

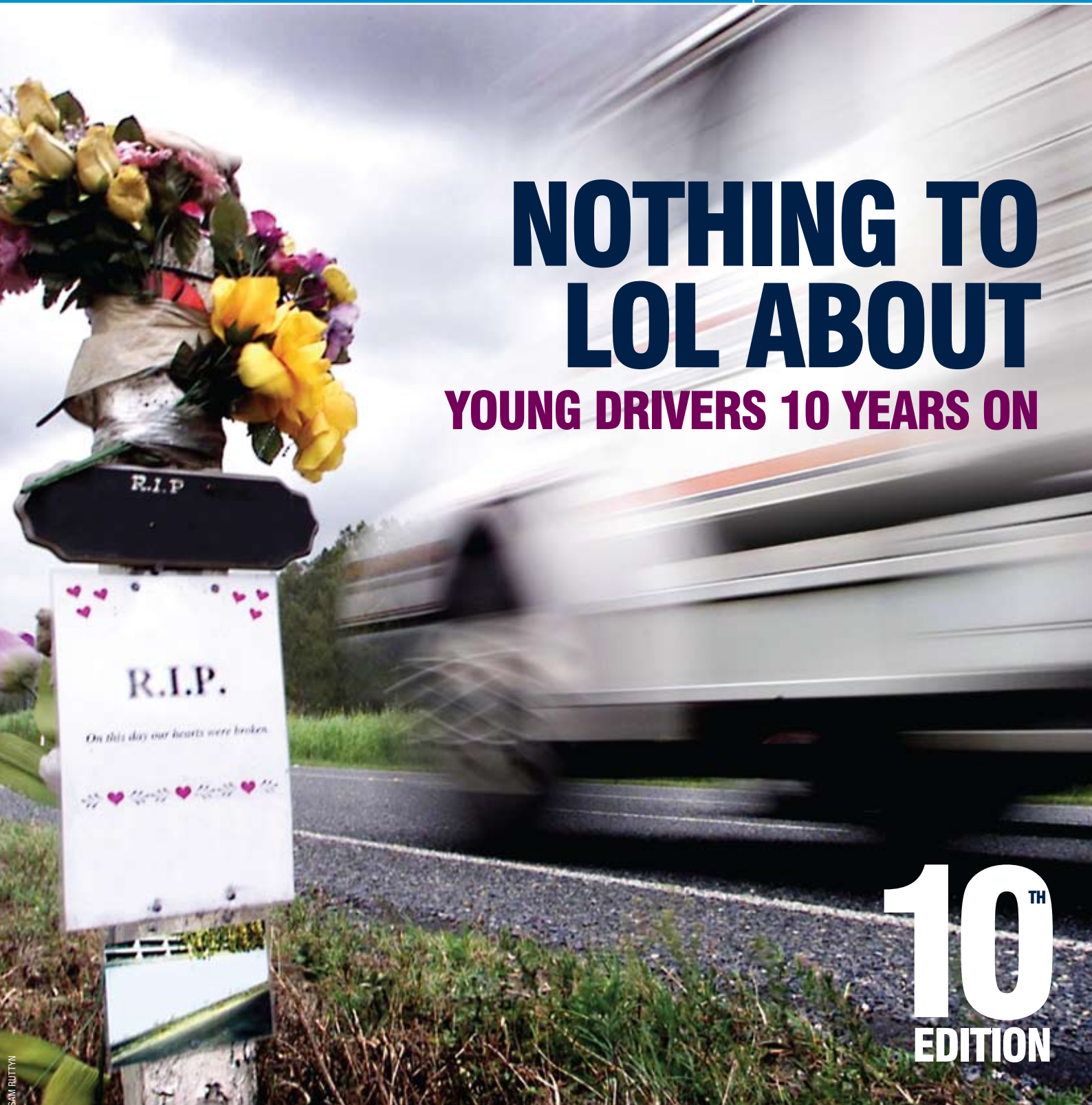
November 2010



YOUNGdrivers

annual road safety index

aami.com.au



**NOTHING TO
LOL ABOUT**
YOUNG DRIVERS 10 YEARS ON

**10TH
EDITION**

SAM BUTTIN



AAMI first helped draw attention to emerging young driver trends and issues with its inaugural *Young Drivers Index* in 2001.

That first *Index* focussed on behavioural distinctions between younger and older drivers in the area of speed, impatience and drink-driving, with the overwhelming conclusion that young drivers – by their nature – are more prone to risk-taking.

The focus of the AAMI *Young Drivers Index* has since expanded to consider such things as the role of technology in distracting young drivers, and how the unique characteristics of the current crop of young ‘Gen Y’ drivers are influencing their behaviour behind the wheel.

The 10th AAMI *Young Drivers Index* goes a step further. In collaboration with the National Trauma Research Institute at The Alfred, one of Australia’s leading trauma hospitals, this *Index*, as well as reviewing driver behaviour and attitudes, casts a spotlight on the often tragic effects that the risk-taking of young drivers can have in the form of horrific and life-altering trauma.

