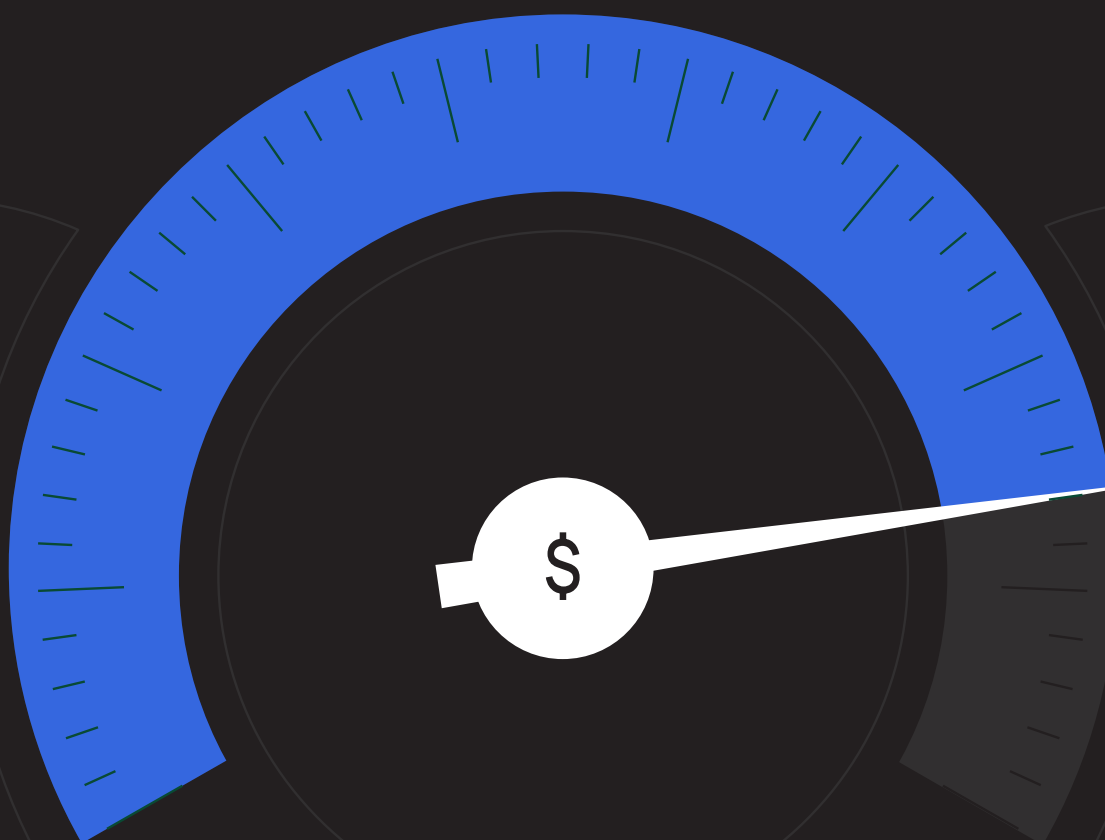


# Transport Affordability Index

Q3  
2021

QUARTER 3, 2021  
Released November 2021





---

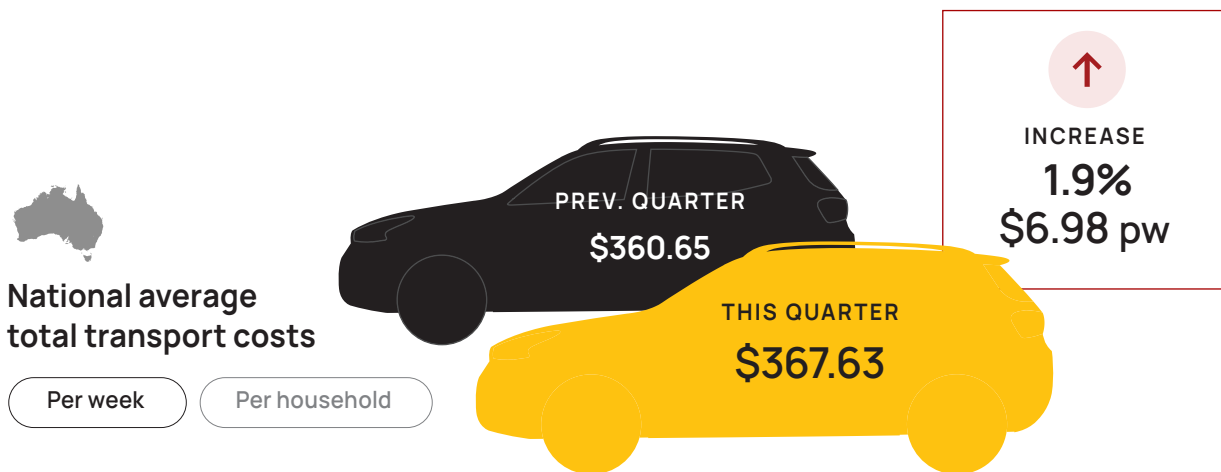
## CONTENTS

---

02	Foreword
03	Key figures
04	Annual transport costs
06	Weekly transport costs
08	Transport affordability
10	Transport costs by category
19	States and territories comparison
28	Background and methodology

---

# Rising transport costs fuelling cost of living pressures



Transport continues to have a major impact on the family budget.

The latest edition of the AAA Transport Affordability Index shows the costs of transport in capital cities and across regional households in every state and territory continues to increase.

Across the country, AAA data shows the average Australian city household now pays \$19,117 on annual transport costs; or 14.8 % of household income.

For the first time, the average weekly transport costs in our capital cities have risen above \$400. This equates to spending \$20,897 on annual transport costs; or 15.5 % of household income. While regional households are spending an average of \$328.51 a week representing 14% of household income.

AAA data also shows, nationally, average weekly household transport costs have increased by as much as \$58 compared to 2020. This comes as new research\* shows Australians expect to drive for work and holidays more than ever before.

Rising fuel prices are a significant contributor to rising costs across both regional and metropolitan Australia. The average Australian capital city retail price of regular unleaded petrol rose by 10.7 cents to 154.1 cents per litre, costing the typical city household \$280 more per year. Averaged across the regions, the cost of petrol increased by 9.7 cents to 150.0 cents per litre.

With a federal election and two state elections due next year, this report is a timely reminder that cost of living pressures are rising and that policies that further increase transport costs need to be avoided.



