

MEDIA RELEASE
FRIDAY 25 JULY 2008

FAILURE TO SHOP LOCALLY ADDING TO AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL WOES – NEW RESEARCH

A national audit of everyday shopping habits has revealed a tendency to travel away from local shopping strips to make simple purchases is responsible for adding almost 1.9 million tonnes to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and is robbing local communities of up to \$92 billion in revenue.

Conducted for local business online search directory TrueLocal and released today, the national audit looked to identify where a basket of nine common purchases, including takeaway food and alcohol, were made. It found that in a 12 month period, the average Australian aged between 18 and 64 is making over 43 trips, travelling up to 477 kilometres outside of their local area and spending over \$7,000 to make these purchases. Visits to doctors, dentists, hairdressers and other professional services account for a further 6 trips and another 78 kilometres.

Collectively this represents more than 650 million out-of-area shopping trips generating 7.3 billion kilometres of extra travel. The biggest contributor of extra travel appears to be shopping trips for clothes and accessories, accounting for almost half a million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, followed by out-of-area trips for takeaway food, which is responsible for increasing our carbon footprint by a further 306,000 tonnes.

According to Arron Wood, 2007's Environmentalist of the Year, much of this impact could be reduced if more Australians were to make a conscious effort to shop locally. "The habit of getting into the car to drive unnecessary distances to buy things that are available in our own backyard just does not make economic or social sense. Not only is there a massive impact on the environment, but with rising petrol prices, there is the personal cost, and for local businesses, which are often the lifeblood of many communities, there is the disastrous economic cost," explained Arron.

Well-known boxer and small business owner Kosta Tsyzu agrees. "In most parts of Australia – from the city to the bush - local business is the backbone of the local community. Local businesses not only provide jobs but they often support local groups such as schools and charities. Can you imagine what a local community would look like without them? With \$92 billion worth of lost sales at stake, the degree of out-of-area shopping for simple purchases detected by this audit is a serious issue for all small business owners."

According to the TrueLocal shopping audit, it seems Australians want to shop locally with 86 per cent of those surveyed agreeing it saves time, 62 per cent agreeing it provides jobs and supports the local economy and 46 per cent believing it creates a sense of community. Yet 54 per cent admit they don't visit their nearest dentist, 44 per cent say they don't go to their local hairdresser and 43 per cent say they go to a doctor outside their local area.

It appears that rising petrol prices and concern for the environment may not be enough to encourage shoppers to change their ways. The biggest hurdle to shopping locally for many appears to be in finding good local businesses.

"Surprisingly, when investigating what would motivate more local shopping, the TrueLocal shopping audit found that making it easier to find good local businesses would make people more inclined to

shop locally than rising petrol prices (89 per cent versus 73 per cent). That's why we need innovative solutions to help people easily locate what they need within their local area. The number one rule in generating behavioral change it to make it easy for people," explained Arron.

As a dedicated local business online search directory, the newly relaunched TrueLocal website is a great tool for any Australian wanting to find good local businesses in their local area.

TrueLocal's chief executive officer, John Allan, said TrueLocal offers much more than just a phone number and address.

"It provides detailed information on the business, products and services on offer, photos, video clips, street maps and independent reviews from previous customers," he said.

"It makes finding the best hairdresser, bottle shop, doctor, dentist, retail outlet, mechanic or tradesman in any local area so much easier."

"Any solution which helps connect local customers with local businesses thereby reducing unnecessary travel is a bonus for the environment," added Arron Wood.

About the research: The TrueLocal shopping audit was conducted by Galaxy Research for TrueLocal in July 2008. The study was conducted online among 300 adults aged 18-64 years and the data was weighted to reflect the latest ABS population estimates. The greenhouse gas emission estimates were provided by not for profit organisation Climate Positive.

- ENDS -

For more information, please contact Kim Viney or Linda Reid at Hausmann Communications on (02) 9361 3777 or 0413 602 803 (Kim's mobile) or 0417 800 996 (Linda's mobile)

Average number of trips taken outside of local area in last 12 months:

- Takeaway food: 10.6 trips
- Clothes and accessories: 8.5 trips
- Beer, wine or spirits: 5.7 trips
- Plants or gardening items: 3.4 trips

Average dollars spent outside of local are in last 12 months:

- Clothing and accessories: \$11 billion (or \$100 per shopping occasion)
- DIY items or tools: \$3 billion (or \$74 million per shopping occasion)
- Plants or gardening items: \$3 billion (or \$68 per shopping occasion)
- Beer, wine and spirits: \$4 billion (or \$61 per shopping occasion)
- Cosmetics: \$2 billion (or \$53 per shopping occasion)

Biggest causes of greenhouse gas emissions:

- Trips to buy clothing and accessories: 468,697 tonnes
- Trips to buy takeaway food: 306,700 tonnes
- Trips to buy household furniture or appliances: 193,511 tonnes
- Trips to buy beer, wine or spirits: 204,815 tonnes
- Trips to buy plants or gardening items: 167,936 tonnes
- Trips to buy computer hardware or software: 132,511 tonnes