



Transport
Accident
Commission



Road Safety Monitor

Summary Report 2016

Background

The Road Safety Monitor (RSM) is a survey of Victorians' attitudes and behaviours which has been conducted continuously since 2001.

Between 2001 and 2015 the RSM was conducted on an annual basis, with pulse measures between each wave. Going forwards, quarterly measures will be taken using a modular questionnaire to address particular themes as well as maintain regular results for core measures. This document summarises findings from Quarter 3 2016, the first quarterly wave of the Road Safety Monitor (RSM).

Overall, 727 Victorians contacted through the VicRoads Registration and Licencing Database (VRRDL) completed the survey.

Everyone invited to participate from the VRRDL was mailed a questionnaire pack on 29 September 2016 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. From 25

October a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) phase targeted non-responders with a valid phone number in order to maximise response.

This document covers key findings on the following topics:

- Perceived level of danger in driving and pedestrian behaviours
- How people get around
- Definition of speeding
- Intentionally driving over the speed limit
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Distractions while driving
- Towards Zero
- General attitudes to transport and road safety
- The identification of a primary at risk group – males aged 18-25.

Summary of findings

Prioritising car use over alternative transport methods continues to be a feature of Victorian transport (94% drive at least weekly), with the gap between regular car use and use of public transport much greater than compared to Europe (where weekly car use is 74%). Nearly seven in ten (68%) Victorians do not believe they could get by without a motor vehicle. With such high reliance on motor vehicles, working towards safer driver behaviour, safer vehicles and safer roads is imperative to ensuring the safety of Victorians as they go about their everyday lives. In 2016 the number of lives lost on the road increased from 252 in 2015 to 291.

While there has been much improvement in recent decades, we all need to continue to work together so we can all be safe on our roads. It is important to be able to get to where we need to go, and to be able to do so conveniently. However despite valuing road safety, we continue to engage in behaviours which are risky. For instance, while the vast majority (91%) believes that a safe journey is more important than a quick one, half (51%) of Victorians report speeding intentionally in the past three months - perhaps because low level speeding is often not perceived to be dangerous. However, we do understand that using a hand-held phone is dangerous, yet more than a quarter of us (27%) have read a text message while driving recently.

Summary of findings *continued*

Many (46%) are also not sure it is safe for children to walk and ride in their local neighbourhood, and we value this, rating its importance at 4.3 out of 5. We have come a long way, but there is still some distance to cover.

The Towards Zero strategy is the hallmark of the TAC's current approach to road safety. One of the objectives of this survey is to ascertain the extent to which Victorians believe zero road fatalities to be achievable and the timeframe in which this could occur. Overall, around one in seven (15%) believes it is achievable, and the most common timeframe reported by those who thought zero is possible is the year 2025 (41%) with one in five (21%) opting for 2035.

When we consider who is most at risk on our roads, it is clearly 18-25 year old males. They are over-represented in fatal crashes as drivers and display attitudes and behaviours which suggest that they are more at risk (lower risk perception, greater reported dangerous driving behaviours).

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 which indicate an increased level of risk taking.

When asked to rate how dangerous a number of activities are on the road, Victorians tend to rate all as very dangerous, with the exception of low level speeding (this has also been the case historically, and is not a new finding). We also see lower perception of danger linked to an increased likelihood of engaging in the behaviour, particularly evident with speeding.

When asked to consider how much leeway motorists should be given when driving over the posted speed limit before being booked for speeding, the vast majority (90%) continues to believe 5km/h or less is appropriate in a 60km/h zone and a smaller majority (71%) believes this margin is appropriate in a 100km/h zone.

Exceeding the speed limit remains a common behaviour amongst Victorian motorists with four in ten (43%) reporting they had exceeded the speed limit in a 60km/h zone and just under half (46%) in a 100km/h zone. This increases to six in ten (63%) in a 60km/h zone amongst 18-25 year olds.

Considering impaired driving, overall around one in twenty-five (4%) motorists aged between 18 and 60 years had driven when they thought they were over their legal blood alcohol content (B.A.C.) in the past 12 months. This result is stable with recent measures. There is no evidence to suggest that those who drink drive believe it is easier to avoid being caught than those who do not drink drive, they may just be more comfortable taking the risk or more likely to find themselves in situations where they need to make a decision to as whether to drive or not after drinking.

