



Road Safety Monitor

Summary Report 2017

Key Findings 2017

Background

The Road Safety Monitor is a survey of Victorians' attitudes and behaviours relating to road safety which has been conducted continuously since 2001.

This document summarises findings from the 2017 iteration of the of the Road Safety Monitor (RSM). Overall, 1,742 Victorians who were contacted through the VicRoads Registration and Licensing Database (VRLD) completed the survey.

Everyone invited to participate from the VRLD was mailed a questionnaire pack which included a Primary Approach Letter (PAL) allowing hard copy or online completion. Up to two reminder letters were sent to each sample member who had not completed the survey. Following the initial mail approaches, a CATI phase targeted non-responders with a valid phone number in order to maximise response.

This document provides the key findings on the following topics:



Perceived level of danger for road user behaviours



How people get around



Definition of speeding



Intentionally driving over the speed limit



Use of drugs and alcohol



Fatigue



Distractions while driving



Towards Zero



General attitudes to transport and road safety



Behaviours by gender and age

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest integer. This means that there may be some instances where percentages of each response, even for a single response question, may not add to 100%, but rather may add to 99% or 101%. This is due to rounding and is not an error.

Summary of findings

People are far more likely to drive a car on a weekly basis (94%) than to use public transport (20%) or to ride a bicycle on the road (9%). With such high reliance on motor vehicles, the Towards Zero strategy of working towards safer driver behaviour, safer vehicles and safer roads is important in ensuring the safety of Victorians as they go about their everyday lives. While the number of road deaths on Victorian roads has declined by about 75% since 1970, there were still 258 fatalities on the road in 2017, leaving much work to be done.

Victorians' attitudes towards transport and road safety often matches the Towards Zero philosophy. For example, 93% agree that a safe journey is more important than a quick journey, and 88% believe Victoria should aim for zero road deaths. In addition, a large majority agree that it is extremely dangerous to drive with an illegal blood alcohol content level (90%), to drive while very drowsy (84%) or to drive while using a hand-held mobile phone (84%).

Despite many Victorians agreeing with the philosophy of Towards Zero, and recognising the dangers of illegal behaviours, many still engage in these behaviours. In the past three months 34% have driven when drowsy and 33% have illegally used their mobile phone while driving. In addition, 9% drive over the speed limit at least half the time in 100km/h zones and 42% do so at least some of the time. Further, in the last 12 months 6% have driven when they knew or thought they were over the legal blood alcohol limit.

Those who report they do these behaviours are disproportionately males aged 18-25 or 26-39, although these behaviours are apparent across all groups to some extent. For example, while 9% drive over the 100km/h speed limit at least half the time, 16% of males aged 18-39 do. Similarly, 13% of males aged 18-25 drink drive, as do 8% of males aged 26-39, compared to 6% of the total adult population. Males aged under 40 typically rate their perception of danger lower than other groups, and usually people who have the lowest perception of danger of a particular behaviour are more likely to engage in that behaviour.

It is also worth noting that males in general are more at risk than females, with higher likelihood of being in a fatal crash and generally displaying attitudes and behaviours that indicate an increased level of risk.

Notably, there appears to have been a decline in support for a 'low tolerance' approach to speeding. Since 2013, the proportion of respondents who believe drivers should not be booked if driving 105km/h in a 100km/h zone has increased from 24% to 35%. Similarly, between 2013 and 2017 the proportion believing drivers should not be booked if driving at 65km/h in a 60km/h zone has increased from 8% to 13%.

Apart from the decline in support for a 'low tolerance' approach to speeding, the findings in 2017 are largely similar to those from 2016. One exception was that over the last couple of years there has been a slight decline in the proportion self-reporting speeding 'some of the time' (from 35% to 30% in 60km/h zones, and from 36% to 32% in 100km/h zones), although the proportion speeding at least 'half the time' remained stable.

As was the case in 2016, only a small minority of Victorian motorists aged between 18 and 60 years reported taking recreational drugs (9%), although this proportion was significantly higher amongst those aged 18-25 (17%). Of those who had taken recreational drugs, 18% admitted to driving a vehicle or riding a motorcycle soon after, equating to two per cent of all motorists.

In-car distractions continue to be an issue on Victoria's roads with 33% of motorists using their mobile phone illegally at least some of the time in the past three months. Motorists are more likely to engage in 'passive' distractions such as reading a text message or answering a call with a hand held mobile phone (33%), than more 'active' distractions such as writing a text message or making a phone call with a hand held mobile phone (18%). These behaviours are more common amongst drivers aged under 40.

