

## Research summary

### PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGES AND ATTITUDE, THE RIGHT COMBINATION TO PROMOTE ENERGY SAVINGS

#### Research

Moderators of goal-level effect on pro-environmental behaviour.

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#### Overview

Promoting pro-environmental behaviour is a challenge for policy makers. Communication is a tool to reach this goal, and the content of messages used to promote such behaviour can dramatically impact their efficacy.

A collaboration between the University of Geneva (Switzerland) and Victoria University of Wellington led to conduct a study about the impact of different message, and the interaction with some individual characteristics.

The setting was a computer lab where participants completed an online study. They were asked to turn off the computer screen when they leave in order to save energy.

#### Main research findings

Unlike previous results obtained in Switzerland, the different versions of the message did not have differential effect. They were all very effective to promote energy saving, with more than 85% of participants turning off their computer screen when a message was present, compare to 0% turning off their computer screen in the absence of any message.

Regarding individual differences, results show that people with a more positive attitude toward the environment did turned off their screen more than the other. This result is not so surprising when we know that attitude is one of the predictors of behaviour. What is more interesting is that in the absence of any message, even people with a positive attitude toward the environment did not turned off their screen, shedding light on the role as a trigger of message prompting people to act pro-environmentally in the moment.

#### Relevance of findings to New Zealand

New Zealand, as all other countries, need efficient way to promote pro-environmental behaviours to tackle climate change. These results show the importance to target both individual characteristics such as attitude through persuasive communication for example, and at the same time to use point-of-decision prompts to remind people in the situation to act.