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Much research has reported an attitude-behaviour gap in ecological behaviours. This research seeks to contribute important insights to this literature through a study that uses construal level theory (CLT) to understand the role and impact of psychological distance in explaining sustainable and recycling behaviours. Using a qualitative approach, the research found that consistency between mental construal and all dimensions of psychological distance was pertinent to recycling and sustainable behaviours. While theoretically CLT suggests there should be consistency across psychological distance dimensions and mental construal, there is limited research that explores all distance dimensions. Further, highlighted was the need for a near distance perspective to move individuals to behavioural action. Contrary to previous research, this served to facilitate rather than inhibit behavioural action. Finally, the results suggest that where sustainable behaviours are facilitated and/or required engagement in behaviour can be increased. These findings are important for public policy by highlighting the need to represent recycling behaviour in terms of temporal, spatial, social and hypothetical closeness.

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