The vast majority of Victorian motorists aged between 18 and 60 years report that they do not take recreational drugs. Overall, around one in fifteen (6%) report taking recreational drugs; and a quarter of these (24%) has driven while under the influence in the past 12 months. This equates to one per cent of motorists aged between 18 and 60 driving under the influence of drugs in the past 12 months.

In-car distractions continue to be an issue on Victoria's roads. Motorists are more likely to engage in 'passive' distractions while driving at least some of the time, such as reading a text message (27%) or answering a call with a hand held mobile phone (20%) than actively writing a text message (12%) or making a phone call (13%) with a hand-held mobile phone. These behaviours are all more common amongst younger drivers.

Perceived level of danger in driving and pedestrian behaviours

When asked to consider how dangerous a range of driving and pedestrian behaviours were, participants made it clear that on the whole people do not consider driving a few kilometres over the

speed limit to be as dangerous as other behaviours such as driving with illegal B.A.C., driving while drowsy, or travelling without a seatbelt.

Chart 1. Perceptions of how dangerous behaviours are on the road



Q.4A-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=691

Interestingly, those who think speeding is not dangerous are more likely to speed. This is indicated by the fact that those who reported they drove above either the posted or self-defined speed limit

at least half the time ('speeders') are significantly less likely to believe that driving a few kilometres over the speed limit is dangerous (3.2 mean on a 10 point scale vs 6.3 amongst 'non-speeders').

Perceived level of danger in driving and pedestrian behaviours *continued*

It is worth noting that an overall pattern is that males tend to rate their perception of danger across most risky behaviours as lower than females, and those over 60 years of age tend to rate their perception of danger higher than younger respondents. Typically, people who engage in the behaviour, will have a lower perception of how dangerous it is than those who do not engage in it. For example, those who have a lower perception of danger for driving while using a handheld phone include:

- Males (8.8 vs 9.3 amongst females)
- Those aged under 40 years (8.8 vs 9.2 amongst those aged 40 or over)
- Those who have used a mobile phone to send a text message while driving (8.2 vs 9.2)
- Those who have used a mobile phone to make a call while driving (8.6 vs 9.3).

Chart 2. Perceptions of how dangerous behaviours

	Age Group				Gender	
	18-25	26-39	40-60	61-90	Male	Female
Drive with an illegal Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) level	9.5	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.4	9.7
Drive while very drowsy	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.4	9.1	9.4
Travel in a car without wearing a seat belt	8.8	9.0	9.3	9.5	9.1	9.3
Drive while using a handheld mobile phone	8.8	8.8	9.0	9.5	8.8	9.3
Drive after taking prescription drugs which may cause drowsiness	8.4	8.5	8.8	9.3	8.6	9.0
Cross the street while walking and listening to headphones	6.9	7.7	8.6	9.4	8.1	8.6
Take your eyes off the road for two seconds while driving	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.6	8.1	8.5
Drive while using a hands free mobile phone	6.1	5.5	6.1	7.7	6.0	6.8
Drive a few kilometres above the posted speed limit in a 100km/h zone	5.8	6.0	5.6	6.5	5.5	6.5
Drive a few kilometres above the posted speed limit in a 60km/h zone	5.6	6.1	5.9	6.4	5.8	6.3

Q4. How dangerous do you think it is to... by BANNER - Age, Gender
Total sample; Weight: Weight - Age, Gender from VR file; base n = 691

