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Mobility Index 2026

A yearly lens on the future of mobility in Australia

mycar
Tyre & Auto

An introduction from Sylvain Borré Managing Director, mycar

Welcome to the 2026 Mobility Index by mycar Tyre & Auto. Now in its third year, this annual report has evolved into something more than a snapshot. It's now a three-year (and counting!) tracker into how Australian mobility is fundamentally changing. By comparing sentiment and behaviour across three consecutive years, we can now see which concerns are persistent, which are shifting, and which represent genuine inflection points in how Australians drive, maintain, and think about their vehicles.

Against the backdrop of AI adoption accelerating across every sector of Australian life, with 28 percent of the nation using AI daily¹, the automotive industry faces a unique moment. Drivers are turning to AI for automotive answers at unprecedented rates, yet the stakes have never been higher. These decisions come as cost-of-living pressures reshape how Australians afford, maintain, and keep their vehicles, making clarity and trust more critical than ever.

In this report, we consider what these shifts mean for the state of mobility in Australia today, and into the future. We unpack the outlook and sentiment of drivers on key themes: examining the growing trust gap around AI, alongside how cost-of-living pressures are reshaping vehicle choices, servicing and maintenance spending.

As one of Australia's leading tyres, servicing and repair specialists we've had a front-row seat to these shifts. We know that vehicle ownership has become more complex, balancing technology adoption with affordability concerns, and navigating trust gaps around emerging tools. Our commitment to customer care means helping drivers navigate this complexity with clarity and confidence, backed by the expertise and Lifetime Guarantee² that have defined mycar for decades.

The aim of this report is to unpack three years of data on Australian mobility. What vehicle choices are drivers making? What trade-offs are they considering? And how can the automotive industry prepare for a future where technology, affordability, and trust will define success? The answers matter, not just for the industry, but for every Australian who depends on their vehicle every day.



Sylvain Borré

Sylvain Borré
Managing Director, mycar Tyre & Auto

Snapshot of the nation

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how Australians research vehicle decisions. According to carsales³, AI has entered the top 10 car research influences for the first time, ranking sixth overall. Though rather than replacing traditional sources like review sites and manufacturer information, it's adding another layer of support to the research process.

Our latest findings highlight just how embedded AI is becoming in automotive choices, with nearly half (47 percent) of the Australian vehicle owners we surveyed reporting that AI tools or chatbots have helped them in their vehicle servicing decisions.

While our reliance on AI increases, broader shifts are also reshaping the Australian vehicle landscape. Cost-of-living pressures continue to reshape behaviour, with over two in five Australians now cutting back on discretionary driving.

Meanwhile, fuel-type preferences are shifting with nearly half (46 percent) of Australian vehicle owners reporting that their next purchase will be a hybrid or EV. This is up significantly from 2025 (36 percent) and 2024 (38 percent).

Our 2026 Mobility Index surveyed 2,025 vehicle owners across both capital city and regional areas between 16th - 24th April 2026. The results reveal a nation at an inflection point – where economic pressure and technological change are forcing Australians to rethink not only how they drive, how they service, but whether vehicle ownership remains affordable.



47%

use AI tools or chatbots for their vehicle servicing decisions



49%

believe AI helps them feel more informed when speaking to service providers

³<https://business.carsales.com.au/australias-car-buyer-report/>

Rise of the informed driver

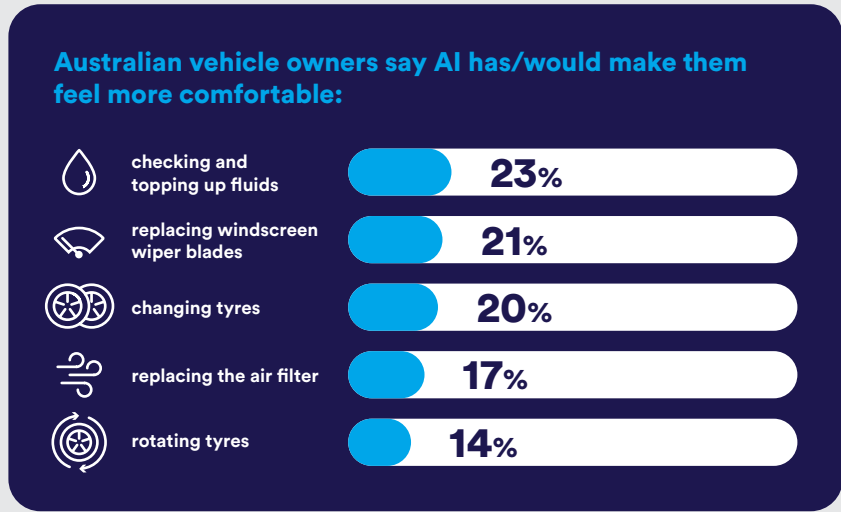
Australians are now taking a more active role in vehicle ownership, actively seeking tools to help them make smarter decisions around their vehicles.

