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**AAMI**



# YOUNGdrivers

annual road safety index

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## Speeding, drinking, fatigue—

still biggest threats to  
young Australian drivers



**Young drivers less likely  
to have driven when  
over drink-drive limit**

**Most young drivers  
support compulsory  
safe-driving courses**



This is the sixth annual *AAMI Young Drivers Index*. It is published to inform and educate the community about trends and issues related to young drivers. In recent years, the Index has focussed on topics including drug driving, mobile phone use while driving, and learner driver training. This year, the Index focuses on the basic and key

issues contributing to road crashes in Australia – speeding, drink driving and fatigue. Sweeney Research conducted a telephone survey of 2384 men and women drivers, aged 18 years and older, in the following locations around Australia:

- Adelaide
- Ballarat, Bendigo and Shepparton
- Batemans Bay, Bega and Ulladulla
- Brisbane
- Canberra
- Central Queensland
- Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie
- Darwin
- Geelong
- Gold Coast
- Hobart
- Launceston
- Melbourne
- Newcastle and Gosford
- North Queensland
- Regional South Australia
- Sunshine Coast
- Sydney
- Tamworth
- Toowoomba and Darling Downs
- Wagga Wagga

This research is supported by an in-depth analysis of car insurance claims lodged in 2005 by AAMI customers in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria.

Terms of reference: in this Index, the term 'young drivers' refers to drivers aged 18-24 years and the term 'other drivers' refers to those aged 25 or older.

## Trends in findings

In the past 12 months, most aspects of young drivers' behaviour and attitudes have remained fairly constant with only slight variations.

\*Some comparisons from the 2005 Index include:

\* Variances of less than 5% are not considered to be a significant change.

## Proportion of young drivers who:

	2005	2006
Have sent or read a text message while driving	68%	70%
Ignore restricted speed limits on local and suburban roads, outside schools and near roadworks	27%	25%
Are concerned they would be over the limit the day after a night of heavy drinking	67%	52%
Say they have driven when probably over the drink-drive limit	39%	38%
Say they have momentarily fallen asleep at the wheel	22%	23%
Have been a passenger in a vehicle when the driver was driving dangerously	66%	70%

## Young less likely to drive when over the limit

Drink-driving is dangerous at any age. For young drivers, the legal rights to drink alcohol and attain a driver licence come into effect at a similar time. This means that young drivers generally take on two important and large responsibilities – two responsibilities that if not respected can be a lethal combination. However, even with these new responsibilities, young drivers are less likely than other drivers to believe they have driven when probably over the drink-drive limit (38% versus 43% of other drivers). They are also more likely to believe they have been over the limit the 'morning after' – half of young drivers (52%) say that after a night of

heavy drinking they have been concerned that they have been over the limit when driving the following day, compared to less than one-third of other drivers (31%).

While some young drivers are behaving responsibly, young drivers are more likely to admit that sometimes when they have been drinking, they have taken a different route to avoid being breathalysed (25% compared to 17% of other drivers).

A similar proportion of young drivers as other drivers believe that it is 'OK for me to drink and drive after a few drinks so long as I feel capable' (12% of young drivers compared to 10% of all other drivers).

## Young drivers are less likely than other drivers to believe they have driven when probably over the drink-drive limit

## Young drivers support fines

More than half of young drivers believe that high speeding fines make the roads safer, and they are more likely to hold this belief than other drivers (55% versus 48% of other drivers). However, young drivers are more likely to admit they ignore restricted speed limits, such as on local, suburban roads, outside schools and for roadworks (25% versus 15% of other drivers).

An equal proportion of young drivers and other drivers agree that sometimes they are unsure of the speed limit because the zones vary so much (both 77%). This view is most common in New South Wales and Victoria.



# 31%

**Young drivers are almost twice as likely to admit to being an impatient driver**

### **Need to change actions on distractions**

Inexperienced drivers can be at risk of a crash if distracted while driving. Their experience of knowing how to cope and deal with unexpected distractions is not as strong as people who have been driving for many more years.

Young drivers are more likely to say they have been distracted by billboards located on busy roads while driving (52% versus 45% of other drivers) and most young drivers believe that rowdy or intoxicated passengers can be a real distraction for young drivers (89%).

### **Do u tlk or txt n drve?**

Mobile phones have been the centre of both police and legislative attention in recent years, as the rapid growth of this now not-so-new technology has implications for drivers around Australia. Although mobile phone providers produce hands-free kits for mobile phones, many drivers continue to insist on driving and using a mobile phone without a hands-free kit. Young drivers are twice as likely to admit they often use their mobile phone without a hands-free kit while driving (35% versus 16% of other drivers).

### **Pump up the volume**

Like many drivers, young drivers enjoy listening to music while they drive. However, young drivers are 50% more likely to admit they have sometimes lost concentration while changing the CD, tape, or radio station while driving (60% of young drivers compared to 40% of all other drivers). Young drivers are also three times more likely to admit their car stereo would often be loud enough for other drivers to hear it even if they had their windows up (30% versus 10% of other drivers). This is a real issue, as it is important that drivers not only see what is happening around them on the road (other vehicles, pedestrians, traffic lights, signs etc) but they need to be able to hear other traffic around them too.

### **Young drivers are more likely to say they have been distracted by billboards**

### **Raging from inside the machine**

Young drivers are almost twice as likely to admit to being an impatient driver (31% versus 16% of other drivers) but less likely to think that drivers are becoming more aggressive (77% versus 87% of other drivers). Young drivers are also more likely to believe that traffic congestion is a major cause of road rage (88% versus 76% of other drivers).

Young drivers are more likely to have witnessed a road rage incident between other motorists (78% versus 65% of other drivers). Young drivers are more likely to admit to having yelled or sworn at another driver for doing something they thought was rude or dangerous (46% versus 40% of other drivers). One in seven young drivers (15%) admit they have become angry at the actions of another motorist and tailgated them, compared to one in ten drivers aged 25 or older.

As pedestrians, young people experience the same amount of aggression from drivers as people aged 25 years or older. A similar proportion of young drivers, as other drivers, admit they have had a close call with a pedestrian or cyclist – 31% and 33% respectively.

# 15%

**One in seven young drivers admit they have become angry at the actions of another motorist and tailgated them**

