Stress less with a calming commute

New research from Virgin Mobile shows 83% of Aussies crave a calmer commute

SYDNEY, 6 February 2018: Aussies are entering the new year with hopes of a calmer commute, with a shocking 5.9 million admitting their journey to work is often more stressful than the day itself.

With the back to work grind in full swing, Aussies are spending on average over an hour and a half (95 minutes) commuting each day, equating to 1.8 billion minutes nationally. Two in 5 Aussies commute via public transport and say time pressures (76%) and loud, annoying passengers (61%) leave them stressed out before the day begins.

It’s no wonder then that 73% of public transport commuters look to their mobile phones to zone out, whether its streaming music (55%), scrolling social feeds (53%) or catching up on the news (53%). In fact, two thirds (68%) of public transport commuters would find their commute more stressful if they didn’t have their phone.

To show how your mobile can help relieve commuting stress, Virgin Mobile and Smiling Mind have released ‘The Daily Commute’, a new meditation program featuring four activities designed to help Aussies on the go ease into their day. Available via the Smiling Mind app, the new meditations encourage Aussie’s to take three to 10 minutes to practice mindfulness as part of their daily commute.

The guided meditations ‘Taking Public Transport’, ‘Walking Mindfully’ and ‘Taking Flight’ help users experience mindfulness no matter how they commute, while ‘Mindful Mindset’ allows drivers to get centred and set their intention for the day or evening ahead, before getting in the car.

“With 7 in 10 Aussies using their mobile phone while commuting on public transport, it’s never been easier to experience the benefits of mindful meditation on the go. Together with Smiling Mind, we developed these new meditations to help busy Aussies be more mindful as they go about their daily life, using their mobile phone as a force for good,” said James Gully, Virgin Mobile CEO.

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgement, and some of the many benefits can include a reduction in anxiety and stress, increased productivity, enhanced awareness and empathy, and improved sleep.

“We hope this new program gives commuters the calm they need to set them up for success for the day ahead, or help them wind down on the way home,” Gully added.

“Mindfulness can truly be practiced anytime, anywhere through your smartphone. We’ve worked with Virgin Mobile to design modules that are custom made for the commuter journey, putting people in a calm state during their ride and throughout the day,” Dr Addie Wootten, Smiling Mind CEO, said.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors
Research was conducted by Virgin Mobile and carried out by Lonergan from a nationally representative survey of Australians in January 2017.

The research also found:

- The top 5 factors that cause Aussies a stressful commute include:
  1. Getting stuck in traffic (59%)
  2. Loud / annoying people (55%)
  3. Worrying about being late (50%)
  4. Missing the bus / train / ferry etc. (40%)
  5. Lack of personal space (34%)
- For those commuting via public transport, time related factors (76%) and other commuters (61%) are the core stressors
- 2 in 5 (41%) Aussies commute via public transport, and over two thirds (73%) use their phone to zone out from what’s happening around them
- Nearly 4.5 million public transport commuters (63%) spend the majority of the commute on their phone with 68% stating they would find their commute more stressful if they didn’t have their phone with them

About Virgin Mobile
From the moment Sir Richard Branson launched Virgin Mobile in 2000, we’ve been driven by our brand purpose of changing the game for good. In a world where most Australians feel powerless against their mobile provider, Virgin Mobile is here to restore the power balance. After all, we’re famous for doing things a little differently, and for a very good reason – our customers.

First of all, we deliver a fairer and more genuine experience by delivering above and beyond on the basics, with award-winning customer service and irresistible prices on the latest handsets, backed by the Optus 4G Plus network.

We also know Aussies need data that works for them. They need flexibility without the compromise. That’s why we’ve introduced FairData™, a unique offer exclusive to Virgin Mobile Postpaid customers. FairData™ uses the collective power of Virgin Mobile’s Postpaid data products to give people data on their own terms. From the Australian-first innovation of Data Rollover which gives you a second chance to use what you paid for to Data Gifting that lets customers share any amount of their unused data with other Virgin Mobile Postpaid customer.

But it doesn’t stop there. When you join us, you’re joining the Virgin family too, so if you’re on a Postpaid plan you can earn Velocity Points just for paying your bill and get access to discounts and deals across other Virgin brands. You’ll also feel part of something bigger, as we invite you to help make the world fairer and brighter through our partnerships with R U OK? and Smiling Mind.
And we do all of this with a side serve of unmistakable Virgin swagger. Why? Because we don’t just play the game, we change it for good.

Now that’s Virgin Mobile.

**About Smiling Mind:**
Smiling Mind is a 100% not-for-profit organisation that works to make mindfulness meditation accessible to all. We deliver the benefits of mindfulness meditation to adults and young people via a fun, easy-to-use, free app, and supported by our training programs for education and in the workplace. All of our programs are backed by research and developed by psychologists.

Mindfulness meditation improves focus, increases resilience and helps people to cope with the stress of modern life.

Our vision is to help every mind thrive. Our mission is to provide accessible, life-long tools to support healthy minds.

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