In doing so, AAMI hopes to change some of the behaviours and tendencies of young people behind the wheel, as part of its contribution to reducing the road toll and making the roads safer for everyone.

In this *Index*, ‘young drivers’ refers to drivers aged 18-24, and ‘other drivers’ refers to those aged 25 or older.

About the AAMI *Young Drivers Index* research

The 2010 AAMI *Young Drivers Index* is based on a combination of AAMI insurance claims data and independent research.

IPSOS Research conducted an independent internet survey of 2,818 Australians of driving age in all states and territories in 2010. Collected data is carefully weighted in line with current ABS population demographics to ensure any extrapolation of results is representative of age, gender and population on a regional, state and national basis.

This survey research is complemented by an in-depth analysis of car insurance claims lodged in the 12 months from July, 2009 through June, 2010 by AAMI customers in every Australian state and territory. This analysis is presented in this AAMI *Young Drivers Index*.

Keeping the pedal to the metal

Impatience is a likely factor in the greater willingness of young drivers to knowingly break the law and speed. Young drivers are almost twice as likely as older drivers to admit to impatience behind the wheel, which translates into a greater propensity to speed. They are almost twice as likely as other drivers to speed 'most of the time', with one in six (17%) admitting to this compared to just 10% of other drivers. Young drivers also appear to be more anxious to get to home or work faster than other drivers, with almost half (48%) indicating they speed for this reason, compared to just three in 10 of other drivers (29%).

A possible factor in young drivers' apparent willingness to speed is confusion over what constitutes speeding; almost a third of young drivers (32%) believe that going less than 10kph isn't really speeding, compared to the one-quarter of other drivers who think this. This may explain why more young drivers (57%) exceeded posted limits by 10kph in the past year than other drivers (51%).



YOUNG DRIVERS THEN AND NOW

Many things can change over 10 years, but a comparison of AAMI *Young Drivers Index* findings from 2001 to 2010 regrettably shows young drivers are as prone to risk-taking as ever. Speed, alcohol and impatience continue to be major factors in collisions involving young drivers, so it's not surprising that these behaviours have changed little.

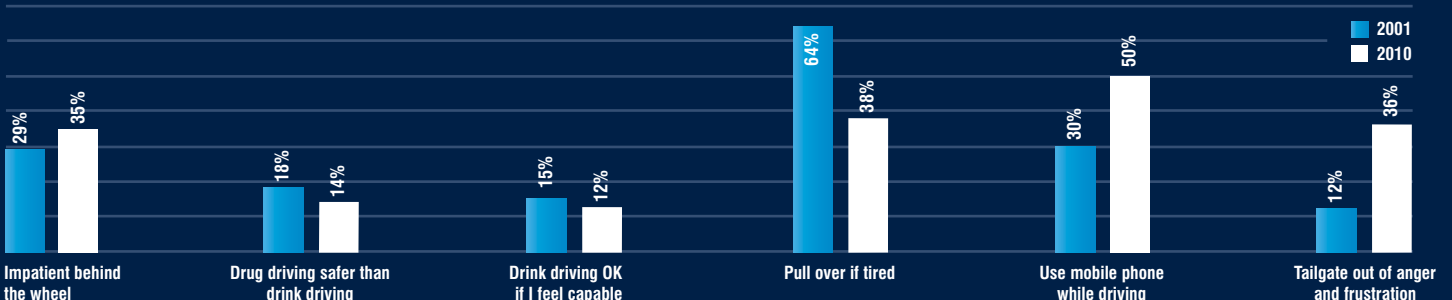
One-third of young drivers (35%) now say they are impatient behind the wheel, compared to three in 10 in 2001 (29%). However, young people do appear to be heeding safety messages about drugs and alcohol. The number of young drivers that believe driving after using drugs is safer than driving after drinking alcohol dropped from one in five (18%) in 2001 to one in seven (14%) this year, and slightly fewer young drivers now think it's okay to drive after a few drinks as long as they feel capable.

Conversely, young driver attitudes to fatigue have worsened. The likelihood of young drivers pulling over to rest has almost halved with

two in five (38%) young drivers now likely to do this, compared to two in three (64%) in 2001.

The affordability and availability of mobile technology has unfortunately translated into a greater willingness of young drivers to engage in risky and driver-distracting behaviour. Despite all the warnings, half of young drivers (50%) now use their mobile without a sanctioned hands-free kit compared to just 30% in 2001. The explosion in internet, email and SMS-enabled handsets over time has likely caused this increase.

Of most concern in the 10 years since the first AAMI *Young Drivers Index* is the extreme to which young drivers express their rage and frustration. In 2001, one in eight young drivers (12%) tailgated others to vent their anger. This has tripled to over a third in 2010, in a worrying sign that young drivers are now angrier than ever.