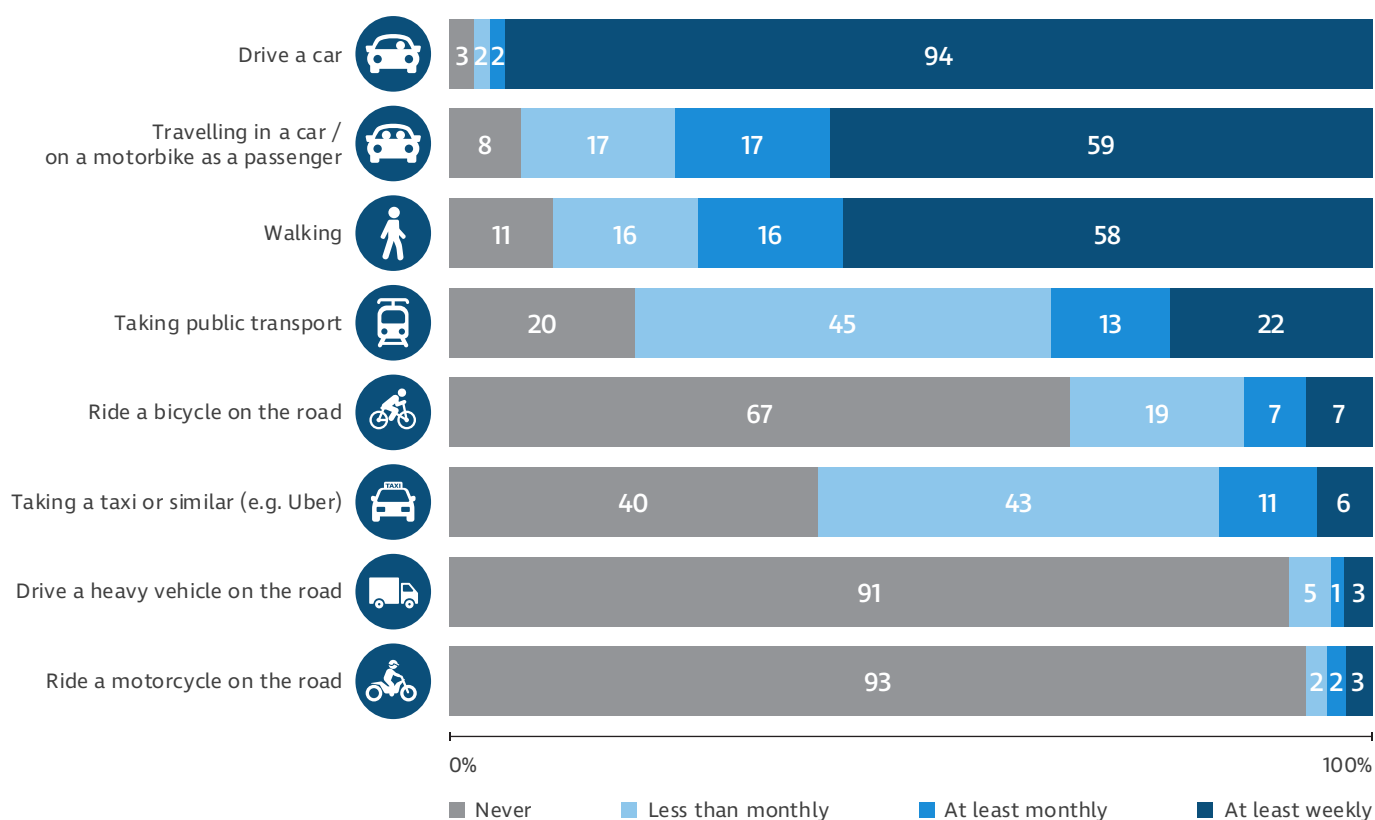
Key Findings 2016

How people get around

The most frequent form of transportation is driving a car, used at least weekly by nearly all (94%) Victorians, ahead of travelling in a car or on a motorbike as a passenger (59%), walking (58%) or taking public transport (22%). Smaller proportions make at least weekly use of a bicycle on the road (7%), catching a taxi or similar (6%), driving a heavy vehicle on the road (3%), or riding a motorcycle on the road (3%).

As a point of comparison, the difference in weekly usage between cars and public transport (94% vs 22%) is substantially larger in Victoria than in the European Union. In the European Union 76% drive cars on a weekly basis while 35% use public transport on a weekly basis¹.