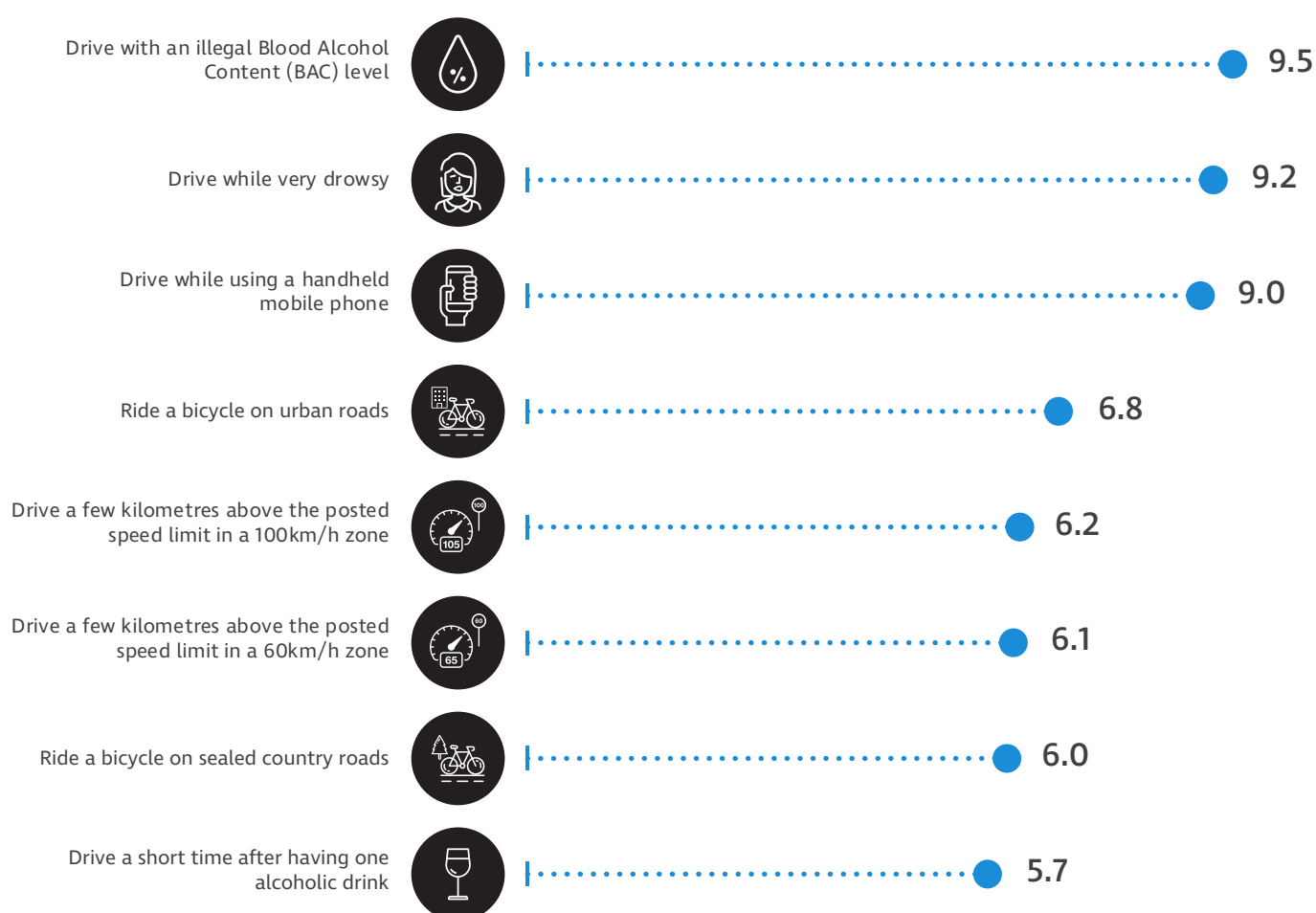


Perceived level of danger for road user behaviours

When asked to consider how dangerous a range of road user behaviours were, participants made it clear that generally, people do not consider driving a few kilometres over the speed limit to be as dangerous as other behaviours such as driving

with illegal blood alcohol content or driving while drowsy or driving while using a handheld mobile phone. These results closely matched the findings from 2016 and 2015.

Figure 1. Perceptions of danger



DANIA-J: Using a scale where 0 is "Not at all dangerous" and 10 is "Extremely dangerous", how dangerous do you think it is to:
Total sample; Weighted sample; base n= from 759 to 1721.

Key Findings 2017

As was the case in 2016, the general trend in perceptions of danger is that males tend to rate their perception of danger lower than females, and those over 40 years of age tend to rate their perception of danger higher than younger respondents.

Typically, the people who have the lowest perception of danger of a particular behaviour are those who are more likely to engage in that behaviour.

For example, those who have a lower perception of danger for driving while drowsy include:

- Males (9.1 vs 9.4 amongst females)
- Those aged under 26 (8.9 vs 9.3 amongst those aged 26 or over)
- Those who have driven when fatigued (8.8 vs 9.5 amongst those who have not).

Figure 2. Perceptions of danger by age and gender

	Age Group				Gender	
	18-25	26-39	40-60	61-90	Male	Female
Drive with an illegal Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) level	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.4	9.4	9.7
Drive while very drowsy	8.9	9.2	9.4	9.3	9.1	9.4
Drive while using a handheld mobile phone	8.7	8.8	9.2	9.2	8.8	9.2
Ride a bicycle on urban roads	6.0	6.5	7.2	7.1	6.6	7.0
Drive a few kilometres above the posted speed limit in a 100km/h zone	6.2	6.0	6.0	6.5	5.5	6.8
Drive a few kilometres above the posted speed limit in a 60km/h zone	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.3	5.7	6.4
Ride a bicycle on sealed country roads	5.2	5.9	6.2	6.2	6.1	5.8
Drive a short time after having one alcoholic drink	6.3	5.8	5.2	5.7	5.0	6.3

DANIA-J: Using a scale where 0 is "Not at all dangerous" and 10 is "Extremely dangerous", how dangerous do you think it is to:
Total sample; Weighted sample; base n= from 759 to 1721 by banner - Age, Gender.

