

## MOBILE PHONES IN CARS

*By Neville Barlow*

A short while ago, the Sunday Star Times newspaper has an article written by Damien Grant. It is entitled “How’s my driving? It depends on my demerit points” I quote ; “I don’t usually pay much attention to speed signs. This flippant attitude earns me my share of demerit points.”

He explains that because his offences were merely speeding and texting he has engaged a lawyer to fight his loss of licence. Further on he exclaims, drink driving causes crashes, talking on the phone doing 70 on a main road at midnight does not.



In the USA according to Bloomberg, smart phones are killing American drivers, but nobody is counting the cost. Over the past 2 years, after decades of declining deaths on the road US traffic fatalities have surged up 14.4%. In 2016 more than 100 people die every day from vehicle accidents. From 2014 to 2016 US drivers who owned mobile phones increased from 75% to 81%.

The way American drivers use their phones is changing . Texting, Facebook and Instagram are the new order of the day and they require much more attention than simply holding a device to your ear and talking. The increase in fatalities among bicyclists, motorcyclists, and pedestrians has in the last 2 years increased by 22%. It is thought it is easier to miss seeing these people from the drivers seat in a car than say a 40 tonne truck especially while being distracted by your phone.

Zendrive Inc. a San Francisco group that analyses smart phone data, in a study of 3 million people , found that drivers were using their phones during 88% of their trips. This data suggests, in the US 14 people a day every day, die as a result of using their phones while driving. I wonder if this is the reason our N.Z. road toll has started also increasing. Also the attitude of some drivers such as Damien Grant who simply cannot ignore their phone while driving.

*Neville*