Beyond general servicing advice, drivers are leveraging AI in highly specific ways: nearly one in five (18 percent) use it to search for and compare service providers, while others prepare detailed questions for mechanics (14 percent), understand whether recommendations are necessary or exploratory upselling (13 percent), and learn what should be included in a proper service (12 percent). The practical value is clear – one in eight (12 percent) have used AI to watch instructional videos that helped them fix something themselves, while 11 percent say AI has made them more proactive about maintenance overall.

This shift signals a deeper change in how drivers engage with vehicle ownership. Younger generations are leading the charge, with Gen Z (64 percent) and Millennials (63 percent) saying AI helps them feel more informed when speaking to technicians, compared to just 22 percent of Baby Boomers. For many, this newfound confidence is translating into independent action: one in six (17 percent) would feel comfortable with AI that alerts them and their preferred service provider to emerging vehicle issues, while similar numbers express interest in AI that analyses driving behaviour to optimise safety or performance.

“This year's Mobility Index finds Australians are increasingly turning to AI to better understand what's happening with their cars, and it's helping them feel more informed when it comes to maintenance and servicing. While AI is a powerful tool in improving transparency and understanding, it's not a replacement for expert care. AI tools consider vehicle servicing questions in isolation – based on the prompt provided to them – and can't take a holistic view and comprehensive assessment of the vehicle. At mycar, we see AI as a way to support better conversations and help drivers make smarter decisions about their vehicles, but it's important not to place all your trust on AI tools.

Sylvain Borré
Managing Director of mycar



14%

use AI to prepare detailed questions for mechanics



Driving under pressure

Australian drivers are under acute financial pressure, and it's fundamentally reshaping how they use their vehicles. While headline inflation has eased, the cumulative impact of over two years of cost-of-living pressure continues to bite hard. Wage growth remains anaemic relative to price rises in essentials – particularly fuel, insurance, and servicing – creating a persistent squeeze on household budgets dedicated to transport.

The data tells a stark story. Australian car owners are paying an average of \$447 per week for transport, making up 16 percent of the average household budget and outpacing inflation by three times over the past two years⁴. For many households, this represents the second-largest expense after housing.

In 2026, the emergence of a K-shaped economy is becoming visible in driver behaviour. Rather than a uniform belt-tightening across all income groups, Australia is splitting into two distinct paths: those with resources to weather the storm, and those forced to fundamentally restructure their mobility decisions.

This divide is reshaping the automotive landscape in real time. Over two in five (43 percent) Australian vehicle owners are cutting back on discretionary trips, while a quarter (26 percent) are driving less or switching to alternative transport – up five percentage points from 2025.

The shift is broad-based: over one in four (27 percent) use public transport more frequently, nearly one in four (23 percent) walk or cycle instead, and one in seven (14 percent) seek to work from home more often.

These aren't marginal adjustments. They represent millions of Australians restructuring their daily routines around fuel affordability – and creating demand for affordable, reliable alternatives.

43%

of Australian vehicle owners are cutting back on discretionary trips



⁴<https://www.realinsurance.com.au/documents/whitepaper-real-commute-report-2025.pdf>

The economic squeeze reshaping Australian mobility

On one side, drivers are extending the life of existing assets: 15 percent are holding on to vehicles longer than expected, prioritising essential repairs while deferring non-urgent work. On the other, drivers are stepping back from ownership investment: one in five (21 percent) are more likely to buy second-hand, while another one in five (20 percent) are delaying vehicle purchases indefinitely.