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010
Sweeney Research, 2001



Such recklessness may also explain why, of all the age groups, young drivers aged 20-24 are more likely to appear in court for dangerous or negligent driving¹. In 2006-07, seven times as many young men as young women faced court for this reason (712 per 100,000 young men compared to 97 per 100,000 young women).

Road rage all the rage

Young drivers are more aggressive than ever, with the number willing to tailgate others to vent their anger tripling to 36% since the first AAMI *Young Drivers Index* in 2001 (from 12%). Equally concerning is that today, twice as many young drivers as older drivers engage in this reckless behaviour.

Compared with other drivers, young drivers are twice as likely (7% compared to 4%) to think retaliating with a rude gesture is the best response to road rage, while more young drivers than other drivers actually do retaliate to

aggressive behaviour in this way (55% compared to 48%).

Similarly, young drivers are more likely than other drivers to verbally abuse or swear in response to dangerous or rude behaviour from another driver (59% compared to 54%). Significantly fewer younger than older drivers think signaling an apology is the best response to road rage (36% compared to 48%).

Drugs + Alcohol + Driving = Recklessness

Although more young drivers are now heeding drug and alcohol warnings than in the past, the willingness of young people to drink, use drugs and drive remains high. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show young drivers aged 20-24 are more likely to appear in court for drink driving offences, with young men six times more likely than young women to front court for this reason².

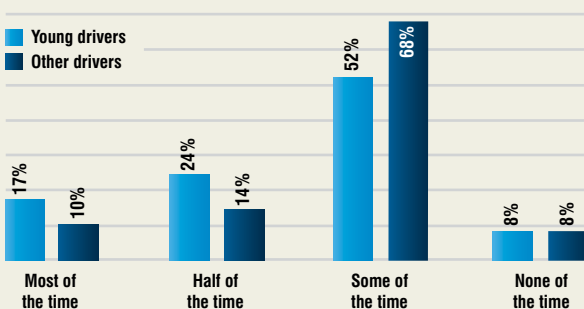
THE 'MORNING AFTER SYNDROME' HAS BEEN EXPERIENCED BY ALMOST HALF OF YOUNG DRIVERS (46%).

Twice as many young drivers as other drivers (12% compared to 7%) think it's okay to drink and drive as long as they feel capable, and young drivers are more likely to have driven when they were probably legally intoxicated (one in five compared to one in seven). This may explain why more young drivers than other drivers have taken a different route home to avoid booze buses (17% compared to 12%).

Significantly more young drivers have been worried that they were over the legal limit when driving the morning after a night of drinking; this 'Morning After Syndrome' has been experienced by almost half of young drivers (46%), compared to three in 10 other drivers (29%), further evidence of the willingness of young drivers to knowingly take risks.

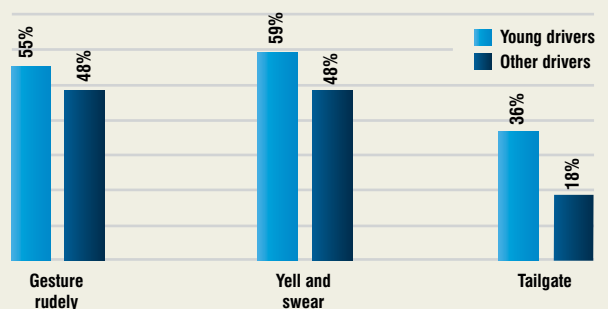
When it comes to recreational and illicit drugs, young drivers are still more reckless than others. In the past year, almost twice as many young drivers have driven after using marijuana,

SPEEDING



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010

ROAD RAGE RESPONSE



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010



speed, ecstasy or cocaine (10% compared to 6%). Young drivers are twice as likely to think driving after using drugs is safer than driving after drinking alcohol (14% compared to 7%). Three times as many young drivers (one in eight compared to one in 25) consider a small amount of recreational drugs won't affect your driving, while fewer younger drivers than other drivers (59% compared to 66%) think recreational drugs are a greater driving risk than prescription medications.

Generation 'Tech'

Whether it's a mobile phone, iPod or MP3 player or GPS device, young drivers now have access to more handheld gadgets that create greater distractions than ever before. The likelihood of today's tech-savvy generation getting distracted behind the wheel has been compounded by the proliferation of these devices, driven by low prices, ease of accessibility, and the "must-have-now" attitude of

ARE YOU STILL OVER .05?

Few motorists would deny that their ability to safely drive can be compromised by having too much alcohol in their system. Slower reaction times, impaired vision and an inflated sense of confidence are just some of the side-effects of drinking too much alcohol, with physical variables such as gender, weight and body fat factoring into how quickly your body can absorb alcohol.

