

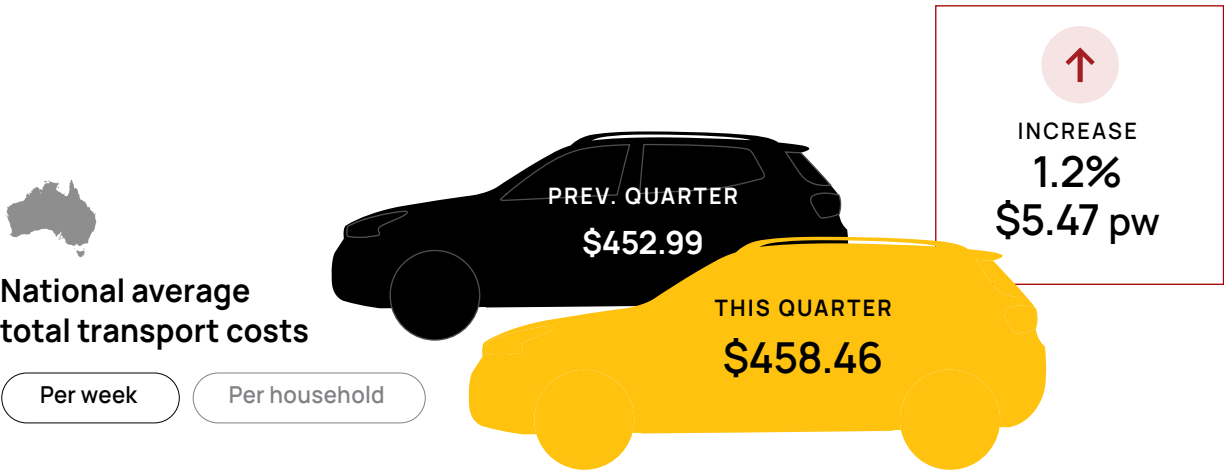
Transport Affordability Index

March Quarter 2026



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Transport costs rise in Q1



In the March quarter of 2026, typical household transport costs rose in 13 of the Transport Affordability Index's 15 benchmark locations, largely driven by higher fuel prices in March and higher insurance costs across Q1.

The two cities where typical household transport costs fell were Perth and Hobart following major reductions in public transport fares. That price relief was not available in Western Australia's and Tasmania's benchmark regional locations, so costs rose in Bunbury and Launceston.

Yet affordability improved in 5 of the 8 capitals and 3 of the 7 regional benchmark locations as the proportion of their typical household incomes spent on transport declined.

These improvements were largely driven by a combination of salary increases and a fall in typical car loan repayments after interest rates fell slightly and more buyers opted for slightly cheaper vehicles.

But the biggest improvements came in Perth and Hobart, where state governments slashed public transport fares, and in Canberra where the ACT's emissions-based registration system rewarded the shift towards more fuel-efficient vehicles with a \$130 fall in typical registration costs.

This year of transport affordability relief follows several years of rising costs and declining affordability.

In Q3 2022, the typical Australian household spent 14.9 per cent of its income on transport. This peaked at 17 per cent in the June quarter of 2024 and settled at 16.1 per cent in 2024's September and December quarters.

Transport affordability is now roughly back to where it was in the first quarter of 2023. (Transport costs' share of typical Australian household income was 15.8% in Q1 2023).

Throughout 2022 and 2023, typical regional transport costs were 1.2 to 1.3 percentage points lower than typical capital city transport costs. Today this gap has narrowed to 0.2 percentage points.

This is largely because of increased government subsidies for public transport. In the long term, this could add to inflation and require using a higher proportion of tax revenue to pay interest on public debt.

Transport costs remain significantly higher than they were before the pandemic. In Q4 2019, the typical Australian household spent 13.9 per cent of its income on transport.

Transport is a significant and unavoidable expense, and transport expenditure is also one of the key drivers of inflation. Governments at all levels must consider these cost pressures when formulating policy.

Transport costs as % of income	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q1 2024	Q1 2025	Q1 2026
Capital average	15.2%	16.4%	17.4%	15.9%	15.6%
Regional average	15.2%	15.2%	16.3%	15.6%	15.4%
National average	14.0%	15.8%	16.9%	15.6%	15.5%



Michael Bradley
Managing Director
Australian Automobile Association

March Quarter 2026

Total transport costs

Per week

Per household



Registration, CTP & licensing
\$33.95 (7.4%)



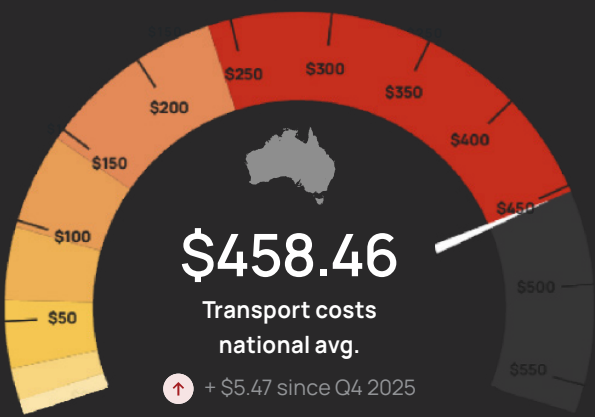
Servicing & tyres
\$34.70 (7.6%)



Insurance
\$51.61 (11.3%)



Roadside assist
\$2.50 (0.5%)



Public transport
\$14.87 (3.2%)



Tolls
\$7.49 (1.6%)



Fuel
\$99.66 (21.7%)



Car loan payments
\$213.67 (46.6%)



Capital cities



Regional

Total costs

AVERAGE	HIGHEST	LOWEST
 \$482.24 ↑ + \$4.32 since Q4 2025	 Sydney ↑ + \$6.20	 Hobart ↓ - \$6.68

Total costs

AVERAGE	HIGHEST	LOWEST
 \$431.29 ↑ + \$6.80 since Q4 2025	 Bunbury ↑ + \$3.83	 Townsville ↑ + \$8.35

Affordability (% of income)

 15.6% ↓ - 0.2% since Q4 2025	 Hobart ↓ - 0.6%	 Canberra ↓ - 0.6%
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Affordability (% of income)

 15.4% — Steady since Q4 2025	 Launceston ↓ - 0.1%	 Wagga Wagga ↓ - 0.1%
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Total transport costs

Per year

Per household

VIEW COSTS PER WEEK (PAGE 6) →

Capital cities

Capital average

\$25,076

↑ \$224 since Q4 2025

In Q1, total transport costs rose in six capitals – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Darwin and Canberra. The average typical capital city household's annualised cost of transport rose by \$224 to \$25,076, a 0.9% increase. Perth and Hobart public transport fare changes meant total transport costs fell in those two cities.