For many, owning your own car – long a symbol of independence and flexibility in Australian culture – is becoming a discretionary luxury rather than a necessity.

70%

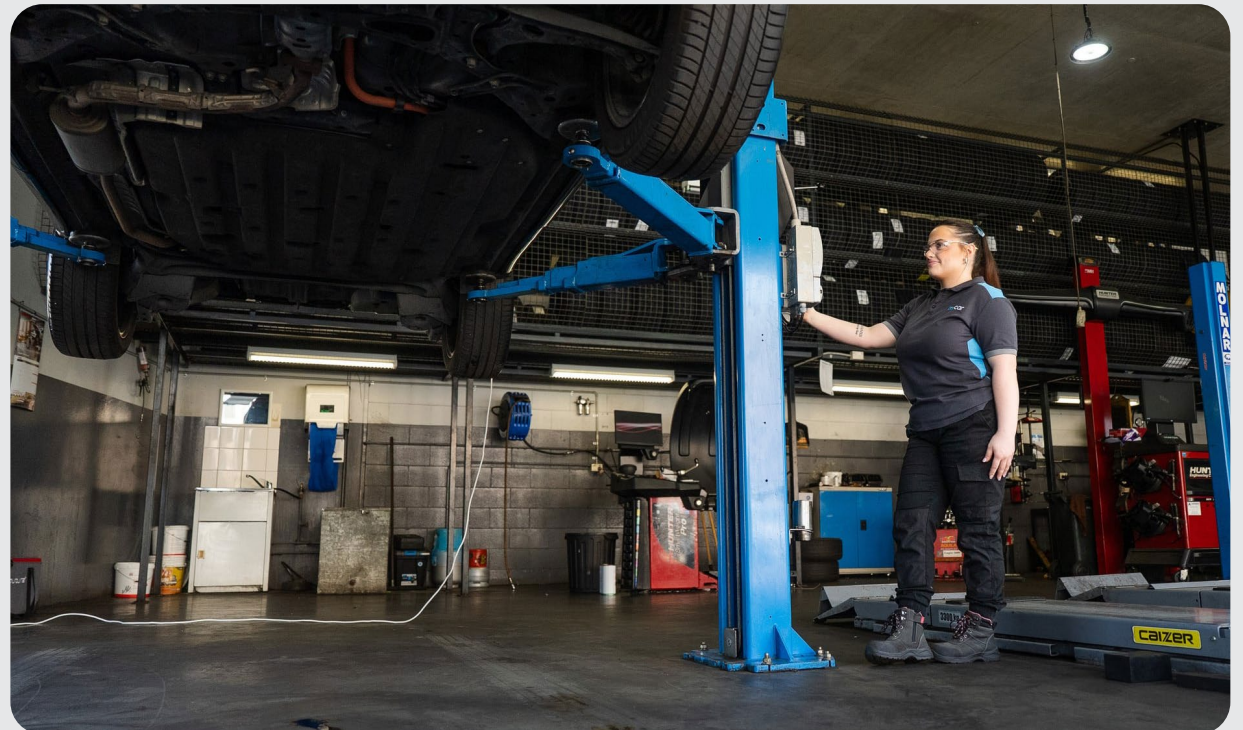


of Australian vehicle owners say their purchasing intentions have been significantly influenced by rising vehicle costs and interest rates

“Fuel shocks and the ongoing cost-of-living pressures are having a profound impact on Australian drivers. As more drivers hold on to their vehicles for longer or delay purchasing decisions, we’re seeing increased demand placed on the servicing and repair sector to keep older vehicles safe, compliant, and roadworthy for extended lifecycles. That will make continued investment in skills, training and repair capability critical as the average age of vehicles on the road continues to rise.

Stuart Charity

CEO, Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association



“Good enough” maintenance mindset

When finances tighten, vehicle maintenance becomes a difficult trade-off with other competing priorities. Fifteen percent of drivers are extending servicing intervals between regular maintenance, while 18 percent are prioritising only essential repairs and deferring non-urgent work. Even more concerning, 24 percent are attempting DIY maintenance tasks instead of relying on professional services – a decision that often creates hidden risks and compounding costs.