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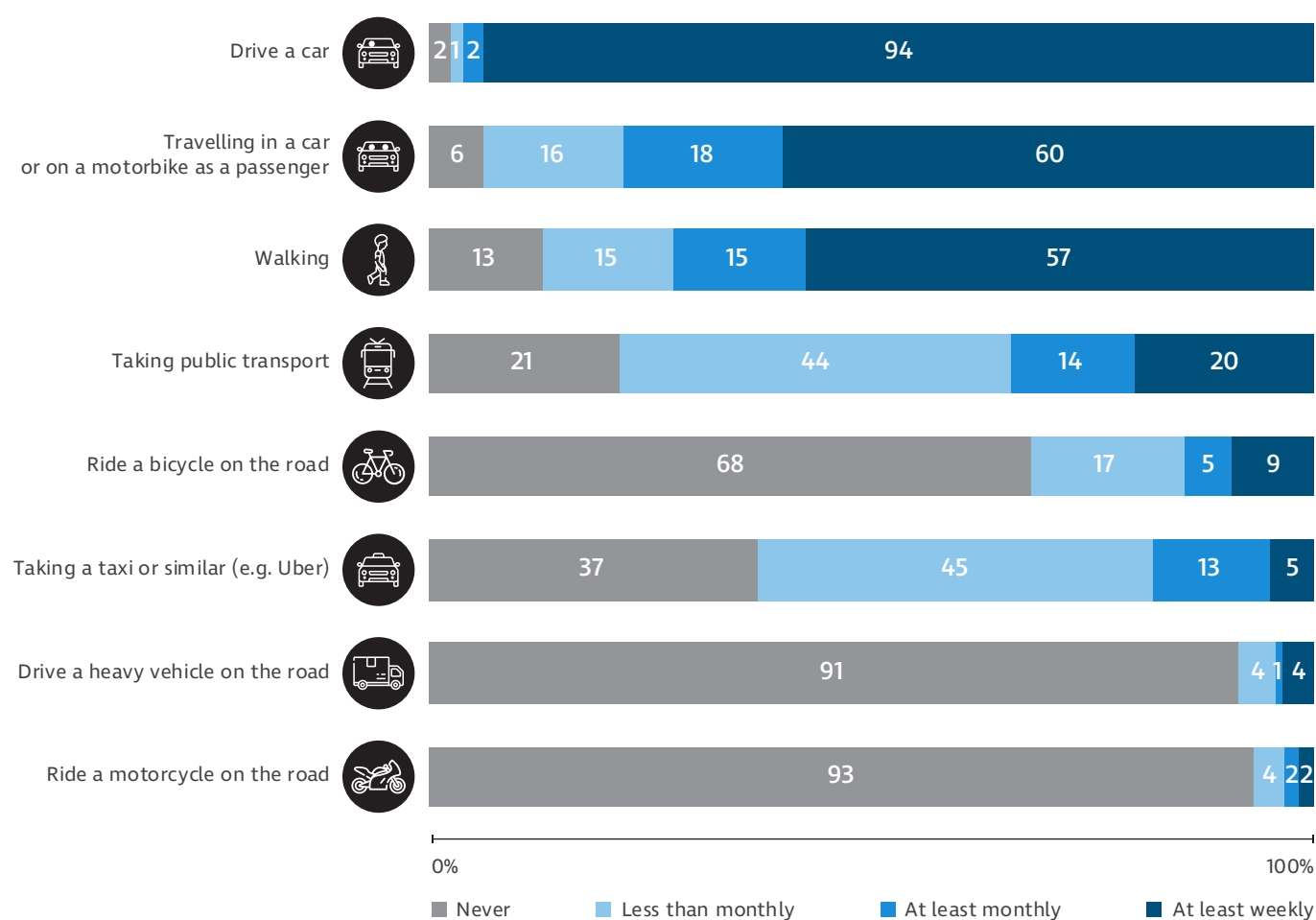


How people get around

The most frequent form of transportation by far is driving a car (weekly usage by 94% of participants), ahead of travelling in a car or motorbike as a passenger (60%), walking (57%) or taking public transport (20%). Smaller proportions make at least

weekly use of a bicycle on the road (9%), catch a taxi or similar (5%), drive a heavy vehicle on the road (4%), or ride a motorcycle on the road (2%). These results do not differ significantly from those in the 2016.

Figure 3. How people get around



M1/2A-D: Total sample; Weighted sample; base n= from 1666 to 1735.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Definition of speeding

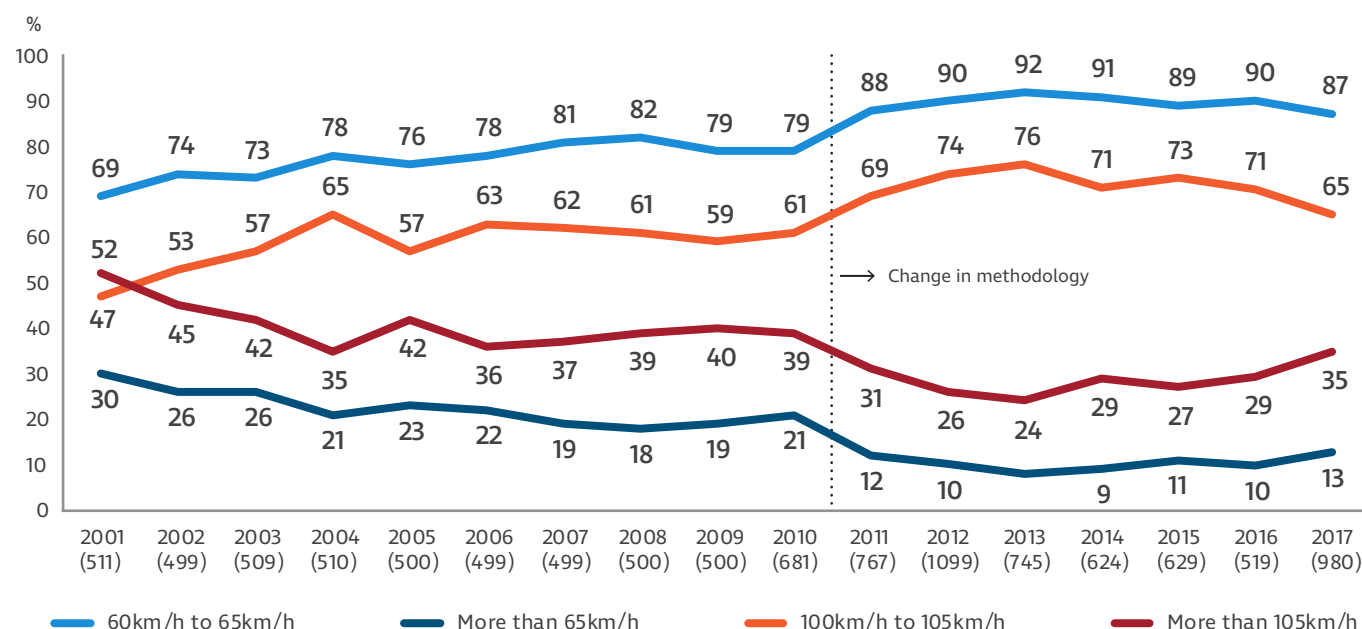
The majority of respondents believe that drivers should have no more than 5km/h 'grace' before they are booked if speeding in both 60km/h and 100km/h zones - the large majority of respondents (87%) believe they should only be able to drive up to 65km/h in a 60km/h zone; while almost two-thirds (65%) provided a speed of up to 105km/h in a 100km/h zone.