Costs rose in four of the index's eight categories. The largest national average capital city increases were for annualised fuel expenditure (up \$292) and insurance costs (up \$222). But a market shift towards cheaper cars and slightly cheaper interest rates meant annualised car loan repayments fell by \$40. Annualised typical capital city public transport costs also fell by \$169.

1	2	3	4
Sydney	Melbourne	Canberra	Perth
\$29,808	\$28,551	\$25,444	\$24,396
↑ + \$322 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$574 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$421 since Q4 2025	↓ - \$445 since Q4 2025
5	6	7	8
Adelaide	Brisbane	Darwin	Hobart
\$24,107	\$23,982	\$22,837	\$21,485
↑ + \$495 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$437 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$337 since Q4 2025	↓ - \$348 since Q4 2025

Average taxes

Fuel excise

\$1,383

↑ + \$26 since Q4 2025

+

Registration, CTP and licensing

\$1,828

↑ + \$1 since Q4 2025

=

Household total

\$3,211

↑ + \$27 since Q4 2025

Total transport costs

Per year

Per household

VIEW COSTS PER WEEK (PAGE 7) →

Regional

Regional average



\$22,427

↑ + \$353 since Q4 2025

The average benchmark regional household's annualised transport cost rose \$353 from the previous quarter – up 1.6% – to a total of \$22,427. Typical total costs rose in all seven regional benchmark locations, with Mount Gambier having the largest increase.

The Index tracks six categories for regional expenses (public transport and tolls only apply in the capital cities).

Costs rose in four of those six categories.

In Q1, annualised fuel prices rose by \$318 and insurance by \$143.

But servicing and tyres costs fell by \$85 annually and there were also small drops in car loan repayments and roadside assistance costs.

1	2	3	4
			
Bunbury	Geelong	Alice Springs	Mount Gambier
\$24,178	\$23,541	\$23,223	\$21,816
↑ + \$199 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$501 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$270 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$513 since Q4 2025

5	6	7
		
Launceston	Wagga Wagga	Townsville
\$21,787	\$21,462	\$20,980
↑ + \$263 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$293 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$434 since Q4 2025



Explore the interactive data

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Average taxes



Fuel Excise

\$1,451

↑ + \$28 since Q4 2025

since Q4 2025

+



Registration, CTP and licensing

\$1,694

↑ + \$13 since Q4 2025

=

Household total

\$3,145

↑ + \$41 since Q4 2025

Total transport costs

Per week

Per household

 Capital cities

Capital average



\$482.24

 + \$4.32 since Q4 2025

In the March quarter, Sydney and Hobart remained the capitals with the highest and lowest respective transport costs.

The typical Sydney household spent \$160.05 more on transport each week than its Hobart counterpart. Melbourne remained the second-most expensive capital.

1	2	3	4
			
Sydney	Melbourne	Canberra	Perth
\$573.23	\$549.06	\$489.31	\$469.15
 + \$6.20 since Q4 2025	 + \$11.05 since Q4 2025	 + \$8.10 since Q4 2025	 - \$8.57 since Q4 2025

5	6	7	8
			
Adelaide	Brisbane	Darwin	Hobart
\$463.60	\$461.19	\$439.17	\$413.18
 + \$9.52 since Q4 2025	 + \$8.40 since Q4 2025	 + \$6.48 since Q4 2025	 - \$6.68 since Q4 2025

Total transport costs

Per week

Per household

Regional

Regional average



\$431.29

+ \$6.80 since Q4 2025

Nationally averaged Q1 benchmark regional centre typical household costs were \$50.95 per week lower than nationally average typical capital city household costs.

Bunbury and Townsville remained the benchmark regional centres with the highest and lowest weekly transport costs, respectively.

In the March quarter, Bunbury's typical household spent \$61.50 a week more on transport than its Townsville counterpart.

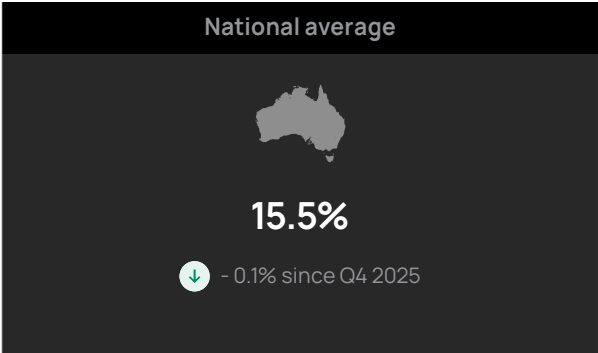
1	2	3	4
 Bunbury \$464.97 + \$3.83 since Q4 2025	 Geelong \$452.72 + \$9.64 since Q4 2025	 Alice Springs \$446.59 + \$5.19 since Q4 2025	 Mount Gambier \$419.54 + \$9.86 since Q4 2025
5	6	7	
 Launceston \$418.98 + \$5.06 since Q4 2025	 Wagga Wagga \$412.74 + \$5.64 since Q4 2025	 Townsville \$403.47 + \$8.35 since Q4 2025	 Explore the interactive data DATA.AAA.ASN.AU

Transport affordability

Costs as a percentage of income

Per week

Per household



A location's costs-to-income ratio determines its local purchasing power – or affordability.

Rising ACT incomes and falling registration costs saw Canberra displace Brisbane as the most affordable capital.

The typical Canberra household's transport costs are higher than its Hobart counterpart's. But income disparities meant that in the March quarter Canberra was the most affordable capital (14.5% of typical household income spent on transport) and Hobart the least affordable (17.4% of income spent on transport).

Capital cities

In Q1, nationally averaged transport expenditure as a percentage income decreased from 15.6% to 15.5%. There were significant regional variations – for example, the typical Perth household's transport expenditure fell from 15.8% to 14.9% of its income.

Average	Highest	Lowest
 15.6% ↓ - 0.2% since Q4 2025	 Hobart ↓ - 0.6% since Q4 2025	 Canberra ↓ - 0.6% since Q4 2025

Rank

		June Qtr 2025	Sept Qtr 2025	Dec Qtr 2025	March Qtr 2026
1	Hobart	18.0%	18.1%	18.0%	17.4%
2	Melbourne	16.6%	16.5%	16.6%	16.9%
3	↑ Darwin	16.0%	15.5%	15.6%	15.8%
4	↑ Sydney	15.7%	15.4%	15.5%	15.3%
5	↑ Adelaide	15.2%	15.2%	15.2%	15.1%
6	↑ Brisbane	14.4%	14.7%	14.7%	15.0%
7	↓ Perth	15.8%	15.9%	15.8%	14.9%
8	↓ Canberra	15.1%	15.1%	15.1%	14.5%
	Capital avg.	15.8%	15.8%	15.8%	15.6%

Transport affordability

Costs as a percentage of income

Per week

Per household

In the March quarter, transport costs consumed 15.5% of the typical Australian household's income, a slight decrease from 15.6% in Q4 2025. This follows five consecutive quarters in which national transport affordability improved.

