



Media Release

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Better choices needed to keep older Western Australians connected

A new RAC survey of older Western Australians has highlighted the urgent need for better planning and greater investment in a range of appropriate and accessible transport options.

RAC's Ageing and Driving Survey of 1,200 older Western Australians aged between 65 to 98 years found there were fewer transport options with increasing age.

RAC Senior Manager Policy and Research Anne Still said the survey shows that as people age their mobility needs change and a lack of reliable, convenient and safe transport options meant many older motorists place a great deal of importance on driving in order to maintain their independence.

"Western Australia is experiencing a demographic shift. As a community, we are living longer and getting older. By 2036, there will be more than three times the number of people aged over 85 than now," Ms Still said.

"Although the car is an important form of mobility, even without access to a private vehicle, older people should be able to remain mobile and connected to the community.

"This is an issue which affects everyone. If we don't want to be isolated and unable to move around when we are older, we shouldn't expect older Western Australians to have to live like that now."

The survey also found people's confidence in using public transport dropped as they aged. Public transport was used more widely by 65 to 69 year olds at two to three times per week compared to 82% of those aged 85 and over using it never or less than once a month.

"Some respondents reported access to a bus stop was a major impediment to using public transport, while frequency of bus and trains during off-peak times often meant car travel was the most convenient way to move around."

Although, the private car remains the primary mode of transport for respondents, the survey found car usage reduced with increasing age. Around 50% of drivers aged over 85 years drive less than 5,000km per year, and 45% of drivers aged over 90 choose to drive less than 3,000km per year.

Taxis was the only mode of transport which increased with age, with 11% of those aged over 90 years using it at least once a week.

Community group transport including those operated by local councils, had not been widely tried, with only a quarter of respondents having used them.

"This is an important issue and one which is not going to resolve itself without intervention. As a rapidly aging community, we need to better provide for the needs of older people.

"As a State we need an agreed plan for how we will meet these challenges."

RAC will provide this information to State and Local Governments and the private sector to highlight the needs of older Western Australians.

This Survey paper will also provide vital information to help plan appropriate transport modes and services for future generations.

The RAC Survey can be read in full [here](#).

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