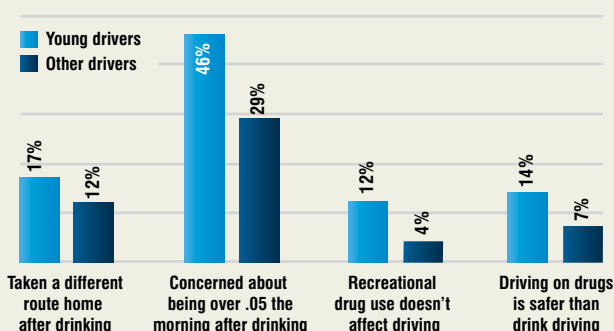
A common question drivers have is how much can I drink and drive and safely remain beneath .05. The safest course of action is to refrain from drinking altogether. But for those men and women who want to have a drink and remain legally able to drive, there are two basic rules:

- **For men** – no more than two standard drinks in the first hour and one standard drink per hour after that; and
- **For women** – no more than one standard drink each hour.

The volume and strength of an alcoholic drink can vary from venue to venue, so it's important to know what constitutes a standard drink. As a general rule, one standard drink is 285 ml of full-strength beer, 100 ml of wine, or a 30 ml nip or shot of basic spirit.

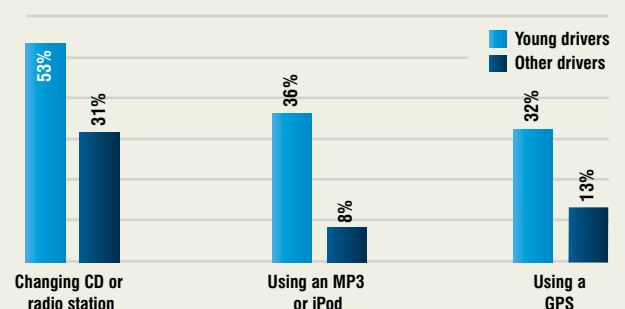
After a big night out, many drivers think their body has absorbed the excesses of the night before and that they are legally able to drive. However, these drivers can very easily overestimate their body's ability to absorb the alcohol they have consumed, making them a risk to themselves and other road users. If you are unsure about whether your blood alcohol content is less than .05, before you drive make sure you have waited at least one hour for each standard drink you consumed over the night, since your last drink. If you're still unsure, err on the side of caution and don't drive.

DRINK/DRUG DRIVING



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010

BEING DISTRACTED WHILE DRIVING



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010



CLAIMS MORE COSTLY FOR YOUNG

A review of insurance claims for the past 12 months is consistent with AAMI *Young Drivers Index* findings that suggest young drivers are a greater risk. Young drivers were responsible for 16% of insurance claims over this period.

As well, drivers 25 and under have higher average insurance claims than other drivers. The average claim of a young driver over the past year was \$2795 compared with \$2440 for other drivers. AAMI claims data shows that the average insurance claim reduces as a driver ages.

Among young men and women drivers, women lodged more AAMI motor insurance claims than young male drivers (29,074 compared to 26,668). However, claims from young male drivers cost more on average than claims from young women, demonstrating young men are a greater insurance risk.

today's youth. Of particular concern, is the 67% surge since 2001 in young drivers' usage of mobile phones while driving (50%, up from 30%) without a hands-free kit.

Compared with other drivers, young drivers are significantly more pre-disposed to in-car technology and the corresponding distractions they pose. They are significantly more likely than other drivers to get distracted by changing the CD or radio station (53% compared to 31%). And young drivers are more than twice as likely as other drivers to get distracted from driving when using iPod or MP3 players (36% compared with 8%), which are increasingly compatible with the car stereos of today.

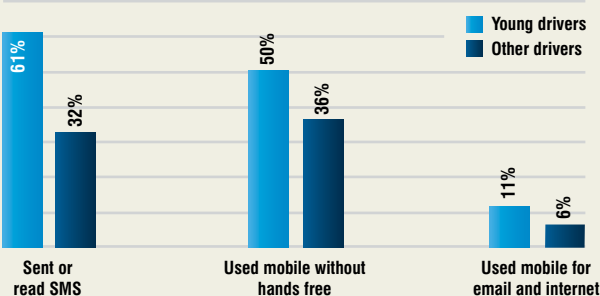
As mobile phones become increasingly complicated, young drivers have more reason to be distracted by their many applications. Not surprisingly, given their preference for texting, young drivers are twice as likely to have sent or read a text message while driving in the past

year, with three in five young drivers engaging in this behaviour compared to approximately a third of other drivers. Young drivers are also far more likely to use their mobile for calls without a hands free kit (50% compared to 36%), and twice as many young drivers have used their mobile to email or surf the internet (11% compared to 6%).

Taking young drivers' affinity with handheld mobile technology into consideration, it's little wonder there is strong resistance from young drivers for a tightening of rules and restrictions about mobile phone usage, with only a third (37%) agreeing that using a mobile while driving should be banned.