Transport consumed 15.6% of nationally averaged capital city typical household incomes (down 0.2% from the December quarter).

This was driven largely by big Perth and Hobart public transport fare cuts and rises in typical Canberra incomes. Affordability actually declined in Brisbane, Melbourne and Darwin.

Transport accounted for 15.4% of the typical benchmark regional centres' household's income, equal to the December quarter.

Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 15.4% — Steady since Q4 2025	 Launceston ↓ - 0.1% since Q4 2025	 Wagga Wagga ↓ 0.1% since Q4 2025

Rank		June Qtr 2025	Sept Qtr 2025	Dec Qtr 2025	March Qtr 2026
1	 Launceston	19.7%	19.4%	19.5%	19.4%
2	 Alice Springs	17.5%	17.0%	16.9%	17.1%
3	 Bunbury	16.5%	16.5%	16.5%	15.9%
4	 Mount Gambier	15.3%	15.3%	15.3%	15.3%
5	 Geelong	14.3%	14.2%	14.2%	14.5%
6	 Townsville	13.2%	13.4%	13.3%	13.7%
7	 Wagga Wagga	12.0%	11.8%	12.2%	12.1%
	 Regional avg.	15.5%	15.4%	15.4%	15.4%

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household

In the March quarter, nationally averaged typical household transport costs rose across Australia.

- **Fuel expenditure:** Annualised national average household fuel expenditure increased by \$292.
- **Car loan payments:** Car loan payments fell in all benchmark locations. This was driven by a market shift towards cheaper vehicles as well as a slight fall in interest rates.
- **Public transport:** Perth's fare structure change and Hobart's temporary free public transport initiative significantly reduced the average capital city transport cost.
- **Comprehensive Insurance:** Nationally averaged comprehensive insurance costs rose significantly after all benchmark locations, except Bunbury, recorded increases.



Capital cities

1	2	3	4
 Car loan payments \$213.71 ↓ - \$0.76 since Q4 2025	 Fuel \$98.13 ↑ + \$5.62 since Q4 2025	 Insurance \$55.16 ↑ + \$4.27 since Q4 2025	 Tolls \$37.47 ↑ + \$0.08 since Q4 2025
5	6	7	8
 Servicing & Tyres \$35.65 ↓ - \$1.58 since Q4 2025	 Registration, CTP & licensing \$35.15 ↑ + \$0.02 since Q4 2025	 Public transport \$27.89 ↓ - \$3.25 since Q4 2025	 Roadside assist \$2.51 ↓ - \$0.03 since Q4 2025

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household

Ranking of typical city and regional households' expenses in the tracked categories remained unchanged from the December quarter. Car loan payments fell but remained the largest transport expense. Roadside assistance remained the least-expensive transport cost category.

The Index assumes a regional household does not rely on public transport for commuting. It also assumes that regional and metropolitan households drive similar cars, so it applies the same fuel efficiency and fuel mix calculations across all benchmark locations.

Regional

1	2	3
 Car loan payments \$213.63 ↓ - \$0.65 since Q4 2025	 Fuel \$101.42 ↑ + \$6.13 since Q4 2025	 Insurance \$47.56 ↑ + \$2.75 since Q4 2025
4	5	6
 Servicing & Tyres \$33.62 ↓ - \$1.63 since Q4 2025	 Registration, CTP & licensing \$32.58 ↑ + \$0.25 since Q4 2025	 Roadside assist \$2.49 ↓ - \$0.04 since Q4 2025

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



Car loan payments

Typical Australian car loan payments fell by \$0.76 a week (or \$40 a year, annualised) in the March quarter following a market shift towards slightly cheaper vehicles and a small drop in interest rates.

The Index tracks the drive-away costs for top-selling vehicles and assumes people in any state's capital and its regional centres face the same interest rates and new car purchase costs. But the capital city average was slightly higher than the national and regional averages because Canberra has no paired regional benchmark location.



Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$213.71 ↓ - \$0.76 since Q4 2025	 Perth ↓ - \$0.01	 Brisbane ↓ - \$0.77

Rank			
1		Perth	\$217.25 - \$0.01
2		Sydney	\$214.96 - \$0.33
3		Canberra	\$214.26 - \$1.51
4		Melbourne	\$213.73 - \$1.55
5		Hobart	\$212.90 - \$0.61
6		Adelaide	\$212.80 - \$0.64
7		Darwin	\$212.13 - \$0.68
8		Brisbane	\$211.61 - \$0.77
		Capital avg.	\$213.71 - \$0.76



Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$213.63 ↓ - \$0.65 since Q4 2025	 Bunbury ↓ - \$0.01	 Townsville ↓ - \$0.77

Rank			
1		Bunbury	\$217.25 - \$0.01
2		Wagga Wagga	\$214.96 - \$0.33
3		Geelong	\$213.73 - \$1.55
4		Launceston	\$212.90 - \$0.61
5		Mount Gambier	\$212.80 - \$0.64
6		Alice Springs	\$212.13 - \$0.68
7		Townsville	\$211.61 - \$0.77
		Regional avg.	\$213.63 - \$0.65

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



Vehicle registration, CTP and driver's licence

In the March quarter, registration, CTP and licence costs rose in NSW and Queensland and fell in WA and the Australian Capital Territory. Costs in the other states and territories remained stable.

Sydney's costs in this category rose \$139 annually – the largest increase in all benchmark locations.

Sydney displaced Canberra as the most expensive capital city for registration, CTP and licensing.

Canberra's costs in this category fell by an annualised \$130 because the ACT's emissions-based registration system rewarded a market shift towards more fuel-efficient vehicles.



Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$35.15 ↑ +\$0.02 since Q4 2025	 Sydney ↑ +\$2.69	 Hobart – Steady



Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$32.58 ↑ +\$0.25 since Q4 2025	 Wagga Wagga ↑ +\$1.83	 Mount Gambier – Steady

Rank

1	↑		Sydney	\$44.95	+ \$2.69
2	↓		Canberra	\$40.52	- \$2.50
3			Perth	\$38.40	- \$0.55
4			Melbourne	\$36.70	-
5			Brisbane	\$33.91	+ \$0.46
6			Darwin	\$33.14	-
7			Adelaide	\$28.15	-
8			Hobart	\$25.39	-
			Capital avg.	\$35.15	+ \$0.02

Rank

1	↑		Wagga Wagga	\$38.47	+ \$1.83
2	↓		Bunbury	\$38.40	- \$0.55
3			Geelong	\$34.42	-
4			Townsville	\$33.91	+ \$0.46
5			Alice Springs	\$33.14	-
6			Launceston	\$25.39	-
7			Mount Gambier	\$24.31	-
			Regional avg.	\$32.58	+ \$0.25



Explore the interactive data

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Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household

Comprehensive car insurance

Annualised comprehensive car insurance costs rose by \$222 for the average benchmark capital city household and by \$143 for the average benchmark regional centre household. Insurance costs rose in all benchmark locations except Bunbury, which had an annualised decrease of \$121.

The biggest annualised increases were in Adelaide and Mount Gambier (both up \$326), Canberra (up \$312) followed by Melbourne (up \$272).

Melbourne remained the capital with the most expensive insurance and Hobart the one with the cheapest. Hobart's typical household spent an annualised \$1,638 less on car insurance than its Melbourne counterpart.

Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$55.16 ↑ + \$4.27 since Q4 2025	 Melbourne ↑ + \$5.23	 Hobart ↑ + \$4.91

Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$47.56 ↑ + \$2.75 since Q4 2025	 Wagga Wagga ↑ + \$1.40	 Launceston ↑ + \$2.56

Rank			
1		Melbourne	\$75.18 + \$5.23
2		Sydney	\$65.77 + \$1.46
3		Darwin	\$56.24 + \$3.45
4	↑	Adelaide	\$51.73 + \$6.27
5	↓	Brisbane	\$51.28 + \$4.30
6		Canberra	\$51.07 + \$5.99
7		Perth	\$46.34 + \$2.57
8		Hobart	\$43.67 + \$4.91
		Capital avg.	\$55.16 + \$4.27

Rank			
1		Wagga Wagga	\$55.86 + \$1.40
2		Alice Springs	\$51.71 + \$3.19
3	↑	Townsville	\$47.64 + \$4.74
4		Geelong	\$47.59 + \$3.36
5	↑	Mount Gambier	\$45.27 + \$6.27
6	↓	Bunbury	\$45.08 - \$2.33
7		Launceston	\$39.74 + \$2.56
		Regional avg.	\$47.56 + \$2.75

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



Servicing and tyres

Servicing and tyre costs fell in all benchmark locations, with average falls of \$82 across the capitals and \$85 across the regional benchmark locations.

Canberra remains the capital with the highest servicing and tyres costs and Adelaide the one with the lowest. In the March quarter, a typical Canberra household paid \$17.68 a week (or \$919 annualised) more for servicing and tyres than its Adelaide counterpart.

Bunbury and Launceston remained the benchmark regional centres with the highest and lowest costs, respectively, in this category. The typical Bunbury household paid \$14.45 a week (or \$751 annualised) more for servicing and tyres than its Launceston counterpart.



Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$35.65 ↓ - \$1.58 since Q4 2025	 Canberra ↓ - \$1.30	 Adelaide ↓ - \$1.61



Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$33.62 ↓ - \$1.63 since Q4 2025	 Bunbury ↓ - \$1.52	 Launceston ↓ - \$1.78

Rank

1		Canberra	\$46.73	- \$1.30
2		Perth	\$37.98	- \$1.55
3		Melbourne	\$36.85	- \$1.25
4		Sydney	\$36.18	- \$1.43
5		Darwin	\$34.93	- \$2.10
6		Hobart	\$33.68	- \$1.74
7		Brisbane	\$29.82	- \$1.62
8		Adelaide	\$29.05	- \$1.61
		Capital avg.	\$35.65	- \$1.58

Rank

1		Bunbury	\$41.21	- \$1.52
2		Alice Springs	\$38.78	- \$2.13
3		Geelong	\$35.18	- \$1.29
4		Wagga Wagga	\$33.78	- \$1.47
5		Townsville	\$30.44	- \$1.62
6		Mount Gambier	\$29.18	- \$1.60
7		Launceston	\$26.76	- \$1.78
		Regional avg.	\$33.62	- \$1.63

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



Fuel

In Q1, retail petrol and diesel prices rose in all benchmark locations. The typical capital city household's fuel annualised expenditure rose by \$292 and the typical regional household's by \$319.

There were big rises in March, but their effect on the quarterly figure was reduced by lower prices in January and February.

From February to March, the average capital city petrol price rose 55.6 cents per litre and the diesel price rose 77.8 cents per litre.

The average regional benchmark petrol price rose by 81.1 cents per litre, and diesel rose by 57.0 cents per litre.

Prices fell in April after fuel excise was cut but that lies outside the scope of this quarterly report.



Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
		
\$98.13	Brisbane	Adelaide
↑ + \$5.62 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$6.26	↑ + \$5.50

Rank

1		Brisbane	\$101.47	+ \$6.26
2	↑ 	Melbourne	\$100.55	+ \$6.38
3		Darwin	\$100.17	+ \$5.81
4	↑ 	Canberra	\$100.00	+ \$6.52
5	↓ 	Sydney	\$98.74	+ \$3.81
6	↑ 	Perth	\$95.30	+ \$6.27
7	↓ 	Hobart	\$94.83	+ \$4.36
8		Adelaide	\$93.95	+ \$5.50
		Capital avg.	\$98.13	+ \$5.62



Regional

Average	Highest	Lowest
		
\$101.42	Bunbury	Wagga Wagga
↑ + \$6.13 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$8.24	↑ + \$4.21

Rank

1		Bunbury	\$120.65	+ \$8.24
2		Geelong	\$119.15	+ \$9.12
3		Launceston	\$111.48	+ \$4.89
4		Alice Springs	\$108.27	+ \$4.81
5		Mount Gambier	\$105.56	+ \$5.83
6		Townsville	\$77.77	+ \$5.77
7		Wagga Wagga	\$67.04	+ \$4.21
		Regional avg.	\$101.42	+ \$6.13

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



Public transport

In the March quarter, the typical capital city household's public transport expenditure fell by \$169 annually, driven by changes in Perth and Hobart that greatly residents of those two cities' public transport expenditure.

Restructuring Perth's fares delivered an annualised decrease of \$796 (or 33%) for daily users of public transport.

Hobart introduced free bus fares as an initiative to help cost of living, eliminating the \$707 annualised cost of taking the bus each weekday to and from the city.

In Q1, Melbourne and Adelaide were the only capitals that offered no public transport incentives.



Toll roads

Only Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane use toll roads. Melbourne's scheduled quarterly indexation increased its typical household's annualised toll costs. Sydney's toll cap meant its quarterly price rises did not affect the typical household.

