

TEXT OF ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER
THE RT. HON J.D. ANTHONY, C.H., M.P.

As Christmas approaches, our thoughts are with family and friends. Regrettably, many will not be with us after the holidays.

Death and injury caused through road crashes is the greatest epidemic of our time. The sad facts are that some 3,000 Australians are killed, and 90,000 injured, on our roads each year.

The tragic reality is that most Australians who die between the ages of five and 34 are killed on the roads.

No matter how good we think we are as drivers, we cannot ignore these statistics. Impatience, aggression, speed, fatigue, unfamiliar vehicles or road conditions, not wearing seat belts and driving after having too much to drink are recognised killers.

Governments in Australia are making every effort to improve road safety, and the nationwide Bicentennial program to improve our roads is an important part of this. But the success of government and community efforts will depend on each of us as road users. I cannot over-emphasise the need to take particular care over the next month. We all have to understand that it is up to each of us to act sensibly. We cannot assume that "it can't happen to us".

I urge all Australians to think before getting behind the wheel. Driving sensibly will take a little more time, patience and care - but it will pay dividends. Try to avoid hazardous situations, take a short break during long journeys and celebrate after you have reached your destination.

The most dangerous thing is driving after having too much to drink. Because all governments in Australia are so concerned with the drink-driving problem, they have co-operated in an Australia-wide television campaign, featuring four award-winning commercials. The commercials have been shown previously, but their message can well afford to be repeated regularly over the next few months.

When you see these commercials, please think about them. They could save lives.

I wish you every happiness for the festive season and safe motoring. I hope that you will all be with us after the holidays - but remember, it's up to you.

Good evening.