Notably, there appears to have been a **decline in support for a 'low tolerance' approach** to speeding. Since 2013, the proportion of respondents who believe drivers should not be booked if driving 105km/h in a 100km/h zone has increased from

24% to 35%. Similarly, between 2013 and 2017 the proportion believing drivers should not be booked if driving at 65km/h in a 60km/h zone has increased from 8% to 13%.

Males aged either 26-39 (45%) or 40-60 (51%) are significantly more likely than younger males aged 18-25 (31%) or females (24%) to think that drivers should not be booked if driving at 105km/h in a 100km/h zone. A similar pattern is apparent in 60km/h zones – males aged 26-39 (20%) or 40-60 (19%) are more likely than males aged 18-25 (14%) or females (7%) to believe drivers should be able to drive at 65km/h without being booked.

Figure 4. Definition of speeding



DAN2- How fast should people be allowed to drive in a 60km/h zone without being booked for speeding?

DAN3 - How fast should people be allowed to drive in a 100km/h zone without being booked for speeding?

Filter: Aged 18-60 years who could specify a number and not below 60km/h; Weighted sample; base from n=980 to 982.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Key Findings 2017

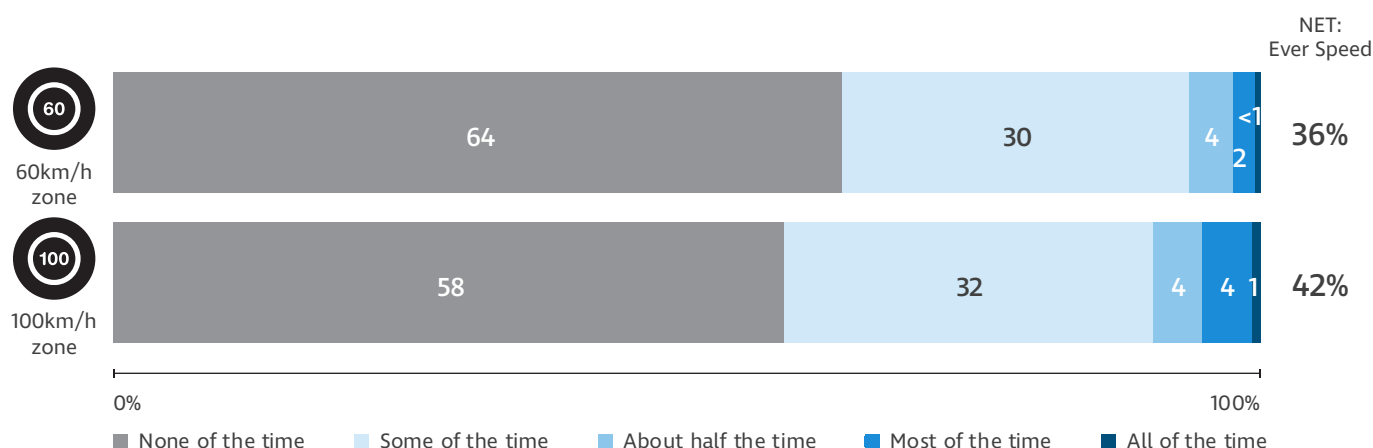


Intentionally driving over the speed limit

Participants were asked how often they intentionally drove above the posted speed limit in the last three months. Over one third of respondents (36% in a 60km/h zone; 42% in a 100km/h zone) ever intentionally speed above the posted speed limit.

Younger people and males are more likely to speed. For example, in 60km/h zones, those aged 18-25 (50%) or 26-39 (45%) are more likely to speed than older participants (30%); males are more likely to speed than females (40% vs 33%).

Figure 5. Intentionally driving over the speed limit



DB1a - In the past three months, how often did you intentionally drive above the limit in a 60km/h zone, even if by only a few km's per hour?

DB1b - In the past three months, how often did you intentionally drive above the limit in a 100km/h zone, even if by only a few km's per hour?

Filter: Driver; Weighted sample; base n=1613 to 1617.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Over the last couple of years there has been a slight decline in the proportion of participants intentionally speeding over the posted limit: In 60km/h zones the proportion intentionally speeding fell from 48% in 2015 to 43% in 2016 and 36% in 2017. In 100km/h zones the proportion fell from 50% in 2015 to 46% in 2016 and 42% in 2017. This decline was mainly due to a fall in the proportion speeding 'some of the time' (from 35% to 30% in 60km/h zones, and from 36% to 32% in 100km/h zones). The proportion who sped at least 'half the time' remained largely stable.

Notably, those who were more likely to go over the speed limit were also more likely to engage in other illegal behaviours such as making illegal mobile calls while driving or drink driving. For example, those who make illegal phone calls are significantly more likely to intentionally drive above the 60km/h limit at least half the time (10% vs 4% amongst those who never make illegal mobile calls). Similarly, those who make illegal mobile calls are more likely to intentionally drive above the 100km/h speed limit at least half the time (18% vs 5%).



Use of drugs and alcohol

Amongst licence holders aged 18 to 60, around four in five (78%) ever drink alcohol, while about one in eleven (9%) have used recreational drugs in the last twelve months. These results are largely similar to those in 2015 or 2016.

Males are more likely to drink alcohol than females (81% vs. 72%), while younger people aged 18-25

are more likely to have taken drugs (17% vs. 6% amongst those aged over 25).

Amongst drivers, 6% indicated that in the last 12 months they had driven when over the BAC limit, a similar finding to that from 2016. Males aged 18-25 (13%) were significantly more likely than older males (7%) or females (4%) to have done so.

Figure 6. Use of drugs and alcohol

	Age Group				Gender	
	18-25	26-39	40-60	61-90	Male	Female
Drinks alcohol	75%	81%	78%	71%	81%	72%
Uses recreational drugs	17%	9%	6%	4%	8%	7%
Driven when over BAC limit	10%	7%	5%	4%	8%	4%

DK2 - Do you ever drink alcohol?

DG3 - In the last 12 months, have you used recreational drugs (for example, methamphetamine, ice, marijuana etc.)?

