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FATALITY FREE FRIDAY 2026 NATIONAL LAUNCH FACT SHEET

Road experts implore immediate attention as the Australian road toll continues to climb¹

- In 2025, 1,314 people were killed on Australian roads (a 1.7% increase on the year before) - that's more than three lives lost every single day.
- Road trauma impacts every type of road user
 - 571 drivers (44%)
 - 259 motorcyclists (19%)
 - 211 passengers (16%)
 - 197 pedestrians (15%)
 - 49 cyclists (4%)
 - and 27 other road users (2%)
- And despite common assumptions, most deaths occurred during the day (61%), with nearly one in five (19%) happening in 60km/h or lower speed zones.

According to the latest data from the Australian Road Safety Foundation², road risk is unacceptably normalised

- Risky behaviour is not rare - 71% of drivers admit to breaking at least one road law.
- In fact, more than half of drivers (53%) confess to taking risks or breaking laws on everyday journeys.
- Risky behaviour isn't a one-off either - 9 in 10 law-breaking drivers (90%) say they engage in unsafe behaviour at least occasionally, with 24% doing so fortnightly or more.
- Speeding is the most common offence, with nearly half of drivers (49%) admitting they have exceeded the speed limit. This is followed by driving while fatigued (30%), looking at a mobile phone (26%), failing to stop fully at a stop sign (21%) and talking on a phone (18%).
- And yet, despite being the number one way Australians believe we can stop road trauma, nearly three-quarters of drivers (72%) say something has caused them to lose focus while driving.

¹ Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Road Deaths, Annual Road Deaths Database, Accessed February 2026

² Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 27 January - 3 February 2025 with a sample size of n=1518 Australian drivers aged 18+years



- Navigation (35%) and changing music (30%) top the list of distractions, followed closely by interacting with passengers (28%) - highlighting how everyday in-car behaviours can compromise focus.
- Distraction doesn't stop when we leave the driver's seat, with 58% of Australians admitting to risky or distracting behaviours while walking or crossing the road.
 - Mobile phones and headphones dominate pedestrian distraction, with 29% admitting to texting or checking social media while crossing the road and 28% listening to music.
- The hardest road habits to quit aren't dramatic - they're everyday behaviours. Eating or drinking in the car (16%) and jaywalking (13%) rank higher than overtaking over a double line (8%) or using a phone behind the wheel (6%).

There is a clear disconnect between Australian attitudes and behaviours

- Yet despite the widespread risks happening on our roads, nearly three-quarters (72%) say they already make safe choices and actively encourage others to do the same.
- Almost half of drivers (44%) admit they don't consistently make safety a priority on the road.
- Nearly a quarter of drivers (24%) acknowledge unsafe habits or difficulty following through on safer choices - with 17% willing to change and 7% admitting they struggle to act.

But Australians care, and there is hope for a fatality-free future

- When it comes to preventing road trauma, Australians are on the same page - almost all (97%) believe most road deaths could be avoided if everyone made safer choices.
- Personal responsibility resonates - 88% of Australians agree that recognising their driving choices could kill or injure someone makes them a safer driver.
- Simply being reminded of Australia's devastating road toll prompts 8 in 10 drivers (80%) to think or act more safely.
- Australians connect with the human cost of road trauma - 6 in 10 (60%) say they think first about the families left behind, rather than the statistics themselves (15%).

And continued focus on road safety messaging and initiatives can and does save lives

- Road safety campaigns work - 83% of drivers say hearing or seeing road safety messages inspires them to stop taking risks.



- More than half (58%) report a lasting impact, while a further 25% say the messages change their behaviour, albeit temporarily.
- Storytelling saves lives - hearing a real-life road trauma story is the leading trigger for behaviour change (30%), ahead of a near miss (24%), being involved in a crash (20%) or receiving a fine (15%).