

Media Release

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DESPITE MELBURNIANS LOVING THEIR CITY, THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE HOUSING AND TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS – NEW REPORT SHOWS

- **Committee for Melbourne and Ipsos’s Living in Melbourne 2024 report reveals 81% of Melburnians** – out of the 1000 people surveyed, are satisfied with their quality of life.
- **Melburnians identify key challenges for the city** – affordable housing and congestion.
- **The city’s car culture means 90% of Melburnians have access to a private vehicle** - with 72% using this mode of transport to travel to and from work or study.
- **Melbourne’s continued expansion of its suburbs is playing out in the statistics:** with people in outer suburbs travelling longer to work and more likely to use a car for commuting.
- **More housing density is opposed, despite its need being evident:** Most are more supportive of accommodating new housing in outer areas of the city (67% support or strongly support) compared to increasing density in established, inner-city Melbourne suburbs (46% support or strongly support).
- **But support for increased density comes where benefits are demonstrated:** Melburnians are more supportive of density in principle if there are liveability benefits delivered as a result (namely affordability of housing, more access to green spaces and better access to public transport).
- **The report will be released today** at a Committee for Melbourne member meeting hosted by Bastion Agency in Cremorne.

A new *Living in Melbourne 2024* report, surveying 1000 Melburnians, has found that even though 81% of Melburnians are satisfied with their quality of life, 37% feel their quality of life has worsened over the past 12 months.

The sentiment is a key cause for reflection for policy makers and leaders in a time of rising living costs and global uncertainty.

“Ensuring that Melbourne can maintain the excellent standards of living that are appreciated by those living here, will require us to consider what really makes the city tick and where improvements can be made,” Committee for Melbourne CEO Mark Melvin said.

The report released by the Committee for Melbourne and leading global researcher, Ipsos shows that Melburnians rate safety, costs of living and affordable housing as very important attributes for a city. However, the report also demonstrates that people are concerned about affordable housing and congestion in Melbourne – indicating that more needs to be done in those areas.

Melbourne’s sprawling suburbs are creating challenges for residents’ living choices, commuting patterns, and daily activities – with the report showing that those in outer suburbs are commuting longer than those that live in inner suburbs.

And unsurprisingly given the geographic spread of the city, Melbourne’s car culture is starkly highlighted in the responses to the survey – with 72% using this mode of transport to travel to and from work or study, comparing to lower rates of commuting by trains (36%), trams (28%) and buses (16%).

“With Melbourne’s population expected to boom to 9 million people by 2050, the city once named the world’s most liveable, is now at risk of becoming more congested as more people take to their cars,” Committee for Melbourne CEO Mark Melvin said.

What is clear though is that Melburnians support government investment in public transport. Despite the emphasis on car ownership in people's daily lives, there is an underlying support for public transport, with 64% of Melburnians rating it as a crucial factor in choosing where to live. Melburnians are also very supportive of the Victorian Government investing in major infrastructure projects such as Melbourne Airport Rail and bus reform.

And the report provides insight into the things we could do to encourage more public transport usage. Common barriers were overcrowding, expense and public transport routes.

"Committee for Melbourne has long advocated for strategic investment in productive infrastructure, like buses and affordable housing, and is therefore pleased to see that efforts would bear fruit if more funds were directed towards those productive infrastructure outcomes," said Mark Melvin.

Despite the pressure points that are arising as a result of urban sprawl, Melburnians seem to prefer this over densification. Most are more supportive of accommodating new housing in outer areas of the city (67% support or strongly support) compared to increasing density in established, inner-city Melbourne suburbs (46% support or strongly support).

However, if benefits are delivered as a result of increased density – such as affordable housing, more green spaces and public transport – then support increases. This provides an opportunity for leaders and policy makers to clearly identify, articulate and promote the benefits of density.

"The report highlights that it has never been more urgent for a plan to be clearly communicated to Melburnians about how we are going to protect our liveability for all in a city that will almost double its population in the next 25 years," Mr Melvin said.

"Better transport connections and access for Melburnians living outside the inner ring, more affordable housing in regions of the city closer to employment centres, and higher density planning are essential to avoid Melbourne sleepwalking into an urban sprawl tipping point."

"The overarching message from the data is that Melburnians love their city and this is reflected in the attitudes, including that 75% of them identify as Melburnian."

"But, the elements which make Melbourne a great place to live could increasingly become under strain, with signs that the city's lifestyle options are increasingly becoming harder for people living outside the inner suburbs to access," Mr Melvin said.

"We need a clearly articulated plan for the future of Melbourne - that all Melburnians can get on board with," he said.

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BACKGROUND: The *Living in Melbourne* report released in June 2024, authored by Ipsos, surveys 1000 people. The Living in Melbourne 2024 survey was designed by the Committee and Ipsos. Groups of Committee members were consulted during the development of the questionnaire. Individual participants completed the questionnaire online, with recruitment of participants conducted via online panel. A total of n=1,000* responses were collected. All participants were located in Greater Melbourne (evenly split between inner, middle and outer Melbourne) and were aged 18 and older. Fieldwork was completed between 24 May and 04 June 2024.

Committee for Melbourne: Committee for Melbourne is relentless in its pursuit of positive and enduring change for all Melburnians. With around 140 members from major corporations, small and medium business, academic institutions, local government and not-for-profit entities and through embracing three key pillars – Future Economy, Infrastructure & Sustainability, and Liveability & Urban Optimisation – the Committee exists to ensure Melbourne’s challenges and opportunities are addressed to keep our city vital, inclusive, progressive and sustainable. The Committee is a not-for-profit, member-funded entity that is politically independent and impartial allowing us to freely and purposefully raise important issues. **To learn more visit:** melbourne.org.au

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