

A dramatic increase in the proportion of motorists suggesting *alternative cars* (e.g. hybrid, electric or solar powered models) as the best option has shot this solution into the top position in 2007. *Alternative cars* as the answer has rocketed from 13% in 2003, to 27% in 2005 and now to 43%.

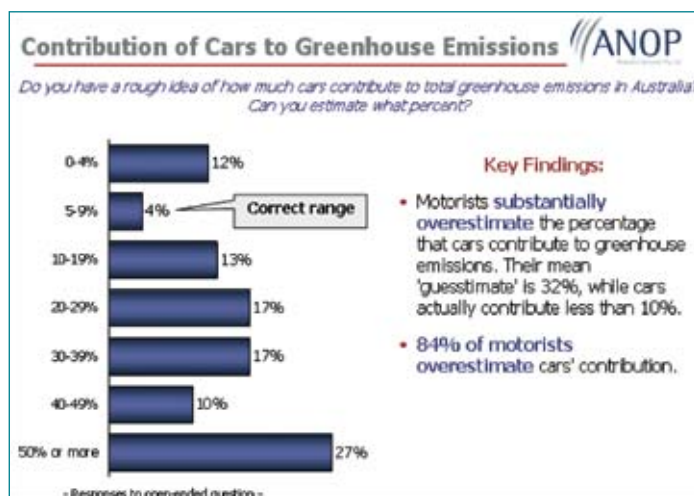
Those suggesting increased use and improvements to *public transport* have remained stable at around 30%, and the suggested use of *alternative fuels* has averaged at a similar figure. The proportion of motorists suggesting the *improvement of vehicle emissions* or *driving less* as solutions has fallen this year. Only 13% now mention improving vehicle emissions, down from 23% in 2005, and only 12% suggest a reduction in driving as a solution, down from 17% in 2005.

Thus, motorists believe that technology and design will lead the way, with improvements to public transport and alternative fuels also contributing to maintaining the status quo for motorists, not keen to have their driving behaviour curtailed.

Contribution of Cars to Greenhouse Emissions

When asked about how much cars contribute to total greenhouse emissions in Australia, nearly half the sample (46%) believe that they have a rough idea – but their estimates turn out to be a significant overstatement of reality.

The correct answer is between 5% and 10%, yet over eight in 10 (84%) overestimate the figure – with motorists’ average “guesstimate” being 32%.



Younger motorists in particular, are especially likely to overestimate the contribution of cars to Australia’s greenhouse emissions, with 89% of those aged 18-34 making this mistake in judgment (and their mean “guesstimate” sitting higher at 35%).

What is also interesting is that the average estimate given by those who claim to have a rough idea of cars’ contribution (34%) is actually further from the correct figure than the mean “guesstimate” given by those who claimed to have no idea (30%) – indicating that motorists are poorly informed on this issue.

Star Rating Systems

It is not surprising that in this context, nine in 10 Australians think it would be a good idea to have a system of environmental star ratings for cars, which indicates the impact that particular cars have on the environment.

Support for such a system is fairly consistent across both urban and regional areas (91% and 89% respectively agreeing that it would be a good idea), and is also at very similar levels across all states and territories (ranging between 88% and 91% in favour).

Younger motorists are particularly in favour of the introduction of environmental star ratings, with 94% of those aged 18-24 viewing the initiative as a good idea.

