

The 3PM Rush

ROAD SAFETY FACTSHEETS / DRIVER BEHAVIOUR: IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **YOUi**

What is the 3pm rush?

For millions of Australians, 3pm marks the point where work commitments, family responsibilities and everyday errands collide. The result is a narrow afternoon window that has become Australia's highest-pressure period on the road. And according to Youi Wrapped 2025 data, the single worst hour of the day for car incidents.

Youi's Project 3PM research set out to understand why. Road Sense Australia has partnered with Youi to turn those findings into practical advice for safer journeys.

Who is most affected?



Parents & caregivers

65% drive every or most weekdays at 3pm, balancing school pick-ups and childcare. Parents with children under five are significantly more likely to speed or use their phone when running late.



Daily 3PM drivers

People driving during the afternoon rush almost every day report the highest levels of fatigue and time pressure. 30% often feel mentally drained or unable to fully concentrate at 3pm.



1981 - 2012

Millennials & Gen Z

The most frequent afternoon drivers, 67% of Gen Zs and 61% of Millennials, are among the most likely to engage in risky behaviours when running late, including lane changing and speeding.

What we suggest every driver should do before driving

1

Plan

- Allow extra travel time and leave earlier where possible
- Avoid back-to-back commitments that leave no room for delays
- Plan your route before departing

2

Prepare

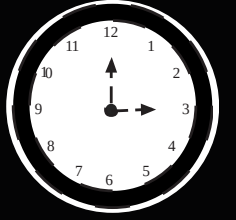
- Enter your destination into the navigation before moving
- Put your phone out of reach and silence notifications
- Answer texts and calls before you drive
- Set up music, podcasts and climate controls before departing

3

Pause

- Before pulling away, take 30 seconds to check in with yourself
- A short pause won't clear traffic, but it can stop the mental load from influencing decisions once you're on the road

Why the 3PM rush matters



Youi research shows 55% of drivers say 3pm is more stressful than any other time of the day.

It's not just the traffic. For many, the real risk is the mental load: the pressure of competing commitments that shapes decision-making behind the wheel before the journey even begins.

What drives 3pm risk?



Traffic volume



Running late



Mental fatigue



Distraction

When running late, drivers admit to:

28%

become impatient with other drivers

20%

change lanes more frequently

19%

accelerate through amber lights

18%

exceed the speed limit

3PM rush key statistics

- 62% admit to engaging in risky driving behaviours when running late
- 84% rate their own driving as safe at 3pm, but 42% say the same about other drivers
- 3pm was recorded as the single worst hour of the day for car incidents on Australian roads
- 58% of Australians cite traffic congestion as their top 3pm stressor, followed by school pick-up pressures (26%) and pressure from other drivers (25%)

For more information visit:

www.roadsense.org.au

www.youi.com.au

Information on this fact sheet is general only and is accurate at the time of publication. Data were sourced from the Youi's Project 3PM survey conducted by Ideally in August 2026. Always follow road laws, workplace requirements, and your organisation's safety policies.