Chart 3. How people get around



Q.1A-2D
Total sample; Weighted sample; base n=704

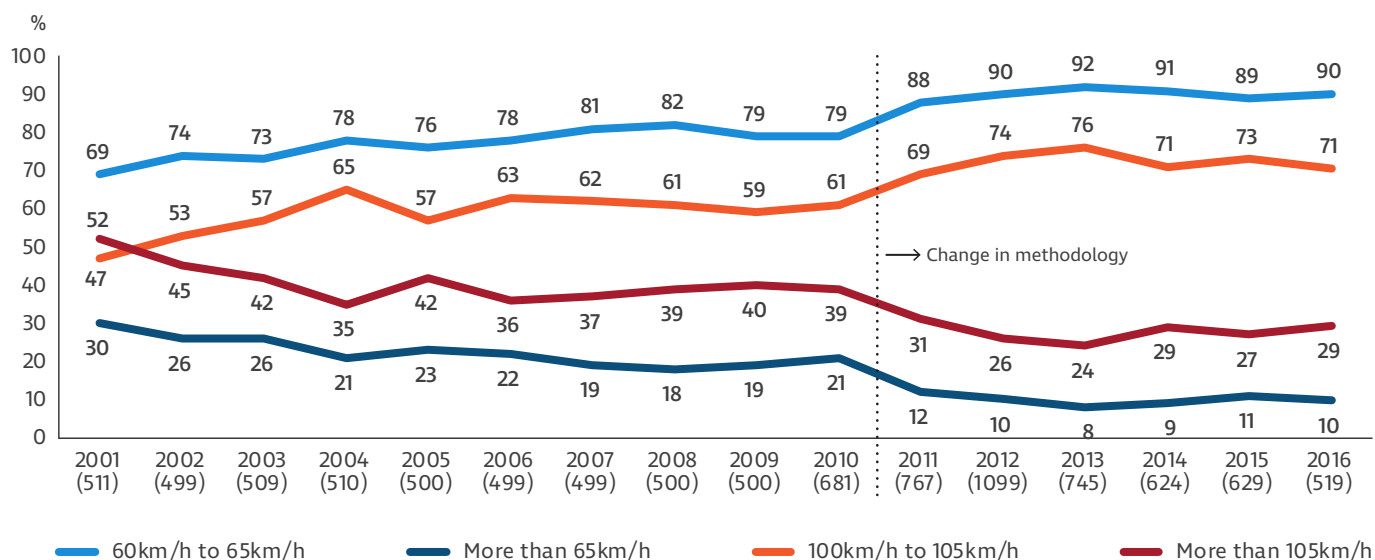
¹ European Commission, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, 'Special Eurobarometer 406'

Definition of speeding

The majority of participants believe that drivers should have no more than 5km/h 'grace' before they are booked if speeding in 60km/h or 100km/h zones - the large majority of respondents (90%) believe they should only be able to drive up to 65km/h in a 60km/h zone; while almost three quarters (71%) provided a speed of up to 105km/h in a 100km/h zone. Respondents living outside major urban areas were more likely to believe that the limits should be within 5km/h in 100km/h zones (77% vs 68% of those living in major urban areas).

It is interesting to note that there has been a stabilising of results in the last five years – by contrast, between 2001 and 2010 there was a steady increase in the proportion believing that drivers should have no more than 5km/h 'grace' before they were booked if speeding. Between 2012 and 2016, however, there has been no change (note that the difference in results between 2010 and 2011 coincided with a methodological change).

Chart 4. Speed at which people should be booked (60km/h zone and 100km/h zone)



Q.5 - How fast should people be allowed to drive in a 60km/h zone without being booked for speeding?

Q.6 - How fast should people be allowed to drive in a 100km/h zone without being booked for speeding?

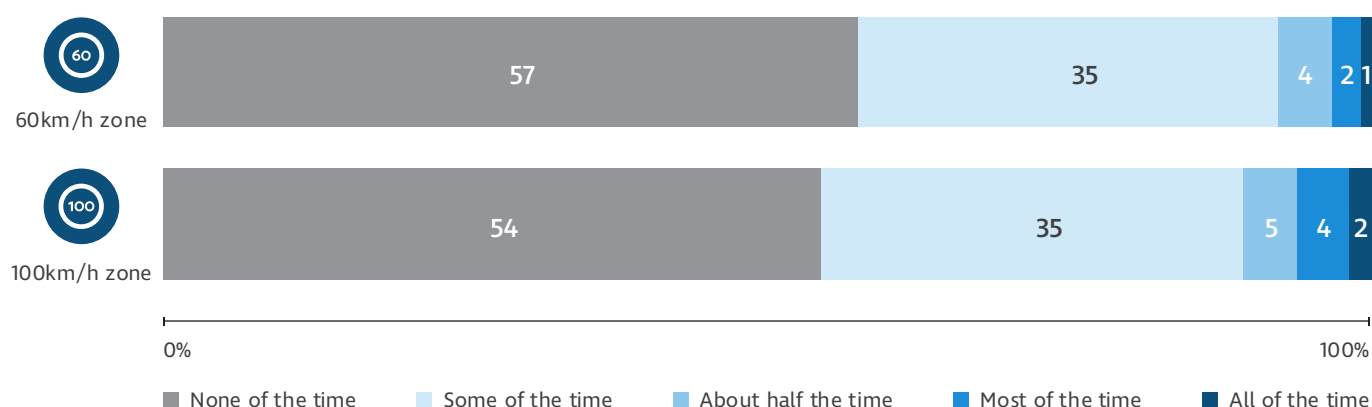
Filter: Aged 18-60 years who could specify a number and not below 60km/h; base n=519

