

SURVEY RESULTS TURN UP GOOD AND BAD

Western Australia's Green Senator Scott Ludlam has seized the opportunity to push his party's case for more public transport spending in the wake of the December release of quarterly Transport Opinion Survey (TOPS) data.

The survey, conducted by the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies, found 54 percent of Australians see investment in public transport as a higher priority than fixing roads.

"The pleasing thing from the research is the strong support for public transport, but of equal importance was the study's findings of widely-held views that transport in Australia is getting worse," Ludlam says.

"People feel there has not been enough investment in public transport and we agree — this needs to change."

A closer look at the TOPS data for the December 2010 quarter suggests it's Victorians who are most concerned about the state of public transport. They blame the state's privatisation policies.

ITLS Director Professor David Hensher says Victoria's public transport has experienced more privatisation than any other state, with tram and metropolitan rail services franchised to private providers in the last decade aiming to improve efficiency.

"Many users believe services have deteriorated in private operators' hands with unreliability and overcrowding, possibly due to under-investment."