



AUSTRALIAN
AUTOMOBILE
ASSOCIATION

ON THE ROAD TO greener motoring

WHAT MOTORISTS THINK ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

AAA regularly undertakes national surveys of motorists' attitudes and priorities. The latest survey was undertaken in 2007 and was the ninth survey of motorists' views undertaken by ANOP for the AAA over the past decade.

The 2007 national study consisted of both qualitative and quantitative components. Pre-survey qualitative research consisted of 10 focus groups held in both urban and regional areas – namely, in inner Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, regional Queensland and regional Victoria. The national survey of motorists consisted of 1,512 telephone interviews.

Personal Concern About the Effect of Cars

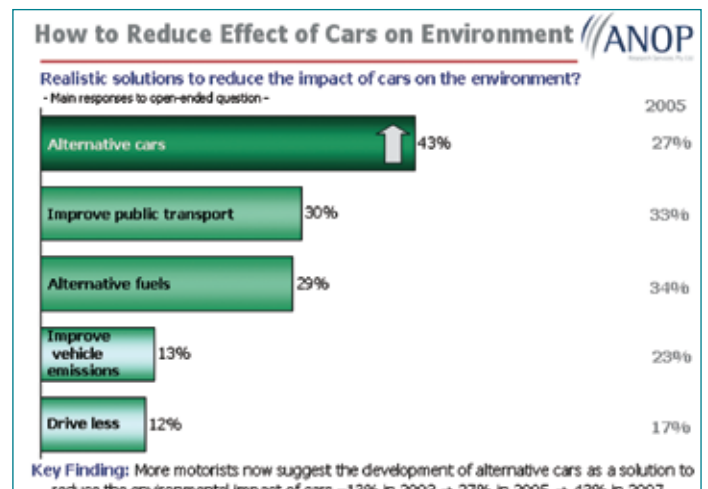
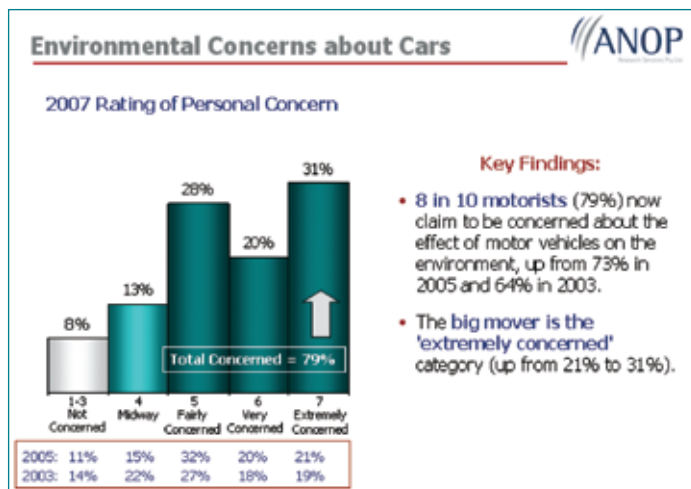
The community's environmental consciousness is clearly on the rise with levels of concern higher now (5.5 on the 7 point scale) than at any time since 1995, after hitting a low in 2003 (when the mean level of concern was 4.9). Those more concerned about the effect of cars are females (giving a mean score of 5.7), those aged between 35-54 (mean score of 5.6) and those who attribute less importance to having a car in their day-to-day life (also giving a mean score of 5.6).

Eight in ten motorists – 79% – now claim to be concerned about the impact of car usage on the environment, up from 73% in 2005 and 64% in 2003. Moreover, the big mover is the 'extremely concerned' category, with notably more motorists rating their level of concern at this high end in 2007 (31% now 'extremely concerned', up from 21% in 2005).

When looked at on a state-by-state basis, those from Tasmania express the most environmental concern (with 83% either 'extremely', 'very' or 'fairly' concerned). Motorists in the Northern Territory are the least concerned about the environmental effects of motor vehicles with only 73% registering as concerned (still, however, a strong majority).

How to Reduce the Effect of Cars on the Environment

When asked to nominate, unprompted, realistic solutions for reducing the impact that cars have on the environment, the community is quick to put its faith into the development of *alternative cars*.



A dramatic increase in the proportion of motorists suggesting *alternative cars* (e.g. hybrid, electric or solar powered models) as the best option has shot this solution into the top position in 2007. *Alternative cars* as the answer has rocketed from 13% in 2003, to 27% in 2005 and now to 43%.

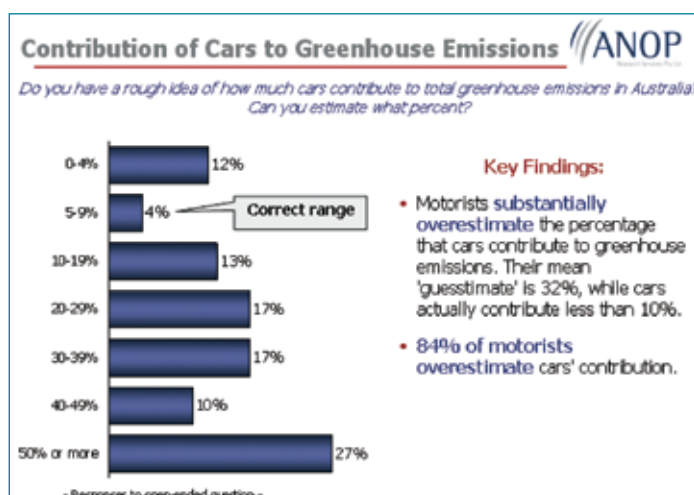
Those suggesting increased use and improvements to *public transport* have remained stable at around 30%, and the suggested use of *alternative fuels* has averaged at a similar figure. The proportion of motorists suggesting the *improvement of vehicle emissions* or *driving less* as solutions has fallen this year. Only 13% now mention improving vehicle emissions, down from 23% in 2005, and only 12% suggest a reduction in driving as a solution, down from 17% in 2005.

Thus, motorists believe that technology and design will lead the way, with improvements to public transport and alternative fuels also contributing to maintaining the status quo for motorists, not keen to have their driving behaviour curtailed.

Contribution of Cars to Greenhouse Emissions

When asked about how much cars contribute to total greenhouse emissions in Australia, nearly half the sample (46%) believe that they have a rough idea – but their estimates turn out to be a significant overstatement of reality.

The correct answer is between 5% and 10%, yet over eight in 10 (84%) overestimate the figure – with motorists’ average “guesstimate” being 32%.



Younger motorists in particular, are especially likely to overestimate the contribution of cars to Australia’s greenhouse emissions, with 89% of those aged 18-34 making this mistake in judgment (and their mean “guesstimate” sitting higher at 35%).

What is also interesting is that the average estimate given by those who claim to have a rough idea of cars’ contribution (34%) is actually further from the correct figure than the mean “guesstimate” given by those who claimed to have no idea (30%) – indicating that motorists are poorly informed on this issue.

Star Rating Systems

It is not surprising that in this context, nine in 10 Australians think it would be a good idea to have a system of environmental star ratings for cars, which indicates the impact that particular cars have on the environment.

Support for such a system is fairly consistent across both urban and regional areas (91% and 89% respectively agreeing that it would be a good idea), and is also at very similar levels across all states and territories (ranging between 88% and 91% in favour).

Younger motorists are particularly in favour of the introduction of environmental star ratings, with 94% of those aged 18-24 viewing the initiative as a good idea.