Sydney remained Australia's most expensive city for road tolls. The typical Sydney household's annualised Q1 toll road costs were \$1,768 more than those of its Brisbane counterpart.



Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
\$27.89	Melbourne	Darwin
↓ - \$3.25 since Q4 2025	↑ + \$2.00	⊖ Steady



Capital cities

Average	Highest	Lowest
\$37.47	Sydney	Brisbane
↑ + \$0.08 since Q4 2025	⊖ Steady	⊖ Steady

Rank

1		Melbourne	\$57.00	+ \$2.00
2		Sydney	\$50.00	-
3	↑	Adelaide	\$45.50	-
4	↑	Canberra	\$34.10	+ \$0.90
5	↓	Perth	\$31.50	- \$15.30
6	↑	Brisbane	\$5.00	-
7		Darwin	-	-
8	↓	Hobart	-	- \$13.60
		Capital avg.	\$27.89	- \$3.25

Rank

1		Sydney	\$60.00	-
2		Melbourne	\$26.40	+ \$0.24
3		Brisbane	\$26.00	-
		Avg.	\$37.47	+ \$0.08

Transport costs by category

Per week

Per household



Roadside assistance

Roadside assistance costs remained steady in all states except Victoria, which recorded a \$12 annual decrease. Roadside assist prices are usually adjusted at the beginning of the financial year.

The Index's roadside assistance costs are based on motoring clubs' basic or standard packages but the services included in these packages vary.

Every state has identical capital city and regional roadside assistance pricing.

Roadside assistance has consistently remained the smallest portion (0.6% national average in the March quarter) of overall transport costs. In Q1, it cost the typical Australian household \$2.50 per week.

Average	Highest	Lowest
 \$2.51 ↓ - \$0.03 since Q4 2025	 TAS — Steady	 QLD ↓ - \$0.23

Rank

1	 TAS	\$2.71	-
2	 VIC	\$2.65	-
3	 ACT	\$2.63	-
3	 NSW	\$2.63	-
5	 NT	\$2.56	-
6	 SA	\$2.42	-
7	 WA	\$2.38	-
8	 QLD	\$2.10	- \$0.23
	 Avg.	\$2.51	- \$0.03

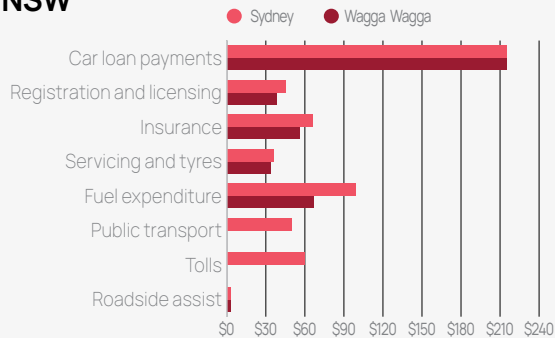
State by state overview

Capital city vs regional centre comparison

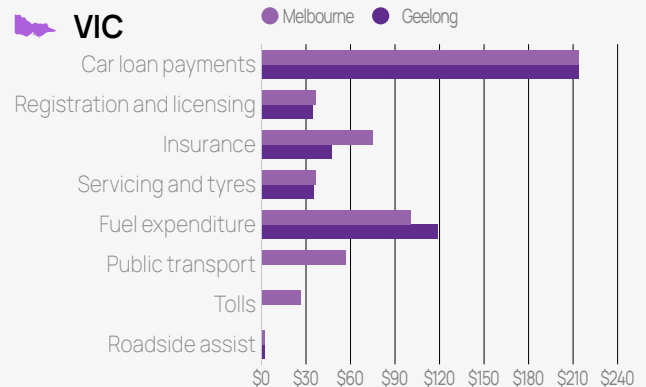
Per week

Per household

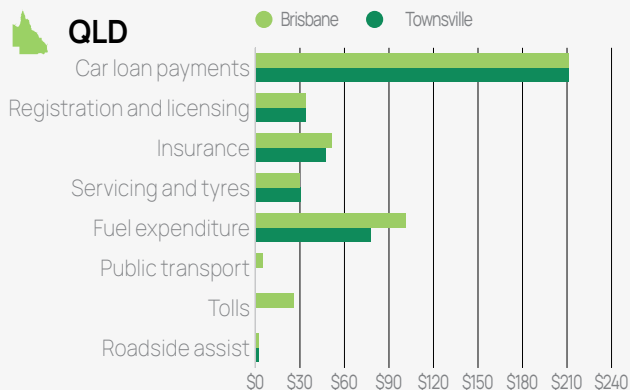
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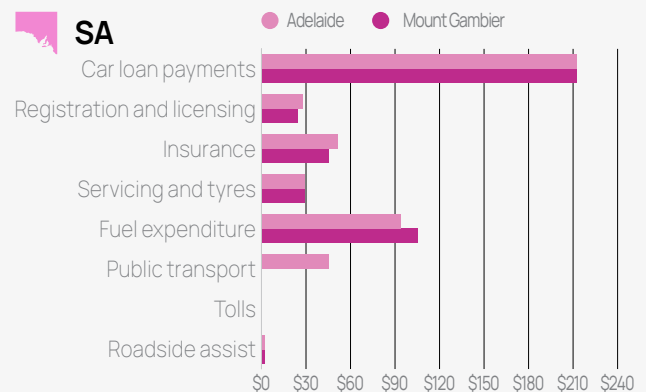
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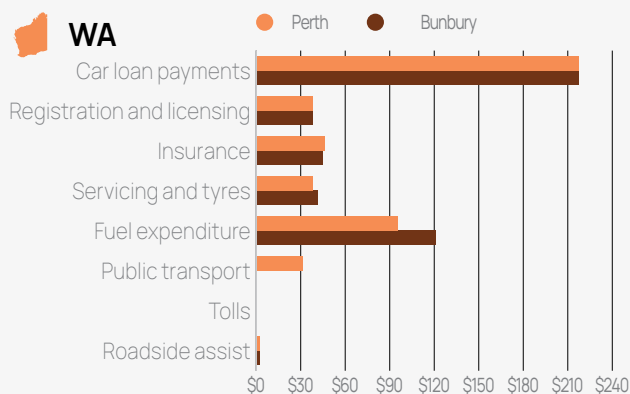
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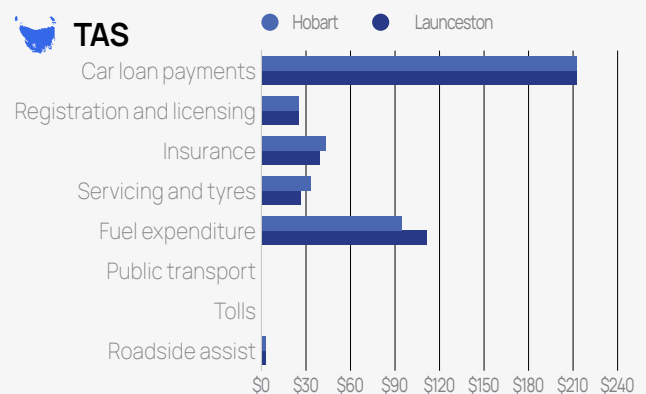
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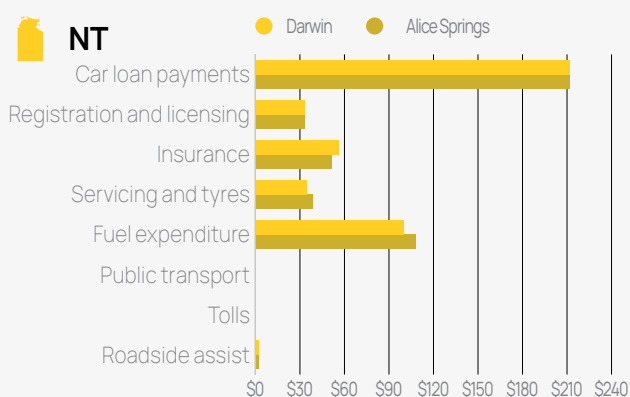
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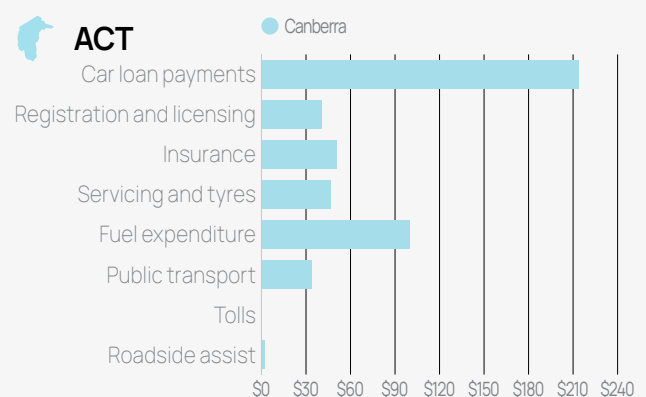
TAS



