

Australian Roads: Regional Driving With Care

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA, June 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New research reveals that while most people recognise the risks of country roads, the habits and hazards making rural driving dangerous are still underestimated.

For those living and working in regional Australia, driving on country roads is part of daily life: long straights, livestock crossings, road trains requiring patience, and kangaroos demanding vigilance. But new research commissioned by [Australian insurer Youi Insurance](#), surveying over 1,000 Australians, puts numbers behind what rural drivers know: country roads are not the relaxed alternative they may seem.

The findings show roads that are both familiar and unforgiving, where the line between safe and unsafe often depends on how you drive, not just where.

Do you drive with care?

When asked how safe they feel on country roads, only 12% of Australians said "very safe." Instead, more than 2 in 5 (43%) said they feel safe only when driving with care, while a further 1 in 3 said they feel "safe enough."

Most Australians intuitively understand that safety on country roads is conditional - it depends on how you approach it. These roads often involve narrower lanes, limited overtaking opportunities, long stretches requiring sustained concentration, and high speed limits paired with unexpected bends, wildlife, and restricted visibility.

While this is familiar to regular rural drivers, the confidence gap between experienced drivers and those unfamiliar with country roads is itself a key risk factor.

The risk that dwarfs everything else

Respondents were asked what most contributes to unsafe country road situations. The answer was clear: 68% identified drivers travelling at unsafe speeds as the key contributor to dangerous situations. This far exceeded other factors, including poor road conditions (50%), driver inexperience or unfamiliarity with roads (48%), fatigue from long-distance driving (47%), and wildlife on or crossing the road (45%).

Concern about speed increases with age, with 78% of Baby Boomers identifying unsafe speeds as a primary risk - the highest of any generation. This reflects decades of experience with the consequences of misjudging speed on country roads.

Unsafe driving isn't rare out here
Unsafe behaviour is not occasional—it's common.

29% of respondents said they encounter unsafe driving often, either weekly or multiple times per week. A further 30% encounter it at least monthly. Only 8% said they've never encountered unsafe driving on country roads at all.

Among younger drivers, exposure is even higher. Gen Z drivers report the highest frequency of encountering unsafe behaviour, with 45% saying they witness it weekly.

The roads themselves are part of the problem
Unsafe driving is not just behavioural, the infrastructure matters too.

Half of respondents (50%) say poor road conditions and infrastructure contribute to unsafe situations, a concern especially strong among older drivers and regional communities where maintenance has lagged.

Victorians and Western Australians were more likely than the national average to cite poor conditions as a contributing factor (57–58% vs 50% nationally). Nationally, fatigue and long-distance driving (47%), wildlife on or near the road (45%), and limited visibility through bends and hills (42%) round out the key contributing factors - common realities for rural drivers.

What needs to change
Australians are not looking for a single solution, but practical improvements where risk is highest.

The top responses were:

- improving road conditions, fixing pavements, widening shoulders, and improving lighting and bridges (61%)
- creating more overtaking lanes and slow-vehicle bays (50%)
- reducing speed limits in high-risk areas (43%)
- and increasing signage and hazard warnings (43%)

Only 2% believe country roads are already safe enough, highlighting a strong call for improvement.

The etiquette that actually saves lives
Country road etiquette reflects generations of shared use, and the research shows which behaviours matter most.

Top three safety behaviours, as ranked by respondents, were: being patient and avoiding risky overtaking (56%), maintaining safe following distance and avoiding tailgating (52%), and driving

at a consistent and appropriate speed (46%).

Older drivers place even greater emphasis on patience, with 65% of those aged 65–74 ranking being patient and avoiding risky overtaking as a top safety behaviour. Baby Boomers also most strongly support pulling over into slow bays to let faster traffic pass (47% vs 35% nationally).

The bottom line

Rural driving risks stem from speed, unfamiliarity, underdeveloped infrastructure, and the unpredictability of environments shared with livestock, wildlife, and heavy vehicles.

Understanding these risks is the first step in managing them. For anyone spending time on country roads - whether daily or for the first time - ensuring both your driving approach and vehicle cover are suited to the conditions is essential.

For the full research findings, visit [Youi's country road safety research](#), or find out more about [Youi car insurance](#).

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Disclaimer: This article's data is sourced from a survey conducted by Ideally Group Limited between 7 April 2026 and 8 April 2026, involving 1,058 individuals aged 18 and above from all states and territories within Australia. Some percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Survey results have not been independently verified by Youi and may not be representative of the general population. Youi makes no representation or warranty of any kind of the accuracy, adequacy, reliability, or completeness of the data and accepts no liability for any loss or damage of any kind suffered as a result of the use of or reliance on the data. Individual experiences may vary.

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