Intentionally driving over the speed limit

Participants were asked how often they intentionally drove above the posted speed limit in the last three months. Slightly over half (57% in a 60km/h zone; 54% in a 100km/h zone) never drive

above the posted speed limit. Those aged 18-25 are more prone to speed – 37% say they speed 'none of the time' over the 60km/h limit vs 56% amongst older participants.

Chart 5. Intentionally driving over the speed limit



Q.7a: 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

Q.7b: 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=727

Notably, those who were more likely to go over the speed limit were also more likely to engage in other dangerous behaviours such as using their handheld mobile phone while driving. For example, those who had used a handheld mobile while driving are significantly more likely to intentionally drive above the 60km/h limit at least half the time (14% vs 4%

amongst those who do not use their handheld mobile while driving). Similarly, those who make handheld mobile calls while driving are more likely to intentionally drive above the 100km/h speed limit at least half the time (20% vs 4% amongst who do not make handheld calls).

Key Findings 2016

Use of drugs and alcohol

Amongst licence holders aged 18 to 60, around four in five (78%) said they drink alcohol. Males were significantly more likely than females to ever drink alcohol (83% vs 72%). Amongst drivers who drink alcohol, 6% admitted they had driven a car when they thought they were over the limit in the last 12 months. Considering all motorists on the road aged 18 to 60 years, this equates to one in twenty-five (4%) reporting drink driving in the past 12 months.

About one in fifteen (6%) claimed to have used recreational drugs in the last 12 months – those aged 18 to 25 were significantly more likely to do so than older participants (12% vs 4%).

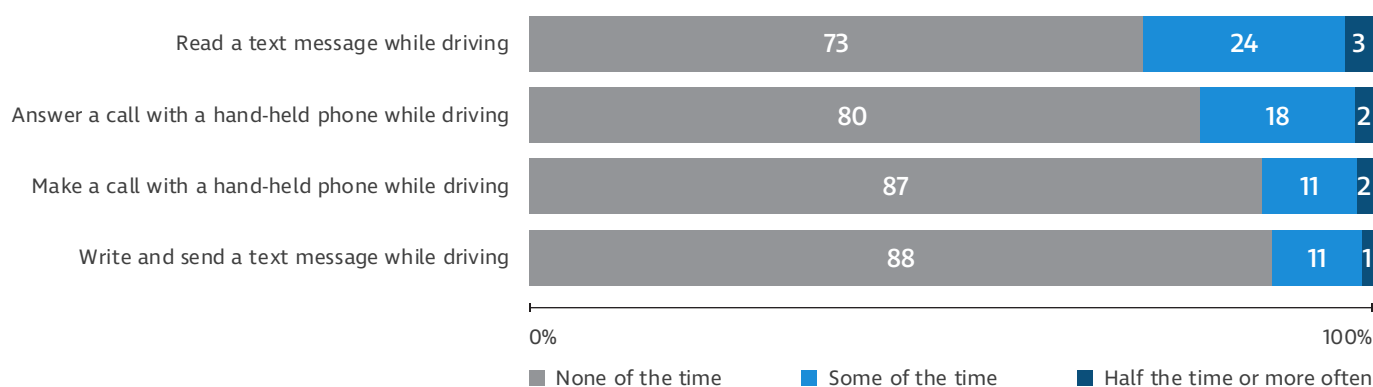
The proportions claiming to ever drink alcohol or to have used recreational drugs in the last 12 months in 2016 were not significantly different from in 2015.

Distractions while driving

While the majority of participants claim not to indulge in behaviours that might distract them while driving, the distracting behaviours they do indulge in are more likely to be more 'passive' distractions such as reading a text message (27%) or answering a call with a hand held phone (20%) than more 'active' distractions such as making a call with a hand-held phone while driving (13%) or writing and sending a text message while driving (12%).

Younger participants (aged under 40) were significantly more likely than their older counterparts to indulge in distracting behaviours. For example, 39% of those aged 18-39 admitted to reading a text message while driving compared to 28% of those aged 40-60 and 8% aged 60 or over.