15%

of drivers are extending servicing intervals between regular maintenance



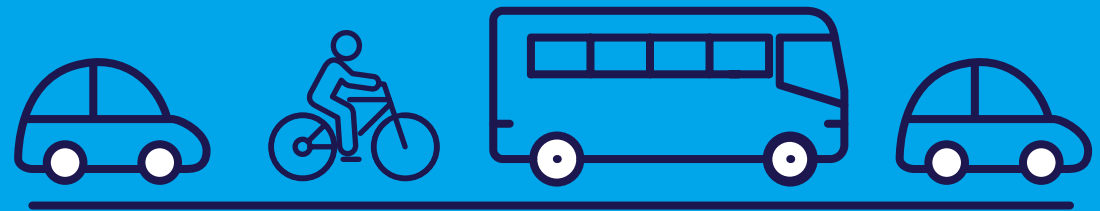
24%

are attempting DIY maintenance tasks



Rising living costs have led to Australian vehicle owners driving less or using other forms of transport to save money

26%



This has increased by 5-percentage points since last year (21%)

The EV paradox

A year ago, Australians were cautious about electric vehicles. Today, something has shifted. Close to half (46%) of Australians plan to next purchase an electric vehicle, or a self-charging or plug-in hybrid – a ten percentage-point increase from just one year prior. More significantly, over a quarter (26 percent) say rising fuel prices are actively pushing them towards EVs. While an additional 27 percent view hybrids as a practical stepping stone from traditional petrol and diesel engines.

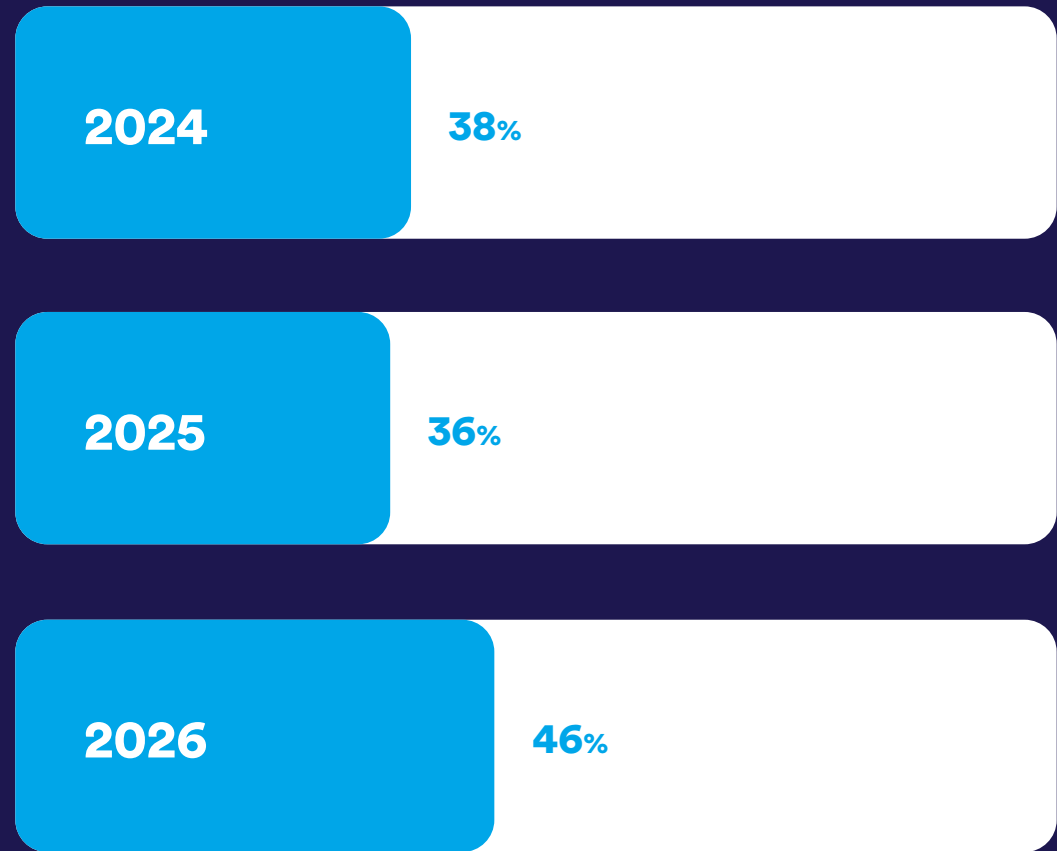
This represents a genuine momentum shift in the market. Yet beneath these encouraging figures lies a paradox: as more Australians seriously consider switching to electric, a complex web of hesitations – around infrastructure, brand trust, regional viability, and upfront costs – continues to hold many back from commitment.



