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AAMI targets social stigma to tackle distracted driving

National motor insurer, AAMI, today announced that it will commit research funding to help tackle the issue of distracted driving, especially among young drivers.

With police highlighting distracted driving as a growing cause of major accidents and the 18th AAMI Crash Index showing technology distraction is escalating, AAMI is in discussions with research partners to explore and better understand specific aspects of distracted driving.

“We are looking at a range of responses to this growing problem, including technology and education solutions,” said AAMI spokesperson, Reuben Aitchison.

“In particular, we are keen to understand the psychology behind the creation of a social stigma, something we believe is necessary in reducing technology distraction, particularly in younger drivers.”

The announcement by AAMI comes after new research showing the unsafe use of technology devices in cars is getting worse in Australia, despite stricter laws, increasing awareness and widespread advertising campaigns about the dangers associated with it.

“AAMI’s Crash Index research is showing some terrifying behaviours are on the rise,” Mr Aitchison warned.

“More than half of young Aussie drivers have sent or read a text message while driving and more than a quarter have read emails or surfed the Internet while driving.

“The latest trend, with the emergence of short video platforms like Vines, is young drivers taking short videos and uploading them while driving. And it has to stop. So much has been done to reduce the number of young drivers dying on our roads in past years and we cannot let this growing threat undo all that good work.”

Key technology distraction findings

Done while driving in the past year, drivers aged 18 - 24	2012	2013
Sent or read a text message	51%	56%
Made a call without using hands-free	43%	45%
Used my mobile to read emails or check the Internet	23%	27%
Input info or adjusted the Sat Nav/GPS	38%	46%
Updated Facebook status	n/a	12%
Sent a tweet	n/a	5%

“The Police are working hard to try and curb this behavior and have undertaken campaigns to enforce the laws around using mobiles while driving, catching tens of thousands of drivers in the act, but it is not always easy.” Mr Aitchison explained. “A multifaceted response to this issue is required to support the Police’s enforcement and community awareness efforts.



“AAMI believes the key to combat the issue of distracted driving among younger drivers is creating a social stigma around it, much like we have with drunk drivers. When texting and driving becomes socially unacceptable and uncool, we will start to see a change in behavior within this age group,” he concluded.

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For further information or to arrange an interview:

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Note to editors:

Newspoll Market and Social Research conducted an independent internet survey of 3,726 Australian drivers, 18 years of age and older, across a full national sample in 2013, of which 973 were aged 18-24 years. Data was collected in line with ISO – 20252 – Market, Social and Opinion Research and has been weighted with current ABS population demographics to ensure any extrapolation of results is representative of age, gender and area.