**Michael Bradley**  
Managing Director  
Australian Automobile Association

\*COVID and impact on mobility Sept. 2021, Australian Automobile Association

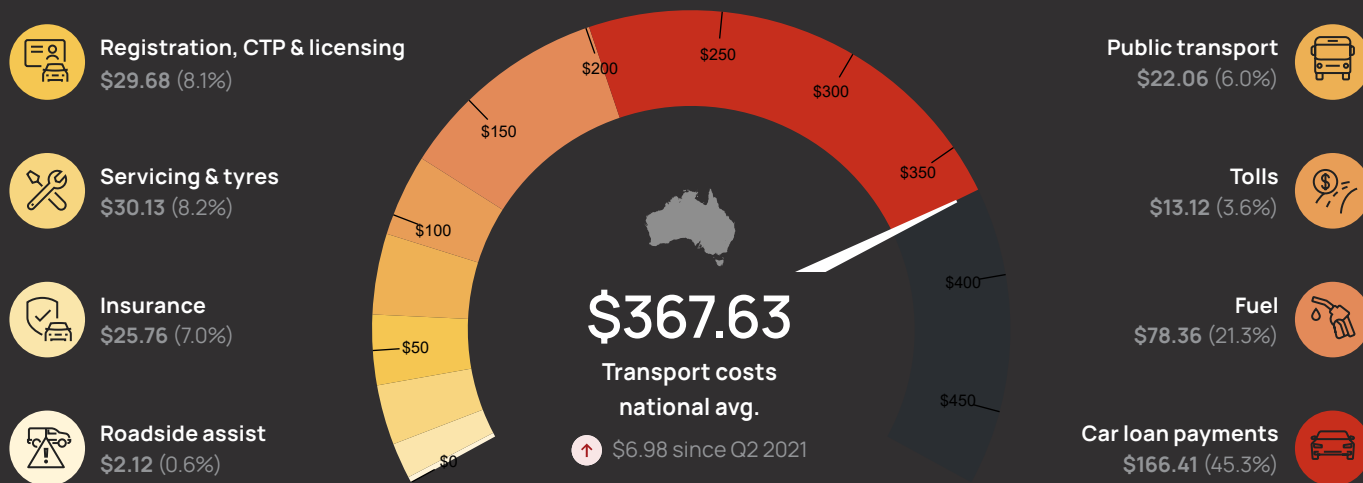
## KEY FIGURES

# Quarter 3 2021

## Total transport costs

Per week




Per household






### Capital cities

### Regional




#### Total costs

AVERAGE	HIGHEST	LOWEST
 <b>\$401.86</b> ↑ \$7.24 Since Q2 2021	 <b>Sydney</b> ↑ \$7.82	 <b>Hobart</b> ↑ \$5.75




#### Total costs

AVERAGE	HIGHEST	LOWEST
 <b>\$328.51</b> ↑ \$6.69 Since Q2 2021	 <b>Bunbury</b> ↑ \$9.10	 <b>Wagga Wagga</b> ↑ \$5.64

#### Affordability (% of income)

 <b>15.5%</b> ↓ 0.1% Since Q2 2021	 <b>Hobart</b> ↓ 0.6%	 <b>Canberra</b> ↑ 0.3%
--	--	--

#### Affordability (% of income)

 <b>14.0%</b> ↓ 0.1% Since Q2 2021	 <b>Launceston</b> ↓ 0.4%	 <b>Wagga Wagga</b> ↓ 0.1%
--	--	---

# Total transport costs

Per year

Per household

VIEW COSTS PER WEEK (PAGE 6) →



## Capital cities

### Capital average



**\$20,897**

↑ \$376 since Q2 2021

In the September quarter, the typical Australian city household's average annualised cost of transport increased by \$376 to \$20,897. Transport taxes – in the form of fuel excise, registration, compulsory third party (CTP) insurance and licensing – cost the typical two-car family \$2,717.

The greatest increase in transport costs was recorded in Brisbane – equivalent to \$465 per year. This was mainly due to higher fuel prices.

1	2	3	4
<b>Sydney</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>Brisbane</b>	<b>Perth</b>
<b>\$24,833</b>	<b>\$23,242</b>	<b>\$23,090</b>	<b>\$20,304</b>
↑ \$407 since Q2 2021	↑ \$366 since Q2 2021	↑ \$465 since Q2 2021	↑ \$424 since Q2 2021
5	6	7	8
<b>Canberra</b>	<b>Adelaide</b>	<b>Darwin</b>	<b>Hobart</b>
<b>\$20,092</b>	<b>\$18,843</b>	<b>\$18,562</b>	<b>\$18,207</b>
↑ \$382 since Q2 2021	↑ \$338 since Q2 2021	↑ \$331 since Q2 2021	↑ \$299 since Q2 2021

## Average taxes



### Fuel excise

**\$1,139**

↑ \$16

Since Q2 2021

+



### Registration, CTP and licensing

**\$1,578**

↑ \$21

Since Q2 2021

=

### Household total

**\$2,717**

↑ \$37

Since Q2 2021

# Total transport costs

Per year

Per household

VIEW COSTS PER WEEK (PAGE 6) →



## Regional

### Regional average



**\$17,083**

↑ \$348 since Q2 2021

The average annual cost of transport for the typical regional household increased by \$348 to \$17,083. Of this, transport taxes cost regional families \$2,697.

The greatest increase was recorded in Bunbury, where annual transport costs rose by \$473 when compared to the previous quarter, mainly due to higher fuel prices.

1



**Bunbury**  
**\$18,109**

↑ \$473 since Q2 2021

2



**Geelong**  
**\$17,842**

↑ 392 since Q2 2021

3



**Alice Springs**  
**\$17,777**

↑ \$267 since Q2 2021

4



**Mount Gambier**  
**\$16,925**

↑ \$350 since Q2 2021

5



**Launceston**  
**\$16,725**

↑ \$390 since Q2 2021

6



**Townsville**  
**\$16,112**

↑ \$270 since Q2 2021

7



**Wagga Wagga**  
**\$16,089**

↑ \$293 since Q2 2021



Explore the  
interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU

## Average taxes



### Fuel Excise

**\$1,194**

↑ \$17 Since Q2 2021

+



### Registration, CTP and Licensing

**\$1,503**

↑ \$20.00 since Q2 2021

=

### Household total

**\$2,697**

↑ \$36.00 since Q2 2021

# Total transport costs

Per week

Per household



## Capital cities









### Capital average



**\$401.86**

↑ \$7.24 since Q2 2021

The September quarter of 2021 saw no change in rankings, with Sydney remaining the most expensive capital city for transport while Hobart remained the cheapest.

1	2	3	4
 <b>Sydney</b> <b>\$477.56</b> ↑ \$7.82 since Q2 2021	 <b>Melbourne</b> <b>\$446.97</b> ↑ \$7.03 since Q2 2021	 <b>Brisbane</b> <b>\$444.05</b> ↑ \$8.94 since Q2 2021	 <b>Perth</b> <b>\$390.45</b> ↑ \$8.15 since Q2 2021
5	6	7	8
 <b>Canberra</b> <b>\$386.38</b> ↑ \$7.34 Q2 2021	 <b>Adelaide</b> <b>\$362.36</b> ↑ \$6.50 since Q2 2021	 <b>Darwin</b> <b>\$356.96</b> ↑ \$6.36 since Q2 2021	 <b>Hobart</b> <b>\$350.14</b> ↑ \$5.75 since Q2 2021



# Total transport costs

Per week

Per household



## Regional

### Regional average



**\$328.51**

↑ \$6.69 since Q2 2021

Transport in the regional centres was, on average, \$73 a week cheaper than in the capitals. Geelong replaced Alice Springs as the regional centre with the second-highest total weekly transport costs (previously third-highest), while all other rankings remained unchanged.

