



NATIONAL MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed 3am, Wednesday October 10, 2007

Commuters shun public transport for cars

Despite increasing patronage of public transport, Australia's capital city commuters are still opting to drive to and from work and university by a ratio of almost 4:1, new research shows.

"Figures in the 2007 *AAMI Crash Index*¹ paint an interesting picture of how Australians living in metropolitan areas are travelling within their cities, with almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of respondents saying they drive to their workplace or university or TAFE," AAMI national public affairs manager Geoff Hughes said.

"Public transport comes a distant second to driving with only 17 per cent of those surveyed in Australia's capital cities using public transport to travel between their daily destinations. This is somewhat surprising given that Australian drivers are becoming increasingly aware of the impact of their driving habits on the environment and traffic congestion, and are being encouraged to use different modes of transport."

Only one in 20 (five per cent) of those surveyed walked or rode a bike to their destinations, while two per cent travelled by motorcycle or scooter.

How the capital cities compare – Car versus Public Transport:

	Melbourne	Sydney	Brisbane	Adelaide	Hobart	Canberra	Darwin
Per cent that drive to work/uni/TAFE	64	63	67	64	64	70	74
Per cent that use public transport to get to work/uni/TAFE	19	20	11	13	6	7	4

In light of increasing traffic congestion on our urban roads, AAMI asked drivers their reasons for not using public transport. Almost four in ten drivers (39 per cent) said they do not use public transport because it takes too long to reach their destination, while one-third (33 per cent) said public transport is unreliable.

Mr Hughes said some of those surveyed are simply not able to use public transport, with more than a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) not having public transport near their homes, workplace or educational institutions. This comes at a time when many state governments are under pressure to extend public transport networks to cater for individuals and families living in the outer suburbs of our growing cities.

"While some of the reasons for not using public transport are valid, it appears that the 'car culture' still reigns supreme, with almost one-third (30 per cent) of capital city dwellers using their cars out of sheer preference alone," Mr Hughes said.

Congestion: it's not just stopping traffic

Given the high number of people driving to and from their daily destinations, the issue of traffic congestion in Australia's capital cities remains an ongoing concern, having an adverse effect on road safety and driver behaviours. According to the *AAMI Crash Index*, 88 per cent of city dwellers attribute traffic congestion as the major cause of road rage.

¹ The 2007 Crash Index was conducted for AAMI by Sweeney Research and is an independent telephone and internet survey of 2380 Australian drivers in all States and Territories (except WA as AAMI does not operate there).



“Traffic congestion is definitely contributing to an increase in negative and selfish behaviour on Australian roads with 92 per cent of those surveyed believing drivers are becoming more aggressive, and almost two-thirds (62 per cent) having witnessed drivers using emergency stopping lanes on freeways to overtake traffic,” Mr Hughes said.

Easing the squeeze on our city roads

Interestingly, drivers are receptive to solutions to ease the squeeze on our city roads with one-quarter (25 per cent) of capital city drivers nationally saying they would support tolls on new and existing roads to reduce traffic and congestion.

“It’s encouraging that drivers recognise congestion is an issue that will continue to be of concern as the populations of our cities increase. One in six (17 per cent) of those surveyed agreed that drivers of passenger vehicles wishing to enter the central business districts of capital cities should be charged for the privilege,” Mr Hughes said.

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To arrange an interview, contact:

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