

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Ensure luggage is secure before driving

**Wednesday, 26 December 2018: Professor Lynne Bilston from Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) is urging drivers to check their luggage is properly secured before travelling this holiday season. In a crash, loose objects such as golf clubs, water bottles and toys can become dangerous missiles striking with a force up to 20 times their own weight.**

Many drivers prepare their luggage, water, snacks and entertainment for the children before a long drive, but making sure luggage is secure and well placed is just as important. Professor Lynne Bilston, Senior Principal Research Scientist at NeuRA, recommends keeping all luggage below the height of the back seat or consider installing a cargo barrier.

“All luggage needs to be properly packed and tied down so that everything is secure. You don’t want anything to be loose if you brake suddenly or are involved in a crash, said Professor Bilston.”

Some more useful tips are:

- Keep the back shelf under the rear window free of loose articles.
- Luggage such as suitcases, groceries and presents should be carefully packed in the boot space so it is evenly distributed across the width of the cargo area and close to the seat back. Many cars have luggage tie-down points to help you secure things so they don’t move around.
- If you have any heavy or sharp small loose items you should secure these in a box or large container.
- It is also important to make sure luggage does not impact the tether strap if there is a child restraint fitted. Don’t confuse luggage tie down points with child restraint tether anchorages or your child could be injured in a crash.

Transport industry leader Transurban is partnering with NeuRA to strive for fatality and injury-free roads through funding the Transurban Road Safety Centre.

Group Executive Project Delivery, Tony Adams said Transurban understands the importance of road safety research and safely securing luggage in cars.

“The holidays are a time when drivers often pack more into their cars than they would usually, highlighting how important it is to ensure items are properly secured and packed so they cannot become dislodged in the event of an accident,” said Mr Adams.

Professor Bilston recommends parents plan ahead to have regular rest stops to let the kids run around. She suggests parents pack a variety of activities, but ensure all items are packed securely so they don’t become missiles in a crash.

**Top tips for safe driving this festive season:**

1. Plan ahead before travelling so you know your route and have snacks, drinks, and plenty of activities to keep children entertained
2. Allow enough time to pack the car safely and securely stow any loose items
3. Make sure everyone is properly strapped in on every trip, no matter how short
4. Drive to the conditions and don't let holiday traffic tempt you to take risks
5. Minimise distractions in the vehicle – program your GPS before you start, and have a passenger answer any phone calls or texts
6. Ensure you are well rested before travelling and take plenty of breaks – especially if you are travelling with kids.

**Digital content available:**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1j6Yw5sarRpfoSAJMbd2Tzzhh6qpxkq3>

- Video and radio grabs with Associate Professor Julie Brown
- Selection of images

***Please note the NeuRA media and communications unit is closed until Monday, 7 January.***

**Transurban Road Safety Centre:**

Housed at NeuRA's headquarters in Randwick and funded by Transurban, the Transurban Road Safety Centre combines world-class research with state-of-the-art facilities. It includes a crash test sled capable of reaching real-life crash speeds and cameras that can record up to 1200 frames per second, allowing researchers to see what occurs in collisions.

**Transurban overview:**

An Australian-owned company that builds and operates toll roads in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, as well as in Greater Washington, United States and Montreal, Canada.

Transurban design roads for the long term, ensuring they'll deliver real and lasting benefits to cities and their communities.

They also research and develop innovative tolling and transport technology that makes travel easier for everyone.

**NeuRA overview:**

Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Sydney, Australia. As a leader in brain and nervous system research, our goal is to prevent, treat and cure brain and nervous system diseases, disorders and injuries through medical research.

