

The World's Worst Drivers: Do We Qualify?

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ABSTRACT

The rising road toll in Australia prompts us rethink our approach to driver education across all age groups.

Not only the 17 to 25 year old males require the extra effort, but the same age females and increasingly and more statistically everyone says, the older drivers.

Television programs showing us the worlds worst drivers get good ratings and a lot of laughs – but, look around you and you will see that everyday on our roads, we see the same dangerous actions and stupid accidents.

Driver Trainers are exposed to these drivers every day and we are becoming frustrated at the lack of effort by the authorities to “attempt” to improve the situation.

Today, I will show you video of these situations seen every time we are on the road with novice drivers. You will laugh at some and gasp at others and realise the stupidity of drivers and wonder why the road toll is not higher.

At the conclusion you may have to rethink enforcement and education methods as I will convince you Australia may just have the Worlds Worst Drivers.

BODY

Let us firstly define **WORST** .

In my Concise Oxford Dictionary (1), Worst is defined as *Most bad or badly or evil or ill*.

Well what can we say – all of the above describe some of the drivers on our roads to a tee.

A driver, who is defined as a person who drives a vehicle, can now be categorized to be the most bad, or evil or ill.

I think the latter, ill, is perhaps the most correct – maybe we can say that a driver who could be the nicest person in our community, is hit by an illness as soon as they get behind the wheel of a motor vehicle.

What possible explanation could we come up with to explain the extreme behaviour change that becomes that person in such a short time after turning on the key.

As I proceed today, I will treat you to some everyday instances that happen on our roads around Australia and while you are listening and watching, think of a reason those events happen and how we can modify the appropriate behaviour and try to save some lives on our roads.

Traffic Report

The average day starts with the traffic report. Oh how we wait for the traffic report to warn us of the endless accidents that will make our drive to the workplace a stressful and long lasting experience.

An accident in my dictionary is defined as an Event that is without apparent cause or an unintentional act.

So none of the “incidents” are covered under those descriptions – so why do we call them accidents.

These events do have an apparent cause and most could definitely be deemed an intentional act.

Are the drivers on our roads bad drivers?, or are they just having a bad day?

The video clips are actual footage taken from my driving school vehicle, shown here so you can firstly see that it is suitably identified as a novice driver training vehicle.

As a driver trainer motoring around in our office with someone else in control of our desk from the right hand seat, we are appalled at the unintentional acts that give us the impression that outside forces are trying to kill us several times a day.

We are able to react to these situations solely as we are able to concentrate on what is going on around us while still keeping one eye on the learning driver.

I have a selection of similar incidences grouped together that occurred over the month of October this year – all of which are breaking a road law and many of which could have resulted in a fatality except for some sort of divine intervention.

The interesting thing is that none of the incidents would have occurred if we were in an identified police vehicle.

Everyone here would have been exposed to these events at some time probably this last week and we tolerate them for some unexplained reason.

How long do we ignore them?

How long do we wait for a loved one to be a victim?

How many persons need to die or suffer horrible injuries before we take action to attempt to control them.

To set the scene – most of the clips are taken at 80 to 100 KPH speed zones with a couple on the Pacific Motorway at 110 KPH.

Firstly we look at the tailgater.

You will notice how the driver behind gets a bit fidgety while I stay in the right lane overtaking a slower vehicle driving at the posted speed limit.

What happened to the 2 second rule that every driver must demonstrate to pass their driving assessment?

As we see, **tailgaters** are not confined to cars, increasingly, heavy vehicles are intimidating the drivers so they can break the speed limit.

Is it because we have laws to keep left on the highways that encourage the faster vehicles to break the law?

High speed situations must be able to produce good drivers as it is amazing how many vehicles can weave through the traffic with such speed and not have an accident, sorry, unintentional act.

There is a market here for an inventor for higher speed flashing indicators so at least we may see a flash or two while the vehicle is merging or overtaking.

Then there is the merger. What happened to the Australian Road Rules for merging?

Here we see a few cases of lack of understanding of the rules of merging lanes.

Why do we have to give way to these merging vehicles from a terminating lane onto the highway proper?

To save a life – our own.

Bus lanes provide the driver with ideal opportunities to get ahead in the traffic – if only they realise how close they were to an accident.

Would the situation be better if we were driving a tank?

School Zone

The school zone is fast becoming a minefield for children and parents as vehicles disobey the school zone speed limit.

The Red Light Runner.

We heard at the Queensland Road Safety Summit 2000 held on the Gold Coast in May, that there were 13 fatalities at traffic lights in Brisbane – all caused by red light runners.

These are 13 too many – we suggested that if the changing green lights were delayed by say 2 seconds, the chances of being hit by a red light runner would be significantly reduced – have we done that yet?

The Traditional Stop Sign Runner.

Here is a selection of non-stoppers – A Queensland national pastime.....

You have to ask “Why do we bother with stop signs?”

Lack of consideration for learner drivers.

A selection of clips to see how other road users treat the learning driver in highly identified training vehicles.

We find our driving school vehicles are used for lane changing and merging as it is understood from their training days, driving school vehicles obey the speed limit and stay to the left and maintain a good safe distance for them to get through the traffic.

Non defensive drivers- The Kamikaze Driver

It is my belief that drivers intentionally increase speed when a vehicle enters an intersection from their left side.

Watch for the brake lights when a driving school vehicle crosses a bit close in front of another vehicle approaching from the right or taboo side.

Non-Roadworthy Vehicle Drivers

If a driver purposely drives a non-roadworthy vehicle on our roads – is that a sign of an entrant into the World’s Worst Driver Hall of fame?

To conclude the video, we have a selection of general driving and road rage situations, all of which are ever increasing, on our roads.

We find that without trying too hard, a large number of serious traffic offences and unintentional incidents are happening every day on our roads.

Some we laugh at – but most we shake our heads at and wonder just how long it will be until one of the drivers will either be killed, injured or kill one of our loved ones.

Conclusion:

I trust I have proven some of the drivers on the roads of Queensland, young and old, male and female qualify for the World’s worst drivers.

The driver training industry has a very important job in training new drivers to stay alive on our roads, however, we are appalled at the lack of Police presence to enforce the adequate road rules.

We are appalled at the lack of Transport Inspectors enforcing the roadworthy regulations and allowing dangerous vehicles on our roads.

I guess we are pleading for help from the Police and Transport authorities in every state of Australia to provide a responsible presence on our roads 24 hours a day, so the drivers on our roads do not become the World's worst drivers and we can live to talk about it.

References (1) Concise Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition 1976 Oxford University Press, Ely House London
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Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my wife, family and the many student drivers for their understanding and assistance in the production of the video and audio for the presentation.

Video camera used is a Panasonic NV-DS55A Digital Mini DV PAL format.

I do not apologise to any law breakers shown in the video.
