

FRIDAY, 22 MAY 2020

# COVID-19 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS SAVING VICTORIANS BIG TIME ON WORK COMMUTES

Almost three-quarters of Victorians have saved more than an hour per day on their work commute as a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions, according to a new RACV survey.

More than 72 per cent of the Victorians who took part in the RACV Pulse Survey said they were saving 40 minutes or more by working from home, including 19 per cent who were saving up to two hours or more.

The results also showed that more than 50 per cent of Victorians want to continue to work or study from home post restrictions being eased, with more than a third of the respondents hoping to do so two to three times a week.

RACV Senior Planner, Stuart Outhred, said the results highlight an opportunity to ease traffic congestion on Victoria's already burdened road network.

"With 50 per cent of Victorians interested in working from home half of the work week in the future, we hope to see employers provide flexible work opportunities for those seeking the balance between home and the office. This choice can improve the satisfaction of many Victorians, while alleviating the pressures on our road network if people continue to avoid public transport," Mr Outhred said.

"We are already seeing an increase in traffic volumes and Melbourne's chronic congestion will only become worse if more Victorians choose to drive instead of catching trains, trams or buses."

The survey, designed to be a pulse check on how Victorians have adapted to COVID-19, also highlighted that 44 per cent plan to incorporate more exercise around their local neighbourhoods and 15 per cent want to ride a bicycle more regularly.

Mr Outhred said it wasn't surprising that the survey showed an increasing public interest in active transport options.

"RACV has been a proponent of active transport for many years now because of the benefits to personal health and the reduction in traffic congestion. It's encouraging to see Victorians using the travel restrictions to walk and ride more often," he said.

"But that also provides an opportunity for local councils and government to be ambitious, bold and innovative with road space allocation so those who want to bicycle or walk around their neighbourhood can and can do so safely. Many streets would benefit from a refocus to provide the room needed for social distancing while also encouraging many to walk and bicycle as often as they would like," added Mr Outhred.

The RACV Pulse Survey, sent in April during the peak of COVID-19 restrictions, also uncovered the following insights about how Victorians are feeling:

- Only eight per cent would like to work from home permanently
- 17 per cent are not keen to stay at home in the future, saying they prefer to work in the office
- 50 per cent been cooking more frequently
- 63 per cent have been waking up later

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- 42 per cent have been exercising more regularly.

The next RACV Pulse Survey will be issued in the coming weeks.

**##ENDS##**

For all media requests, contact the Media & Communications team on:

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**About RACV**

*Founded in 1903, RACV exists to improve the lives of Victorians by delivering valued benefits to members and their communities. RACV addresses the needs of Victorians by informing, advising and representing them through products and services spanning motoring, mobility, leisure, travel, insurance and the home. RACV seeks to help shape a smarter, safer and more connected future for Victoria.*