NT



ACT





NSW transport costs

Per household

Sydney

Sydney remained the benchmark location with Australia's highest transport expenditure. Its annualised typical household transport cost was \$29,808 – up \$322 from Q4 2025 and 6.5% (\$1,831) higher than those of its counterpart in Melbourne, the second-most expensive capital.

The city has a high income-to-costs ratio. And affordability improved as its incomes rose in Q1. Sydney's typical household spent a smaller proportion of its income on transport than in Q4 2025 – 15.3% down from 15.5%.

cost rank	affordability rank
1 / 8	4 / 8
Most expensive	Fourth-least affordable*
Total weekly transport costs	% of income
\$573.23	15.3%
↑ + \$6.20 since Q4 2025	↓ - 0.2%

*by local purchasing power

Wagga Wagga

In Q1, Wagga Wagga's annualised typical household transport was \$21,462, up \$293. This was driven by higher fuel (up \$219 annualised), higher registration and licensing fees (up \$95) and higher comprehensive insurance (up \$73).

This household's transport expenditure fell from 12.2% to 12.1% of its income and Wagga Wagga remained the most affordable benchmark location.

cost rank	affordability rank
6 / 7	7 / 7
Second-least expensive	Most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs	% of income
\$412.74	12.1%
↑ + \$5.64 since Q4 2025	↓ - 0.1%

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$3.81 Rego, CTP & licensing +\$2.69 Insurance +\$1.46
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance Public transport Tolls
↓ Decreased
Servicing & tyres -\$1.43 Car loan payments -\$0.33

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$4.21 Rego, CTP & licensing +\$1.83 Insurance +\$1.40
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Servicing & tyres -\$1.47 Car loan payments -\$0.33



Melbourne

Melbourne was again the benchmark location with Australia's second-highest transport costs. Its annualised typical household transport costs rose by \$574 to \$28,551 – the largest increase among any of the benchmark locations.

Despite drops in car loan repayments (down \$81 annualised) and servicing costs (down \$65), the typical Melbourne household's annualised transport costs rose by \$574. This was driven by rises in fuel costs (up \$332), insurance (up \$272) and public transport costs (up \$104).

cost rank	affordability rank
2 / 8	2 / 8
Second-most expensive	Second-least affordable*
Total weekly transport costs	% of income
\$549.06	16.9%
↑ + \$11.05 since Q4 2025	↑ + 0.3%

*by local purchasing power

Geelong

Geelong's annualised typical household transport costs rose by \$501 from the September quarter, reaching \$23,541. This was driven by higher fuel expenditure (up \$474 annually) and higher comprehensive insurance costs (up \$175).

There were small drops in car loan repayments (down \$81 annually) and servicing and tyres costs (down \$67).

Geelong remains the regional benchmark location with the second-highest transport costs.

cost rank	affordability rank
2 / 7	5 / 7
Second-most expensive	Third-most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs	% of income
\$452.72	14.5%
↑ + \$9.64 since Q4 2025	↑ + 0.3% since Q4 2025

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$6.38
Insurance +\$5.23
Public transport +\$2.00
Tolls +\$0.24
– Unchanged
Rego, CTP & licensing
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Car loan payments -\$1.55
Servicing & tyres -\$1.25

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$9.12
Insurance +\$3.36
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance
Rego, CTP & licensing
↓ Decreased
Car loan payments -\$1.55
Servicing & tyres -\$1.29



QLD transport costs

Per household

Brisbane

In the March quarter, the Brisbane typical household's annualised transport costs rose by \$437 – reaching \$23,982.

Lower servicing and tyres costs (down \$84) and car loan repayments (down \$40) did not offset big jumps in fuel expenditure (up \$325 annually) and comprehensive insurance costs (up \$224).

Brisbane's transport affordability declined in Q1. It is no longer the capital city with the lowest cost-to-income ratio. Canberra and Perth are now more affordable.

cost rank 6 / 8 Third-least expensive	affordability rank 6 / 8 Third-most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$461.19 ↑ + \$8.40 since Q4 2025	% of income 15.0% ↑ + 0.3% since Q4 2025

*by local purchasing power

Townsville

In the March quarter, the typical Townsville household's annualised transport costs rose by \$434 to \$20,980.