Filter: Licence holders with a valid response; Weighted sample; base n= from 1731 to 1742.

DK3 - In the last 12 months, have you driven a car when you knew or thought you were over your legal blood alcohol limit, even slightly?

Filter: Drivers; Weighted sample; base n=1684.



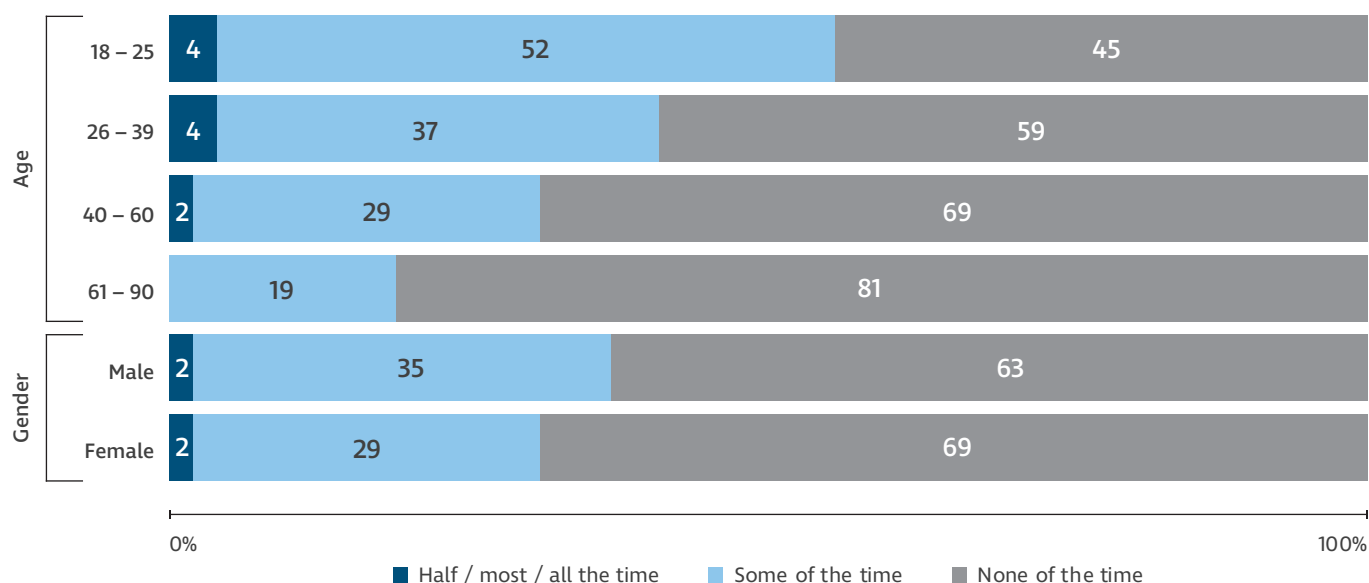
Fatigue

A section on fatigue was introduced in 2017 to examine the prevalence of fatigued driving and its consequences.

Amongst all Victorian drivers, a third (34%) report that they have driven while drowsy in the past three months. Incidence of driving while drowsy is higher

amongst younger drivers with over half (55%) of those aged 18-25 reporting that they had driven in this state. Amongst those aged under 40 years, one in twenty-five (4%) report they drive drowsy more than half the time they drive.

Figure 7. How often driven when drowsy in the past three months



DB2E In the past three months, how often did you drive when feeling drowsy?

Filter: Driver; weighted sample; base: n=1651.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Participants were asked whether they had ever had a near miss (where they almost had a crash), because they were very tired. One in five (21%) reported that they had had a near miss at some time due to fatigue. This increased to a quarter (26%) amongst males, significantly higher than amongst females (16%). The group most likely to report having had a near miss due to fatigue were

those who drive 30,000km per annum or more, with four in ten of this group (40%) having nearly crashed due to fatigue. Working longer hours is also a significant predictor of having a near miss, with those who work more than 40 hours per week (29%) more likely to have had a near miss than those who work fewer hours (20%).



Distractions while driving

One-third (33%) claimed to use a mobile phone illegally while driving in the past three months. This includes 26% who had read a text message while driving, 17% who had answered a call with a hand held phone while driving, 12% who had made a call with a hand-held phone while driving and 12% who have written and sent a text message while driving.

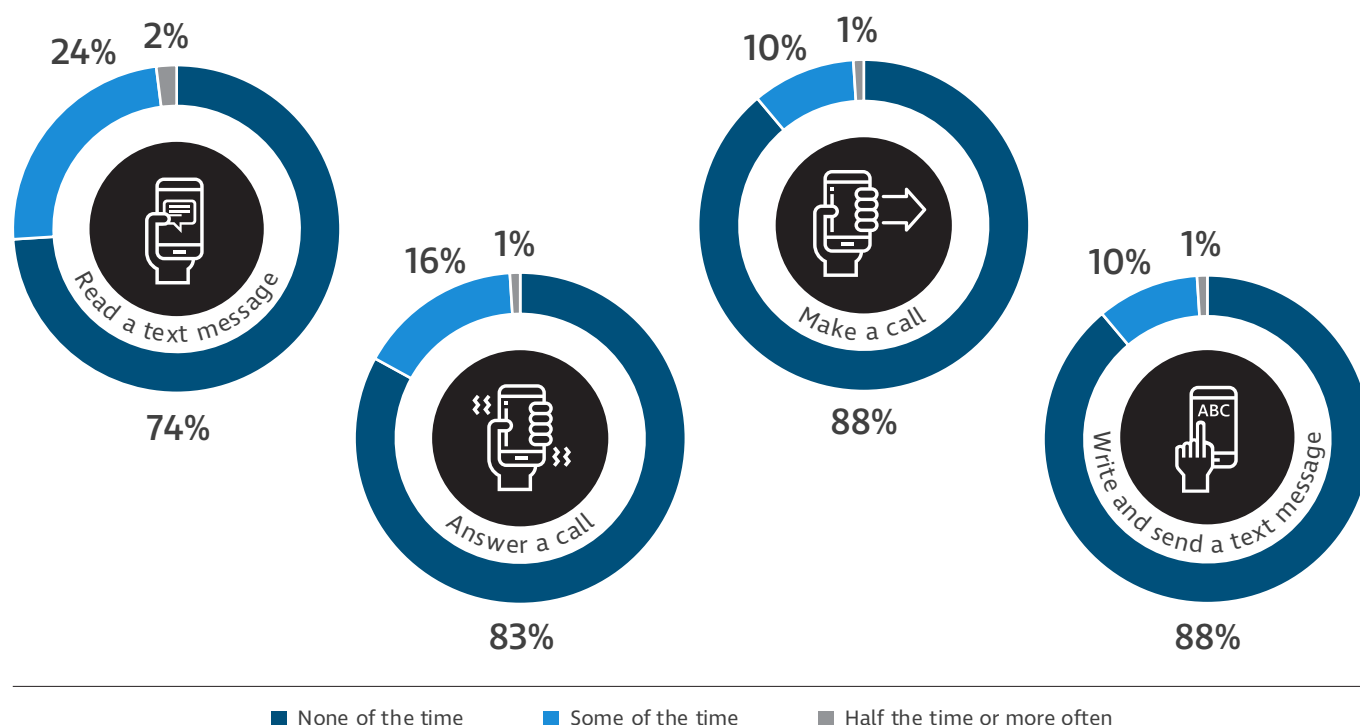
These results indicate that distracting behaviours people self-report are more likely to be 'passive' than 'active', with 33% either answering a call with a hand-held mobile phone or reading a text,

