

2024 FATALITY FREE FRIDAY NATIONAL FACT SHEET

According to new research¹, Australians' unsafe behaviour is responsible for increased road risk:

- More than half (54%) of the Australian population admits to breaking road rules.
- As pedestrians, 53% of Aussies admit to being distracted. The use of headphones and mobile phones are behind the most common distractions.
- Likewise, distraction is causing an issue for more than 7 in 10 (71%) of drivers. Using a GPS, changing music, using a mobile phone and turning away from the road to talk with passengers are the most common distractions.
- Add to this, more than two-thirds (68%) of drivers even admit to breaking the law:
 1. 48% of Australian drivers speed
 2. 32% admit to driving fatigued
 3. 27% admit to looking down to use their phone
 4. 26% have failed to observe a stop sign
 5. 17% talk on the phone while driving
 6. 14% have crossed a double line
 7. 9% have driven through a red light
 8. 7% drive under the influence of alcohol
 9. 4% haven't worn their seatbelt
 10. 2% drive under the influence of drugs
- Worryingly, risky driving is happening regularly, with 2 in 10 (21%) breaking the law at least weekly, and 4 in 10 Aussies (42%) at least monthly

Road safety education can make a difference in changing this dangerous behaviour:

- 8 in 10 Australians say road safety messages have had a positive impact on their behaviour:
 - 49% believe these messages leave a lasting impact on their behaviour
 - 33% believe it's improved their behaviour at least short-term.

¹ Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 12-27 March 2024 with a sample size of n=1513 adults aged 18+years

- Even just being confronted by the road toll numbers inspired 3 in 4 Australians (75%) to think or act more responsibly.
- Almost all Australians (99%) recognise that most road deaths could be preventable by people making safer choices.

A focus on protecting others' lives may be the key to improving Australians' dangerous habits:

- More than 8 in 10 (85%) Australians acknowledge that they drive safer when they recognise that their choices could kill or injure another person.
- It's likely why a similar number (87%) admit that they're a safer driver when they have passengers in the car.
- Interestingly, looking at the potential of the lives drivers are supposed to protect could inspire safer behaviour with more than half (51%) saying they would be more cautious if their passenger was destined to achieve something great.
- Of these, knowing that they could influence the medical, peace, technology, environmental and political landscapes had the most power, but even becoming a new social media influencer would be enough to improve behaviour:
 - 47% if they were going to make a medical breakthrough
 - 39% if they were destined to win a Nobel Peace Prize
 - 39% if they were going to invent a new technology
 - 38% if they were going to solve climate change
 - 34% if they were going to be the next Prime Minister
 - 33% if they were going to play sport for Australia
 - 29% if they were going to become a famous singer or musician
 - 25% if they were going to become the next Banksy or Picasso
 - 15% if they were going to become the next Kim Kardashian.

The 'thank you' wave could be more than just a gesture, instead serving as an important reminder to drivers that their road choices impact the lives around them:

- 57% of Australians believe the 'thank you' wave is dying out, which is more than last year (55%).
- That said, one-third of Aussie drivers (33%) use the thank you wave every day or every time they're in the car and an additional 56% of Aussies adopt a thank you wave at least once a month.

Driving road safety campaigns that focus on the impact of behaviour on others comes as Australia's road toll continues to climb²:

- Last year, 1,273 fatalities were recorded across the nation, which is 7.9% higher than the year before, and the third straight year that the road toll has increased.
 - 353 in New South Wales
 - 298 in Victoria
 - 278 in Queensland
 - 158 in Western Australia
 - 117 in South Australia
 - 34 in Tasmania
 - 31 in Northern Territory
 - 4 in Australia Capital Territory
- Importantly, more than 50% of deaths were not driving a vehicle:
 - 611 fatalities (48%) were drivers
 - 251 fatalities (20%) were motorcyclists
 - 210 fatalities (16%) were passengers
 - 159 fatalities (12%) were pedestrians
 - 35 fatalities (3%) were cyclists
 - 7 fatalities (1%) were unknown
- Contrary to common misperceptions about road crashes:
 - The majority of fatal crashes occurred during the day (62%)
 - The majority of fatal crashes occurred on a weekday (63%)
- Likewise, it wasn't young drivers who accounted for the largest number of fatalities, but experienced road users:
 - 14 young children aged between 0-7 years
 - 48 young people aged between 8-16 years
 - 243 young adults aged between 17-25 years
 - 284 adults aged between 26-39 years
 - 389 adults aged 40-64 years
 - 293 adults aged 65 and over

² Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Road Deaths, Annual Road Deaths Database, Accessed February 2024