

# RAA Member Panel

## Wet Weather Driving and Navigation

This Member Panel survey was designed in a different fashion to previous surveys. It presented participants with the scenario of driving to an unfamiliar location in the Adelaide Hills during bad weather. It was designed to prompt participants to think about what they might do in a similar situation. The survey included questions relating to driving behaviour and the use of navigation tools (street directories, GPS etc.).

Generally the feedback indicated the style and topic of this survey provoked respondents to carefully consider their current driving practices in wet weather. The change in season and cold weather patterns prior to this survey may also have had an influence on people.

### Results

#### Navigation

Responses indicated people are generally more cautious as weather conditions get worse and don't see it as much of an issue as long as everyone 'drives to the conditions'. However people also expressed a concern with other drivers having a tendency to 'freak out' when weather conditions are poor.

Almost all respondents (95%) indicated they would check directions before getting in the car when going on a trip. With 70 per cent re-checking or checking for the first time once they are in the car. Interestingly, the use of mobile phones was just as popular as printed/handwritten directions.

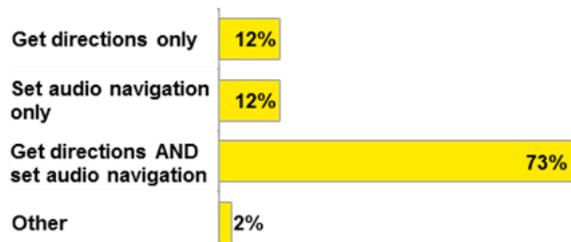
Given that technology is now such a big part of our lives, it was surprising to find *Street Directory* was the equal top response for source of directions along with *GPS*. These two sources claimed top spot for directions both before getting into the car and once people were in the car.

Source of directions	Before getting in car	Once in the car
GPS	30%	43%
Street directory	30%	20%
Phone	20%	13%
Computer printout/written	19%	13%
Other	1%	10%

When people use their phone or GPS for directions they are most likely (73% of respondents) to use a combination of both visual navigation and voice guidance.

Confidence in electronic navigation appears to be quite strong with 88 per cent of respondents who use their GPS or phone directions agreeing that the directions will be correct.

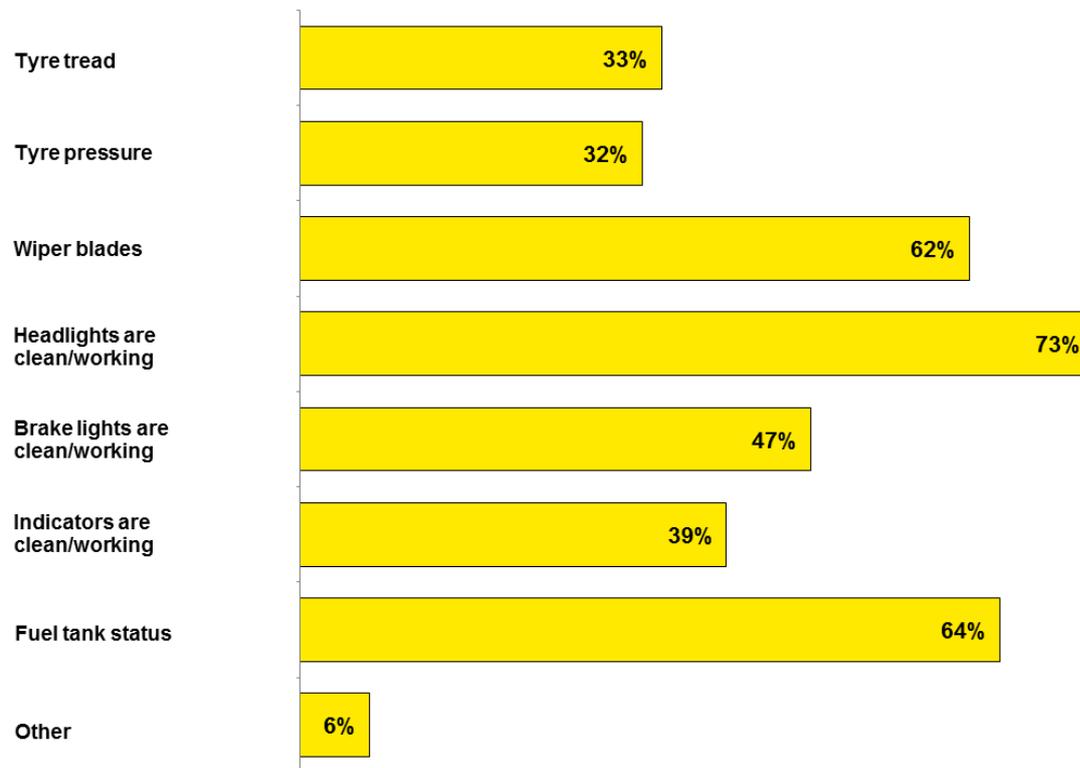
#### When using your phone or GPS for directions, are you most likely to:



## Vehicle Checking

Just over half of respondents (53%) indicated they were likely to check something on their car before embarking on a trip. While 73 per cent of these respondents said they would check their headlights were clean and working. Other top responses were fuel tank status (64%) and wiper blades (62%). Only one third would check their tyres. While it might not be practical to check tyre pressure and tread depth right before a trip when it's raining, it's important to periodically check your tyres.

What do you check on your car?

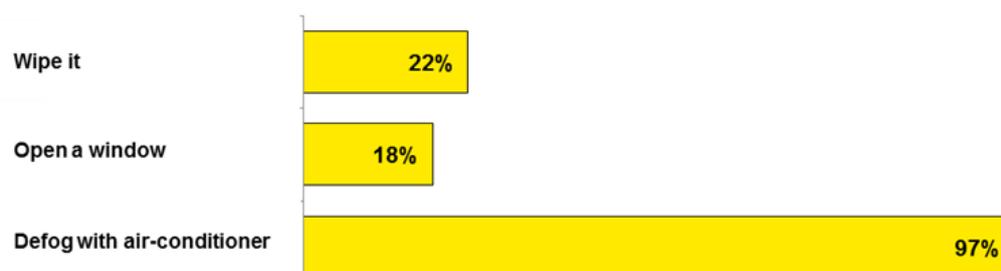


## Demisting

RAA experts explained that fogging occurs because the air inside your car is moister than the cold air outside due to your body heat and warm breath that's trapped inside the vehicle. Basically, this excess moisture settles on the inside surface of the glass causing fog.

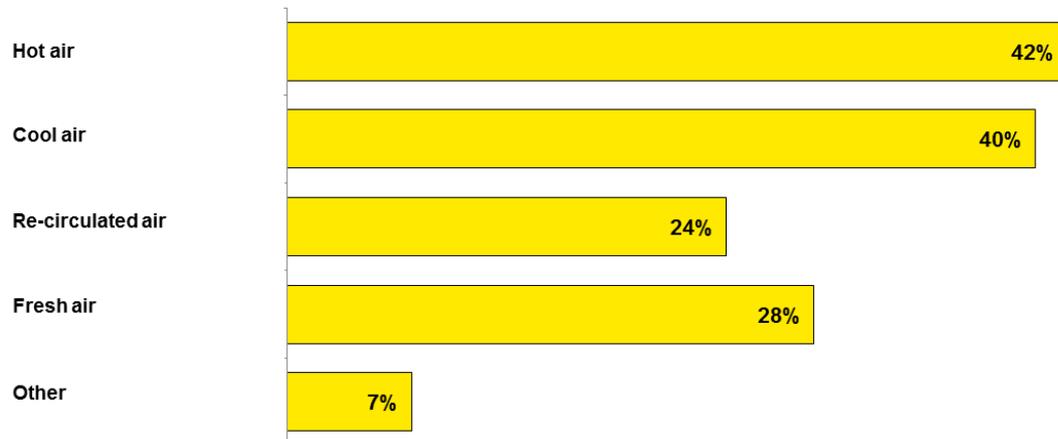
Nearly all respondents (93%) indicated that they would defog their windows with an air-conditioner, which is the correct thing to do. The air-conditioner works by drying the air, sucking the moisture out, so in winter it can act like a rapid demister.

You start the car and notice the inside of the windscreen is fogged up. What are you most likely to do?



Respondents were evenly split between using hot air (42%) and cool air (40%) when using their air-conditioner to defog their windscreen. Likewise they were evenly split between using fresh air (28%) and cool air (24%). For the best efficiency, RAA recommends using warm fresh air with the air-conditioner on and the fan on high.

