information to better their health. Coles also leveraged their relationships with sporting personalities to ensure the campaign achieved maximum exposure and engagement.

It also feels authentic, a natural extension of Coles' commitment to offering healthier food alternatives to customers. Coles has been working for years to expand the range of nutritious, fresh foods in their supermarkets, eliminating artificial colours and introducing healthier options under their sub brands 'Nature's Kitchen', 'Wellness Road' and 'Certified Organic'. They've also had a long history of supporting causes that inspire healthier living including the AFL Healthy Kicks program and Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation.

A partnership with impact and heart, for sure.

[More info HERE](#)

CORPORATES ARE TOO PROFIT FOCUSED



"In general, all Corporates care about is profit and they'll do anything to get it, even damage society and the environment in the process."

2021



- 65% AGREE
- of which 32% STRONGLY AGREE

2020



- 64% AGREE

Gen Z are most ardently in agreement at 69% and have significantly shifted their opinion, with a 13 percentage point increase on last year. Baby Boomers have decreased (-9 percentage points) and once again Builders have dramatically increased to 67% - an 18 percentage point uplift. For the first time in a decade of tracking this sentiment, Builders are in alignment with Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z. Again we must emphasise that the sample size of Builders was quite small at 48 people.



"Our vox pop interviews suggest that Builders have not suddenly become disenchanted, it's been bubbling for a while, with 2021 being 'enough is enough' time. It appears that two distinct events have caused this. Rio Tinto destroying ancient aboriginal rock shelters for an iron mine (and the resulting public outcry) and then time in reflection during COVID."

Hailey Cavill-Jaspers

PROTESTING AT THE CHECKOUT



"In the last year, I have actively boycotted a company/brand/product/service because of their poor reputation in social responsibility (by boycott we mean, refused to purchase / petitioned against)."

2021



- **38% AGREE**
- **of which
18% AGREE
STRONGLY**

2020



- **36% AGREE**
- **of which
16% AGREE
STRONGLY**

The most active boycotters are Millennials (49%) followed closely by Gen Z at 46%. The biggest uplift in a year is Gen Z - up 12 percentage points compared to last year.



"Although the overall levels of boycotting haven't changed significantly since last year, the growth among Gen Z is considerable. They are often very active and influential on social media so brands beware – getting them offside can create undesirable attention and the potential to create long term negative perceptions towards the brand."

Paul Di Marzio, Managing Director, Di Marzio Research



"In our 2018 research we asked Millennials what kind of behaviour defined 'boycotting'. The top 3 answers were 'Stop buying a product' (86%), 'Refuse to buy a product' (53%) and 'Switch to a competitor' (43%). This negates the idea that Millennials are simply clicktivists¹⁴ – they take their activism to the checkout."

Hailey Cavill-Jaspers

¹⁴ Clicktivism – a form of activism, which is online, largely social media, to galvanise protests

CORPORATES HAVE GREATEST POTENTIAL

Australians still believe that corporates have the greatest potential:



"Of all the major institutions, I believe that Corporate Australia has the greatest potential to solve societal problems in the coming years."

2021



- **61% AGREE**
- of which
26% STRONGLY AGREE

2020



- **63% AGREE**
- of which
26% STRONGLY AGREE

Although this looks like a decline, it's not really a big change, and it still represents over half believing that corporates have the greatest potential. The 'agree strongly' remains stable at 26%. Millennials are slightly above average at 67%, and those in NSW are slightly above average at 67%.



"Companies exist because of the consumer, no matter how much power they have. People are becoming more aware of global warming and the environmental damage that we're doing, sometimes the result of corporations. But in the end we have the power, we can choose not to buy from those corporations."

~ Rachael, Gen X

Hail a ride, plant a tree

Indonesia's ride-hailing giant Gojek has launched a new feature that allows users to donate to tree-planting schemes to offset their carbon footprint.

[More info HERE](#)



A picture of diversity

Crayola, who inspire creativity in children in the form of wax crayons, has introduced a 'colours of the world' range that has 24 specially formulated colours representing different skin tones.