1



**Bunbury**  
**\$348.25**

↑ \$9.10 since Q2 2021

2



**Geelong**  
**\$343.12**

↑ \$7.54 since Q2 2021

3



**Alice Springs**  
**\$341.87**

↑ \$5.14 since Q2 2021

4



**Mount Gambier**  
**\$325.48**

↑ \$6.73 since Q2 2021

5



**Launceston**  
**\$321.63**

↑ \$7.50 since Q2 2021

6



**Townsville**  
**\$309.84**

↑ \$5.20 since Q2 2021

7



**Wagga Wagga**  
**\$309.41**

↑ \$5.64 since Q2 2021



Explore the  
interactive data

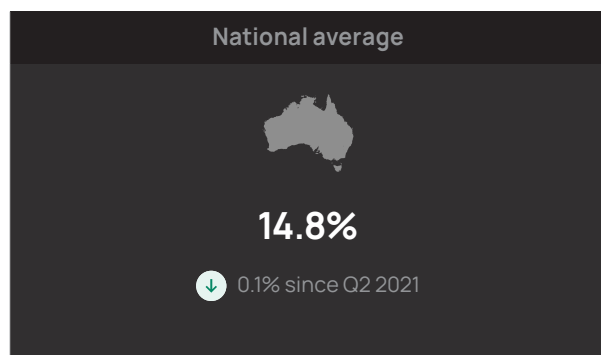
DATA.AAA.ASN.AU

# Transport affordability

## Costs as a percentage of income

Per week

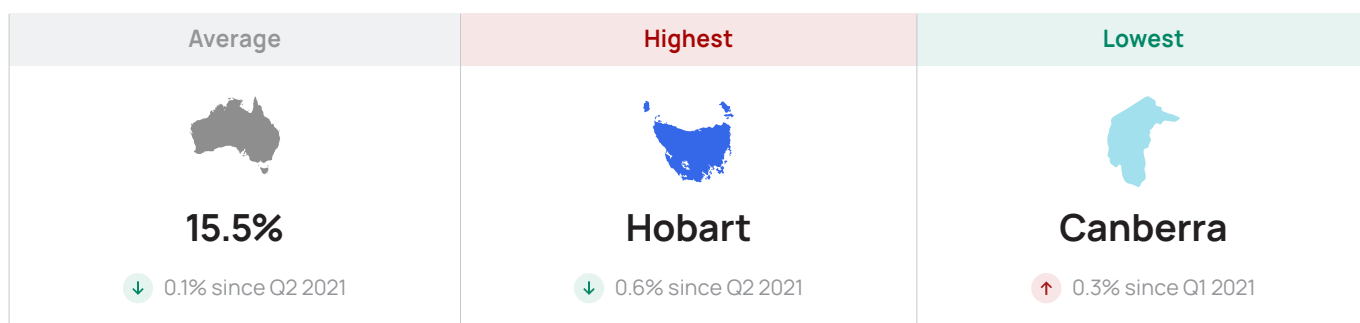
Per household












The relationship between a region's income and costs determines local purchasing power – or affordability. For example, in dollar terms Hobart had the lowest total transport costs, while Sydney had the highest. But when this cost is measured as a percentage of typical household income, Hobart – not Sydney – ranked as the Australian city with the least affordable transport costs.



### Capital cities



### Rank

		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1	 Hobart	15.5%	17.6%	18.1%	17.5%
2	 Brisbane	15.3%	17.2%	17.4%	17.3%
3	 Melbourne	14.0%	15.6%	15.8%	16.4%
4	 Sydney	13.4%	15.4%	15.6%	15.5%
5	 Darwin	12.3%	14.6%	15.0%	15.2%
6	 Perth	12.5%	14.7%	14.9%	14.4%
7	 Adelaide	12.7%	14.7%	14.7%	14.3%
8	 Canberra	11.1%	13.1%	13.5%	13.7%
	 Capital avg.	13.3%	15.3%	15.5%	15.5%

# Transport affordability

## Costs as a percentage of income

Per week




Per household

Across Australia, regional households earned \$212 per week less than their city counterparts (based on ABS data). But the difference was more pronounced in New South Wales and South Australia. Households in Wagga Wagga and Mount Gambier earned considerably less per week than their city counterparts: \$270 and \$268 per week less on average, respectively.







Nationally, the average cost of transport cost took up 14.8 per cent of the typical household's income – 15.5 per cent in the capital cities and 14.0 per cent in regional centres.



### Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 <b>14.0%</b> ↓ 0.1% since Q2 2021	 <b>Launceston</b> ↓ 0.4% since Q1 2021	 <b>Wagga Wagga</b> ↓ 0.1% since Q2 2021

### Rank

		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1	 <b>Launceston</b>	15.4%	17.8%	18.2%	17.8%
2	 <b>Alice Springs</b>	12.5%	14.9%	15.3%	15.5%
3	 <b>Mount Gambier</b>	12.5%	14.5%	14.7%	14.4%
4	 <b>Bunbury</b>	11.6%	14.0%	14.3%	13.9%
5	↑  <b>Geelong</b>	10.5%	12.3%	12.5%	13.0%
6	↓  <b>Townsville</b>	10.6%	12.5%	12.7%	12.6%
7	 <b>Wagga Wagga</b>	8.8%	10.8%	11.1%	11.0%
8	 <b>Regional avg.</b>	11.7%	13.8%	14.1%	14.0%



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →

# Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household









↑ Overall, there was an increase in household average weekly transport expenses.

The increase in transport costs over the quarter was driven by changes in these cost categories:

- **Car loan payments** – the average upfront cost for purchasing new cars increased in all jurisdictions.
- **Registration, CTP and licensing** – costs increased all jurisdictions except South Australia.
- **Comprehensive insurance** – premiums increased in most locations.
- **Car maintenance** – costs increased in all locations except Canberra.
- **Fuel** – prices increased considerably in all locations.
- **Toll roads** – toll road costs increased for Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane due to scheduled indexation from 1 July 2021.
- **Public Transport** – fares increased in Adelaide.



## Capital cities

1	2	3	4
 <p><b>Car loan payments</b> <b>\$166.40</b></p> <p>↑ \$0.46 since Q2 2021</p>	 <p><b>Fuel</b> <b>\$77.57</b></p> <p>↑ \$5.38 since Q2 2021</p>	 <p><b>Tolls</b> <b>\$65.58</b></p> <p>↑ \$0.70 since Q2 2021</p>	 <p><b>Public transport</b> <b>\$41.36</b></p> <p>↑ \$0.14 since Q1 2021</p>
5	6	7	8
 <p><b>Servicing &amp; tyres</b> <b>\$30.91</b></p> <p>↑ \$0.23 since Q2 2021</p>	 <p><b>Registration, CTP &amp; licensing</b> <b>\$30.35</b></p> <p>↑ \$0.41 since Q1 2021</p>	 <p><b>Insurance</b> <b>\$28.54</b></p> <p>↑ \$0.34 since Q1 2021</p>	 <p><b>Roadside assist</b> <b>\$2.12</b></p> <p>↑ \$0.03 since Q1 2021</p>

# Transport costs by category

Per week







Per household

The ranking of average expenses for the typical city and regional families remained the same over the quarter. Car loan payments and fuel expenditure remained the largest expense in the representative families' transport budgets, while roadside assistance and insurance were the smallest.

The Index assumes that city and regional households have the same costs for purchasing and financing a new car and for roadside assistance. Because city and regional households drive similar cars, the same assumptions about fuel efficiency and fuel mix are applied.



## Regional

1	2	3
 <b>Car loan payments</b> <b>\$166.42</b> ↑ \$0.46 since Q2 2021	 <b>Fuel</b> <b>\$79.26</b> ↑ \$5.16 since Q2 2021	 <b>Servicing &amp; Tyres</b> <b>\$29.23</b> ↑ \$0.26 since Q2 2021
4	5	6
 <b>Registration, CTP &amp; licensing</b> <b>\$28.90</b> ↑ \$0.38 since Q2 2021	 <b>Insurance</b> <b>\$22.59</b> ↑ \$0.39 since Q2 2021	 <b>Roadside assist</b> <b>\$2.12</b> ↑ \$0.04 since Q2 2021

# Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



## Car loan payments

The upfront costs of purchasing a new car increased in all jurisdictions – on average by \$106 – in the September quarter, resulting in the cost of weekly car loan payments increasing in all locations by 46 cents per week, or \$24 a year on average.

All rankings remained the same in the quarter.




Regional households incurred the same costs in this category as their capital city counterparts because it is assumed that interest rates and new car purchase costs are the same in regional and capital city locations.






