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## The times they are a-changin': Safety concerns stop kids travelling to school alone

- *Only one third of Aussie kids allowed to walk, bike or scoot to school alone*
- *AAMI's research found most parents blame other drivers for school zone danger*
- *One in four drivers admit to speeding through school zones*

New research released today by national insurer AAMI revealed that more than half (56 per cent) of primary school children are now driven or accompanied to and from school by another adult, with only a third (37 per cent) of parents allowing their kids to travel to school unaccompanied or with other kids.

This is in stark contrast to previous generations when almost seven in ten Australians (69 per cent) used to walk, bike or scoot to and from primary school by themselves.

When digging deeper to identify why Australian parents no longer allow their children to travel to and from school unaccompanied by an adult, more than three quarters (78 per cent) cite safety concerns - with the majority (61 per cent) worried about drivers not paying attention - and 17 per cent blaming their children's lack of road safety awareness and sense.

As the first full week of the 2025 school year gets underway, national insurer AAMI and the Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) are warning Aussie drivers to pay attention to speed limits in school zones, slow down and keep a lookout for children crossing roads.

### **AAMI's research revealed alarming insights on dangerous driving behaviours Aussies admit to in and around school zones including:**

- **A quarter (25 per cent)** admit to speeding through school zones because they didn't notice signs
- **More than one in ten (12 per cent)** do not always follow school 'Drop and Go' zone rules
- **12 per cent** admit to speeding through school zones when they don't see any children around
- **12 per cent** admit to being distracted by their phone while driving or queuing in a school drop off zone
- **11 per cent** have double parked or stopped in the middle of the road in front of their children's school.

Additionally, the research found that more than a quarter (28 per cent) of Australian drivers were confused about school zone speed limits and times, while 22 per cent of Aussie parents were confused about their children's school 'Drop and Go' zone rules.

### **Quotes attributable to AAMI Motor Claims Executive Manager Luisa Rose:**

"The research findings indicate a generational shift in the way parents let their children commute to and from school, with the majority of Aussie kids now being driven or chaperoned by an adult," Ms Rose said.

"With this shift in our approach to school travel we need to be aware children may not have road safety skills and awareness, increasing the risk of an accident occurring in a school zone."

"While understandably not everyone can walk, ride or scoot to school due to distance and time, one thing everyone can do is learn, and follow, is the road rules to ensure our children are safe when arriving at and

leaving school.

**Quotes attributable to Russell White, Chair & Founder of the Australian Road Safety Foundation:**

"Alarming, deaths among children aged 0 - 7 years increased by 54 per cent in 2024 compared to the previous year<sup>1</sup>, and this is not a trajectory we want to see continue in 2025," Mr White said.

"This year, we hope to see a decrease in road fatalities especially involving children, and we're calling on the community to help.

"AAMI's research findings revealed that Australians are driving recklessly in and around school zones and need to pay attention to speed limits and rules that have been put in place to keep children safe.

"Speed signs in school zones have been around for decades, so there is no excuse to be confused by them or to be caught speeding during those designated times.

"The keys to reducing the Australian road toll are in our hands, which is why we're once again partnering with AAMI to encourage Australians to drive safely in and around schools."

**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. This year's campaign features music from acclaimed Australian artist Amy Shark, adding a powerful and emotive soundtrack to its message

**AAMI and the ARSF's top tips for Back to School Road Safety:**

- **Expect the unexpected** - children have limited road-safety awareness and experience and can behave unpredictably
- **Look out, look out there are children about!** Always look out for children disembarking from buses or cars
- **There are rules for a reason** - if dropping off or picking up your children, know and follow your school's safety directives
- **Park distractions and focus on the job at hand** - avoid driving distracted and follow all road rules and signage
- **Take the time to teach your children** about road safety where you can walk, scoot or bike with them to school so they learn these vital life skills.

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**Notes to Editor**

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

**For more information:**

**Angela Wilkinson**

E: [Angela.wilkinson@suncorp.com.au](mailto:Angela.wilkinson@suncorp.com.au)

T: 0477 395 119

**Melissa Cronin:**

E: [melissa.cronin@suncorp.com.au](mailto:melissa.cronin@suncorp.com.au)

T: 0439 224 438

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics for 1 January – 30 November 2024. Data sourced from BITRE as of 20 January 2025