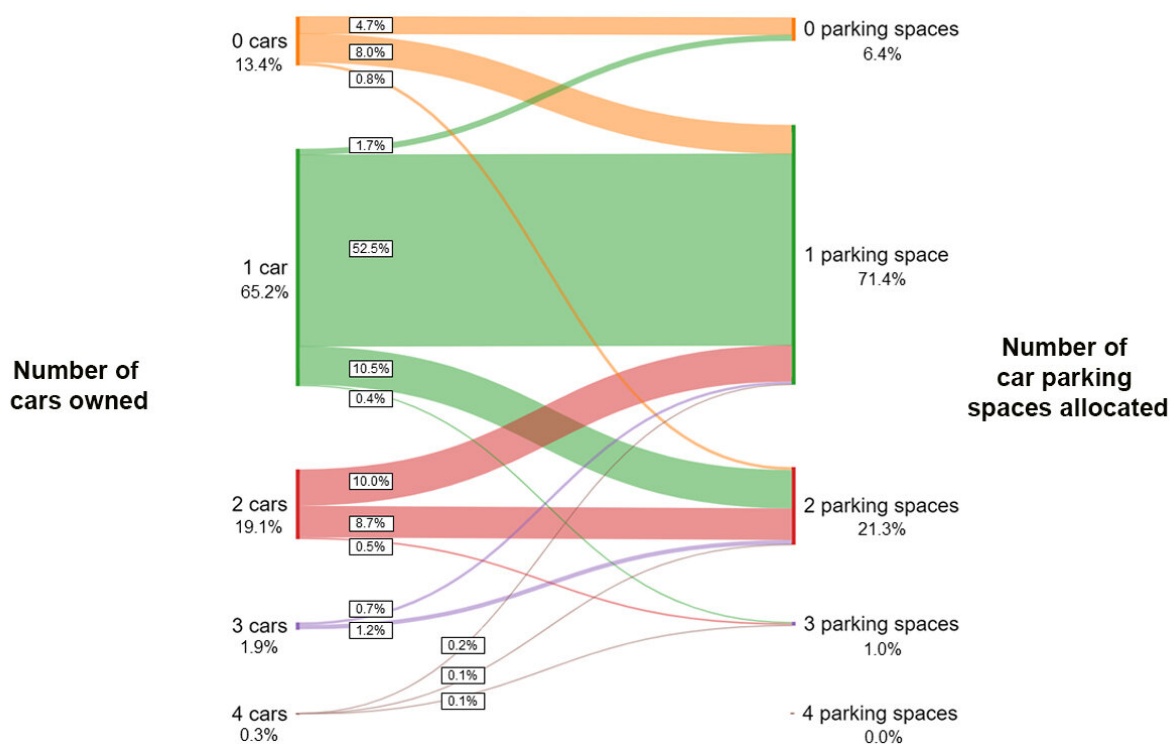


Australians paying \$6 billion for unused apartment parking

March 30 2023



A Sankey chart showing the correlation between number of cars owned and number of car parking spaces allocated. Credit: Chris De Gruyter

Experts are calling for planning policy to 'unbundle' parking spaces from apartments to reduce housing costs and alleviate street parking woes.

A new RMIT University study surveyed more than 1,300 [apartment](#)

residents across Melbourne, Sydney and Perth to assess the adequacy of off-street parking for apartment households.

Lead researcher Dr. Chris De Gruyter from RMIT's Centre for Urban Research said two thirds of households owned the same number of cars as their allocated parking spots.

However, 20% of households had too much allocated parking, while 14% did not have enough.

De Gruyter said the imbalance of off-site parking for apartments reflected residents not having a choice in how many parking spots they needed when renting or buying an apartment.

In Victoria, there are [minimum parking provisions](#) that state every one and two-bedroom apartment must have at least one parking spot, and apartments with three or more bedrooms must have at least two.

"We found in our study that people living in larger apartments tend to have an oversupply of parking because of this policy, which means they're paying for a space they're not using," De Gruyter said.

De Gruyter said 13.4% of the surveyed households did not own a car but most were still allocated a parking space.

With each [parking space](#) worth up to [\\$100,000](#), he estimated the price of unused off-site parking is costing residents more than \$6 billion.

"This oversupply is not just an inefficient use of [space](#), it is exacerbating housing affordability issues," he said.

"Meanwhile, apartment households with an undersupply of parking are forced to park on the street, competing with visitors in the area."

"It is very clear that there is actually plenty of apartment parking—it's just allocated incorrectly."

Unbundling for more choice

De Gruyter is calling for state and [local governments](#) to allow for unbundled parking in planning policy to help balance the over and undersupply of off-site parking.

He said unbundling parking was not about taking away parking from residents—it was about giving people the choice to own or rent [parking spaces](#) in line with their needs.

"We can choose the number of bedrooms we want in our homes, yet we have no say in how much parking we need," he said.

"We want people to have the option to choose not to have parking instead of it being imposed on them. Similarly, those who wish to have additional parking can have this."

Unbundled off-street parking in [apartment buildings](#) is still uncommon in Australia, but can be seen in several newer complexes, such as Melbourne Square, Indi City Sydney and Arklife in Brisbane, choosing to unbundle parking from [apartments](#).

De Gruyter said it was promising to see the [renewed Arden precinct](#) in North Melbourne introduce planning policy to facilitate unbundled parking for their new buildings.

"Unbundled parking is going to help with housing affordability, reduce car use and on-street [parking](#) issues," he said.

"We're also going to see better health for residents as there will be more

[physical activity](#) due to more public transport use, and better air quality from less car use."

But waiting for the market alone to bring this change would be too slow, said De Gruyter, and state and local government had an important role to play.

"[Do apartment residents have enough car parking? An empirical assessment of car parking adequacy in Australian cities](#)" is published in the *Journal of Transport Geography*.

This [research](#) was led by RMIT University in collaboration with the University of Western Australia. Chris De Gruyter, Paula Hooper and Sarah Foster are co-authors.

More information: Chris De Gruyter et al, Do apartment residents have enough car parking? An empirical assessment of car parking adequacy in Australian cities, *Journal of Transport Geography* (2023). DOI: [10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2023.103542](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2023.103542)

Provided by RMIT University

Citation: Australians paying \$6 billion for unused apartment parking (2023, March 30) retrieved 6 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2023-03-australians-paying-billion-unused-apartment.html>

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