Chart 6. Distractions while driving

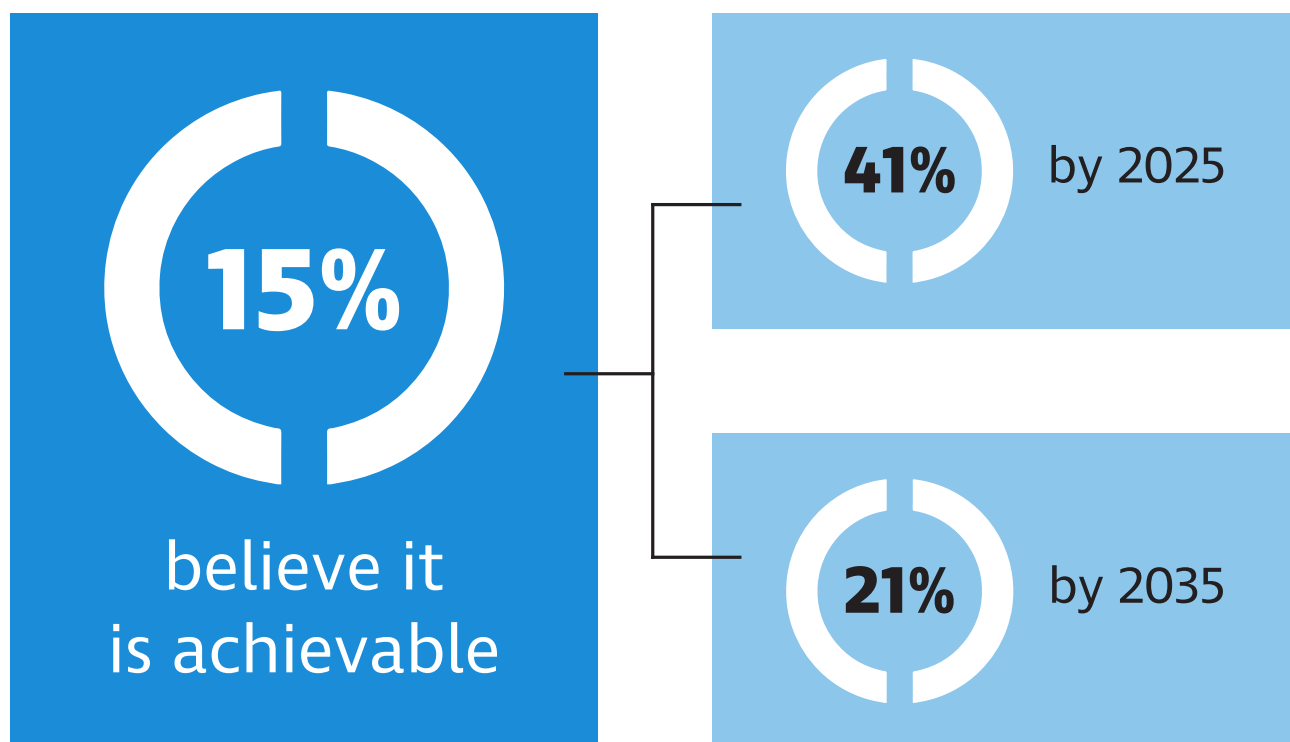


Q.7: The next questions are about behaviour that may be illegal, such as speeding, drink and drug driving etc. In the past three months, how often did you...?
Filter: Driver; Weighted sample; base n=688

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 one in seven (15%) believed it would ever be achievable. Participants' perceptions did not vary significantly across demographics.

Amongst the one in seven (15%) respondents who thought zero road deaths was achievable, there was a good deal of uncertainty about when it might occur, with a quarter (26%) unable to give a response. Four in ten (41%) thought it might be achievable by 2025, while one in five (21%) thought the year 2035 was more likely.



STAND TOGETHER



General attitudes to transport and road safety

Several statements relating to general attitudes towards transport were presented to participants. The large majority agreed that 'a safe journey is more important than a quick journey' (mean score of 4.6 out of 5) indicating the large majority agree with the underlying philosophy of Towards Zero. The fact that participants are more likely to disagree that they are 'often in a hurry when travelling' (2.4) is also a finding which suggests support of the Towards Zero philosophy. The large majority also agreed that 'even good drivers make mistakes' (mean score of 4.4).

This finding suggests some support for the Towards Zero philosophy in that it implies it is not solely the responsibility of road users to reduce the number of lives lost on our roads to zero given mistakes will always be made by drivers.