27%

view hybrids as a practical stepping stone from traditional petrol and diesel engines

% of Australians who plan on buying a hybrid or EV for their next vehicle purchase:



The barriers to adoption remain real

The path to Australia's EV transition is not blocked by ideology, but by practical realities. One in three ICE drivers (32 percent) still place greater trust in traditional petrol and diesel vehicles, not because they doubt EV efficacy, but because they lack confidence in the infrastructure, cost and new manufacturers.

A third of Australians (33 percent) question whether an EV would reliably serve regional and long-distance driving – a concern that peaks sharply with those based outside capital cities (39 percent) versus those who live in them (28 percent). Three in ten (31 percent) are concerned about potential wait times at chargers.

Cost remains a significant barrier. Nearly one in four vehicle owners (23 percent) cite the upfront cost of EVs and hybrids as prohibitively high given current economic conditions – particularly in an environment where interest rates have risen sharply, and cost-of-living pressures continue to weigh on household budgets.

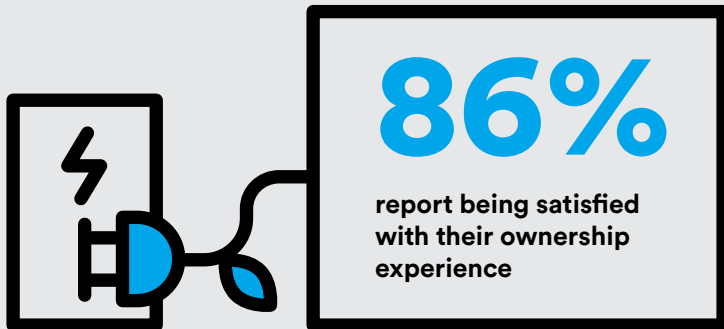
Trust in emerging EV brands also presents a friction point. As new manufacturers enter the Australian market, three in ten vehicle owners (31 percent) express uncertainty about whether these brands can be relied upon for safety and long-term reliability – a legitimate concern for consumers making a significant financial commitment.



