

Embargoed until 10.00am Friday, 28 April

Research shows that bad behaviour on the roads can be reduced through education and awareness of the individual role people can play in reducing road trauma¹:

- The vast majority (85%) of Australian road users believe it is individual road users that will have the biggest impact on the road toll
- Specifically, Aussies believe that the road users who wield the largest influence on our road safety from highest to lowest:
 - General road users
 - Truck drivers
 - Motorcyclists
 - Cyclists
 - Scooterists / E-Scooterists
 - Pedestrians
 - Passengers
 - Skateboarders
- And yet, 62% of the Australian population admit they take risks on the road
- Likely because safety isn't always top of mind for close to half of Australians (46%) when they're using the road
- Alarming for road experts, more than 1 in 10 Australians say they don't believe there's risk on the road and they're confident enough using them not to worry about safety at all
- And while almost half (49%) say they care about safety an equal amount no matter how they're using the road, the number who admitted they care most when they're behind the wheel was not far off (42%)
- But when confronted with the road toll numbers, more than three-quarters (76%) of Australian road users admitted it made them think or inspired them to make a difference

¹Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 3-9 March 2022 with a sample size of n=1,016 adults aged 18+ years

As road aggression rises, Australians believe reviving the thank you wave may be one of the keys to promoting safer roads²:

- Half of Australians (50%) have reported an increase in aggression on the roads since they've returned to normal (post Covid-19), and almost half of these say it's been "significant"
- More than half of Australians (55%) believe the 'thank you wave' is dying out, and a good majority of those people (47%) would like to see it make a come back
- The vast majority of Australians (87%) care about thank you waves being offered on the road
- When it comes to reasons why, the key reasons were:
 - As an important reminder that we all share the road (69%)
 - Because they can inspire more kindness on the road (68%)
 - That they can prevent road rage (56%)
- On the opposite end of the spectrum, just 5% of people didn't think a thank you wave could contribute to improved road safety
- Almost a third (32%) claim to give a 'thank you wave' daily or every time they're in the car, and another 28% said multiple times a week
- So when it comes to the types of thank you waves, Australians have clear favourites:
 - 74% of Aussies wave when saying thanks to someone who has been kind
 - 61% use a wave to signal that they're happy for another road user to go first
 - 51% return thank you waves given by other drivers
 - 44% just use a wave to acknowledge someone else on the road without reason
 - 30% use it to apologise for being pushy or annoying

²Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 3-9 March 2022 with a sample size of n=1,016 adults aged 18+ years

However, choosing road safety and improving bad behaviour are main factors that the ARSF hopes will work alongside the thank you wave³:

- As pedestrians, almost half of Australian road users admit to taking risks on the road. The most prominent include:
 - Listening to headphones (28%)
 - Texting, checking social media or playing games on a mobile device (28%)
 - Talking on the phone or asking Siri/Google Assist a multitude of questions (24%)
 - Blinding following the crowd without looking out (18%)
 - Reading a book / electronic reader (5%)

- As drivers, bad behaviour is still presenting a huge risk factor:
 - More than half (51%) of Australian drivers admit to speeding
 - More than 4 in 10 (43%) use a mobile phone behind the wheel
 - More than a quarter (28%) drive fatigued
 - Almost a quarter (24%) have failed to stop at a stop sign
 - More than 1 in 10 drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Almost 1 in 10 (9%) have driven through a red light

- When it comes to the reasons that we look away from the road as drivers, the top five reasons include:
 - Using GPS or maps on a phone/device (40%)
 - Changing the music (40%)
 - Talking to passengers or looking at a passenger device (24%)
 - Getting food out of the takeaway bag (18%)
 - Turning around to children in the backseat (17%)

³Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 3-9 March 2022 with a sample size of n=1,016 adults aged 18+ years

The drive to address road safety comes after the road toll has continued to climb over the past few years⁴:

- 1,193 people were killed on Australian roads last year, which is six per cent higher than the year before (1,127 total fatalities in 2021) and nine per cent higher than in 2020 (1,095 fatalities)
- And while many quickly assume this is just a problem for drivers, the reality is far more wide-reaching:
 - 555 drivers
 - 235 motorcyclists
 - 191 passengers
 - 164 pedestrians
 - 35 cyclists
 - An additional 13 deaths, which were uncategorised

⁴ Deaths in Australia, Australian Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (accessed 15 March)