Nevertheless, driver responsibility is still considered a major factor given that participants were more likely to agree than not (3.9) that 'how people drive is more important than road design in saving lives.' Participants were evenly divided on whether they 'would like to use cars less and cycle and walk more.'

Chart 7. Level of agreement with statements relating to roads and transport



Q26: 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=678

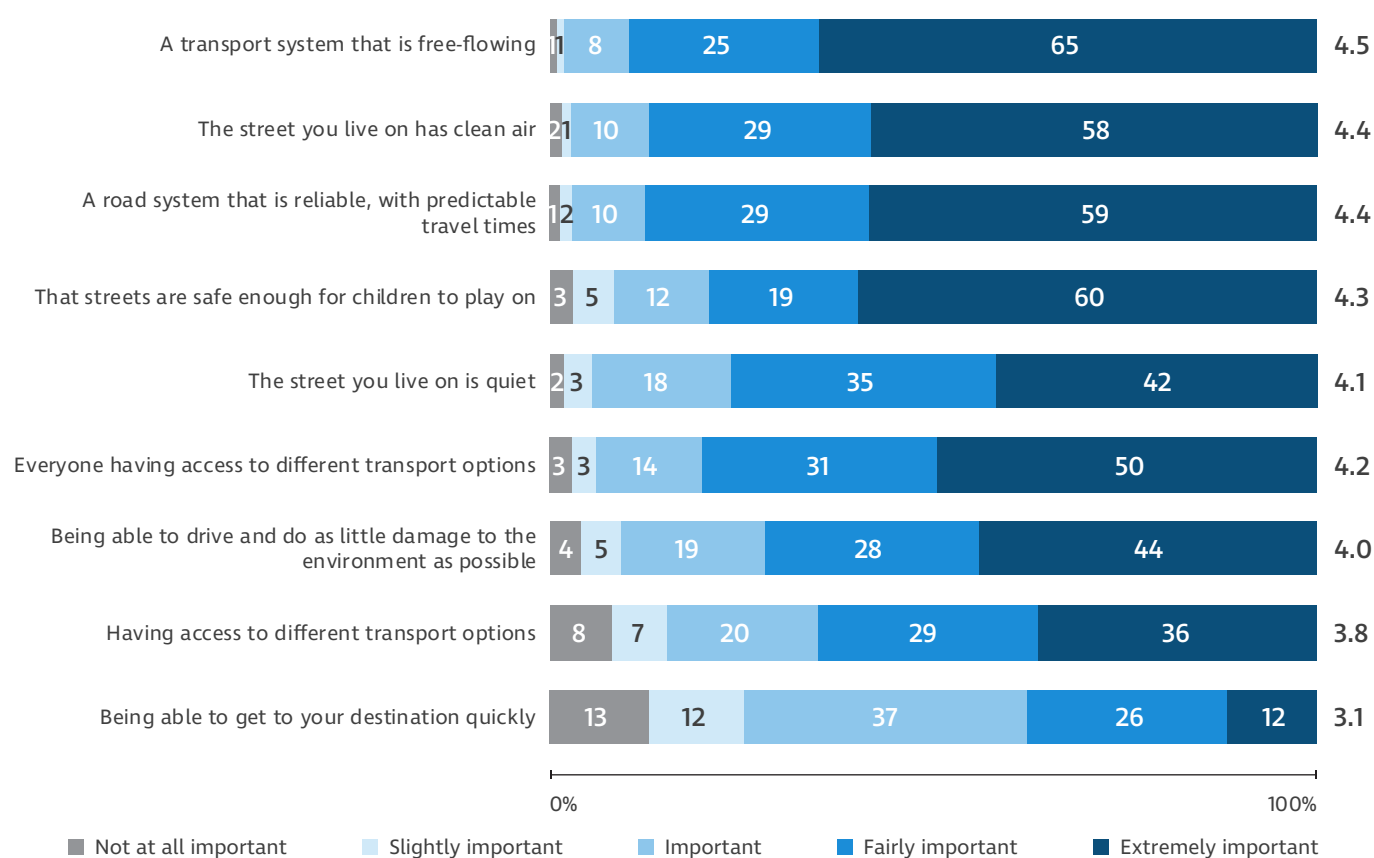
Key Findings 2016

General attitudes to transport and road safety *continued*

Participants were also asked how important several aspects of our transport system are to them. On the whole participants perceived 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 complement this aspect of Towards Zero. Participants were more polarised concerning whether ‘being able to get to your destination quickly’ is important (with an average score of 3.1). On the whole people agreed that it was important to have access to different transport options, although the level of perceived importance was greater when the statement related to everyone (4.2) rather than when the statement related to the participant only (3.8).