### Capital cities



### Regional







Average	Highest	Lowest
 <b>\$166.40</b> ↑ \$0.46 Since Q2 2021	 <b>Perth</b> ↑ \$0.53	 <b>Darwin</b> ↑ \$0.53

Average	Highest	Lowest
 <b>\$166.42</b> ↑ \$0.46 Since Q2 2021	 <b>Bunbury</b> ↑ \$0.53	 <b>Alice Springs</b> ↑ \$0.53

#### Rank

1		<b>Perth</b>	\$167.71	<b>+ \$0.53</b>
2		<b>Sydney</b>	\$167.27	<b>+ \$0.43</b>
3		<b>Melbourne</b>	\$166.48	<b>+ \$0.45</b>
4		<b>Canberra</b>	\$166.29	<b>+ \$0.39</b>
5		<b>Adelaide</b>	\$166.24	<b>+ \$0.48</b>
6		<b>Hobart</b>	\$166.14	<b>+ \$0.39</b>
7		<b>Brisbane</b>	\$165.66	<b>+ \$0.44</b>
8		<b>Darwin</b>	\$165.45	<b>+ \$0.53</b>
		<b>Capital avg.</b>	\$166.40	<b>+ \$0.46</b>

#### Rank

1		<b>Bunbury</b>	\$167.71	<b>+ \$0.53</b>
2		<b>Wagga Wagga</b>	\$167.27	<b>+ \$0.43</b>
3		<b>Geelong</b>	\$166.48	<b>+ \$0.45</b>
4		<b>Mount Gambier</b>	\$166.24	<b>+ \$0.48</b>
5		<b>Launceston</b>	\$166.14	<b>+ \$0.39</b>
6		<b>Townsville</b>	\$165.66	<b>+ \$0.44</b>
7		<b>Alice Springs</b>	\$165.45	<b>+ \$0.53</b>
		<b>Regional avg.</b>	\$166.42	<b>+ \$0.46</b>

# Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



## Vehicle registration, CTP and driver's licence




Weekly registration, CTP and licensing costs increased in all jurisdictions except South Australia.










Canberra remained the most expensive capital city for registration, CTP and licensing, while Hobart remained the least expensive, with the typical Canberra household spending \$900 more per year than Hobart.

Bunbury remained the most expensive regional centre in this cost category. Mount Gambier replaced Launceston as the regional centre with the lowest registration, CTP and licensing costs (previously second-lowest). The annualised difference between Bunbury and Mount Gambier was \$619.






### Capital cities









Average	Highest	Lowest
		
<b>\$30.35</b>	<b>Canberra</b>	<b>Hobart</b>
↑ \$0.41 since Q2 2021	↑ \$0.54	↑ \$0.36

Rank				
1		Canberra	\$39.94	+ \$0.54
2	↑ 	Perth	\$34.04	+ \$1.06
3	↓ 	Melbourne	\$33.61	+ \$0.44
4		Darwin	\$30.74	+ \$0.60
5		Brisbane	\$30.34	+ \$0.29
6		Adelaide	\$26.82	- \$0.07
7		Sydney	\$24.73	+ \$0.07
8		Hobart	\$22.62	+ \$0.36
		Capital avg.	\$30.35	+ \$0.41



### Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
		
<b>\$28.90</b>	<b>Bunbury</b>	<b>Mount Gambier</b>
↑ \$0.38 since Q2 2021	↑ \$1.06	↓ \$0.14

Rank				
1		Bunbury	\$34.04	+ \$1.06
2		Geelong	\$31.50	+ \$0.44
3		Wagga Wagga	\$30.94	+ \$0.05
4		Alice Springs	\$30.74	+ \$0.60
5		Townsville	\$30.34	+ \$0.29
6	↑ 	Launceston	\$22.62	+ \$0.36
7	↓ 	Mount Gambier	\$22.14	- \$0.14
		Regional avg.	\$28.90	+ \$0.38



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →

# Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



## Comprehensive car insurance

In the September quarter, the weekly cost of comprehensive insurance for both the benchmark new and used vehicles increased slightly for the typical Australian city household. Melbourne remained the most expensive city while Perth remained the cheapest, with a typical Melbourne household spending \$933 per year more than Perth.

Brisbane recorded the largest increase in insurance premiums among the city households, rising by \$94 per year.




The largest difference between a capital city and its regional counterpart was in Victoria, where a typical Geelong household spends \$667 a year less on comprehensive insurance than Melbourne.






### Capital cities










### Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 <b>\$28.54</b> ↑ \$0.34 Since Q2 2021	 <b>Melbourne</b> ↓ \$0.38	 <b>Perth</b> ↑ \$1.30

Average	Highest	Lowest
 <b>\$22.59</b> ↑ \$0.39 Since Q2 2021	 <b>Mount Gambier</b> — Steady	 <b>Bunbury</b> ↑ \$1.22

#### Rank

1		Melbourne	\$34.62	- \$0.38
2	↑ 	Sydney	\$31.63	+ \$0.27
3	↑ 	Brisbane	\$31.44	+ \$1.80
4	↓ 	Darwin	\$31.32	- \$0.69
5	↓ 	Canberra	\$30.84	+ \$0.40
6		Adelaide	\$29.13	-
7		Hobart	\$22.69	-
8		Perth	\$16.68	+ \$1.30
		Capital avg.	\$28.54	+ \$0.34

#### Rank

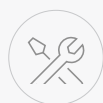
1		Mount Gambier	\$27.37	-
2		Alice Springs	\$25.87	- \$0.39
3	↑ 	Townsville	\$25.69	+ \$1.49
4	↓ 	Wagga Wagga	\$25.28	+ \$0.69
5		Geelong	\$21.79	- \$0.25
6		Launceston	\$18.09	-
7		Bunbury	\$14.03	+ \$1.22
		Regional avg.	\$22.59	+ \$0.39



# Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



## Servicing and tyres




The cost of servicing and tyres increased slightly over the September quarter for both the typical capital city and regional households.

Overall, the cost of maintaining a representative new and used car remained highest in Canberra and lowest in Adelaide, with a typical Canberra household paying \$784 more per year than Adelaide.










Among the regional locations, the cost of maintaining a car remained most expensive in Alice Springs and cheapest in Launceston, with families in Alice Springs paying \$562 more on an annual basis.



### Capital cities




Average	Highest	Lowest
		
<b>\$30.91</b>	<b>Canberra</b>	<b>Adelaide</b>
↑ \$0.23 Since Q2 2021	↓ \$0.05	↑ \$0.10

#### Rank

1		<b>Canberra</b>	\$40.06	- \$0.05
2	↑ 	<b>Melbourne</b>	\$32.14	+ \$0.42
3	↓ 	<b>Perth</b>	\$32.12	+ \$0.27
4		<b>Sydney</b>	\$31.85	+ \$0.39
5		<b>Darwin</b>	\$31.40	+ \$0.24
6		<b>Hobart</b>	\$29.56	+ \$0.25
7		<b>Brisbane</b>	\$25.18	+ \$0.18
8		<b>Adelaide</b>	\$24.98	+ \$0.10
		<b>Capital avg.</b>	\$30.91	+ \$0.23



### Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
		
<b>\$29.23</b>	<b>Alice Springs</b>	<b>Launceston</b>
↑ \$0.26 Since Q2 2021	↑ \$0.27	↑ \$0.21

#### Rank

1		<b>Alice Springs</b>	\$34.68	+ \$0.27
2		<b>Bunbury</b>	\$34.68	+ \$0.29
3		<b>Geelong</b>	\$30.77	+ \$0.40
4		<b>Wagga Wagga</b>	\$29.86	+ \$0.37
5		<b>Townsville</b>	\$25.66	+ \$0.18
6		<b>Mount Gambier</b>	\$25.08	+ \$0.10
7		<b>Launceston</b>	\$23.86	+ \$0.21
		<b>Regional avg.</b>	\$29.23	+ \$0.26



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →

# Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household






## Fuel

The average Australian capital city retail price of regular unleaded petrol rose by 10.7 cents to 154.1 cents per litre, costing the typical city household \$280 more per year. Sydney remained the capital city with the highest fuel expenditure; its average petrol price was up 11.9 cents to 163.0 cents per litre in the September quarter. Adelaide remained the city with the lowest fuel prices and expenditure, paying 145.7 cents per litre, up 9.9 cents from the June quarter.