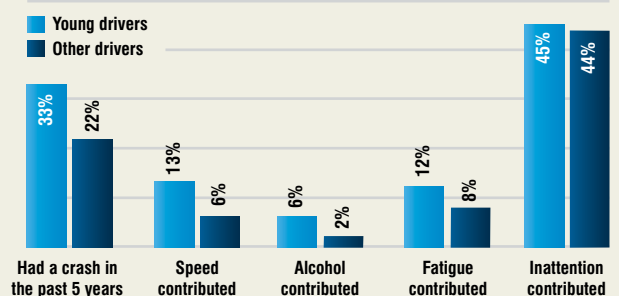
GPS satellite navigation devices – whether portable or a standard or optional car accessory – are becoming the norm rather than the exception in the cars of today. But like other interactive handheld devices, GPS systems are proving more distracting for young drivers. One in three young drivers (32%) say they have been distracted

IN THE PAST YEAR WHILE DRIVING...



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010

COLLISIONS



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010



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from driving by their GPS compared to just one in eight other drivers (13%).

Crash test dummies

A lack of experience is a factor in young drivers being more likely to be involved in single or multiple vehicle collisions. In the last five years, a third of young drivers have experienced a crash, compared to less than a quarter of other drivers (22%).

While speed, alcohol and fatigue contribute most to collisions involving fatality or serious injury, basic inattention is the main reason young and other drivers give for the crashes they have had. Almost half of all drivers (44%) blame a lack of attention for collisions they have been in, with young drivers equally disposed to blame inattention for their crashes.

Given young drivers' willingness to engage in risky behaviour, it comes as little surprise that they are more likely to attribute crashes to speeding, alcohol and fatigue. Nearly twice as

IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, A THIRD OF YOUNG DRIVERS HAVE EXPERIENCED A CRASH, COMPARED TO LESS THAN A QUARTER OF OTHER DRIVERS (22%).

many young drivers as other drivers blamed speed for their collisions (one in eight compared to one in 17), while three times as many young drivers said alcohol was a factor (6% compared to 2%). Young drivers are 50% more likely than other drivers to blame fatigue for their crashes (12% compared to 8%).

Young drivers' greater tendency to be involved in collisions helps explain why they are also over-represented among road fatalities. Of the young people aged 15-24 who died in Australia in 2004-06, over three in 10 of them (31%) were killed in transport accidents, compared with just 1% of people 25 and over who died in a transport accident.⁴

Putting the Prohibited in 'P'

Drivers overwhelmingly agree P-platers and young drivers should face tougher driver restrictions on when they can drive and who they can carry in the interests of road safety.

Twice as many other drivers (70% compared to 36%) think young drivers

should be restricted from carrying more than one passenger. And three-quarters of other drivers (74%) support late night curfews for young drivers compared to just 44% of young drivers, in a clear sign that most drivers think P-platers and young drivers are a greater risk at night.

When it comes to breaking the law, AAMI's research suggests young drivers shouldn't receive any special treatment because they are young and inexperienced. In fact, almost nine in 10 other drivers (85%) support a zero tolerance approach for P-platers caught speeding, with a mandatory three month license suspension. Three in five young drivers (59%) also support such a restriction.

Common ground between the young and the old is much more likely in the area of driver education, with nine in 10 other drivers of the view that safe driving courses should be compulsory for young drivers (91%), compared to three-quarters of younger drivers (76%) who support such a requirement.



¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Social Trends 2008, *Risk taking by young people*

² *Risk taking by young people*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Social Trends 2008; In 2006-07, there were 626 adjudications per 100,000 young men and 134 per 100,000 young women

³ Australian Transport Safety Bureau, *Do you know when to stop?*

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Social Trends 2008, *Risk taking by young people*



SEX IN THE CIVIC!

The stereotype of young male drivers is that they are more likely to speed, flout drink driving laws and generally act more irresponsibly than young women on the roads. And while a review of the AAMI *Young Drivers Index* bears much of this out, the reality is that, on numerous counts, young women are just as reckless.

Young women cast from the same speedy mould

Contrary to popular opinion, young women are more inclined to speed than young men: three in five young women (60%) admit to exceeding speed limits by 10kph or more in the past year compared to 55% of young men, and young women are more likely than young men to speed to get to work or home faster – (50% compared to 46%). That young women are more inclined than young men to say they are impatient drivers (39% compared to 32%) may explain their greater tendency to speed.

When it comes to aggression, however, this year's *Young Drivers Index* findings uphold the popular stereotype: young men are more aggressive behind the wheel than young women.

Young men are more likely than young women to respond to dangerous driving with a rude gesture (58% compared to 52%) and they are more likely to confront the other driver as a response (4% compared to 1%). And while young men and women are equally likely to tailgate another driver in response to aggression (37% compared to 35%), young men are more likely to justify such recklessness – three-quarters of these young men (73%) say tailgating is justifiable compared with two-thirds of the young women (64%).

Rules? Who needs 'em

What is most concerning when comparing young men to young women is their willingness to ignore the law, and drive under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The AAMI *Young Drivers*



MOBILE PHONES ARE THE MAJOR DISTRACTION, WITH MORE YOUNG WOMEN THAN MEN ADMITTING TO SENDING OR READING A TEXT MESSAGE WHILE DRIVING IN THE LAST YEAR.



