



*Under embargo until 12.01am 24 January 2024*

## **Back to school road safety: Aussies admit to speeding in school zones**

New research has revealed a third of Australians have fessed up to speeding through school zones, with some even excusing the reckless behaviour because they couldn't see any children at the time.

As kids around the country start to return to school this week, national insurer AAMI and Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) say the statistics are shocking and are urging Aussie drivers to slow down and pay attention to signage and lowered speed limits.

### **AAMI's research revealed concerning insights into our reckless driving behaviours around schools, including:**

- **A third** of Aussie drivers admit to speeding through a school zone because they didn't notice the signs.
- Almost a third (**29 per cent**) of Aussie drivers have admitted to being confused about school zones, including speed limits, times and signs.
- Alarmingly, **one in ten** have sped through a school zone because there were no children in sight.
- A further **one in 20** drivers have been involved in a car accident or near miss around a school zone.
- **13 per cent** say they don't know what time school zones apply.

The research also reveals that 72 per cent of Aussie drivers admit to exceeding the speed limit in general. And two thirds of Aussie drivers say they admitted to speeding because they didn't notice the signs.

### **Excuses as to why Aussies speed in general:**

- Not noticing the signs indicating a change in speed limit – **65 per cent**
- Lapse in concentration and driving on auto-pilot – **59 per cent**
- Rushing to get to next destination, including afterschool/ work activity because I'm running late – **40 per cent**
- Impatience – **18 per cent**

When asked why they adhered to the speed limit, almost half (48 per cent) of Aussie drivers fear getting caught by Police and don't want to pay a fine or accrue demerit points and lose their license. Concerningly, only one in five fear injuring others on the road, which shows Aussies are more concerned about paying a fine rather than putting others' lives at risk.

### **Quotes attributable to AAMI Motor Claims Manager Leah James:**

"Reduced speed limits in school zones have been around in different states for more than two decades, so there is absolutely no excuse to speed through school zones.

"A pedestrian crossing the road has an 87 per cent chance of survival when hit by a vehicle travelling at 40km/h or less. This drops dramatically when the speed is higher".

"School aged children, particularly those starting Prep or under 10 years of age have limited road safety experience and can behave unpredictably. The onus is on us as adults to protect their lives and ensure they can get to and from school safely every day.

"AAMI has analysed more than 350,000 motor insurance claims across the country in the past financial year and found Fridays were the worst day of the week for crashes, while afternoons between 1pm and 4.30pm during school pickup proved the most dangerous time."

Statistics released from the Australian Road Safety Foundation shows:

- In 2023, there were 1,266 people killed on Australian roads (up 7.3 per cent from 2022).
- Of those fatalities, 9 per cent were children under the age of 18 years.
- 16 pedestrian children were killed on Australian roads last year.

### **Quotes attributable to Russell White CEO and Founder of the Australian Road Safety Foundation:**



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"Each year, more than 1,200 lives are tragically lost on Australian roads. This year, we want to see a decrease in road fatalities especially involving children, and we're calling on the community to help us achieve this.

"The keys to reducing this number and saving lives are in our hands, which is why we're partnering with AAMI to encourage Australians to drive safely around schools.

"No-one wants to be involved in a car accident with a child, these can be traumatic and have a ripple effect in the community, not just on those involved. School zones are in place to protect lives and prevent fatalities but are only effective when adhered to."

**Music to the ears of parents**

After initially launching in 2021, Australian Road Safety Foundation and AAMI are once again rolling out their *Slow Down Songs* initiative across Spotify, to geo-target drivers nearing school zones. Songs start playing normally but dramatically slow down when drivers are within 5km of a school, which reminds them they are entering an area with lowered speed limits and need to slow down and take extra caution.

**AAMI's Top Tips for Back-to-School Road Safety:**

- Expect the unexpected - children have limited road-safety awareness and experience and can behave unpredictably
- Always look out for children disembarking from buses or cars
- If dropping off or picking up your children, follow your school's safety directives
- Avoid driving distracted and follow all road rules and signage.

