

Aussies ignore road safety message

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DRIVERS are ignoring road-safety campaigns despite the millions of dollars governments spend on them.

A survey of 1600 motorists by the Social Research Centre found no change in bad driving habits by the majority of respondents. In some cases, they were worse.

The most disturbing finding was that using mobile phones while driving had increased to the extent it was now commonplace.

About 60 per cent of drivers admitted illegally using mobile phones while driving, while 30 per cent texted - although most agreed that using phones increased their chances of having an accident.

This was a significant increase on last year's survey figure.

One in 25 admitted to driving while over the legal alcohol limit and some confessed to having nodded off behind the wheel while drunk.

NSW topped the list for using phones while driving, with 68 per cent admitting to calling or texting, followed by Western Australia.

Drivers continue to speed, with almost 60 per cent of drivers viewing speeding fines as a way for governments to raise money.

More than 25 per cent of motorists believed they could drive 10km/h above the speed limit in a 100km/h zone without being fined. Most who admitted to driving 10km/h or more above the limit were in the ACT.

One in six drivers admitted falling asleep at the wheel, with the majority being repeat offenders.

For one in 10 drivers, nodding off had resulted in a car crash.

Northern Territory drivers were the most likely to fall asleep, followed by those in South Australia.

Drink-driving continued despite more motorists believing there were more random breath-testing units.

The majority of drink-drivers were in the Northern Territory, where almost one in 10 got behind the wheel while over the limit.

The next biggest drinkers were in Western Australia, followed by South Australia, the ACT and NSW.

The study found fewer people are being random breath-tested, with 28 per cent of motorists tested last year compared with 32 per cent in 2005.

And almost 60 per cent of wine-drinkers did not know how many standard drinks were in a 750ml bottle of wine, whereas 60 per cent of beer drinkers knew how many drinks were in a 375ml stubby.

Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said the survey also found wide-spread support for existing traffic laws.

Source: The Daily Telegraph (<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/sunday-telegraph/aussies-ignore-road-safety-message/story-e6frewt0-1225820393760>)