



SPEED LIMITS

There is a point where freedom and responsibility intersect

Recently, there has been some publicity around an increase in country road speed limits to 130 km/h. It would be easy to consider the facts of the matter being proved by one vehicle exceeding the speed limit over a considerable distance in one trip but there are other considerations as well. Let's look at the facts in relation to what faster speeds actually mean.

In 2003, speed limits on some country roads were reduced from 110 km/h to 100 km/h. In 2006, the Centre for Automotive Safety Research conducted a review of those road where the speed limit had been reduced, covering a period from two years before the reduction, to two years after the reduction. What they discovered was that there had been a 32% reduction in casualty crashes in the two years following the change of speed limit.

In 2011, many roads within 100 km of Adelaide had their speed limit reduced from 110 km/h to 100 km/h. This was based on evidence that, from 2006 to 2010 there had been 290 casualty crashes on those roads. One of the main reasons for reducing speed limits is to reduce both stopping distance and impact energy.

When we look at stopping distances, let's assume a driver has a perception and reaction time of about 1.5 seconds and the vehicle has a deceleration rate of about 0.7g.

100 At 100 km/h - Stopping distance is about 100 metres

At 110 km/h - Stopping distance is about 115 metres AND

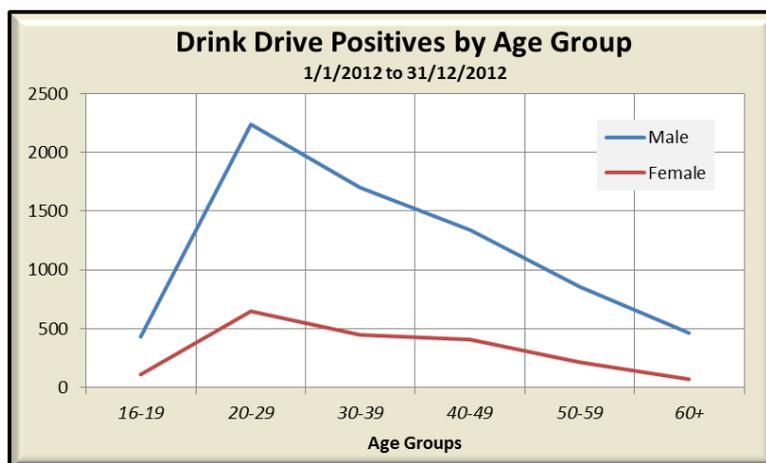
- Impact energy has increased by 21%
- At the point where the 100 km/h car would have stopped, the 110 km/h car is still travelling at 50 km/h
- A 10% increase in speed = a 15% increase in stopping distance

130 At 130 km/h - Stopping distance is about 150 metres. A 30% increase in speed = a 50% increase in stopping distance.

If the road is glazed through heavy use, has oil or dust on it or the road is wet, stopping distances increase dramatically. If the vehicle's tyres or suspension are worn, this will also increase stopping distance. Sometimes, due to road or weather conditions, the maximum speed limit can be unsafe. Drivers should always drive to the conditions.

South Australian Drink Drivers — who needs to lift their game?

DRINK DRIVE POSITIVES by AGE GROUP 1/1/2012 to 31/12/2012			
AGE GROUP	Sex	TOTAL	Overall Total
16-19	Male	433	543
	Female	110	
20-29	Male	2238	2884
	Female	646	
30-39	Male	1701	2148
	Female	447	
40-49	Male	1335	1742
	Female	407	
50-59	Male	858	1070
	Female	212	
60 +	Male	464	534
	Female	70	
		8921	8921



This information plots drink-drivers for the 2012 calendar year in age demographic groups. It can be noted from this graph that 16-19 year olds (with 543 drivers) for both sexes who do not have access to liquor scored low compared to other groups – a level which is not matched until drivers are 60 years or more (with 534 drivers). Young drivers 20-29 years (with 2884 drivers) are risk takers when driving and using alcohol. This is particularly true of young male drivers with 2238 drivers being detected. This risk taking behaviour lessens but continues for some people into their 30s (with 1742 drivers) and 40s (with 1070 drivers).

Why do young drivers continue with this behaviour? Research shows that the human brain's final stages of development, particularly for males, continue well into a person's early 20s, and often conclude around age 25. The prefrontal cortex, which governs reasoning, advanced thought and impulse control, is the final area of the human brain to mature, but is a critical element in safe driving. Other Road Safety data supports this risk taking behaviour by these groups.

This risk taking behaviour continues for other age demographic groups who still exhibit this risk taking behaviour and we should remember that in 2012 40% of fatal crashes involved alcohol or drugs. The reality is that 8923 drivers were detected drink driving and have had their licences disqualified, their motor vehicles impounded for 28 days, have substantial fines or expiations imposed, been forced into a position to explain to their employers or families why they can't drive and risked other measures such as an alcohol interlock being fitted to their vehicle before they return to a full driver's licence.

Don't take the chance, if you are going to drink, don't drive. Think about what it could mean to be caught – or worse, to be the reason that someone loses their life or is seriously injured.



Fairies and Crash Test Dummies 'Show' the way

The South Australia Police stand at this year's Royal Adelaide Show focussed on the 175 year history of policing in this State. At the display, the Road Safety Section were on hand to discuss the road toll and its continued decline since the mid 1970's and the apparent plateauing of the road toll over the last couple of years. It is thought that this may be attributable to the increased use of mobile telephones and other personal electronic devices. In 2005 Police issued just over 3,600 expiation notices to members of the public for using a hand-held mobile telephone. In 2012 this figure had risen to over 10,600.

Across the nine days of the Show, 1200 visitors to the stand were asked to use a 'reaction / sobriety tester' by moving a wire loop from one end of the skill tester to the other without making contact with the central wire 'course'. They were then asked to try the skill tester again, but on this occasion, our 'drivers' were asked to try texting a message on their mobile telephone at the same time. The results were, quite predictably, very poor. Our 'drivers' were then asked to try the activity once more whilst wearing 'beer goggles', which affect the hand to eye coordination of the wearer to the same level as if they were affected by alcohol to the level of 0.05 – 0.08. Needless to say, no one made it all the way from one side to the other without making the sobriety tester beep.

Seen here are the crash test dummies trying their hand at the sobriety tester and a fairy trying out the beer goggles (right).



Are fully reflective vehicle wraps legal in South Australia ?

Not that long ago, the Australian Design Rules (ADRs) were clear about reflective surfaces that could dazzle a driver; hence we didn't have chromed windscreen wipers or chromed bits on bonnets. The Federal Office dropped this requirement from the ADR's and we are starting to see more reflective components appearing on cars.

There does not appear to be any specific Act or Regulation that covers a vehicle being highly reflective; however, if it is likely to cause motorists to be dazzled in sun light or by headlights at night, it would be reasonable to say that it is a safety risk, which would enable the vehicle to be defected under Section 145 (5) of the Road Traffic Act.