compared to only 18% who either made a call with a hand-held mobile phone or wrote a text.

The results from the 2017 survey were very similar to those from 2016.

Younger people are more likely to use a mobile phone illegally while driving, with 52% of those aged 26-39 and 45% of those aged 18-25 having done so. By contrast, only 33% of those aged 40-60 and 7% of those aged over 60 had used a mobile phone illegally while driving.

Figure 8. Hand-held mobile phone usage while driving



DB2ABCD - In the past three months, how often did you....
 Filter: Driver; Weighted sample; base n= from 1645 to 1659.
 Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Key Findings 2017



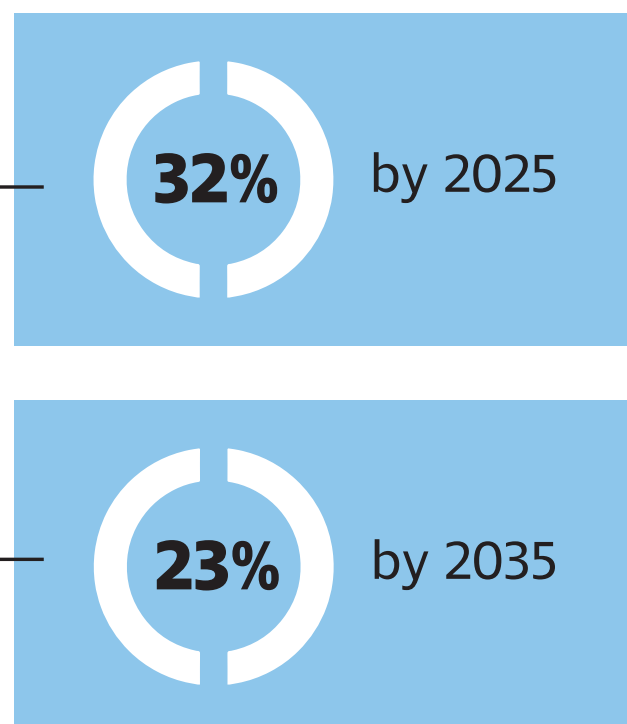
Towards zero

Participants were asked whether Victoria should aim for zero road deaths, and whether reducing the number of road deaths to zero would ever be achievable. While a large majority (88%) believed zero road deaths was a worthy aim, only a minority of 15% believed it ever achievable. These results were virtually identical in 2017 as in 2016.

Females (92%) are more inclined than males (84%) to believe that Victoria should aim for zero, although the majority of Victorians regardless of demographic characteristics supports the zero target.

Belief that zero is possible decreases with age, with nearly a quarter (24%) of 18-25 year olds believing that Victoria will reach zero road deaths versus one in twelve (9%) of those aged 61 and over.

Amongst the 15% of participants who thought zero road deaths is achievable, there was a good deal of uncertainty about when it might occur, with 23% unable to give a response. Nearly a third (32%) thought it might be achievable by 2025, while 23% thought the year 2035 was more likely.



STAND TOGETHER





General attitudes to transport and road safety

Participants were asked to consider nine statements relating to attitudes and experiences concerning roads and transport.

Victorians' attitudes align with some of the principles underpinning Towards Zero. For example, the large majority agree that 'a safe journey is more important than a quick journey' (mean score of 4.7 out of 5), and participants are more likely to disagree than agree that they are 'often in a hurry when travelling' (2.4).

Nevertheless, views do not always mirror the Towards Zero philosophy; Victorians are still more likely to believe than not that 'how people drive is more important than road design in saving lives' (3.9).

There were no significant shifts in attitudes between 2016 and 2017.

Figure 9. Agreement with statements relating to roads and transport



TZ4 - The following statements are about a broad range of attitudes and experiences relating to roads and transport. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree".
Total sample; Weighted sample; base n= from 832 to 867