Averaged across the regions, the cost of petrol increased by 9.7 cents to 150.0 cents per litre. Alice Springs remained the centre with the highest prices at 158.5 cents per litre while Geelong became the cheapest at 141.8 cents per litre. The typical household in Bunbury continued to have the highest fuel expenditure among the regional centres, at \$4,975 per year, because research shows that Bunbury residents tend to drive longer distances than people in the other centres. Wagga Wagga continued to have the lowest expenditure at \$2,802 per year because its residents typically drive less.



## Capital cities




Average	Highest	Lowest
 <b>\$77.57</b> <div>↑ \$5.38 Since Q2 2021</div>	 <b>Sydney</b> <div>↑ \$6.06</div>	 <b>Adelaide</b> <div>↑ \$4.86</div>

### Rank

1		<b>Sydney</b>	\$81.67	<b>+ \$6.06</b>
2	↑ 	<b>Brisbane</b>	\$79.27	<b>+ \$5.29</b>
3	↓ 	<b>Hobart</b>	\$78.80	<b>+ \$4.70</b>
4		<b>Melbourne</b>	\$78.04	<b>+ \$5.43</b>
5		<b>Canberra</b>	\$77.36	<b>+ \$6.06</b>
6	↑ 	<b>Darwin</b>	\$76.15	<b>+ \$5.68</b>
7	↓ 	<b>Perth</b>	\$75.67	<b>+ \$4.95</b>
8		<b>Adelaide</b>	\$73.63	<b>+ \$4.86</b>
		<b>Capital avg.</b>	\$77.57	<b>+ \$5.38</b>



## Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 <b>\$79.26</b> <div>↑ \$5.16 Since Q2 2021</div>	 <b>Bunbury</b> <div>↑ \$5.96</div>	 <b>Wagga Wagga</b> <div>↑ \$4.10</div>

### Rank

1		<b>Bunbury</b>	\$95.66	<b>+ \$5.96</b>
2		<b>Geelong</b>	\$90.31	<b>+ \$6.43</b>
3		<b>Launceston</b>	\$88.58	<b>+ \$6.49</b>
4		<b>Alice Springs</b>	\$83.23	<b>+ \$4.13</b>
5		<b>Mount Gambier</b>	\$82.60	<b>+ \$6.26</b>
6		<b>Townsville</b>	\$60.56	<b>+ \$2.76</b>
7		<b>Wagga Wagga</b>	\$53.89	<b>+ \$4.10</b>
		<b>Regional avg.</b>	\$79.26	<b>+ \$5.16</b>

# Transport costs by category

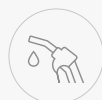
Per week

Per household



## Public transport

The cost of public transport remained unchanged across all cities in the September quarter except for Adelaide, where public transport costs increased by \$1.10 per week. With the lowest expenditure, the typical Darwin household spends \$42.10 per week (\$2,189 per year) less on public transport costs than its equivalent household in Perth, which has the highest cost.






## Toll roads

Only three Australian cities – Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane – use toll roads. Costs increased by \$31 per year in Sydney and Melbourne and increased by \$47 per annum in Brisbane due to a scheduled price adjustment.

The typical Sydney household continues to incur the greatest costs for toll roads, while Brisbane remained the one with the lowest toll costs. The typical Brisbane household spends \$34.54 per week (or \$1,796 per year) less on tolls than the one in Sydney.






## Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
		
<b>\$41.36</b>	<b>Perth</b>	<b>Darwin</b>
↑ \$0.14 Since Q2 2021	– Steady	– Steady







## Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
		
<b>\$65.58</b>	<b>Sydney</b>	<b>Brisbane</b>
↑ \$0.70 Since Q2 2021	↑ \$0.60	↑ \$0.90

### Rank

1		<b>Perth</b>	\$62.10	-
2		<b>Brisbane</b>	\$56.52	-
3		<b>Sydney</b>	\$50.00	-
4		<b>Melbourne</b>	\$45.00	-
5		<b>Adelaide</b>	\$39.50	<b>+\$1.10</b>
6		<b>Canberra</b>	\$29.72	-
7		<b>Hobart</b>	\$28.00	-
8		<b>Darwin</b>	\$20.00	-
		<b>Capital avg.</b>	\$41.36	<b>+\$0.14</b>

### Rank

1		<b>Sydney</b>	\$88.24	<b>+ \$0.60</b>
2		<b>Melbourne</b>	\$54.80	<b>+ \$0.60</b>
3		<b>Brisbane</b>	\$53.70	<b>+ \$0.90</b>
		<b>Avg.</b>	\$65.58	<b>+ \$0.70</b>



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →

# Transport costs by category




Per week

Per household












## Roadside assistance

The differences between states for roadside assistance costs are not large. Tasmania had the highest ongoing roadside assistance costs at \$121 per year, while the Northern Territory had the lowest at \$99 per year. Roadside assistance costs are based on state and Northern Territory motoring clubs' basic or standard packages, but services included in these packages vary from club to club. The Index assumes that the regional households face the same costs as their capital city counterparts because roadside assistance providers offer standard state-wide pricing.