[More info HERE](#)



Braille Bricks

Lego are committed to make learning fun – for all. They introduced Braille Bricks in several languages to help visually impaired children learn Braille through play. Compatible with existing Lego toys, the Braille Bricks are moulded with studs that match with Braille letters and numbers.

[More info HERE](#)



SWITCHED IN THE LAST YEAR TO SUPPORT A CAUSE:

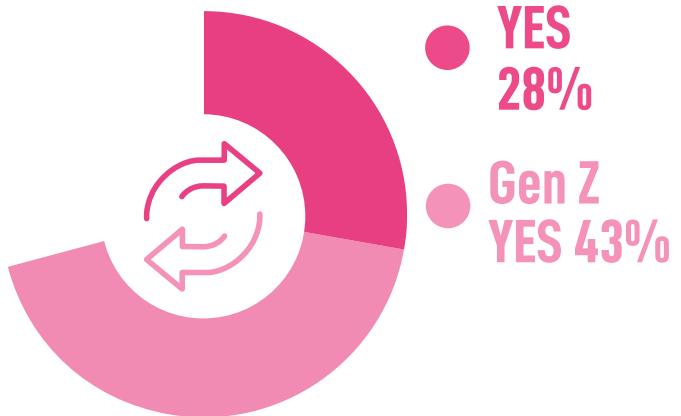


"In the last year I have actively switched from my usual product/service to another because of its support of a cause or charity I care about"

2021



2020



Switching behaviour is generally consistent with last year but a slight decline in the younger age groups can be seen. This is not surprising given so many consumers have had to alter their shopping behaviour during lockdowns. Gen Z are 12 percentage points higher than the average (38%) and Millennials not far behind being 10 percentage points above average (36%).

2017 the results were:

Total 14% said YES	19% Gen Y said YES
37% Gen Z said YES	11% Gen X said YES

2014 the results were:

Total 16% AGREED	19% Gen Y AGREED
No Gen Z	19% Gen X AGREED



"We asked this same question four years ago (2017) and seven years ago (2014), albeit with different response options. Although results can't be directly compared, it's fair to say that the incidence of switching to support a cause has increased since then and remained steady despite the impact of the pandemic. The younger generation are still leading the way when it comes to switching for a cause."

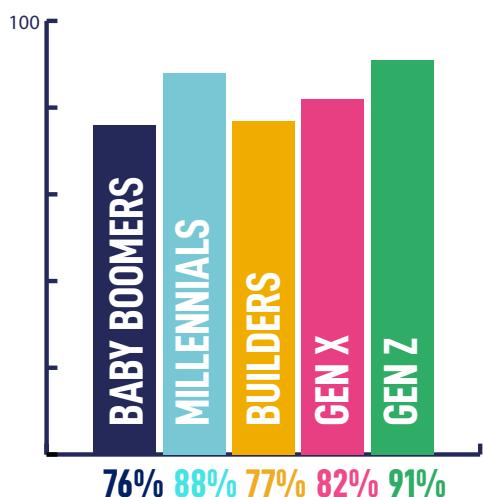
Paul Di Marzio, Managing Director, Di Marzio Research

SWITCHING TO SUPPORT A CAUSE IN THE COMING YEAR

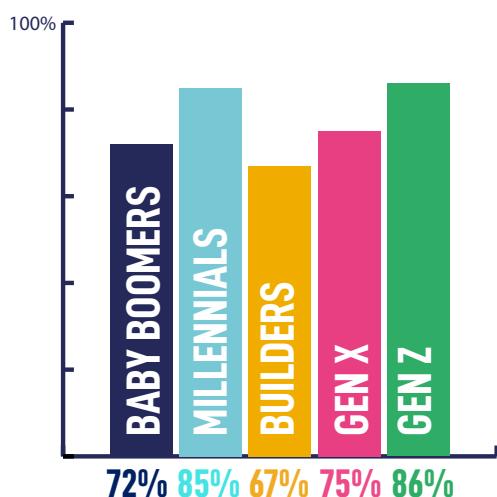


"In the coming year, when purchasing a product or service that you would normally purchase, how likely would you be to choose one that supports a charity you care about, assuming the product or service quality and price are equal?"

