

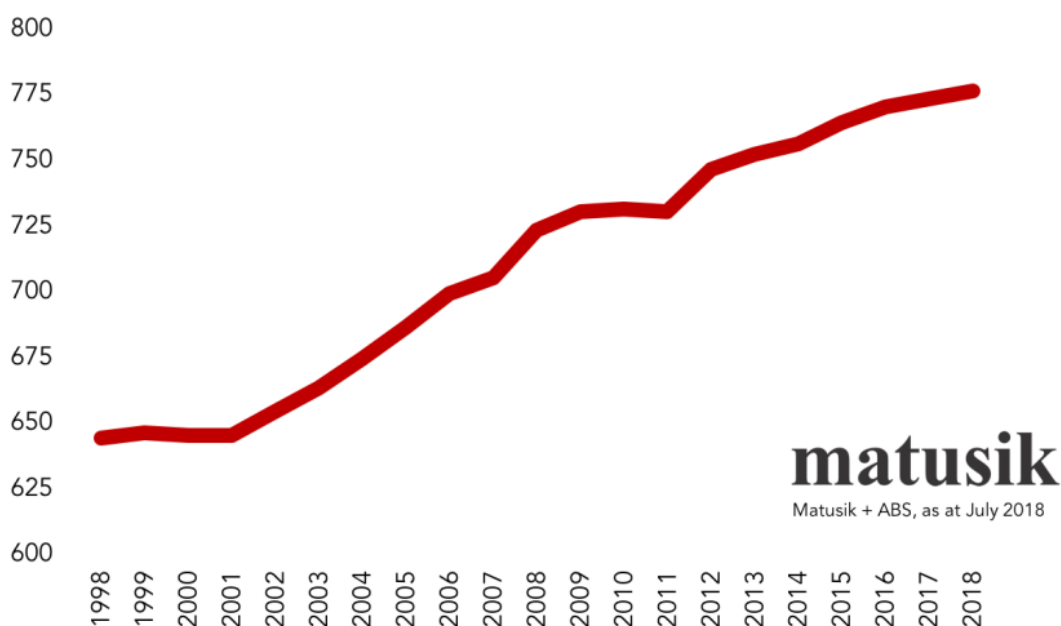
# Cars

Much is written about population growth and its positive impact on most things economic.

But there is also sting in that tale.

Despite the intelligentsia telling us the opposite, the number of vehicles per capita, is on the rise in Australia. It is currently 776 vehicles per 1,000 bodies. It was 723 a decade ago and just 644 in 1998.

Registered vehicles per 1,000 population  
Australia



Gentrification, urbanisation, uberisation and all those other trendy urban movements haven't yet had an impact on our car use and especially the number of cars on our streets.

There are just over 19 million registered vehicles in Australia, which is up 25% on ten years ago. Pity our road

and parking capacity hasn't increased anything like that volume over the same time frame. It is no surprise that traffic congestion has become much worse and many of our streets are now parking lots.

## Registered vehicles

### Australia, states + territories

State/Territory	2018 (no)	Decade change	% change
NSW	5,618,385	1,098,422	24%
Vic	4,923,032	1,001,458	26%
Qld	4,045,335	871,888	27%
SA	1,408,960	230,056	20%
WA	2,234,564	487,985	28%
Tas	480,935	89,608	23%
NT	162,500	39,514	32%
ACT	302,568	60,806	25%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>19,176,279</b>	<b>3,879,737</b>	<b>25%</b>

Tasmania, in particular, is feeling the change with 921 vehicles per 1,000 people and a 17% increase in this statistic over the past ten years. Queensland, South and Western Australia are also feeling the heat.

Interestingly Victoria – read Melbourne – has seen little change in the ratio of vehicles per population. Yes, their recent high rate of population growth has seen their streets get more crowded, but it is not as bad as it might have been.

## Registered vehicles per 1,000 population

### Australia, states + territories

State/Territory	Vehicles/1,000	Decade change	% change
NSW	712	59	9%

Vic	774	25	3%
Qld	817	60	8%
SA	816	72	10%
WA	863	53	7%
Tas	921	134	17%
NT	660	96	17%
ACT	733	35	5%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>7%</b>

There are lots of lessons here including Melbourne's somewhat more decentralised workforce; medium density infill housing in Melbourne's middle and outer suburbs; the city's range of effective public transport options and a strong local culture of public transport use. It isn't perfect but better than what is (or more to the point, isn't) happening in our other urban centres.

So, when you hear all the positives about population growth, remember 1,000 additional people means 776 more cars, Australia-wide, and closer to 817 more cars in Queensland.

### **End note**

Maybe driverless cars will reverse this trend. GoGet and other car sharing schemes might help too. But I am not that convinced.

For mine the key is to get people working closer to where they live and to provide housing closer to where they work. Yet most councils and state governments have planning schemes and policies that do the opposite.

Brisbane City Council, sadly, has recently joined this long queue.

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Our chart and both tables are sourced from ABS Publication

9309.0 – Motor Vehicle Census, Australia.

Until next time,



**Michael Matusik**

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Matusik Missives are free but public support is vital so that I can continue to fund investigations and publish posts which speak reason to the distortion. **Your annual \$99 donation helps me, help you! Click [here](#) to donate.**