Mobile phones aren't the only things distracting young drivers; iPods, MP3 players and satellite navigation systems are also drawing young people's attention away from the roads. Young men are slightly more likely than women to be distracted from driving by their iPod (37% compared to 33%), and GPS navigation devices are also more distracting for young men than women (33% compared to 29%).

So, who's the better driver?

The matter of which sex is the better driver is always a touchy subject, arguably for the divisive opinions and views the topic inevitably creates. Part of the problem, however, is what do we mean by 'better'? If the likelihood of having a crash is the measure, young women have come off second best because they are slightly more likely to have had a crash in the last five years than men (34% compared to 31%).

Differences in the *causes* of these crashes, however, provide a clearer picture of which sex is better behind the wheel.

Young men are more likely to blame their crashes on the major causes of road trauma – speed and alcohol – than women. In fact, young men are four times as likely as women to attribute their crashes to alcohol (9% compared to 2%), and are slightly more likely to blame speed (15% compared to 11%). Completing the trifecta, young men are more likely to attribute their crashes to fatigue. One in six young men (16%) said fatigue had been a factor in their collisions, compared to just one in 11 young women (9%).

Index findings are cause for serious concern in this area.

Young men are much more likely to have driven over the legal limit, with one in four young men admitting to this (24%) compared to one in six young women (17%). This may explain why 70% more young men than women admit to taking a different route home to avoid being breathalysed (22% compared to 13%). Four times as many young men as women think it's OK to drive as long as they feel capable (19% compared to 5%), highlighting the risks young men are prepared to take despite having had a few drinks.

Young men are also bigger risk-takers when it comes to using recreational drugs and driving. More young men than women admit having driven after using recreational drugs in the past year (11% compared to 8%), and they are nearly twice as likely as young women to think driving after using recreational drugs is safer than driving after drinking alcohol (18% compared to 10%). Young men are more than twice as likely to think a

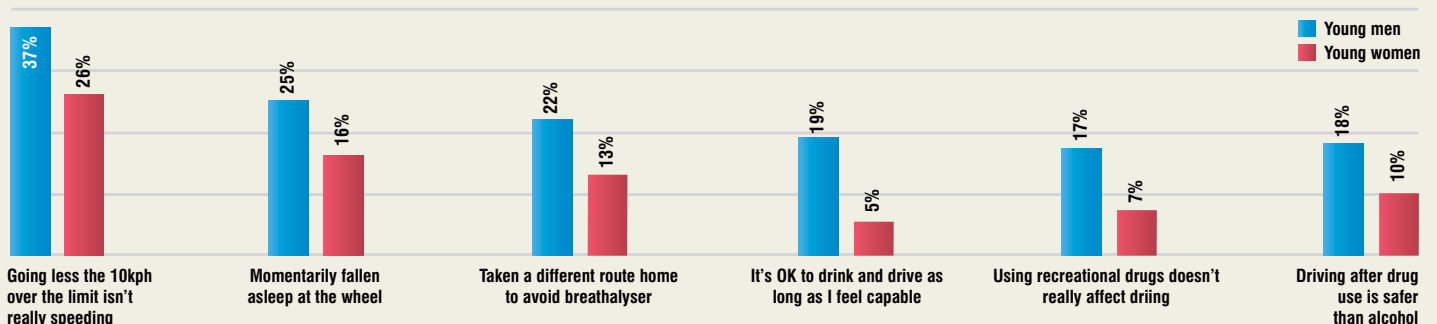
DIFFERENCES IN THE CAUSES OF CRASHES PROVIDE A CLEARER PICTURE OF WHICH SEX IS BETTER BEHIND THE WHEEL.

little recreational drug use won't affect their driving (17% compared to 7%), and they are also less trusting of the results of random drug testing – less than half of young men (48%) say they trust the results of drug testing, compared to 58% of young women.

Driven 2 distraction

Few would disagree that today's youth are savvy and prolific users of technology, especially hand held mobile phones, music players and social networking. An unfortunate by-product of this is a generation that is particularly distracted behind the wheel. Mobile phones are the major distraction, with more young women than men (67% compared to 55%) admitting to sending or reading a text message while driving. Young women are also more likely to use their mobile without a hands-free kit for making calls while driving (53% compared to 47%), however young men and women are equally disposed to read email or surf the web on their smartphone while driving (12% compared to 11%).

YOUNG MEN VERSUS YOUNG WOMEN



Source: IPSOS Research, 2010

ROAD TRAUMA

– AFFECTING THE LIFE OF A YOUNG MALE DRIVER NEAR YOU

Specialists like those from Australia’s leading trauma hospital, The Alfred, witness the tragic realities of youth-related road trauma every day. And with young people over-represented among road fatalities⁵, the likelihood of specialists like these having to treat a young person involved in a serious collision is particularly high. An analysis of acute care admissions to The Alfred for road traffic related trauma injury causes since 2002 reveals some disturbing patterns about trauma admissions – especially among young men aged 18-24.