2021



2020



Definitely/probably 53%

Definitely/probably/possibly 83%

Males 80% Definitely/probably/possibly

Females 86% Definitely/probably/possibly

Definitely/probably 48%

Definitely/probably/possibly 78%

Males 76% Definitely/probably/possibly

Females 79% Definitely/probably/possibly

As the chart shows, the propensity to switch in the coming year is fairly consistent amongst all the generations, with Gen Z the most ardent switchers.

The biggest shift in the past year is the Builders, with a 10 percentage point increase. The 'definitely/probably' statistic is compelling at 53%, as anecdotal research shows that this is a strong indicator of follow-through behaviour.



"This is the first time in my 20+ years of tracking cause-related purchase behaviour I've seen agreement over 80%. This suggests we're going to see a lot more switching behaviour as Australia opens up and consumption resumes to pre-pandemic levels. This will be both females and male shoppers, across all generations. If you're a corporate or brand and you're not aligned to a charity I'd think very strongly about embracing one, as 4 in 5 Australians will be influenced to buy or reject your product. If you do have a cause partner, it's time to start promoting it through your products not just on your website and in your annual/CSR reports."

Hailey Cavill-Jaspers

CAUSES THAT MOTIVATE BRAND SWITCHING BEHAVIOUR



"Following on from the previous question, which of the causes or social issues listed would motivate you most and second most to make such a choice?"

Note: Only those respondents that said they would definitely/probably/possibly choose to switch brands to support a cause answered this question, so the sample size was smaller (834) not the total sample of 1,002:

2020 Top 6		2021 Top 6	
Environmental protection & conservation	19%	Climate Change/Global Warming	23%
Mental health services	18%	Mental Health Services	20%
Healthcare & disease prevention	18%	Healthcare, illness prevention & medical research	19%
Medical research	18%	Environmental conservation, reducing waste/pollution	18%
Disaster response & relief in Australia	16%	Support & care for vulnerable people ie disabled, indigenous, homeless	17%
Child protection	16%	Animal rescue, care & protection	17%

7th was Disaster Response & relief in Australia, 8th was Children's Hospitals, 9th was Child Protection and 10th was Employment & skills training.

Whilst there's been a little bit of jostling for position amongst the Top 10, there's no major shifts.



"Females are more motivated by animal rescue, care and protection (4 percentage points higher than the average at 21%). Builders are more motivated by healthcare, 16 percentage points above the average (35%) and disaster response, 19 percentage points above the average (32%). Despite the country (and the globe) being gripped by a health crisis, the threat of climate change is just too real to be ignored. This is supported by other studies this year. Mental health is the new pandemic and Australians clearly want corporates to step up and take action on this issue."

Hailey Cavill-Jaspers

COMMUNICATION



For the first time since 2018, we asked about the way in which companies communicate their support of causes & charities, given this has been a topic of lively debate regarding how companies leveraged the #BlackLivesMatter & #MeToo movements.

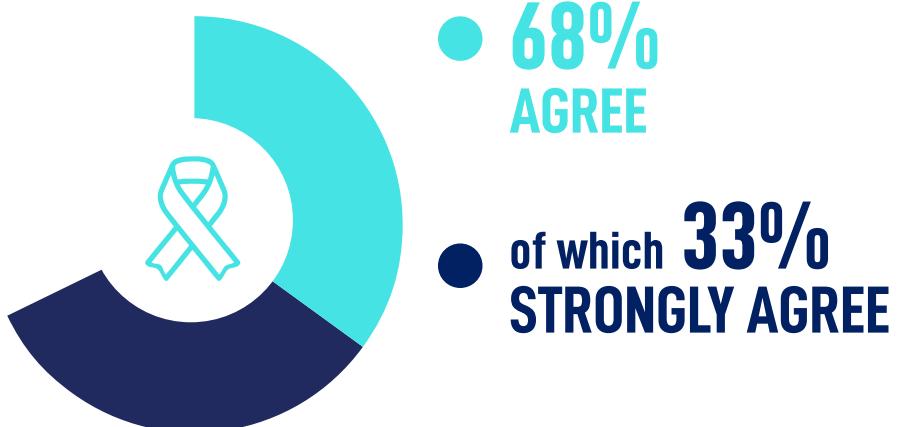
Prior to this question we provided a definition of the term 'woke washing' for those unfamiliar with it. Our definition was 'when a company jumps on a popular social issue just to make a profit'

