

## Australians on the road

With the numbers of vehicles on the road setting new records, McCrindle Research delivers a snapshot of Australia's cars, drivers and their attitudes.

### The Australian carpark

- There are almost 15 million vehicles registered to drive on Australia's roads. This is up from 10.4 million in 2003.
- 7 in 9 of these are passenger vehicles (e.g. cars, station wagons, 4WDs, etc.).
- For every motorcycle there are 27 cars on the road.
- For every bus, we have roughly 148 passenger vehicles.
- While the number of cars increased by 2.4% last year, the number of motorcycles increased by more than four times this (10.6%). There are 36% more motorbikes on the road today than there were in 2003.
- The growth in the number of vehicles on the road by state exactly mirrors the population growth rate. That is, the number of vehicles in Western Australia and Queensland grew by 4.7% last year- twice the rate of NSW, Victoria and the ACT (just over 2%).
- There are 1.4 people per vehicle – a figure that is edging closer to parity. In WA there are just 1.2 people per vehicle. Nationally there is 1 bus for every 250 Australians.
- The average age of all registered vehicles is now 10 years. This has been declining since it peaked at almost 11 years in 1998. However it is a lot older than the average age in 1971 when it was 6.1 years.
- Motor cycles are the youngest vehicle type with a median age of 9.1 years while the average campervan is older than most high school students (18.6 years)
- Tasmania has the oldest fleet, averaging 12 years, while the Northern Territory has the youngest fleet (and the fewest vehicles per capita) at 9 years.
- 8 in 10 vehicles use unleaded petrol, 1 in 10 use diesel and 1 in 10 using LPG/other fuel.
- Every second car on the road (53.2%) is either a Toyota, Holden or Ford. Toyota is the most popular make, comprising 1 in 5 vehicles.



### What's all the rage?

The #1 cause of road rage among Australian road users is unsafe drivers. This group includes people who either drink drive, speed, or tailgate. Drivers who push in at the last minute, including those who cross several lanes at a time, ranks second while people who neglect to indicate is the third-most common cause of road rage. Surprisingly, failure to provide other motorists with a courtesy wave came in at the bottom of the road-rage list.

### The much maligned 4WDs?

The intolerance shown towards 4WD's on city roads continues to rise. 3 in 5 road users are against four-wheel drives (4WDs) and sports utility vehicles (SUVs) being allowed for regular driving on city streets and suburban roads. Roughly 1 in 8 Australians behind the wheel is of the opinion that 4WD's are

environmentally irresponsible and a danger to both pedestrians and other road users. These results show that there is much resentment not just towards other people's driving behaviours, but also to their selection of vehicle. Who's keeping score?

In 2006, NSW alone identified nearly 300 occurrences of false nominations for driving offences. Interestingly, 12% of Australians stated they would consider asking someone they knew to claim demerit points on their behalf. Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) are not entirely aware of how many points they still have left on their licence.

## #1 Fear: Other drivers

The #1 fear on Australian roads is other drivers. This fear ranked above driving in storms, large trucks, breaking down, being fined, and even having an accident.

## Licence to drive

Driving continues to be a significant rite of passage as the majority of Australian teenagers (54%) obtain their provisional licence (or P plates) within a year of first becoming eligible and 1 in 4 pass the test within a week of their birthday. More than a third of these new drivers (36%) fail the test once before passing; while almost half got their licence first go. Despite this success rate though, the category of driver most criticised by survey respondents are "young drivers". The most common complaints were that they are "not mature enough", "too inexperienced", "take too many risks" and "disregard laws such as talking on their mobile phones/texting while driving".

## Do we need to speed?

Two thirds of drivers surveyed (67%) state that they speed at least some times when they drive. While 1 in 3 drivers believe that anything over the limit is speeding, 30.9% state that "less than 5km/h over the limit is fine" and 15% state that "less than 10km/h over the limit is acceptable". The most common reason given for speeding is not paying attention to the speedometer (60%). This is, however, closely followed by the more questionable excuse of running late (58%). Other common factors for speeding include wanting to pass a large or dangerous vehicle (42%) and pressure from surrounding vehicles (27%).



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