Chart 8. Relative importance of issues relating to roads and transport



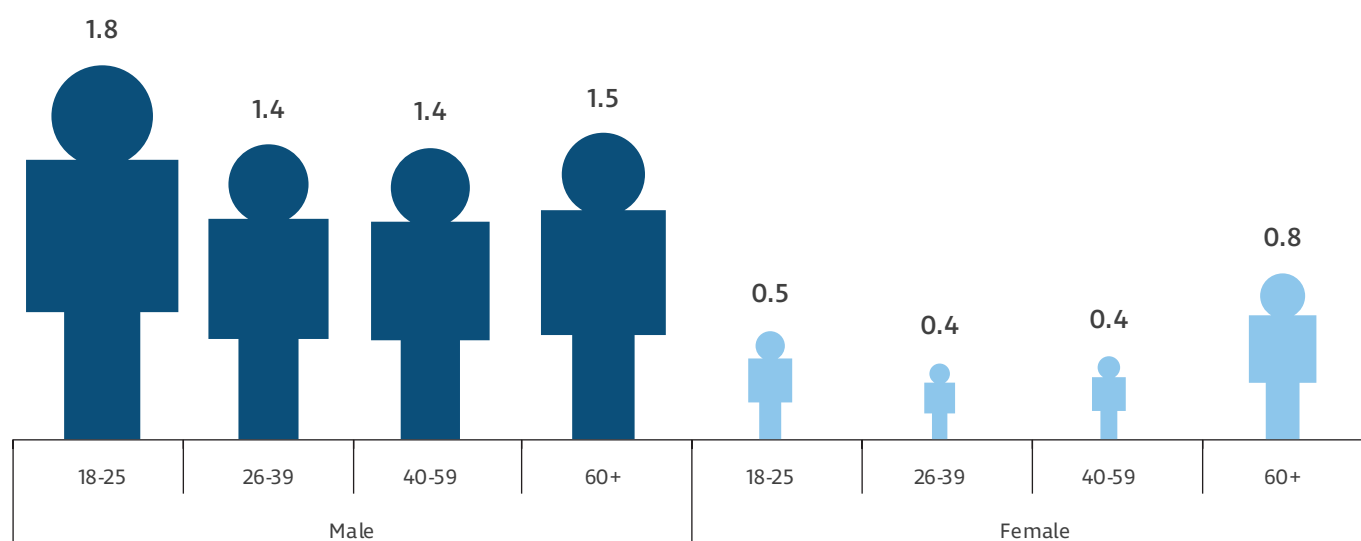
Q27: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not at all important", and 5 is "Extremely important", how important are the following things to you?
Total sample; Weighted sample; base n=705

At risk group: Males aged 18 to 25

Males aged 18-25 form the most at-risk group on our roads. They are the demographic most over-represented in road fatality statistics (passengers and pedestrians have been excluded).

Young males aged 18 to 25 tend to have lower perceptions of danger than other groups, and typically, those who have a lower perception of danger of particular actions are more likely to engage in those actions.

Chart 9. Likelihood of fatality by gender and age (2016)*



Source: Raw fatality data from TAC / analysis by Wallis

*The average across all demographics is 1. Therefore, a score of 2.3 indicates a 130% increased chance of fatality than the average. A score of 0.4 indicates a 60% reduced chance of fatality than the average.

For example, males aged 18-25 are more likely than older males and females overall to make a call with a hand held mobile phone while driving (25% of young males do vs 13% of older males and 12% of females), and correspondingly less likely to believe that driving while using a hand-held mobile phone is dangerous (8.3 on a 10 point scale where scores closer to 10 indicate a greater perception of danger vs. 8.9 amongst older males and 9.3 amongst females).

Similarly, males aged 18-25 are more likely to drive a few kilometres over a 60km/h speed limit (58% vs 42% amongst older males and 41% amongst females) while at the same time they are less likely to believe that doing so is dangerous (5.0 on a 10 point scale vs 5.9 amongst older males and 6.3 amongst females).