**[ENDS]**

|   | NSW | VIC | QLD | SA  | WA  | National |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| <b>Do you ever exceed the speed limit?</b>  |     |     |     |     |     |          |
| Never   | 33% | 25% | 23% | 32% | 22% | 28%      |
| Sometimes   | 65% | 73% | 77% | 67% | 76% | 71%      |
| All the time  | 3%  | 2%  | 1%  | 1%  | 2%  | 2%       |
| <b>What is the maximum you have exceeded the speed limit by?</b>  |     |     |     |     |     |          |
| Less than 10 km/h   | 70% | 75% | 73% | 69% | 64% | 72%      |
| 10-20 km/h  | 23% | 21% | 17% | 22% | 28% | 22%      |
| More than 20 km/h   | 7%  | 4%  | 10% | 8%  | 8%  | 7%       |
| <b>Which of the following have caused you to exceed the speed limit?</b>                                    |     |     |     |     |     |          |
| Not noticing the signs indicating a change in speed limit   | 66% | 63% | 69% | 61% | 64% | 65%      |
| Not knowing what time school zones apply  | 15% | 12% | 12% | 7%  | 13% | 13%      |
| Lapse in concentration and driving on auto-pilot  | 53% | 57% | 68% | 62% | 66% | 59%      |
| Rushing to get to next destination, including afterschool/ work activity because I'm running late           | 37% | 36% | 43% | 42% | 56% | 40%      |
| Impatience  | 22% | 18% | 15% | 14% | 19% | 18%      |
| <b>If you stick to the speed limit, is it because:</b>  |     |     |     |     |     |          |
| You are scared of getting caught by police and don't want to pay a fine                                     | 32% | 36% | 40% | 49% | 41% | 37%      |
| You are scared of getting caught by police and don't want demerit points/ lose license                      | 13% | 10% | 11% | 7%  | 10% | 11%      |
| You don't want to injure others on the road   | 22% | 24% | 18% | 17% | 24% | 22%      |
| You don't want to have a car accident and damage your car/ lose money on fixing it/ paying insurance excess | 9%  | 11% | 10% | 8%  | 10% | 10%      |
| You notice other cars in front/ around you have slowed down   | 5%  | 2%  | 5%  | 0%  | 5%  | 4%       |
| You are a law-abiding citizen at all times.   | 20% | 17% | 16% | 19% | 11% | 18%      |



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| Have you ever done any of the following?  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sped through a school zone because there were no children in sight 4  | 9%  | 8%  | 6%  | 14% | 7%  | 8%  |
| Sped through a school zone because I didn't notice the speed reduction sign   | 33% | 33% | 40% | 22% | 24% | 33% |
| Driven through a red light because there were no cars or pedestrians in sight   | 15% | 11% | 12% | 8%  | 11% | 12% |
| Used your mobile phone to access or open navigation in a Maps type app while driving                                  | 42% | 37% | 34% | 47% | 46% | 40% |
| Used your mobile phone to check/ write emails while behind the wheel  | 9%  | 6%  | 4%  | 10% | 10% | 8%  |
| Used your mobile phone to take a photo while driving  | 8%  | 7%  | 5%  | 13% | 8%  | 8%  |
| Used your mobile phone to access social media while driving   | 7%  | 5%  | 3%  | 8%  | 3%  | 5%  |
| Used your mobile phone to make a phone call while driving   | 25% | 28% | 24% | 29% | 33% | 27% |
| Used your mobile phone to send a message while driving  | 13% | 17% | 10% | 19% | 14% | 14% |
| Are you confused about school zone speed limits, school zone times and school zone signs?                             |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| I don't know when the school term ends and begins and if the school zone speed limits apply during those times or not | 22% | 14% | 17% | 14% | 11% | 17% |
| I don't know when the school zone times apply during the day as I'm not a parent to school aged kids.                 | 7%  | 12% | 7%  | 10% | 7%  | 8%  |
| I don't know when the school zone times apply during the day even though I have school aged kids.                     | 2%  | 3%  | 2%  | 3%  | 3%  | 2%  |
| I don't know what the speed limit is in school zones.   | 1%  | 2%  | 1%  | 3%  | 1%  | 1%  |
| No, they're straightforward.  | 68% | 69% | 74% | 71% | 79% | 71% |
| Have you been involved in a car accident or near-miss around a school zone?   |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Yes   | 4%  | 6%  | 4%  | 7%  | 3%  | 5%  |
| No  | 96% | 94% | 97% | 93% | 97% | 96% |

The research findings were compiled through a national survey with a representative sample of 1,000 Australians aged 18+ and was conducted by PureProfile in January 2024 on behalf of AAMI.

Claims data collected from Suncorp Group's network of brands including: AAMI, Suncorp Insurance, GIO, Apia and Bingle

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<sup>i</sup> [School zones - Randwick City Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/school-zones)