NEW RESEARCH

Distracted Driving - is it an addiction problem?

Professor Barry Watson, Dr Ioni Lewis, Dr Cassandra Gauld and Dr Oscar Oviedo-Trespalacios from CARRS-Q and Professors Ross Young, David Kavanagh and Katy White, and Dr Shimul Haque from QUT have been engaged by the Australian Automobile Association and New Zealand Automobile Association to conduct research on distracted driving. The project has three goals:

1. Understand the potentially addictive nature of smartphones for young drivers;
2. Develop effective messaging and resources for the use of mobility clubs; and
3. Start a national discussion about how smartphone addiction potentially interplays with distraction and crashes, providing solutions.

The findings from this research will be used to inform the development of educational and awareness materials, including a “tool kit”, for young drivers, their peers and their parents.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Level crossings: How much can a driver bear?
A publication in Safety Science by Dr Gregoire Larue and David Rodwell, CARRS-Q and Dr Anjum Naweed, CQU, reports high levels of violations were observed at Victoria’s worst level crossings at Laverton in outer Melbourne. The level crossing has roundabouts on either side and is crossed by 7000 vehicles an hour in peak times. Other nearby complications include car parks and a military base and checkpoint.

Over a 2 hour peak period, 91 cars stopped on the level crossing while queueing in traffic between the roundabouts on either side of the crossing. Another 36 vehicles and 44 pedestrians ignored flashing red lights and crossed before the boom gate came down.

The crossing was closed a staggering 59% of the time (70 minutes) due to the volume of trains and a lack of synchronisation that saw the boom gates closed for up to 6 minutes at a time.

“The specific design of the level crossing and local road environment resulted in high levels of congestion for a number of reasons including large train traffic volumes, short stacking issues, limited options for pedestrians to cross, and activation vs. time-to-arrival synchronisation issues,” the researchers wrote.

“These conditions attracted decision errors, pressures, and other ostensible issues which led to deliberate and unintended violations.

“Alternative, more affordable countermeasures for the short to medium term could include red light cameras at level crossings, better synchronisation between road-rail controls, better maintenance and improved signage.”

Since the field study was conducted the Victorian Government has announced the Aviation Road crossing will be closed down by 2020 and replaced with the bridge over the railway lines.

Cyclist-motorist crashes worse at stop/give way junctions

PhD Scholar, Rabbani Rash-ha Wahi, analysed 13 years of Queensland police crash records to investigate how the way traffic was controlled at intersections influenced the injuries to riders in collisions with motor vehicles.

The findings, published in the Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, investigated the determinants of cyclist injury severity under different traffic control measures at intersections. Mr Wahi found almost 40% had occurred at junctions with Stop or Give-way signs.

“In most cases, the bicycle and motor vehicle were approaching each other at right angles and possibly collisions occur because drivers have difficulty with judging gap sizes and speed before deciding whether to enter from the minor road or perform a turning manoeuvre,” he said.

Mr Wahi found cyclists’ injuries were more severe in bicycle–motor vehicle crashes at unsigned intersections in hilly areas than in flat areas. “It may be that cyclists and drivers can’t see each other until too late because of the crests and dips, or that they were travelling faster.”

“The large number of bicycle motor-vehicle crashes at four-way intersections with traffic lights suggested that cyclists may not have enough time to cross the intersection before motorized cross traffic receives a green light, possibly because signal timing is often based on motor-vehicle speeds,” he said.
EDUCATION UPDATE

Congratulations to another PhD Graduate!

Where are our graduates now?
Our congratulations to Dr Graham Fraine, a CARRS-Q alumni, who was named on the Queen’s Birthday 2018 Honours List awarded with a Public Service Medal for outstanding public service to social science research and policy development in Queensland. Graham is now Chief Strategy Officer at Sunshine Coast Council; his previous role was Deputy Director-General (Policy) at Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Queensland).

Capacity Building Workshops
Dr Mark King and Professor Barry Watson delivered Speed Management workshops in two Indonesian cities to officers from Transport, Police and Public Works agencies. The workshops were conducted for the Indonesian Directorate General of Land Transportation and funded by the Australian Government’s Indonesia Transport Safety Assistance Package. The workshops form part of a set of road safety capacity building activities that CARRS-Q has undertaken since 2009, aimed at promoting an evidence-based approach to road safety that fosters cooperation between agencies responsible for road safety in Indonesia.

New videos released
We have produced a complement of videos aimed at educating the community on how to stay safe on the road, including the final release of The Science of Speed.

How do Newton’s Laws affect whether crashes occur and their consequences? Humans are not designed to withstand the forces that commonly occur in crashes and cars can succeed – or not succeed – to protect drivers and passengers. Footage from the Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) and the Transport Accident Commission shows that some modern cars are much safer than others in a crash, but the speeds at which they can protect their occupants in particular types of crashes are still alarmingly low.

HAVEN’T REGISTERED YET? GET IN NOW BEFORE EARLYBIRD CLOSES ON 30 JULY!

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ICSC is coming to Brisbane!

We are very pleased to announce that CARRS-Q will host the 2019 International Cycling Safety Conference (ICSC2019), here in Brisbane at QUT’s Gardens Point Campus.

18-20 NOVEMBER 2019 - UPDATE YOUR CALENDARS!

Registered for this year’s event?

ICSC2018 will be held in Barcelona. Click here to find out more.
CARRS-Q is a joint venture initiative of the Motor Accident Insurance Commission and Queensland University of Technology

Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety - Queensland

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New Grants and Commissioned Research

Mitigating signal colour-misconceptions from prescription lenses worn by train drivers *Dr Gregoire Larue*

Provision of Services to monitor and progressively evaluate the implementation of SLOMO in Western Australia *Prof Narelle Haworth, Dr Matthew Legge, Dr Ross Blackman & Prof Barry Watson*

Collaborative research into drug driving at Kansas State University - Fulbright Senior Scholar *Prof Jeremy Davey*

Can voluntary apps reduce mobile phone use while driving? *Dr Mark King & Dr Oscar Oviedo-Trespalacios*

Distracted Driving Program *Prof Barry Watson, Prof Katherine White, Dr Ioni Lewis, Dr Cassandra Gauld, Dr Oscar Oviedo-Trespalacios, Prof Ross Young, Prof David Kavanagh, Dr Shimul Haque*

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