This was driven by increased fuel expenditure (up \$300 annually) and higher comprehensive insurance costs (up \$246). Townsville remains the regional benchmark location with the lowest annualised transport costs and the second-best affordability (after Wagga Wagga).

cost rank 7 / 7 Least expensive	affordability rank 6 / 7 Second-most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$403.47 ↑ + \$8.35 since Q4 2025	% of income 13.7% ↑ + 0.4%

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
- Fuel expenditure +\$6.26 - Insurance +\$4.30 - Rego, CTP & licensing +\$0.46
– Unchanged
- Public transport - Tolls
↓ Decreased
- Servicing & tyres -\$1.62 - Car loan payments -\$0.77 - Roadside assistance -\$0.23

↑ Increased
- Fuel expenditure +\$5.77 - Insurance +\$4.74 - Rego, CTP & licensing +\$0.46
– Unchanged
↓ Decreased
- Servicing & tyres -\$1.62 - Car loan payments -\$0.77 - Roadside assistance -\$0.23



SA transport costs

Per household

Adelaide

In Q1, the typical Adelaide household's annualised transport costs rose by \$495 to \$24,107.

This was driven largely by rises in comprehensive insurance costs (up \$326) and fuel expenditure (up \$286 annually).

This was the fifth consecutive quarter Adelaide had the lowest capital city diesel prices. Its average Q1 diesel price was 201.5¢ (the national average was 209.7¢). Its average March diesel price was (258.1¢) (the national average was 260.7¢).

cost rank 5 / 8 Fourth-least expensive	affordability rank 5 / 8 Fourth-most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$463.60 ↑ + \$9.52 since Q4 2025	% of income 15.1% ↓ - 0.1% since Q4 2025

*by local purchasing power

Mount Gambier

In Q1, Mount Gambier's annualised typical household transport costs rose to \$21,816, up by \$513 from the previous quarter – the biggest regional benchmark location increase.

Lower servicing and tyres costs (down \$84) and car loan repayments (down \$33) did not offset big rises in comprehensive insurance costs (up \$326 annually) and fuel expenditure (up \$303).

Since Q3 2021, Mount Gambier has had the lowest benchmark location registration, CTP and licensing fees.

cost rank 4 / 7 Fourth-least expensive	affordability rank 4 / 7 Fourth-most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$419.54 ↑ + \$9.86 since Q4 2025	% of income 15.3% – Steady since Q4 2025

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
- Insurance +\$6.27 - Fuel expenditure +\$5.50
– Unchanged
- Public transport - Rego, CTP & licensing - Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
- Servicing & tyres -\$1.61 - Car loan payments -\$0.64

↑ Increased
- Insurance +\$6.27 - Fuel expenditure +\$5.83
– Unchanged
- Rego, CTP & licensing - Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
- Servicing & tyres -\$1.60 - Car loan payments -\$0.64



Explore the interactive data

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WA transport costs

Per household

Perth

In Q1, the typical Perth household's annualised transport costs fell by \$445 to reach \$24,396, and the proportion of income spent on transport went from 15.8% in Q4 2025 to 14.9% in Q1 2026. This saw Perth shift from being the second-least to the second-best affordable capital for transport.

A Transperth ticket price restructure reduced a day trip fare by more than \$3. For an individual travelling to and from the city each weekday, this provides annualised savings of \$796. These savings in public transport offset large rises in fuel

cost rank	affordability rank
4 / 8	7 / 8
Fourth-most expensive	Second-most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs	% of income
\$469.15	14.9%
↓ - \$8.57 since Q4 2025	↓ - 0.9% since Q4 2025

*by local purchasing power

Bunbury

In the March quarter, the Bunbury typical household's annualised transport costs rose by \$199 to reach \$24,178.

Annualised fuel expenditure rose \$429. This was partly offset by lower comprehensive insurance costs and servicing and tyre costs. Bunbury was the only benchmark location where comprehensive insurance prices fell in Q1.

Bunbury remained the benchmark regional centre with the highest typical household expenditure on car loan repayments; fuel; registration, CTP and licensing; and servicing and tyres.

cost rank	affordability rank
1 / 7	3 / 7
Most expensive	Third-least affordable*
Total weekly transport costs	% of income
\$464.97	15.9%
↑ + \$3.83 since Q4 2025	↓ - 0.6%

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$6.27
Insurance +\$2.57
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Public transport -\$15.30
Servicing & tyres -\$1.55
Rego, CTP & licensing -\$0.55
Car loan payments -\$0.01

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$8.24
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Insurance -\$2.33
Servicing & tyres -\$1.52
Rego, CTP & licensing -\$0.55
Car loan payments -\$0.01



Hobart

Hobart's annualised typical household transport costs fell to \$21,485 – down \$348 from the previous quarter. This was driven by Hobart's free public transport initiative, introduced to ease cost of living pressures. For someone taking a bus to and from work each weekday, this provides annual savings of \$707.

This initiative offset big increases in comprehensive insurance (up \$255) and fuel expenditure (up \$227).

Despite its improved transport costs-to-income ratio (from 18.0% in Q4 2025 to 17.4% in Q1 2026), Hobart remains the capital with the least-affordable transport costs.

cost rank 8 / 8 Least expensive	affordability rank 1 / 8 Least affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$413.18 ↓ - \$6.68 since Q4 2025	% of income 17.4% ↓ - 0.6% since Q4 2025

*by local purchasing power

Launceston

Launceston's annualised typical household transport costs rose by \$263 to reach \$21,787. Higher fuel expenditure (up \$254 annualised) and comprehensive insurance costs (up \$133) outweighed smaller drops in servicing and tyres costs (down \$92) and car loan repayments (down \$32).

Launceston has been the least affordable benchmark location since Q1 2021. Following the introduction of free public transport in Hobart, Launceston's total typical household transport costs became higher than those in its state capital.

cost rank 5 / 7 Third-least expensive	affordability rank 1 / 7 Least affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$418.98 ↑ + \$5.06 since Q4 2025	% of income 19.4% ↓ - 0.1% since Q4 2025

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
- Insurance +\$4.91 - Fuel expenditure +\$4.36
– Unchanged
- Rego, CTP & licensing - Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
- Public transport -\$13.60 - Servicing & tyres -\$1.74 - Car loan payments -\$0.61

↑ Increased
- Fuel expenditure +\$4.89 - Insurance +\$2.56
– Unchanged
- Roadside assistance - Rego, CTP & licensing
↓ Decreased
- Servicing & tyres -\$1.78 - Car loan payments -\$0.61



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NT transport costs

Per household

Darwin

In the March quarter, Darwin's annualised typical household transport costs rose by \$337 to reach \$22,877.

This was driven by rises in fuel expenditure (up \$302 annually) and comprehensive insurance costs (up \$179).

