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## **Significant increase in the percentage of adults saying they're now personally affected by climate change - AIB Sustainability Survey**

### **Cost of living challenges continue to influence sustainability decisions most, but becoming less of a concern**

The sixth AIB Sustainability Survey reveals a **growing acknowledgement of the impact of climate change on people's lives**. Since December 2020 there has been a significant increase in the percentage of adults saying that they are being personally affected now by climate change, rising to 45% from 37%. 2023 was a remarkable year with rainfall and warming at unprecedented levels at times in Ireland with the impacts of climate change on people's lives plain to see.

**The cost of living continues to be the major barrier preventing people from making more sustainable choices, but concerns are easing**, with the percentage of people who cite cost as a major barrier down by 20 percentage points on the previous survey in May 2023. However, inflation continues to weigh heavy on consumers' minds, as 52% of adults say the cost of living has made them less interested in sustainability, up 15 percentage points from 37% in the previous wave. 44% said a lack of sustainable alternatives was the main barrier, down from 59% in May 2023, while 33% cited a lack of clarity, understanding or information, down from 35%.

#### **People see climate change as a challenge which requires solutions from across society.**

Respondents believe the government (71%) followed by individuals (57%) hold most responsibility for driving behavioural change to tackle environmental issues. 46% of respondents expect to a great extent that multinationals implement sustainable practices, diminishing to 38% for large Irish businesses, 19% for charities and 14% for SMEs.

**There was an increase in certain lifestyle changes with the greatest potential to reduce carbon emissions**. For example, 29% of consumers are already using electricity produced with renewable sources, up from 27% in June 2021, while 10% are driving an electric car compared with just 6% in 2021, and another 20% intend driving an electric car in the next three years. 58% said they are already buying fewer clothes or buying previously owned clothes compared with just 52% in the previous wave. However, only 11% have switched to a vegan or vegetarian diet compared with 13% in 2021, while just 4% intend switching in the next three years.

A small minority of consumers are interested in taking out **home improvement loans themselves to improve the energy efficiency of their homes**, up 10% from 8% in the previous wave.

The percentage of respondents who cite **scientists and academics as having the most influence on their attitudes and behaviour** when it comes to sustainability rose to 40% from 30% in June 2020.

AIB Chief Sustainability and Corporate Affairs Officer Mary Whitelaw said "Our world is changing before our eyes. The sixth wave of AIB's Sustainability Research shows an increase in the proportion of people who say their lives are affected by climate change. It's encouraging to see that the cost

barrier to making more sustainable choices is easing somewhat as inflation eases. AIB is here to support our customers wishing to build a greener tomorrow through our lower-cost green mortgages for customers whose homes have a BER rating of B3 or higher, as well as cheaper green personal loans which can go towards the installation of solar panels, insulation or the purchase of an electric vehicle.”

Amárach Chairman Gerard O’Neill said “The research shows that Irish citizens are keen to play their part in achieving Ireland’s climate change goals for 2030, but they still need guidance, encouragement and support from government, business and others to contribute to a sustainable future for Ireland”.

**Ends.**

**Notes to Editors:**

The research findings are based on a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults aged over 18 in December 2023. This is the sixth AIB Sustainability Survey carried out by Amárach for AIB. The previous waves of research were carried out in May 2023, June 2021, December 2020, June 2020 and December 2019.

To ensure the integrity of comparisons, all waves have been adjusted for any changes in methodology.

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