

Experience A Bonus On Victorian Roads

Baby Boomers show Gen X and Y a thing or two about road safety.

December 6, 2010 (FPRC) -- With driver frustration and road rage on the rise, it seems older drivers might have a thing or two to teach the younger generations when it comes to courtesy and patience on Victorian roads.

According to new research from leading national over 50s insurance company Apia, drivers aged over 55 are less likely to engage in aggressive behaviour behind the wheel than those in younger age groups.

Nationally, older drivers are the least likely of all age groups to become so angry with the actions of another motorist that they resort to tailgating them, with only 8% of over 55s engaging in this dangerous practice compared to 27% of drivers aged 18 - 54.

Apia Executive Manager Craig Dingle said the findings, released today to coincide with the start of Victorian Seniors Week, showed that when it came to driving behaviours age and wisdom certainly appeared to go hand in hand.

'It may be a reflection of this more relaxed stage of life that older drivers appear to be more calm and forgiving on the road than their younger counterparts,' said Mr Dingle.

'Only 13% of motorists aged over 55 consider themselves to be an impatient driver, well below the average of 23% for the younger age groups.

'Older drivers are also the least likely to respond to driver aggression in kind, with 53% saying that the best way to respond to road rage from another driver is to signal an apology and to concentrate on their own driving (compared to an average of 43% for drivers aged 18 - 54).

'Seniors Week is a time for celebrating the wealth of knowledge and experience that older Victorians bring to our community and Apia's research shows that this experience is being reflected in their driving habits,' Mr Dingle said.

Apia's research also found that while half of Victorians surveyed (50%) considered older drivers to be a hazard on the road, people aged over 55 years were actually less likely to engage in risky behaviours like driving when tired or texting while driving.

'Older and more experienced motorists appear to have a greater awareness of the danger that common distractions can cause when behind the wheel and are more likely to stay concentrated on their driving rather than trying to multi-task.

'Only one in ten older drivers (10%) said they had sent or read a text message while driving during the last year, compared to almost half of drivers in other age groups (48%). Drivers over 55 were also much less likely to use a mobile phone without a hands-free kit when behind the wheel – 18% compared to 48% of drivers aged 18 - 54.

'Older drivers were also less likely to say they had performed an illegal driving manoeuvre, like running a red light or making an illegal U-turn, with only 15% of drivers over 55 saying that they had done this in the last year, compared to 29% of younger drivers,' Mr Dingle said.

Drivers aged 55 and over were also more likely to take additional precautions behind the wheel, with 70% saying they would pull over for a power nap if they were tired while driving and 96% saying they drove more cautiously in areas with high pedestrian activity (compared to 51% and 91% respectively among motorists aged under 54).

Mr Dingle said these safer driving practices were reflected in Apia's claims data which showed that Victorian drivers over 50 had an 8% lower incidence rate of motor vehicle claims than those in younger age groups.

'As well as having a lower incidence of claims, our data also shows that, following an accident, repairs for damage to an older Victorian driver's car are on average 20% less expensive than those for younger drivers' cars, which could be a result of their tendency to take less risks behind the wheel,' Mr Dingle said.

'During Seniors Week, we'd encourage other Victorian drivers to take a leaf out of the Baby Boomers' book and exercise some patience and understanding behind the wheel to help make our roads a safer place for everyone.'

Quick facts:

One in eight (13%) motorists over 55 consider themselves to be impatient drivers, compared to almost one in four (23%) drivers aged 18 – 54.

Only 8% of drivers over 55 have tailgated another motorist after becoming angry at their actions, compared with 27% of younger drivers.

Older drivers are less likely to become distracted by changing the CD, tape or radio station while driving – 25% compared with 38% of drivers under 55.

15% of drivers over 55 admit to having run a red light or making an illegal U-turn in the last 12 months, significantly lower than the 29% of drivers in other age groups who say they have done this.

Drivers aged over 55 also appear to be more honest when it comes to owning up to a mistake, with only 9% admitting they would think twice about leaving their details if they damaged another car in a car park and no one witnessed it – compared to 23% of drivers aged 18 - 54.

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1. Apia's research is based on an independent internet survey of 2,818 Australians, conducted by IPSOS Research across all states and territories. Collected data is carefully weighted in line with current ABS population demographics to ensure any extrapolation of results is representative of age, gender and population on a regional, state and national basis.

--APIA Company Information--

Apia is one of Australia's leading insurance and financial services organisations, forming part of Suncorp. Established more than 20 years ago, Apia is renowned for its personal customer service. In fact, that's part of the reason why Apia is the most recommended insurance company in Australia*. The goal at Apia is to continue to provide high quality insurance products with real personal service to the over 50's market in Australia. Apia has more than 700,000 customers across Australia serviced by 30 branches and approximately 450 staff.

--About APIA--

Apia insurance specialises in home insurance, landlord insurance, car insurance, caravan insurance, motorhome insurance, boat insurance and travel insurance for people over 50 who are working less and living more.

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