Of most concern is the stark difference in acute trauma hospital admissions between young men and women. From 2002-2009, young men were approximately 2.5 times more likely to be admitted to The Alfred for acute care brought about by road traffic related trauma and injuries. Of the 2471 admissions of this kind over this period, 1767 were young men aged 18-24. Last year (2009) was particularly bad, with young men three times as likely as young women to be admitted to The Alfred for road traffic related trauma care (244 admissions for young men compared to 79 for young women).

Closer scrutiny of The Alfred’s trauma data shows young men are far more likely than young women to be admitted

FROM 2002–2009, YOUNG MEN WERE APPROXIMATELY 2.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE ADMITTED TO THE ALFRED FOR ACUTE CARE BROUGHT ABOUT BY ROAD TRAFFIC RELATED TRAUMA AND INJURIES.

for road traffic related trauma across the entire spectrum of admission categories, from being the driver of the motor vehicle through to being a pedestrian. Last year, young men were three times as likely as young women to present as the driver of the motor vehicle (90 admissions for young men compared to 30 for young women). This trend has remained largely consistent; from 2002-2009 young men were twice as likely as young women to present as the driver in acute care trauma admissions to The Alfred.

Even as passengers, young men are more likely to experience road traffic related trauma injury than young women. Almost twice as many young male passengers were treated for this at The Alfred as young women (51-32), continuing a trend that has consistently seen young male passengers more likely to experience road traffic related trauma. Of the 538 motor vehicle passengers treated by The Alfred for trauma from 2002-2009, 337 were young men and 201 were young women.

The considerable difference between trauma admissions for young men and women motorcyclists is also concerning. From 2002-2009, young male motorcycle drivers were 22 times as likely as young women to experience road traffic related trauma (396 young male admissions

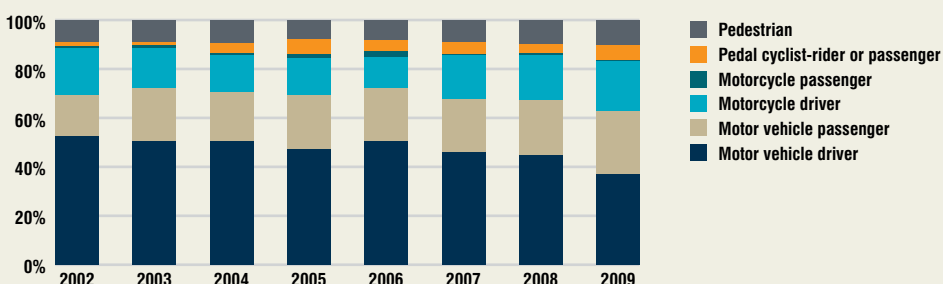


compared to just 18 young female admissions). While more young men than women participate in motorcycling, that so many more young male motorcycle drivers experience trauma possibly underscores their greater willingness to take risks.

Notwithstanding the emotional toll road trauma takes on victims and their families and friends, the cost of trauma to the community is considerable. According to the Federal Department of Transport and Infrastructure, the annual economic cost of road crashes in Australia is conservatively estimated at \$18 billion per year.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is especially common among road trauma sufferers, affecting around 70% of road traffic accident victims. In Australia, the lifetime cost for the care of moderate and severe TBI victims is around \$8 billion⁶, demonstrating that the cost of trauma extends well beyond the hospital theatre and intensive care unit.

ACUTE CARE TRAUMA ADMISSIONS TO THE ALFRED FOR ROAD TRAFFIC RELATED TRAUMA INJURY CAUSES – AGES 18–24 YEARS



Source: The Alfred Trauma Registry

⁵ Australian Institute of Family Studies, *In the driver’s seat: Understanding young adults’ driving behaviour*, 2005

⁶ National Trauma Research Institute website www.ntri.org.au

A PERSPECTIVE ON YOUTH ROAD TRAUMA FROM ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING TRAUMA SURGEONS

BY PROFESSOR RUSSELL GRUEN



Michael* was still on a high when he accelerated to overtake. He had hit the winning runs, and was driving his teammates to their usual celebration spot, but he didn't see the oncoming truck.

I met Michael and two of his four companions forty minutes later in The Alfred's Emergency and Trauma Centre. Two were unconscious – their bodies smashed. A machine was pumping air into their lungs, as their lives hemorrhaged from ruptured organs and severed vessels. Michael had led his team to victory, and now he was fighting for his life.

As a surgeon in Australia's busiest trauma hospital, you'd think I'd be used to caring for young drivers like Michael. But I'm also a father of two boys in whom I have hopes for the future that are probably similar to those that Michael's parents had for him. Perhaps that's why every injured young driver brings a painful reminder of the fragility of the human body, even when it's young, strong and seemingly immortal.