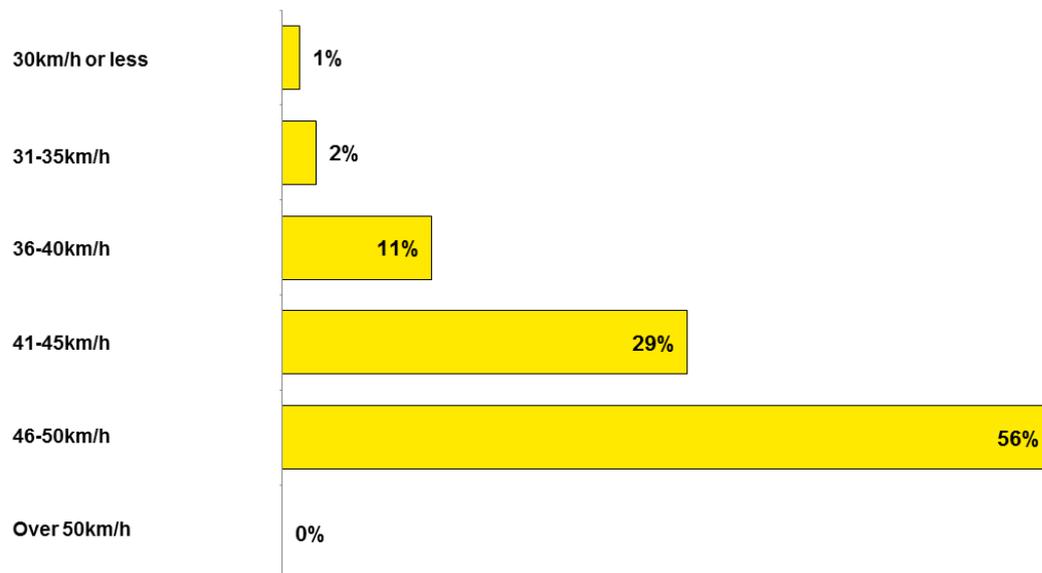
You set the demister on the air-conditioner. Which of the following are you most likely to select:



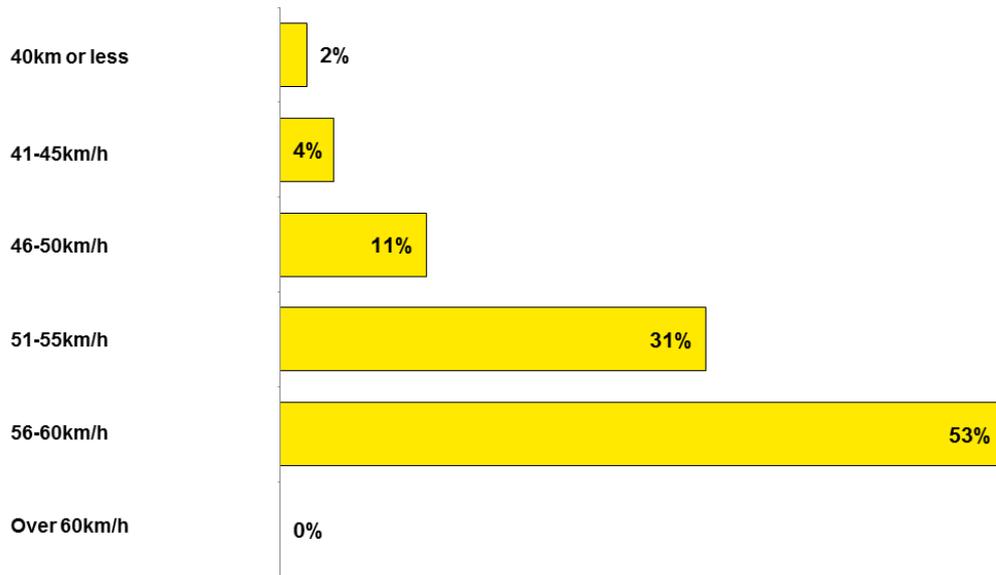
### Driving

The majority of respondents indicated that in bad weather they are most likely to drive no more than 5km/h below the speed limit regardless of whether they're on quiet 50km/h roads (56%) or busy 60km/h roads (53%). Thankfully, no one said they would drive above the speed limit.

