



## Media Release

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For immediate release

# **DIGITAL BILLBOARDS CAN IMPROVE DRIVER BEHAVIOUR, WORLD-FIRST AUSTRALIAN STUDY REVEALS**

World-first research shows roadside advertising on digital billboards can improve driver performance.

The study, conducted by independent road safety research institute, the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB), measured driver behaviour in the presence of two digital billboards in real-world environments.

Drivers were unaware of the study that captured video data of vehicle movement around two complex intersections in Queensland. Data was captured during morning and afternoon peak-hour traffic and at night-time over a four-week period, both with and without a digital billboard present.

The locations measured, on the Gold Coast and in Gladstone, were selected because they had no existing sign but had approval to build a digital billboard during the study. This allowed researchers to capture data on driver behaviour before and after a digital sign was installed.

Researchers analysed two key indicators of distraction that are known to increase the risk of an accident: lane drift, which is veering within the lane; and, stopping over the line, which is failing to stop correctly at an intersection. The researchers also measured whether any crashes occurred. When the digital billboards were switched on at a range of dwell times (the time one advertisement is displayed before it changes) from 30 seconds down to 8 seconds, researchers observed the following results:

- Lane drift either improved or was unaffected
- Stopping over the line improved in all but one instance
- No crashes occurred.

Dr Paul Roberts, Principal Researcher for the ARRB noted: “Although we considered the introduction of a digital sign at an intersection would probably reduce driver performance, this study showed that it is sometimes possible for a digital sign at an intersection to operate with no negative impact on driver performance, and even, in some cases, to improve it.”

Charmaine Moldrich, CEO, Outdoor Media Association (OMA), the body that commissioned the report, said: “The Out of Home advertising industry is committed to ensuring its signs are safe. This study was finalised shortly after the release of research by the Accident Research Centre at Monash University which found that 88% of driver distraction occurs inside the car.\* We were already confident that well-designed digital Out of Home signs were safe, but we were surprised to learn that our signs can actually help improve driver performance, probably because they encourage people to look up from in-car distractions.

“We hope this research prompts governments around Australia to streamline dwell time regulation of Out of Home signs, given they can improve driver performance,” concluded Moldrich.

*\* Source: Australian Naturalistic Driving Study 2018*

A summary of the research can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/2FP8Yv3>

**Ends**

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## **About OMA**

The OMA is the peak industry body which represents most of Australia’s Outdoor Media Display companies and production facilities, and some Media Display asset owners.

The OMA operates nationally and prior to July 2005 traded as the Outdoor Advertising Association of Australia (OAAA). It was first incorporated in 1939.

The OMA’s charter is to serve its members by promoting the OOH industry and developing constructive relations with its primary stakeholders.

Its core functions are Marketing and Research (including audience measurement), Government Relations and Regulatory Affairs, Media Relations, and Member Services.

The OMA is governed by a Board of Directors which is elected by the membership. Members of the OMA adhere to a Code of Ethics and abide by the regulatory frameworks in which they operate.