

Media Release

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Australians commit to a car-free commute to avoid congestion chaos

- 42% of drivers are starting work earlier and leaving later to avoid peak hour traffic
- Victorians most impacted by congestion (74%), followed by WA (70%), QLD (68%) & NSW (67%)
- Tasmania the only state where the majority haven't noticed a rise in congestion 58%

Two in three Australians (67.5%) have changed their work and travel habits to deal with an increase in road congestion, a new study from independent national road research body, ARRB Group has shown.

The survey of more than 1,000 Australians found 49% were driving less to avoid gridlock on their daily commute with 22% turning to public transport, 17% cycling or walking and 9% choosing to work from home more often.

The research shows Australians of all ages are making sacrifices to get to work on time and while 73% of 18-24 year olds have turned to public transport, walking or cycling to avoid the increase in road traffic in the last five years, less than a third of 45-65 year olds (29%) were choosing to leave their cars at home.

ARRB National Technical Leader and Manager of Congestion, Dr Charles Karl said the results highlighted a clear generational difference in how Australians were coping with the rise in congestion.

"While Gen Ys are happy to ditch their cars in favour of public transport, foot and pedal power, older generations have their hands firmly on the steering wheel, choosing to work longer hours to avoid the dreaded peak-hour crawl," Dr Karl said.

"Population growth, particularly in outer-urban areas, is putting greater strain on our road network amplifying the impact of accidents, breakdowns and maintenance works on commute times. New roads and better public transport may be the long-term solution, but involving road users in decision making and incentivising behaviour change might just be our secret weapon in the congestion battle."

"We've all felt the impact of less peak-hour traffic on our roads during school-holidays, so imagine if we could divert even 10% or 20% of cars off our roads in the busiest times by taking a more innovative community-led approach."

When asked what sacrifices Australians were willing to make to help relieve the strain on our road network, almost half (47%) said they would work more flexible hours, while two thirds (66%) said they would commit to a car-free commute one or more days per week – choosing public transport (34%), walking (20%) or cycling (12%).

Given the power to make three anti-congestion changes, 41% said they would ban or reduce on-street parking during peak hours, 39% would enable more free flowing traffic (longer green lights) on major arterials and 38% would widen roads with an additional lane.

Dr Karl said clearways were a good example of the difficult decisions authorities faced, often needing to balance strong opposition from local residents and retailers with the greater good of the community.

Other key findings include:

- **Australians committed to cars:** 39% of drivers set off for work earlier because their morning commute now takes longer and 41% of drivers weave through backstreets and take a less direct route to work to avoid traffic bottlenecks.

- **Technology underutilised** - Despite the availability of news reports, satellite navigation and Google Map technology, only 7% of people said they choose their route or mode of transport based on real-time traffic updates.
- **Cycling infrastructure still divisive** - 25% of Australians believe building more bike infrastructure is a top three priority to alleviate congestion while 24% think that cyclists should be banned entirely from main roads.
- **Gen Y's are less reliant on cars** with 51% of 18-24 year olds willing to commit to using public transport one or more days a week to reduce congestion while 57% of 45-54 year olds would rather start work earlier and leave later.
- **It's not cool to carpool** - only 4% currently carpool and only 16% willing to carpool more often to help alleviate congestion, yet 28% said they would create transit lanes (for cars with more than one passenger) on major roads as a top three anti-congestion priority.

– ENDS –

ARRB is a leading expert globally in road research and technology. For the last 55 years we've been helping transport, road and infrastructure bodies to identify and adopt best practices for developing and maintaining safe and sustainable roads.

Note about the survey: Survey conducted via Pure Profile Research using an online survey method. Survey completed by >1,000 Australian adults.

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