The speed limit is 50km/h - at what speed are you most likely to drive?

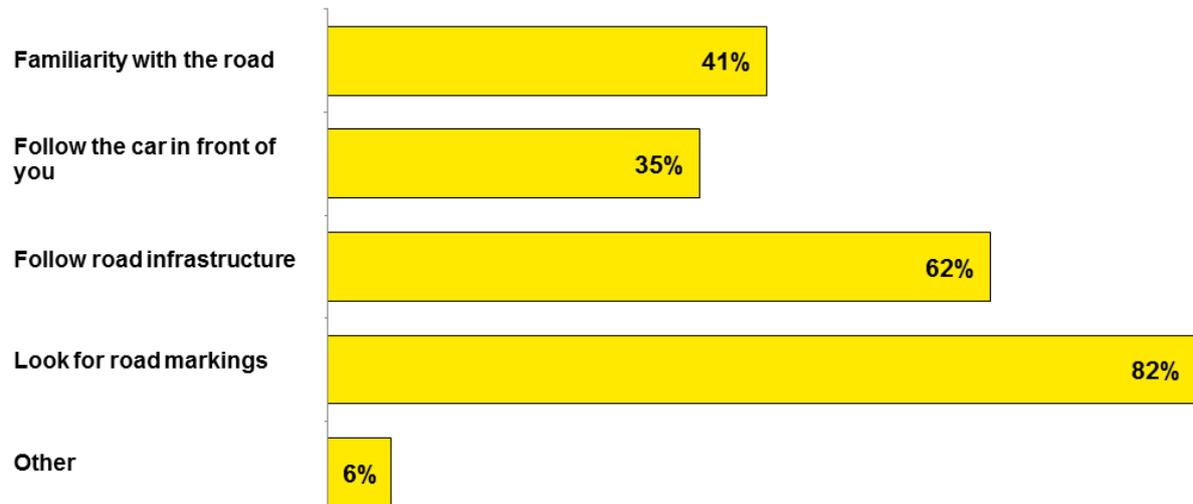


The speed limit is 60km/h - at what speed are you most likely to drive?



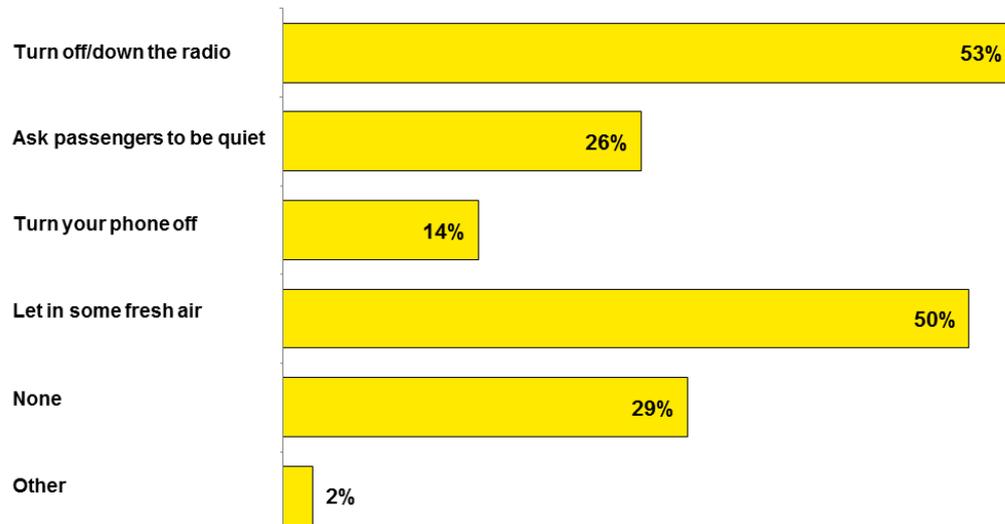
Glare on the road can affect line marking visibility, and when driving in an unfamiliar environment the line markings could be your only true guidance in the event of very bad weather. When asked, Member Panel respondents predominately try to use other road markings or objects. It is also pleasing to find that 97 per cent of respondents indicated they would increase the distance between them and the car in front during bad weather.