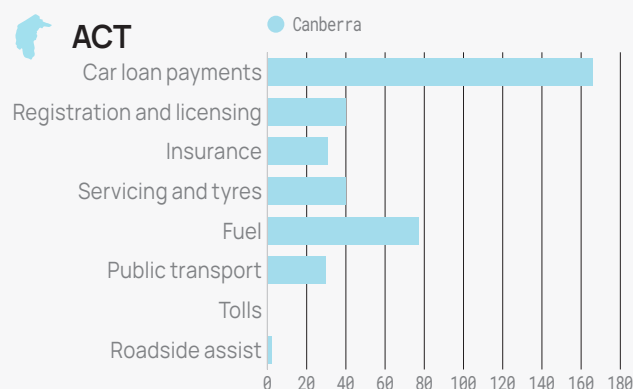
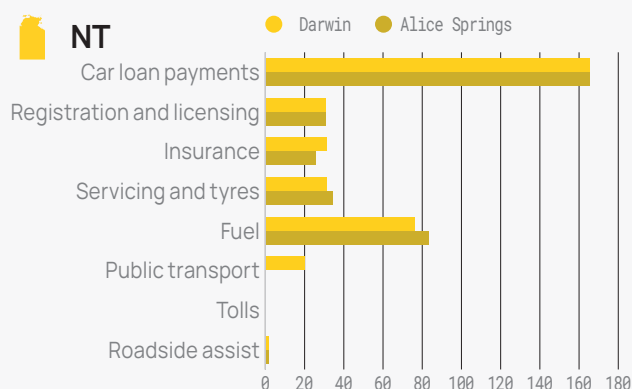
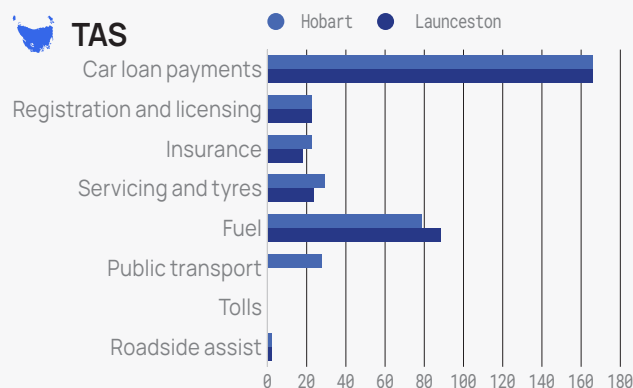
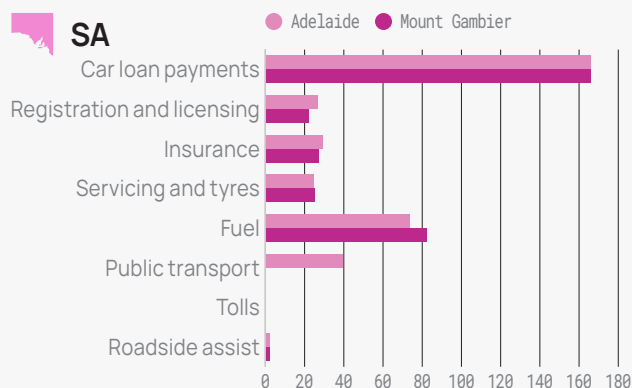
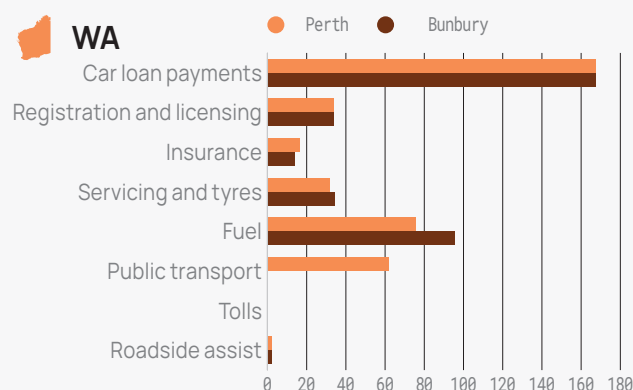
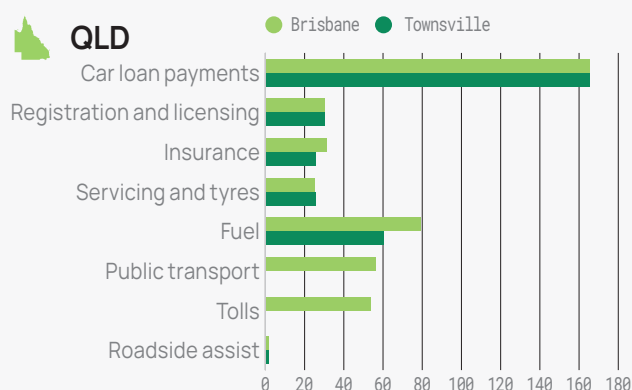
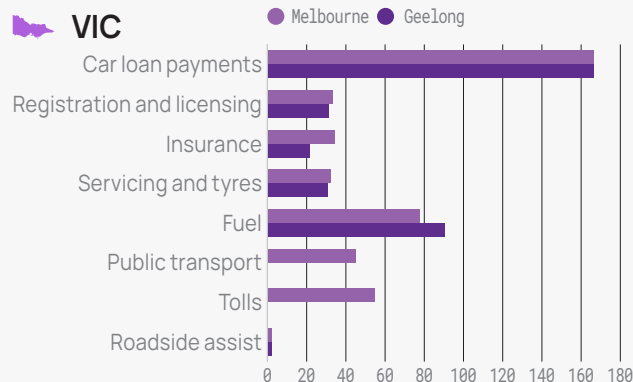
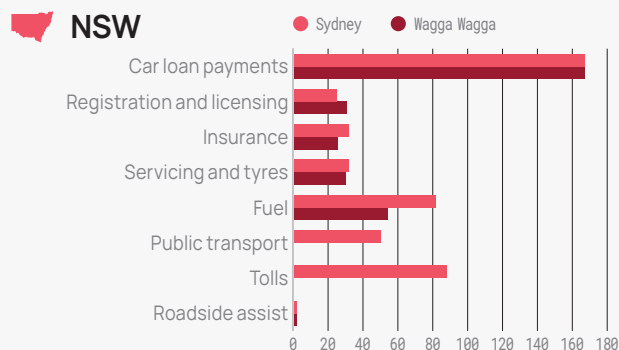
Average	Highest	Lowest
		
\$2.12	TAS	NT
↑ \$0.03 since Q2 2021	↑ \$0.06	– Steady

### Rank

1		TAS	\$2.33	+ \$0.06
2		VIC	\$2.27	+ \$0.08
3		ACT	\$2.17	-
3		NSW	\$2.17	-
5		WA	\$2.13	+ \$0.04
6		SA	\$2.06	+ \$0.04
7	↑ 	QLD	\$1.94	+ \$0.04
8	↓ 	NT	\$1.90	-
		Avg.	\$2.12	+ \$0.03

# State by state overview

## Capital city vs regional centre comparison





# NSW weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Sydney

In the September quarter, Sydney transport costs increased by \$407 per year and it remained Australia's most expensive city for transport. This was mainly due to higher fuel expenditure which rose by \$315 per year assuming costs remained constant.

## Wagga Wagga

Wagga Wagga remained the benchmark regional centre with the lowest transport costs – both in total cost (at \$16,089a year) and in terms of the local income-to-cost ratio. Its costs increased by \$293 per annum, driven largely by higher fuel expenditure which rose by \$213 per year.

cost rank 1 / 8	affordability rank 4 / 8
Total transport costs <b>\$477.56</b> ↑ \$7.82 since Q2 2021	% of income <b>15.5%</b> ↓ 0.2% since Q2 2021

cost rank 7 / 7	affordability rank 7 / 7
Total transport costs <b>\$309.41</b> ↑ \$5.64 since Q2 2021	% of income <b>11.0%</b> ↓ 0.1% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.43</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.07</li><li>Insurance = \$0.27</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.39</li><li>Fuel = \$6.06</li><li>Tolls = \$0.60</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public transport</li><li>Roadside assistance</li></ul>
↓ Decreased

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.43</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.05</li><li>Insurance = \$0.69</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.37</li><li>Fuel = \$4.10</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Roadside assistance</li></ul>
↓ Decreased



# VIC weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Melbourne

Melbourne remained Australia's second most expensive city for transport. The typical household spent the equivalent of \$23,242 a year – an increase of \$366 per annum from the previous quarter. This was mostly due to fuel expenditure which rose by \$282 per annum.

cost Rank 2 / 8	affordability rank 3 / 8
Total transport costs <b>\$446.97</b> ↑ \$7.03 since Q2 2021	% of income <b>16.4%</b> ↑ 0.5% since Q1 2021

## Geelong

Geelong had yearly transport costs of \$17,842 and became the regional centre with the second highest costs, becoming more expensive than Alice Springs. Geelong replaced Townsville as the third most affordable regional centre (previously second most affordable). Geelong's transport costs increased by \$392 a year, mostly because of higher fuel expenditure which rose by \$334 per annum.

cost rank 2 / 7	affordability rank 5 / 7
Total transport costs <b>\$343.12</b> ↑ \$7.54 since Q2 2021	% of income <b>13.0%</b> ↑ 0.5% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.45</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.44</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.42</li><li>Fuel = \$5.43</li><li>Tolls = \$0.60</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.08</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public transport</li></ul>
↓ Decreased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insurance = \$0.38</li></ul>