Key Findings 2017

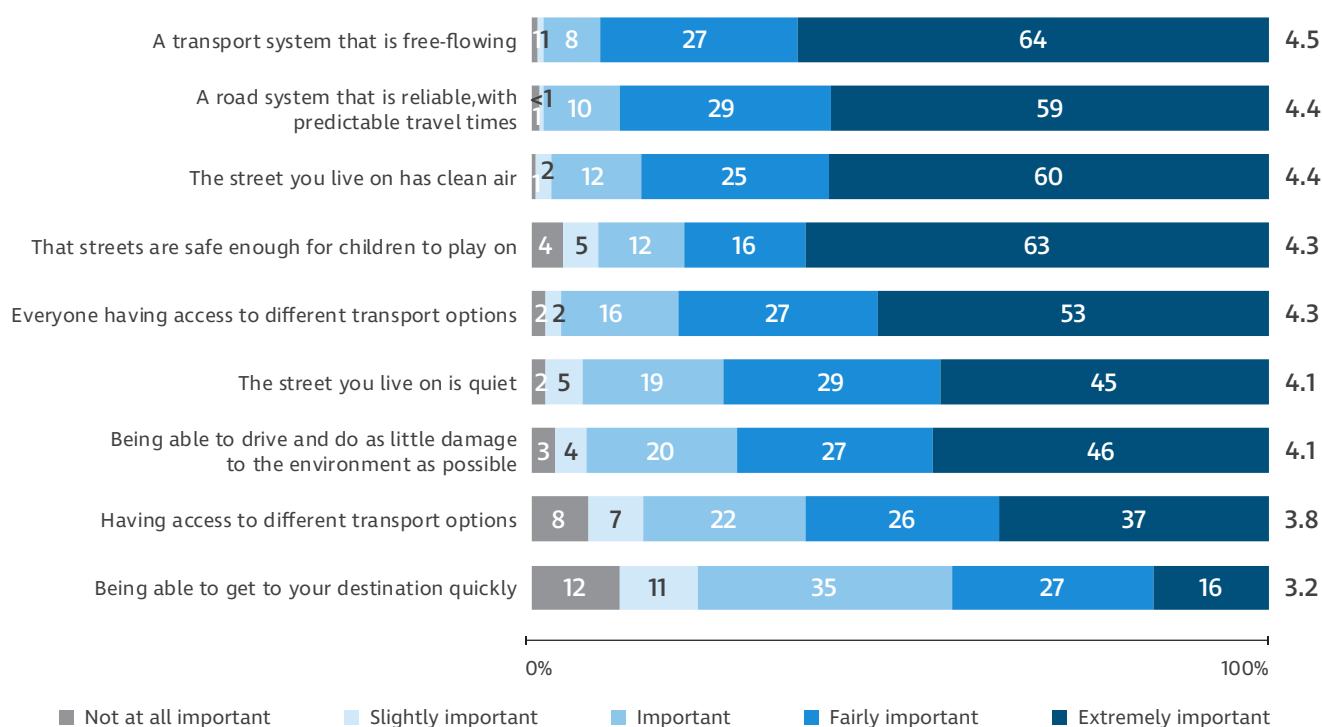
Participants were also asked how important several aspects of our transport system are to them.

Victorians perceive the quality of the transport and road systems to be very important – with both ‘a transport system that is free flowing’ (with an average score of 4.5 out of 5) and ‘a road system that is reliable, with predictable travel times’ (4.4) both being considered important by most people. As a high quality road system is an integral component of Towards Zero, this suggests peoples’ views complements this aspect of Towards Zero.

Interestingly, participants consider ‘a road system that is reliable, with predictable travel times’ (4.4) as more important than ‘being able to get to your destination quickly’ (3.2).

On the whole people agreed that it was important for everyone to have access to different transport options (4.3), and that there be a high quality of life in local streets with most agreeing ‘the street you live in has clean air’ (4.4) and ‘that streets are safe enough for children to play on’ (4.3).

Figure 10. Relative importance of issues relating to roads and transport



TZ5 - On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not at all important", and 5 is "Extremely important", how important are the following things to you?
 Total sample; Weighted sample; base n= from 834 to 847.
 Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Behaviours by gender and age

Much evidence suggests that both the likelihood for a road crash to occur and its severity increases with speed. Since 2008, 29% of all fatalities have involved excessive or inappropriate speed. Despite this, findings from the Road Safety Monitor indicate a substantial minority of people regularly speed,

with 6% admitting they speed at least half the time in a 60km/h zones, and 9% speeding at least half the time in a 100km/h zone.

Younger males aged 18-25 or 26-39, and females aged 18-25 are the people most likely to speed often.

Figure 12. Driving over the speed limit at least half the time in a 60km/h zone

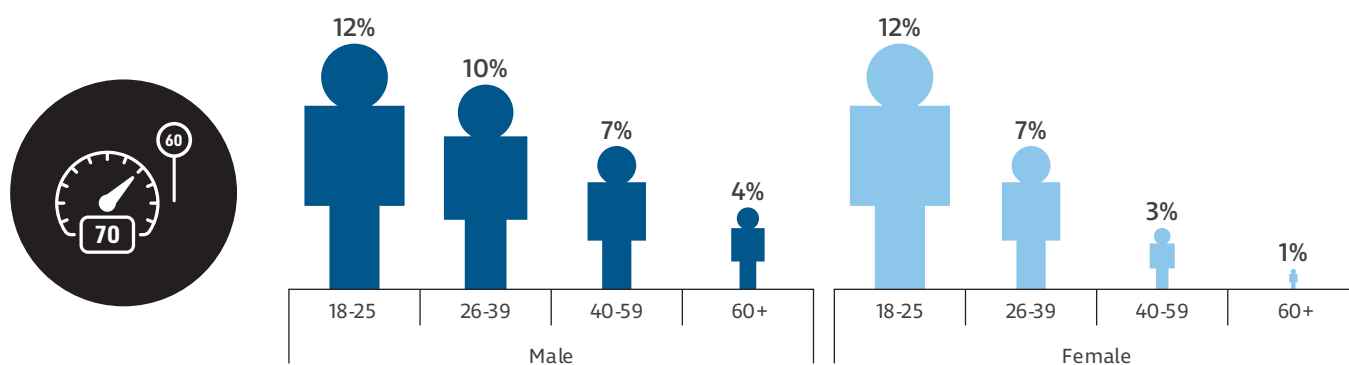
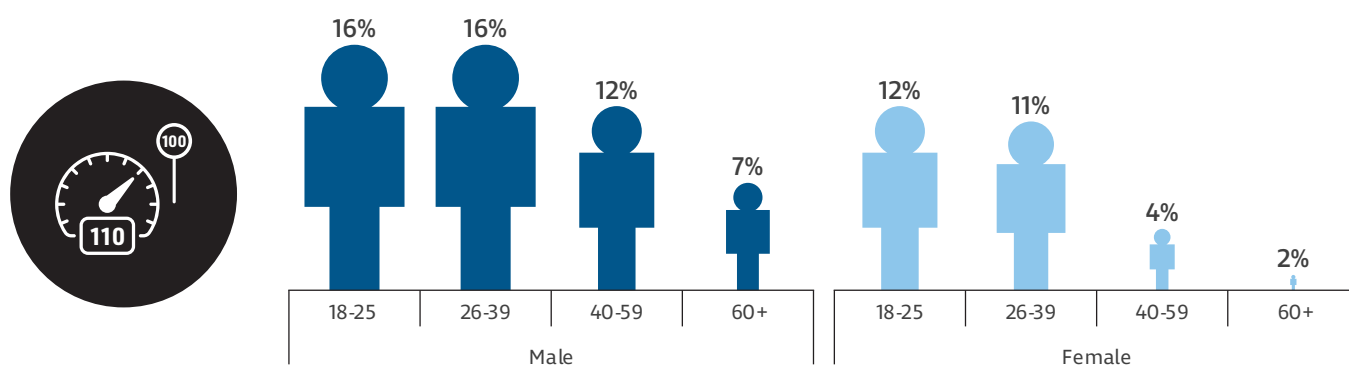