**You struggle to see the line markings on the road due to the glare created by headlights on the wet road. How do you determine what path you should drive on?**



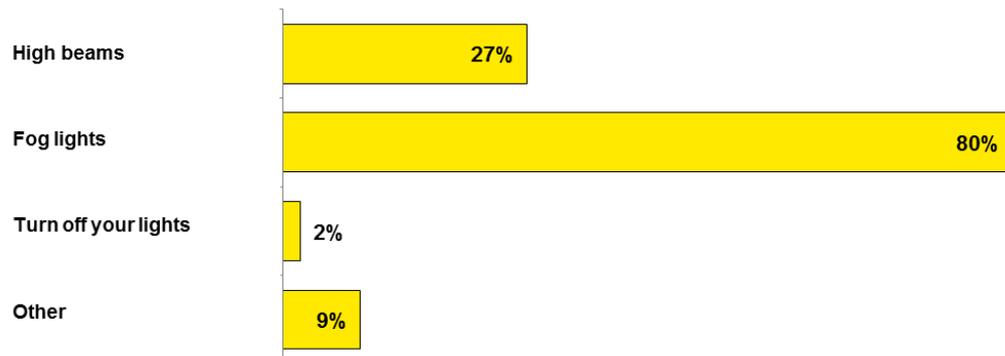
Does turning down the radio make it easier to see? It seems our Member Panel think so, with 54 per cent of respondents indicating they would turn off/down the radio when driving in foggy conditions. 50 per cent also indicated they would let some fresh air into the car (e.g. turn on air-conditioner or open a window). Just under one third (29%) indicated they would drive as normal.

**Which of the following changes would you be likely to make to the internal environment of your vehicle?**



Around one quarter (27%) said they would use their high beam headlights to increase what they can see in foggy conditions. However this may actually make visibility worse in foggy conditions, as the light reflecting off the fog may cause a 'white out'.

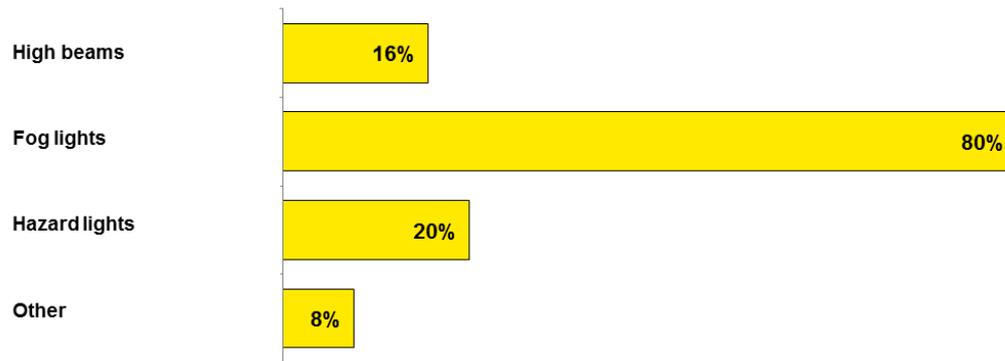
**Which of the following do you do/use to increase what you can see?**



Nearly all (98%) of the Member Panel respondents indicated that they would take action to make themselves more visible in foggy conditions. The most common response by far was to turn on fog lights (80%) followed by hazard lights (20%).

While many people might think hazard lights can only be used to warn other motorists of a stationary hazard, the Australian Road Rules allow for hazard lights to be used "if the driver is driving in hazardous weather conditions (example, fog or smoke)".

Which of the following do you do/use to make your vehicle more visible to others?



When driving in bad weather, cautious was the dominant feeling amongst respondents. This was felt more strongly when driving on a busy 60km/h road and a foggy road in the Adelaide Hill's than it was on a quiet 50km/h road. Also of note is that feeling anxious increased significantly for a foggy road in the Adelaide Hills rather than on metropolitan roads.

Feeling	Quiet 50km/h road	Busy 60km/h road	Foggy road in the Hills
Cautious	68%	76%	76%
No different to normal	16%	11%	3%
Confident	9%	4%	2%
Anxious	3%	3%	12%
Nervous	2%	5%	5%
Scared	1%	0%	2%
Other (please specify)	1%	0%	1%

Analysis of verbatim responses indicated that approximately half (48%) of all respondents would feel relieved at the end of their trip when they safely arrived at their destination. Around 10 per cent stated they would feel happy, while a small number of people said they would reconsider if they needed to make the trip and would re-evaluate getting in their car.