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.45</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.44</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.40</li><li>Fuel = \$6.43</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.08</li></ul>
– Unchanged
↓ Decreased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insurance = \$0.25</li></ul>



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →



# QLD weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Brisbane

Brisbane's typical household had transport costs of \$23,090 a year made it Australia's third highest city for transport costs and second-least affordable capital. Transport costs increased by \$465 a year, largely due to higher fuel expenditure, which was up \$275 a year.

cost rank	affordability rank
3 / 8	2 / 8
Total transport costs	% of income
<b>\$444.05</b>	<b>17.3%</b>
↑ \$8.94 since Q2 2021	↓ 0.1% since Q2 2021

## Townsville

The Townsville typical household's transports costs increased by \$270 to \$16,112 a year in the September quarter. This increase was largely due to higher fuel prices with net expenditure increasing by \$143 per year. Townsville remained the second least expensive and replaced Geelong as the second most affordable regional centre (previously third most affordable).

cost rank	affordability rank
6 / 7	6 / 7
Total transport costs	% of income
<b>\$309.84</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
↑ \$5.20 since Q2 2021	↓ 0.1% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
Car loan payments = \$0.44
Rego, CTP & licensing = \$0.29
Insurance = \$1.80
Servicing & tyres = \$0.18
Fuel = \$5.29
Tolls = \$0.90
Roadside assistance = \$0.04
– Unchanged
Public transport
↓ Decreased

↑ Increased
Car loan payments = \$0.44
Rego, CTP & licensing = \$0.29
Insurance = \$1.49
Servicing & tyres = \$0.18
Fuel = \$2.76
Roadside assistance = \$0.04
– Unchanged
↓ Decreased





# SA weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Adelaide

Adelaide's household transport costs rose by \$338 to \$18,843 per annum. This increase was mainly due to higher fuel expenditure (up by \$252 per year).

cost rank 6 / 8	affordability rank 7 / 8
<b>Total transport costs</b> <b>\$362.36</b> ↑ \$6.50 since Q2 2021	<b>% of income</b> <b>14.3%</b> ↓ 0.4% since Q2 2021

## Mount Gambier

Mount Gambier's typical household spent \$16,925 per year on transport – an increase of \$350 from the previous quarter. This increase was mainly due to higher fuel expenditure (up by \$326 per year). Mount Gambier became less affordable than Adelaide, making it one of three regional centres to be less affordable than its city counterpart.

cost rank 4 / 7	affordability rank 3 / 7
<b>Total transport costs</b> <b>\$325.48</b> ↑ \$6.73 since Q2 2021	<b>% of income</b> <b>14.4%</b> ↓ 0.3% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.48</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.10</li><li>Fuel = \$4.86</li><li>Public transport = \$1.10</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.04</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insurance</li></ul>
↓ Decreased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.07</li></ul>

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.48</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.10</li><li>Fuel = \$6.26</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.04</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insurance</li></ul>
↓ Decreased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.14</li></ul>



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →



# WA weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Perth

In the September quarter, Perth's typical household saw an increase in transport costs of \$424 to \$20,304 per annum. This increase was mainly due to fuel expenditure, which was up by \$257 per year.

## Bunbury

Bunbury's typical household transport costs rose by \$473 to \$18,109 per annum. The overall increase was driven by rises in fuel prices, where expenditure rose by \$310 per annum. Bunbury remained the regional centre with the highest transport costs.

cost rank 4 / 8	affordability rank 6 / 8
Total transport costs <b>\$390.45</b> ↑ \$8.15 since Q2 2021	% of income <b>14.4%</b> ↓ 0.5% since Q2 2021

cost rank 1 / 7	affordability rank 4 / 7
Total transport costs <b>\$348.25</b> ↑ \$9.10 since Q2 2021	% of income <b>13.9%</b> ↓ 0.4% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.53</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$1.06</li><li>Insurance = \$1.30</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.27</li><li>Fuel = \$4.95</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.04</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public transport</li></ul>
↓ Decreased

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.53</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$1.06</li><li>Insurance = \$1.22</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.29</li><li>Fuel = \$5.96</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.04</li></ul>
– Unchanged
↓ Decreased



# TAS weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Hobart

Hobart's typical household spent \$18,207 per year on transport – an increase of \$299 from the previous quarter. This was mainly due to higher fuel expenditure (up by \$245 per annum). Hobart remained Australia's capital city with the lowest transport costs, but was also the least affordable in terms of purchasing power.

cost rank	affordability rank
8 / 8	1 / 8
Total transport costs	% of income
<b>\$350.14</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
↑ \$5.75 since Q2 2021	↓ 0.6% since Q2 2021

## Launceston

Launceston's household transport costs were equivalent to \$16,725 a year – an increase of \$390 per annum. This was mainly due to higher fuel expenditure (up by \$337 per annum). Launceston had the lowest average earnings among all the cities and centres and remained the least affordable regional centre for transport. Launceston was one of only three regional centres where transport costs were less affordable than its city counterpart.

cost rank	affordability rank
5 / 7	1 / 7
Total transport costs	% of income
<b>\$321.63</b>	<b>17.8%</b>
↑ \$7.50 since Q2 2021	↓ 0.4% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.39</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.36</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.25</li><li>Fuel = \$4.70</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.06</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insurance</li><li>Public transport</li></ul>
↓ Decreased

↑ Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car loan payments = \$0.39</li><li>Rego, CTP &amp; licensing = \$0.36</li><li>Servicing &amp; tyres = \$0.21</li><li>Fuel = \$6.49</li><li>Roadside assistance = \$0.06</li></ul>
– Unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insurance</li></ul>



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →



# NT weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Darwin

Darwin's typical household spent \$18,562 a year on transport, an increase of \$331 from the previous quarter. This was due largely to higher fuel expenditure, which was up by \$295 per annum. Darwin remained the city with the second lowest transport costs.

cost rank	affordability rank
7 / 8	5 / 8
<b>Total transport costs</b> <b>\$356.96</b> ↑ \$6.36 since Q2 2021	<b>% of income</b> <b>15.2%</b> ↑ 0.2% since Q2 2021

## Alice Springs

Alice Springs replaced Geelong as the regional centre with the third highest transport costs (previously second highest) – which equated to \$17,777 a year, \$267 higher than the previous quarter – and one of only three regional centres where transport costs were less affordable than its city counterpart. This quarterly increase was largely due to higher fuel expenditure (up by \$215 per annum).

cost rank	affordability rank
3 / 7	2 / 7
<b>Total transport costs</b> <b>\$341.87</b> ↑ \$5.14 since Q2 2021	<b>% of income</b> <b>15.5%</b> ↑ 0.2% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
Car loan payments = \$0.53
Rego, CTP & licensing = \$0.60
Servicing & tyres = \$0.24
Fuel = \$5.68
– Unchanged
Public transport
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Insurance = \$0.69

↑ Increased
Car loan payments = \$0.53
Rego, CTP & licensing = \$0.60
Servicing & tyres = \$0.27
Fuel = \$4.13
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Insurance = \$0.39



# ACT weekly transport costs

Per week

Per household

## Canberra

Canberra's typical household spent \$20,092 per annum on transport, which was \$382 more than recorded in the previous quarter. This increase was largely driven by higher fuel expenditure which rose by \$315 per annum. Canberra's high median income made it the most affordable city in the September quarter.

cost rank	affordability rank
5 / 8	8 / 8
Total transport costs	% of income
\$386.38	13.7%
↑ \$7.34 since Q2 2021	↑ 0.3% since Q2 2021

## Changes in transport category costs

↑ Increased
Car loan payments = \$0.39
Rego, CTP & licensing = \$0.54
Insurance = \$0.40
Fuel = \$6.06
– Unchanged
Public transport
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Servicing & tyres = \$0.05



Explore the interactive data

DATA.AAA.ASN.AU →

# Background and methodology

## Overview

The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) commissioned SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) to design and develop the Transport Affordability Index. Initially the Index analysed only the capital cities across Australia, but since the June 2017 quarter the Index includes a regional household in every state and the Northern Territory.