Figure 13. Driving over the speed limit at least half the time in a 100km/h zone



DB1a - In the past three months, how often did you intentionally drive above the limit in a 60km/h zone, even if by only a few km's per hour
 DB1b - In the past three months, how often did you intentionally drive above the limit in a 100km/h zone, even if by only a few km's per hour
 Filter: Driver; Weighted sample; base n= from 1613 to 1617

Key Findings 2017

In addition to speeding, younger males aged under 40 are more likely to engage in other behaviours that can lead to vehicle accidents such as drink driving, illegal mobile phone use and drowsy driving.

Females ages under 40 are also more likely to engage in these behaviours, particularly illegal mobile phone use and drowsy driving.

Figure 14. Driven when over BAC limit

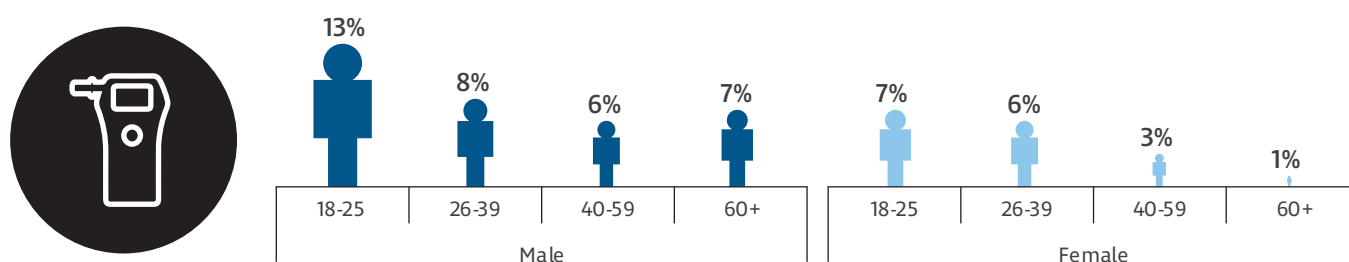


Figure 15. Illegal mobile phone use

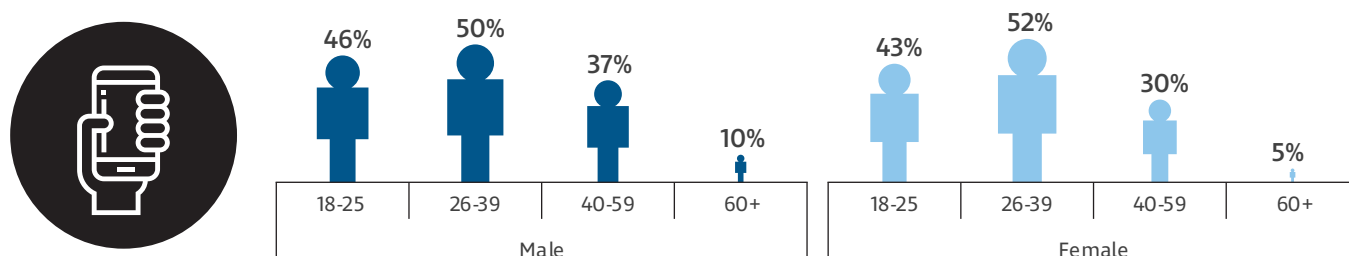
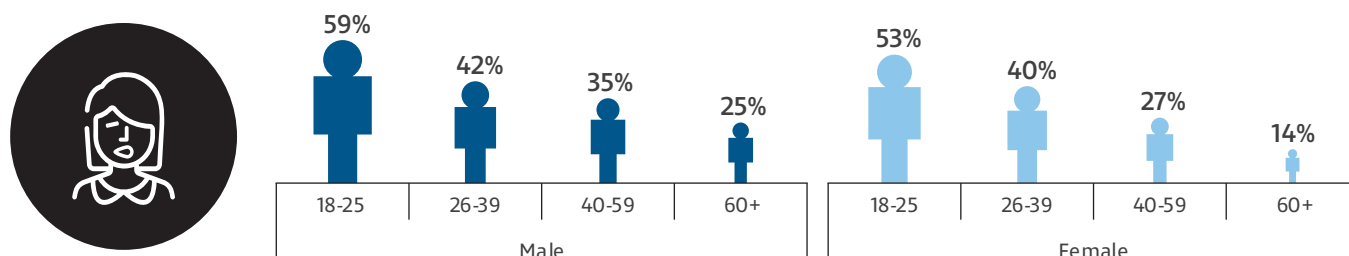


Figure 16. Driving when drowsy at least some of the time



DK3 - In the last 12 months, have you driven a car when you knew or thought you were over your legal blood alcohol limit, even slightly?

DB2ABCD - In the past three months, how often did you....(list of four illegal mobile phone uses)

DB2E - In the past three months, how often did you drive when feeling drowsy?

Driver; weighted sample; base: from n= 1645 to 1684



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