WOKE WASHING



"It's good when a company or brand uses its social media platforms to amplify a topical cause or issue, but if I can't see a genuine commitment to that cause, it's just a PR stunt or 'woke washing' in my view."

2021



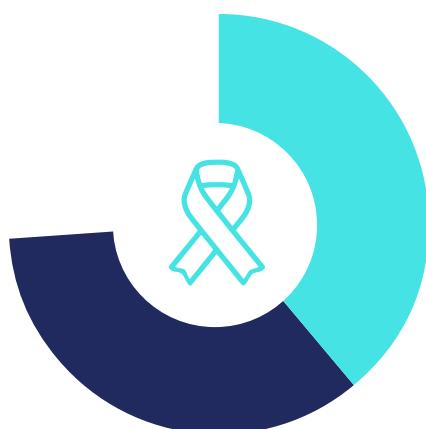
This level of agreement was consistent across most generations, with a few variances. Gen Z were 9 percentage points higher than the average at 77%, not far behind were Millennials at 5 percentage points higher at 73%. After that it was the Builders at 67%.

CHARITY ADDS CREDIBILITY



"When seeing a company or brand getting behind a cause, it's more credible & genuine if they're partnering with a charity or non-profit to effect social change."

2021



- 72% AGREE
- of which 35% STRONGLY AGREE

Builders are 7 percentage points above the average, at 79%, followed by Millennials at 76%. Clearly the older generation - the most prolific givers to charity - see a charity adding credibility to a company partnership.



"Consumers have the will - and means - to uncover and expose companies that SAY, but do not DO. Public declarations without evidence will only backfire"

Hailey Cavill-Jaspers



McDonald's had a supersized lapse of judgement in Brazil during the pandemic. When the company separated their Golden Arches to promote social distancing it was met with, backlash. Consumers felt it was insensitive, a branding exercise in the midst of a global health crisis

SOCIAL IMPACT COUNTS



When seeing a company or brand promoting its support of a cause, I'm more likely to believe it when I see what they're doing and the tangible social impact achieved

2021



- 74% AGREE
- of which 35% STRONGLY AGREE

Seeing the tangible impact is most important to Gen Z, at 5 percentage points above the average (79%) followed closely by the Builders at 77%.



"It's clear that Australians do want companies to use their marketing might and reach to shine a light on causes they care about, but to avoid 'woke washing' they must show genuine & tangible results. Consumers definitely want action, but careful sensitivity checking is required before putting out a media release."

**Georgia McIntosh,
Chief Communicator,
BePartnerReady.com®**

5. Conclusions

What it means for changemakers

If you're working within a charity, social enterprise, non-profit or Foundation to advance a societal mission we'd love to hear from you – what do YOU think it means for you and your sector?

McKinsey have predicted that it'll take some industry sectors more than five years to recover from the pandemic. Whilst some industry's have done exceptionally well during Covid – online grocery, telehealth, home furnishings & meal delivery services to name a few – others have been decimated (airlines, hotels and restaurants). Either way, there's a sure-fire way to advance recovery – and that's meeting the needs of consumers and customers. Not just their practical needs but also, resonate with their values and meet their moral needs. This is where things get interesting – and exciting for changemakers.

