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New Research Shows People Believe in Climate Change But Few Fear Risks, as AIB hosts 9th Annual Sustainability Conference

- **86% of people think that climate change is happening**
- **But only 30% believe extreme weather is a risk**
- **Younger and older least confident in understanding sustainability**
- **Benedict Cumberbatch and Prof Brian Cox among keynote speakers at flagship event**

New research by AIB has revealed that 86% of people in Ireland think that climate change is happening, with nine in ten attributing it to human activity. However, only one in three (30%) believe extreme weather poses a high level of risk over the next decade and just 40% say they are worried about climate change.

The research also identifies a significant gap in the public's confidence in their understanding of sustainability. Just one-third (33%) of Irish consumers say they feel confident about their knowledge of sustainability topics. Levels were lowest among younger and older people, with 26% of 18–24-year-olds and 25% of those aged 65+ considering themselves confident. In contrast, confidence levels were highest among 25–44-year-olds (43%) and geographically among those living in Dublin (39%). Only one-fifth (19%) believe living sustainably is convenient, down from 23% in 2019.

The findings are being released as AIB hosts its ninth annual Sustainability Conference, which this year has the theme ***“Where our shared ambition meets action”***. AIB CEO, Colin Hunt, who is addressing the conference, said that the survey highlighted the need to support people, and communities to make sustainability part of their lives in a way that is convenient, cost-efficient and positive.

“Sustainability must mean social progress and a better way of doing things, like warmer homes, better transport, or cleaner electricity,” he said. “AIB is focused on financing infrastructure like renewable energy and energy efficient housing and buildings, so that it is easier for people to choose a more sustainable future. We are also focused on providing support and advice to our customers so that they understand more about the benefits of sustainability.”

The research reveals that 3 out of 10 (29%) people say they already take meaningful action in their personal lives to try to live more sustainably. However, younger respondents are among those least likely to, with 14% of 18–24-year-olds saying they act purposefully on sustainability. Those over the age of 55 are most likely to, at 34%.

Among the relatively small number (6%) who say they don't care about sustainability, one in four cite scepticism/conspiracy, while a similar proportion state it is not a personal priority for them. A further fifth say they are disinterested in it.

The findings are based on research carried out online among a nationally representative sample of 1,500 adults aged 18 years or over, which was conducted from mid-August to the start of September by Amárach.

Sustainability Conference

Keynote speaker at today's AIB Sustainability Conference is award-winning actor, producer, Greenpeace ambassador and humanitarian advocate, Benedict Cumberbatch, who will share his unique perspective on the power of storytelling to drive positive change, exploring how creativity and advocacy can help address global sustainability challenges. Also addressing the conference are Professor Brian Cox, Professor of Particle Physics, broadcaster and author, as well as Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr OBE, the mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, who will explore the intersection of leadership, sustainability and community impact. The event, which begins at 9am, is free to attend online and registration can be completed [here](#).

AIB Chief Executive, Colin Hunt, added: *"The theme of today's Sustainability Conference, 'Where our shared ambition meets action', reflects our journey in AIB, where our commitment to sustainability is unwavering. We see it as a business imperative, key to a more resilient and competitive economy. We will continue to innovate, to collaborate and to support our customers and communities on the journey to a more sustainable future. The task ahead is demanding, but our shared ambition remains undiminished."*

One of AIB's three strategic priorities is to green our business. Through this we have been translating our ambition into action by:

- Providing €20.5bn of green and transition lending since setting our Climate Action target in 2019 of reaching €30bn by 2030. €3.8bn of this funding was lent in the first nine months of this year.
- Our Climate & Infrastructure Capital unit delivered new lending of €1 billion in the first nine months of the year, of which 64% was in Europe and the UK.
- 60% of new mortgage lending in the Republic of Ireland was green in the third quarter.
- We have raised a total of €8.2bn from ESG bonds since we issued our first one in 2020.
- In July we launched a new low-cost green and transition loan for businesses.
- In 2022 AIB became the first Irish business to sign a corporate purchase power agreement and last year 87% of our electricity was certified as renewable.

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