

# Managing driver distraction risk posed by technology – Australian road laws



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# Who is the National Transport Commission (NTC)?

We lead national land transport reform in support of Australian governments.

This includes:


- developing policy
- facilitating legislative amendments
- undertaking routine reviews.

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# The situation




The widespread adoption of smartphones, as well as wireless communication, entertainment and information systems, has increased the risk of distracted driving.





# The problem



The ARR has not kept pace with the arrival of the smartphone and modern technology devices

The ARR inconsistently treat the sources of distraction and safety risks associated with certain behaviours

The ARR can be confusing for road users and policy about what technology devices are legal and illegal to use.



# The policy approach

## 5 broad based principles

- Proper control of a vehicle
- Prescriptive rules for drivers that are easily understood
- Prescriptive rules for drivers that apply to all technology devices
- Prescriptive rules for drivers that apply to device interactions and functionalities
- Permission of voice-based interactions

# Enforcement Challenges

- Difficult for enforcement agencies to identify behaviours
- Road rule enforcement one of the main regulatory tools to minimise driver distraction
- Use of prescriptive rules seeks to facilitate enforcement
- Enforceability through photo evidence important

# Australian Driver Distraction Model Laws

- Inbuilt and mounted devices
- Motorbike helmet devices
- Wearable devices
- Portable devices
- ARR's are model law, so states and territories can adopt them, either entirely or partially, within their corresponding road laws.
- Additional non-regulatory initiatives

# Conclusions

- Combination of performance-based and prescriptive rules
- Performance-based component addresses any source of distraction
- Prescription indicates permitted and prohibited interactions with technology.



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