The Index provides a snapshot of the costs of transport for typical households in Australia and is regularly updated to show how transport costs change relative to incomes. The baseline is the first quarter (January to March) of 2016 for the city households and the second quarter (April to June) of 2017 for the regional households.

The characteristics of the household reflect the most common or average characteristics of the population. In some cases, household characteristics have been chosen to ensure some typical transport costs are well illustrated, while still being representative. The hypothetical households in different regions are largely identical to allow for ready comparison.

The Index considers a full range of costs families face when they own a car, as well as public transport costs. These fall into two broad categories: upfront costs and ongoing costs. Upfront costs include purchase costs for a new vehicle such as interest payments, registration, stamp duty, compulsory third party (CTP) insurance, driver's licences, comprehensive car insurance and roadside assistance. Ongoing costs (fuel costs, tolls and car maintenance) increase the more the vehicle is driven. Public transport costs for a city household's typical commute to work are also measured, as these form a growing share of weekly expenses.

While the AAA recognises that vehicle depreciation represents a significant, often hidden cost to families, this cost has not been included in the Index. The Index seeks to account for the actual weekly transport cash outflow for an average Australian household, covering costs that must be factored into the weekly family budget; depreciation is not usually accounted for in this way. Similarly, parking costs have not been included in the Index because consistent data is not available.

The Index seeks to compare the affordability of household transport costs across Australia by comparing them with an estimate of the hypothetical household's median weekly income. Total household transport costs in each city are compared with the average income of a typical family in that city to illustrate the proportion of income spent on transport-related costs.

As the Index is updated over time, a clearer picture will emerge of which household transport costs are putting pressure on Australian household budgets, and whether this differs across the country's capital cities and regional centres. The Index allows the AAA to assess the impact of proposed government policies on the average weekly budget. Families will also be better informed about how their decisions about transport affect their overall household budgets.

## The hypothetical household

The hypothetical household is a couple with children, the most common type of household in Australia according to the 2016 census. The couple consists of a 38-year-old woman and a 36-year-old man, which are the average ages for men and women in Australia. They live in a detached house and have two cars. Both are employed.

### City household

In each city, the hypothetical household is assumed to live in middle to outer ring suburbs with relatively high population density, good access to public transport, and in the case of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, that the family uses toll roads to access the CBD. In Sydney, the Index assumes that one member of the family uses toll roads only two days per week to travel to the CBD because toll costs are high and alternate routes are available. It assumes one member of the benchmark household uses toll roads every weekday in Melbourne and Brisbane. (Sydney vehicle owners are also eligible for free vehicle registration costs under the state's Toll Relief Scheme, and this is factored into the calculations.)

A typical Australian passenger vehicle is driven 13,800 kilometres per year and is 9.8 years old. Correspondingly, for the city household, the model assumes that the household's two motor vehicles are driven 15,000 and 10,000 kilometres per year. The car that drives 10,000 kilometres per year is assumed to be 10 years old and owned outright. The car that drives 15,000 kilometres per year is assumed to be a near-new vehicle and financed with a car loan. In addition, one member of the household is assumed to travel by public transport into the CBD and home again, five days per week.

### Regional household

There are key differences between metropolitan and regional households transport costs. The Index assumes that the regional household:

- on average, travels further than the city household
- pays more for petrol than the city household in some locations because they usually drive more and generally face higher fuel prices than their city counterparts
- on average, earns less than their city counterparts
- pays less for insurance because most states offer lower comprehensive premiums on new and used cars in regional areas
- doesn't pay road tolls
- doesn't pay for public transport as there is little or no availability in regional areas.

Registration, CTP and licensing costs are cheaper for regional households in South Australia and Victoria because state government policies impose different regional and metropolitan pricing structures in relation to CTP premiums. At the time of publication, these costs were \$239 cheaper in regional South Australia and \$110 cheaper in Victoria due to lower CTP premiums.

The regional locations chosen for analyses were selected as they have populations of over 10,000 people, have relatively dense population (at the SA2 ABS level), have ages similar to the average ages in the hypothetical city household, have a reasonable proportion of detached housing and have a substantial proportion of couple family households with children.

The regional locations included for comparison are:

- Wagga Wagga
- Geelong
- Townsville
- Bunbury
- Mount Gambier
- Launceston
- Alice Springs

The underlying assumptions for the regional household are largely the same as for the city household, but vehicle use and household income have been adjusted. The Index also assumes that regional households do not use public transport because services are very limited in those areas. As there are no toll roads in any of the regional locations, this cost has also been excluded.

### Other considerations

The method of calculating the car usage for each regional location has been based on BITRE 2015 data that analysed the average commuting distance for each centre based on size and location.<sup>1</sup> These estimated commuting distances were divided by the average commuting distance of the capital city in that jurisdiction. This ratio was then multiplied by the car use distance of the master household to estimate the hypothetical household's car use in regional cities.

Using the BITRE assumptions, all regional households travelled further than their city counterparts, except in Townsville and Wagga Wagga. In these locations, the cities are smaller than the capital city and too far for people to commute to the capital for work or leisure. Households in

Townsville and Wagga Wagga may also drive less during the week to get to work, run errands and access social activities. By comparison, people in Geelong travel more because they are close enough to Melbourne to commute regularly for work or leisure, so total distances travelled are greater. The regional city is selected to be compared to its city counterpart rather than compared to other regional centres given that distances travelled vary.

The cost of servicing a new car is the same across both regional and city locations, as these costs are based on the manufacturers' servicing schedule. Costs associated with the older car, and tyres for both cars, are based on data from the ABS Household Expenditure Survey (HES)<sup>2</sup> and indexed in line with the CPI for maintenance and repair of motor vehicles.<sup>3</sup> The difference between regional and city households is attributable to differences in the cost of servicing the older car and the cost of tyres.

The incomes used for the regional locations have been calculated as a proportion of the average income for the figures used for the capital cities using data from the 2016 Census. For example, the household income of a couple family with children in Wagga Wagga was 91.25 per cent of that of the average Sydney income for a couple family with children. The Index has therefore calculated the income for Wagga Wagga as 91.25 per cent of the city household's income. Using this method, all regional households reported lower weekly earnings than their city counterparts.

For the purposes of this report, the term 'typical household' refers to a hypothetical household as defined above. Further information on the methodology and assumptions used to generate the AAA's Transport Affordability Index can be found in SGS Economics' final report on the AAA's website.



---

## End notes

1. Commonwealth of Australia, 2015. Information Sheet 73: Australia's commuting distance: cities and regions. Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics. Accessed 21 January 2019. [https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/is\\_073.pdf](https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/is_073.pdf)
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017. Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results, 2015-2016, cat. no. 6530.0. Accessed 7 February 2020. <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@nsf/Lookup/6530.0Main+Features12015-16?OpenDocument>
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019. Consumer Price Index, Australia, Sept 2020, cat. no. 6401.0. Accessed 28 October 2020. <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/mf/6401.0>
4. SGS Economics and Planning, 2016. Transport Affordability Index Final Report. August 2016. Accessed 1 February 2019. <https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/sgs-report-aaa-transport-affordability-index.pdf>