If, and when, companies rise to answer the call of the Crusading Consumer, there will be a greater demand for companies to embrace CSR & Social Good strategies. Whilst some companies will first address the impact of their operations before going public (as they should) others will be seeking to partner with charities to tackle social problems and some will want to go public. For those that do, the results are far reaching and include motivated & proud staff, enhanced reputation, differentiation from competitors, and potentially more customers.





Here's the thing. When Crusading Consumers feel heard and they see action, they'll champion that company or brand too. Loudly. Word of mouth marketing¹⁵ has never seen such a vocal champion.

Some companies & brands may continue to use their media platforms to amplify a topical 'cause' or social issue. However, with consumers so alert to distasteful 'woke-washing', it would be wise for them to partner with a charity to demonstrate genuine action & outcomes.

For 72% of Australians, this adds more credibility & believability.

Therein lies the opportunity for changemakers working with non-profits, social enterprises, and charities.

Suddenly, you're not just the sector that cares for vulnerable people, or repairs environmental damage and one that is 'worthy' of support – **but a powerful partner to help companies meet consumer demand.**

If you operate in the realm of climate change, mental health, healthcare & illness prevention, medical research, environmental conservation, support & care for vulnerable people and animal rescue – you have an advantage.

These are the top 6 causes that motivate Australians to switch brands. If you don't have company's (especially FMCG¹⁶ brands) queuing up to partner with you, something's amiss.

The important question however, is: are you ready to form mutually beneficial partnerships with corporates, companies & brands?

Just being a popular cause isn't enough. You must be willing to partner, as well as able to partner. It's essential that you're organisationally ready to enter a commercial arrangement with a company or brand. To calculate your Readiness score, give our free [Readiness Q&A](#) a go.

¹⁵ WOMM – 83% of consumers say word of mouth influences their purchases, Talk Triggers 2018 <https://www.talktriggers.com/cm>

¹⁶ FMCG – Fast Moving Consumer Goods

Companies funding a cause partnership from the Marketing & CSR purse, will want business as well as social outcomes (as distinct from the HR & Philanthropic purses). It's not feel-good vibes, but KPI's. Do you know what you have to offer? Do you know how to spot an approach from someone holding the marketing or CSR purse? Check out our free '[4 purses infographic](#)' to help you navigate the 4 purses and identify what each purse holder wants from a charity partner.

Now is the time for non-profit leaders to empower their people, upskill their teams, and use these statistics to prove the potency of your cause to influence consumer purchase.

You're welcome to cite any of these statistics on your website or in presentations to corporate prospects, however, ensure to reference the stat otherwise it lacks validity: **Conscious Consumer Report 2021, Di Marzio Research/BePartnerReady.com®.**



"I want my grandchildren to grow up in a world like I grew up in – it was fun, minimalist, not too many things. Now they've got too much, it's all about material things, 'keeping up with the Joneses'. I really want my grandkids to learn what we need to do to help the planet survive."

~ Zori, Baby Boomer



6. More Resources

We do hope that these insights and statistics will help all changemakers (causes, charities & social enterprises) have more confidence when approaching corporates & brands for partnership in 2022 and beyond. However, statistics alone won't guarantee success. Changemakers need to be ready to partner with corporates.

After 26 years of corporate-cause partnering, we know a thing or two about readiness. If you don't know whether your *organisation* is ready to embrace a corporate partnerships strategy, do our free Readiness Q&A.

If you'd like more information on how to become *partner* ready, check out our free resources and training [here](#).

BePartnerReady.com® is an online training and implementation program enabling changemakers to upskill and win corporate partnerships. We're a group of social entrepreneurs based in Australia, committed to empowering the social sector to partner-up with the most innovative and resourceful sector – corporates & brands.

Hailey Cavill-Jaspers is the firm's Chief DoGoodologist. She's built over 50 significant and enduring corporate-cause partnerships in 26 years of matchmaking, facilitating the investment of millions of dollars and expertise into the non-profit sector. She is a social entrepreneur, author, speaker and CSR consultant.

Watch her story [here](#).

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