There were less substantial decreases in servicing and tyres costs (down \$110) and car loan repayments (down \$35).

Darwin's free public bus services meant it remained the capital with the cheapest public transport, alongside Hobart.

Alice Springs

In the March quarter, Alice Springs' annualised transport costs rose to \$23,223, up \$270 from Q4 2025.

Higher annualised fuel expenditure (up \$250) and comprehensive insurance costs (up \$166) outweighed cheaper lower servicing and tyres and car loan repayments.

The city's costs-to-income ratio made it the second-least affordable benchmark regional centre (only Launceston is less affordable). Alice Springs and Launceston are the only benchmark regional centres with higher total costs than their capital cities'.

cost rank 7 / 8 Second-least expensive	affordability rank 3 / 8 Third-least affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$439.17 ↑ + \$6.48 since Q4 2025	% of income 15.8% ↑ + 0.2%

*by local purchasing power

cost rank 3 / 7 Third-most expensive	affordability rank 2 / 7 Second-least affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$446.59 ↑ + \$5.19 since Q4 2025	% of income 17.1% ↑ + 0.2%

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$5.81 Insurance +\$3.45
– Unchanged
Public transport Roadside assistance Rego, CTP & licensing
↓ Decreased
Servicing & tyres -\$2.10 Car loan payments -\$0.68

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$4.81 Insurance +\$3.19
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance Rego, CTP & licensing
↓ Decreased
Servicing & tyres -\$2.13 Car loan payments -\$0.68



ACT transport costs

Per household

Canberra

In the March quarter, the typical Canberra household's annualised transport costs rose by \$421 to reach \$25,444. A large increase in income for Canberra's typical household offset the increase in transport costs. This meant Canberra had the lowest Q1 capital city cost-to-income ratio.

The city's typical annualised household fuel expenditure rose \$339 and comprehensive insurance costs rose \$312.

The ACT's emissions-based registration system meant a market shift towards more fuel-efficient vehicles reduced typical registration prices by \$130. Following this decrease, Canberra was no longer the capital with the highest registration, CTP and licensing costs. Sydney now holds that position.

cost rank 3 / 8 Third-most expensive	affordability rank 8 / 8 Most affordable*
Total weekly transport costs \$489.31 ↑ + \$8.10 since Q4 2025	% of income 14.5% ↓ - 0.6%

*by local purchasing power

Changes in weekly transport costs

↑ Increased
Fuel expenditure +\$6.52
Insurance +\$5.99
Public transport +\$0.90
– Unchanged
Roadside assistance
↓ Decreased
Rego, CTP & licensing -\$2.50
Car loan payments -\$1.51
Servicing & tyres -\$1.30



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Background and methodology

Overview

The AAA and SGS Economics developed the Transport Affordability Index as an indicator of movements in the total price of household transport through a longitudinal study design approach. It uses economic modelling to illustrate changes over time to transport costs relative to movements in the CPI and household incomes. The Index provides a snapshot of the costs of transport for a hypothetical or “benchmark” household in each capital city and in a regional location in each state and the Northern Territory by transport cost category (upfront, ongoing, and other “typical” costs) over time.

As well as tracking the original data points, the Index also accommodates all relevant government policy levers that impact transport costs (such as toll relief schemes and public transport discounts and caps).

As with any economic modelling, the Index is built on a series of assumptions. Since its release in 2016, the same specific data points have been updated and changes have been tracked quarterly.

This longitudinal approach provides a way of understanding the degree and direction of change in costs by location over time. It is conceptually akin to the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ “basket of goods” used to identify and track CPI over time. As with the ABS “basket of goods”, the Index can be updated over time to reflect the changing patterns of Australian households and their transport options and choices.

In the Q3 2024 release, the typical Brisbane and Melbourne households’ assumed use of toll roads were changed from five return trips to two return trips each week to align them with the Sydney household. In addition, the method of calculating comprehensive car insurance costs was broadened to cover substantially more data points from market leading insurers. To enable comparisons, adjustments have been made to the corresponding Q2 2024 costs.

As well as tracking the original data points, the Index also accommodates all relevant government policy levers that impact transport costs (such as toll relief schemes and public transport discounts and caps).

The hypothetical households

The Index’s economic modelling is based on a “hypothetical household” whose key characteristics are drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (including census data), the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (including motor vehicle use), and industry (including new vehicle sales, fuel prices and insurance costs).

For the purposes of the economic modelling, it is assumed the hypothetical household:

- **Comprises a 36-year-old male and a 38-year-old female with children living in a detached house. Both are employed full time and commute each weekday to workplaces in or near their city or town’s CBD.**¹
- **Has two mid-range, high selling cars – a near-new car financed with a variable-rate car loan and an older car owned outright. Both vehicles are roadworthy and registered.**
- **Has comprehensive car insurance from market leading insurers.**
- **Services both vehicles according to manufacturers’ guidelines.**

These characteristics are used to contextualise and model transport costs in each capital city and in one regional centre in every state and the Northern Territory.

The households in each capital city and benchmark regional centre are identical in almost all respects to enable ready comparison. But their transport costs differ based on where they live. Their assumed vehicle and public usage can also vary in some respects based on known local differences.

¹ Additional characteristics are considered for the purpose of calculating insurance costs.

*“The Index is conceptually akin to the ABS ‘**basket of goods**’ used to identify and track CPI over time.”*



The capital city households

For each capital city household, it is assumed that the household's new car is driven 15,000 kilometres per year and its older car is driven 10,000 kilometres per year.

In each capital city, the hypothetical household is assumed to live in middle to outer-ring suburbs with relatively high population density and good access to public transport.

To ensure public transport costs are captured, the Index assumes one adult of the household commutes to and from work by public transport each weekday.

In the case of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, the family also uses toll roads to commute.

The Index assumes one member of the household uses toll roads twice a week to travel to and from work.



The regional households

The Index's benchmark regional locations were selected as they have populations of over 10,000 people; have relatively dense populations; have similar ages to the average ages in the hypothetical city household; have a reasonable proportion of detached housing; and have a substantial proportion of households with couples and children.

The Index recognises that typical households in regional locations:

- Generally face higher fuel prices than their city counterparts.
- Earn less than their state or territory capital city counterparts.
- Pay less for insurance because most jurisdictions offer lower comprehensive premiums on new and used cars in regional areas.
- Do not pay to use toll roads.
- Do not pay for public transport as there is little or limited availability in regional areas.
- Have different commuting distances and patterns than their city counterparts (which are specific for the respective areas).

Incomes are based on ABS data for city and regional centres. This means that all the benchmark regional households have lower weekly earnings than their capital city counterparts.