The facts speak for themselves. Approximately 1500 people die, and at least 4000 are seriously injured, on Australian roads every year. Injured drivers are most commonly male and under 24 years of age. Because young people are so often involved, serious injury accounts for more productive years of life lost in Australia than heart disease and cancer combined. In a split second, a young person with a promising future can become a road toll statistic. Or, alternatively, they might become an invalid whose dreams are shattered and who now needs lifelong care – a situation that many regard as worse than death.



AAMI's *Young Drivers Index* is especially important in that it helps us to understand why young people are overrepresented in road fatalities and serious injuries. In the Index's tenth year, three main types of precipitating behaviours seem evident.

The first are behaviours that increase the risk of crashes, especially drinking or drug-taking, speeding, and driving when sleepy. These are risks well known to us all, but it seems young drivers, especially males, more often take such risks and underestimate the potential consequences.

The second type of behaviours are those that result from poor split-second decisions, and include impulsive actions such as road rage, inappropriate responses to dangerous situations such as obstacles on the road, or dangerous actions such as overtaking into oncoming traffic. Well-trained and experienced drivers make fewer of these mistakes.

The third type of behaviours are those characteristic of young peoples' lives

in 2010. Text messaging and using handheld mobile phones, iPods and MP3 players while driving create risks unfamiliar to former generations. Perhaps impatience behind the wheel has a generational element to it, too.

Clearly many risk-reduction strategies involving many parts of Australian society are needed. AAMI also leads the way in risk-reduction programs, for example through the Skilled Drivers Program, and by supporting the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y.) Program. The P.A.R.T.Y. Program brings young people face-to-face, in the intensive care units of Australia's trauma hospitals, with the consequences of risk taking and poor decision-making by other young people whose lives have now changed forever.

For all of us in Australian society – parents, young people, business and government – a safer future for young drivers cannot have too high a price. Understanding the problems and implementing sensible strategies are the keys to this goal.

Professor Russell Gruen is a trauma surgeon at The Alfred in Melbourne, and is Director of the National Trauma Research Institute.

The NTRI operates the P.A.R.T.Y. Program that receives funding from AAMI.

* not his real name

LESS SPEED, MORE SPACE, AND CONCENTRATION THE KEYS TO SAFE DRIVING

AAMI'S SKILLED DRIVERS PROGRAM MANAGER, TONY BARBER,
COMMENTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND DRIVING



Driving at a speed safe for the conditions, keeping a safe distance between you and the car in front of you and not being distracted are the practices of a safe driver.

These skills are the theme of AAMI's Skilled Drivers program, which has been offering driver awareness courses to young people under 25 for nearly three decades.

Due to a number of factors, including inexperience, over confidence, driver

distraction and risk taking, young people are over-represented on the national road toll each year. In fact, nearly a third of serious road crashes in 2010 involved drivers under the age of 25.

Our course is designed to show young drivers how going too fast or not paying attention could result in collision or even death.

It is designed to encourage young drivers to explore what they think can cause crashes, before then experiencing these things first hand, in their own cars, and in a controlled test environment.

Our course is not just about safe driving; it's about having a realistic

OUR COURSE IS DESIGNED TO SHOW YOUNG DRIVERS WHEN DRIVING ON THE ROAD; HOW GOING TOO FAST OR NOT PAYING ATTENTION COULD RESULT IN COLLISION OR EVEN DEATH.

view of your own abilities, knowing your own vehicle, understanding how quickly things can go wrong and the consequences of making the wrong decisions.

Our aim is to provide a forum for young drivers to become aware of their own limitations and share that experience with their peers. To allow them to discover for themselves the importance of driving to the conditions and providing simple strategies to help them stay out of trouble.

What participants and their parents have said...

*I went into the course with seven years of driving experience and felt quite knowledgeable. I thought that because I consider myself a safe and calm driver that I would be sitting back and thinking "yeah yeah, I know all of this already". But I came out of the course surprised by how much I didn't know, and felt really educated and pleased that I took part in it. **Candice***

*Both my daughters have participated; both enjoyed it and found it a real eye opener as to just how important the 'gap' is. Lord knows we have encouraged them from the beginning to keep a safe distance, and I think they were doing a reasonable job before the course, but now have a far better appreciation of the reality on the road – without having learnt the hard way. **Geoff***

ABOUT AAMI SKILLED DRIVERS

The AAMI Skilled Drivers course was founded in 1982 in response to community concerns, and is a one-day theory and practical course which encourages positive behaviour in drivers under 25. It is AAMI's

biggest community program and is run in six states across the country. The course is offered free to AAMI comprehensive policyholders aged under 25 and to the children and grandchildren of older AAMI policyholders.

In 2009-10, 5277 young Australians participated in the program. Through Skilled Drivers, AAMI is also a major sponsor of the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y.) program run by the National Trauma

Research Institute at The Alfred. Launched in 2009, this program educates teenagers about avoiding situations that can result in injury. They witness firsthand the appalling impacts of trauma in The Alfred's

intensive care department. AAMI offers P.A.R.T.Y. program participants a complimentary place on the Skilled Drivers course when they reach legal driving age.

For details or bookings visit www.aami.com.au