

# MEDIA RELEASE

1 February 2009

## **Congestion headache for Perth's commuters**

Perth's bus and train network is failing commuters with results of an RAC survey revealing 60 per cent of respondents said it was not possible for them to get to work using public transport.

The survey revealed that a massive 81 per cent of people drive to work and only 11 per cent use public transport. The most common reasons for people not using public transport were that it takes too long and that it's inconvenient or too difficult.

RAC Head of Member Advocacy Matt Brown said because of this imbalance congestion was becoming an increasing problem for Perth residents and a better public transport system would help ease this.

"56 per cent of respondents said congestion had worsened in the past 12 months," Mr Brown said.

"In that same time Perth's population has increased by 2.8 per cent and it's going to continue growing, meaning Perth's congestion is only going to get worse.

"It's a major concern that only four in 10 people who live in the metropolitan area feel they can access convenient public transport to get to work. Perth needs to prepare now for the future transport needs of the city."

Mr Brown said it was estimated congestion currently cost Perth nearly \$1bn a year\*, but this figure was forecast to blow out to \$2.1bn by 2020.

"Perth's freeways and highways are becoming car parks at rush hour and this is only going to get worse," Mr Brown said.

"Creating a better and more accessible public transport system is just one way to help solve the issue of congestion.

“This is a major challenge facing the State Government and it needs to be addressed in its new transport strategy the ‘20 year master plan for Perth’s future needs’ – a pre election commitment made by the Liberal Government.

“These costs don’t even take into consideration the long term environmental damage that is caused by congestion.”

Almost one third of metropolitan respondents work in or around the Perth CBD and almost 80 per cent said they leave for work between 6am and 9am.

About 35 per cent of respondents said in the past year their journey time to or from work had increased and of these 79 per cent said it had increased by between five and 20 minutes.

“When you get so many people travelling to and from the same area at the same time, congestion is bound to occur,” Mr Brown said.

“However survey respondents strongly rejected the introduction of a peak hour toll on Perth’s major arterial roads to help reduce the number of cars; almost 70 per cent were opposed to it.”

Mr Brown said the State’s public transport system would need significant ongoing investment to ensure Perth’s workers could be offered a viable alternative to using their car.

“The RAC wants to ensure Western Australians have smooth movement around the State, whether by car, bus or train and they particularly need smooth movement at peak hour.”

ENDS

*\* Figures from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and regional Economics*

*\*\* Please note: The RAC figures used are based on metropolitan respondents only.*

**RAC Head of Member Advocacy Matt Brown will conduct a doorstop interview outside RAC Head Office at 10.30am on Sunday 1 February**

**RAC Head Office: 832 Wellington Street, West Perth**