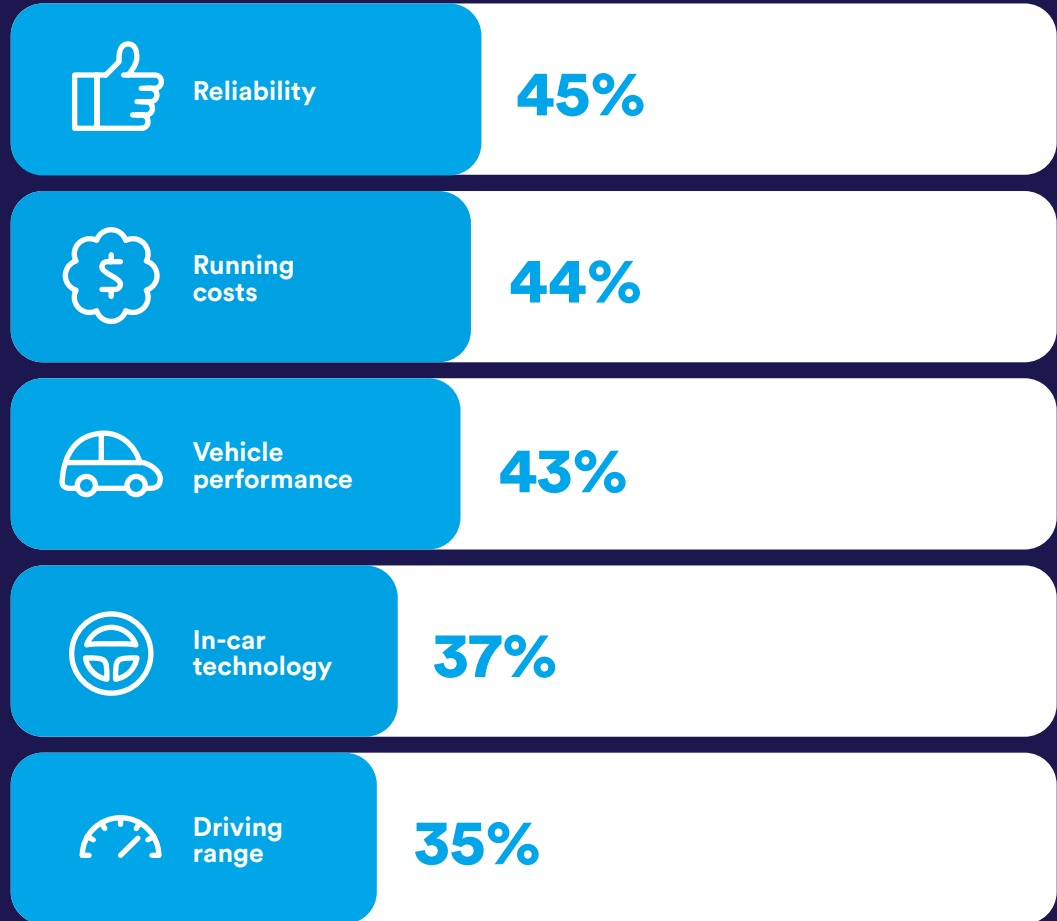
The satisfaction paradox

Yet for those who have already made the transition, the data tells a compelling story. Among EV and hybrid owners who have completed their purchase, an impressive five in six (86 percent) report being satisfied with their ownership experience.

This high satisfaction rate represents the strongest evidence that hesitation among non-adopters is not rooted in product deficiency, but in information gaps and confidence deficits. In other words, the hesitation is driven by a lack of trust and understanding around EVs – rather than the technology itself failing to meet expectations.



Apprehension from ICE drivers around EVs and hybrids



Bridging the gap

To unlock Australia's EV transition, three critical gaps must be addressed. First, public and private investment in charging infrastructure must accelerate and be transparently communicated, particularly in regional areas where infrastructure anxiety is highest.

Second, clearer, accessible information about the true cost of EV ownership (including charging versus fuel, warranty coverage, and long-term reliability) must be made readily available to prospective buyers.

Third, the automotive servicing and repair industry must be equipped and visible in its readiness to support EV owners through maintenance, servicing, and repairs.

This last point is crucial. When drivers say they want confidence before committing to an EV, they are asking: "Will I be able to get my vehicle serviced affordably and reliably?"

mycar is preparing for this moment. With 43 EV-ready stores across Australia, an established mobile van offering, and ongoing technician training in electric vehicle servicing, mycar is positioning itself as a trusted bridge into the EV era.



“That's exactly what mycar is preparing for: training our technicians, investing in EV-ready stores, offering state of health battery testing for peace of mind, and ensuring drivers have access to expert care whether they're driving petrol, diesel, hybrid or fully electric.”



Adele Coswello
Chief Customer Officer, mycar



Summary

In 2026, Australian drivers are navigating more choice and more pressure than ever before. New technologies promise clarity, while economic constraints demand careful decisions. At mycar, we see this tension play out every day, in customer conversations, in service decisions, in the real choices people make about their vehicles. Our role is to cut through the complexity and deliver what matters most: expert care, honest communication, and solutions that work within the reality of people's lives. Because mobility is about more than just keeping cars on the road – it's about supporting the Australians who depend on them.

Contact us

With over 280 stores across Australia, and mobile tyre and service vans, our team of experts is available to help you with all your personal or fleet car needs. For reliable service and friendly advice, visit mycar.com.au or call us on 13 13 28.

The research was commissioned by mycar and FleishmanHillard and was conducted by Lonergan Research in accordance with the ISO 20252 standard. Lonergan Research surveyed 2,025 Australian Vehicle Owners aged 18+. Surveys were distributed throughout Australia including both capital city and non-capital city areas. The survey was conducted online amongst members of a permission-based panel, between 16th - 24th April 2026. After interviewing, data was weighted to the latest population estimates sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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