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MEDIA RELEASE

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Australians prepared to adopt new pricing regime to relieve traffic congestion

A majority of Australians would like to see existing road usage charges such as fuel excises and vehicle registration fees, replaced with charges more directly linked to the distance and time of day that they travel, according to a University of Sydney Business School survey.

However, the strong public support for a new charging system is provided on condition that there is no increase in the total amount paid by travellers.

The quarterly Transport Opinion Survey conducted by the Business School's internationally recognised Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies (ITLS) found that Seven out of ten Australians support the replacement of existing fuel excises with a charge based on distance driven.

Six in ten people surveyed said they would be willing to pay five cents for every kilometre they drive in capital cities during the weekday peak periods in return for removal of registration fees.

An end to registration fees was supported by 70 percent of Victorians while the number was 63 percent in Queensland and South Australia and 55 percent in New South Wales.

Commenting on the survey results, the Director of the ITLS, Professor David Hensher, said there was "clearly a strong desire in the community for something to be done about the cost of road use and the growing amount of traffic congestion in our cities".

"The findings suggest that governments will win voter backing for any move away from fixed charges such as registration fees, in favour of a distance-based peak period charge that will reduce traffic congestion while not increasing the cost of motoring," Professor Hensher said.

The regular TOPS index of transport confidence indicates that Australians are now more confident about the future provision of transport infrastructure and services by local and national authorities than they were in 2015.

The short-term transport confidence index for local transport is now at 85, compared to 63 in March 2018 and 44 in September 2015. The long-term confidence index for Australian transport also increases to 83 from 74 in the first quarter of this year.

TOPS is the only regular national survey (commencing in 2010) to measure public opinion on transport related issues. The third-quarter 2018 report is available at:
<http://sydney.edu.au/business/itls/tops>

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