

Teenagers and Rideshare in Australia:

Parental Perspectives & Implications for Safe Independent Mobility

Presenter: Sjaan Koppel | **Date:** 16/09/2026 | **Venue:** World of Volvo, Gothenburg

FAMILIES WERE ALREADY USING RIDESHARE—BUT SAFETY PRACTICES CHANGED

What happens when families use rideshare services together?

- Online survey with Australian parents of children aged 0–17 years.
- Only 41% of parents had travelled in a rideshare vehicle with their youngest child.
- Restraint practices were less consistent than in the family's own vehicle.
- Appropriate restraints were not always available or used.



Article

What Are the Restraint Practices, Preferences, and Experiences When Australian Parents Travel with Their Children in a Rideshare Vehicle?

Sjaan Koppel ^{1,*}, Sujanie Peiris ¹, Mohammed Aburumman ¹, Chernyse W. R. Wong ¹, Justin M. Owens ² and Katie N. Womack ³

PARENTS SAW THE MOBILITY BENEFIT—BUT MOST WERE UNWILLING

- Online survey with Australian parents of children aged 0-17 years.
- **37.9%** were willing to allow their child to travel alone in a rideshare service.
- Previous family rideshare service experience increased willingness.
- Safety, trust and the ability to monitor the journey shaped decisions.



Another question: were parents concerned about the unfamiliar driver, or about independent travel more generally?

REASSURANCE MATTERED MORE THAN THE TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY

- Online survey with Australian parents of children aged 0-17 years.
- **37.9%** willing to allow travel alone by rideshare
- **57.2%** willing to allow travel alone in an automated vehicle
- Willingness increased when:
 - the child was older;
 - the service was perceived as safe and reliable; and
 - parents could track, see or communicate with their child.



Article

Parents' Willingness to Allow Their Unaccompanied Children to Use Emerging and Future Travel Modes

Sjaan Koppel ^{1,*}, Hayley McDonald ¹, Sujanie Peiris ¹, Xin Zou ² and David B. Logan ¹

¹ Monash University Accident Research Centre, Monash University, Clayton, VIC 3800, Australia; hayley.mcdonald@monash.edu (H.M.); sujanie.peiris@monash.edu (S.P.); david.logan@monash.edu (D.B.L.)

² Monash Institute of Transport Studies, Monash University, Clayton, VIC 3800, Australia; xin.zou@monash.edu

* Correspondence: sjaan.koppel@monash.edu; Tel.: +61-3-9905-4739

TEEN RIDESHARE THEN BECAME A COMMERCIAL REALITY

Teen rideshare had shifted from a hypothetical possibility to a travel option families were already navigating.

April 2024: Uber Teen launched in parts of Australia

- Teen-specific accounts linked to a parent's profile.
- Journey tracking, driver information and communication features.
- Greater independence for teenagers—with continued parental oversight.

This created an important evidence gap:

- How were teenagers using rideshare?
- When were they travelling without an adult?
- How were parents managing these journeys?

Our study examined rideshare use among Australian parents and teenagers aged 13–17 years.



METHOD

PARTICIPANTS: Aged 18 years or older, resided in Australia, drove at least once per week, & had at least one teen (aged 13-17 years) living with them who regularly travelled in their vehicle with them.

MATERIALS: Participants completed a 20-minute online survey administered via Qualtrics:

- Parents' socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender);
- Parents' driving characteristics (frequency of driving, crashes, infringements, seatbelt use);
- Parents' risky driving behaviours (Driver Behaviour Questionnaire [DBQ]);
- Parents' use of rideshare services (frequency, type of trips, reasons for non-use);
- Teens' characteristics (age, gender, seatbelt use, travel frequency with parents);
- Teens' use & non-use of rideshare services (frequency, reasons for rideshare trips, seatbelt use); and
- Parents' attitudes & behaviours towards teens using rideshare services – both accompanied & unaccompanied (frequency, reasons for allowing/restricting rideshare use, safety practices).

PROCEDURE: Following ethics approval, an online survey was promoted via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, X/Twitter) between July and August 2024.

ANALYSES: Descriptive statistics summarised parents' socio-demographic characteristics, teens' characteristics, attitudes & behaviours regarding their teens' use of rideshare services, both accompanied & unaccompanied

- A logistic regression model was developed to identify factors associated with teenagers' unaccompanied rideshare use.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics		% (n)
Age (years)	18–24	0.8% (5)
	25–34	11.0% (72)
	35–44	32.8% (214)
	45–54	39.4% (257)
	55+	16.0% (104)
Gender	Male	40.8% (266)
	Female	58.7% (383)
	Non-binary/gender diverse	0.5% (3)
Highest level of completed education	Primary/Intermediate/High school	16.7% (109)
	Technical/Trade/Diploma	31.9% (208)
	Undergraduate degree	28.7% (187)
	Postgraduate degree	22.7% (148)
Yearly household income (\$AUD) before taxes	≤\$50,000	7.8% (51)
	\$50,001–\$100,000	25.0% (163)
	\$100,001–\$150,000	23.3% (152)
	\$150,001–\$200,000	18.4% (120)
	≥\$200,001	17.6% (115)
	Prefer not to say	7.8% (51)
Residential state/territory	Australian Capital Territory	1.2% (8)
	New South Wales	28.7% (187)
	Northern Territory	0.6% (4)
	Queensland	17.9% (117)
	South Australia	8.3% (54)
	Tasmania	2.1% (14)
	Victoria	32.2% (210)
	Western Australia	8.9% (58)

RESULTS

PARENTS’ PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLE USE

- Driving frequency: **Daily: 64.0%**; 4–6 times per week: 25.0%; 2–3 times per week: 10.1% (66); 1 time per week: 1.1%.
- Seatbelt Use Frequency: **Always: 90.6%**; Almost always: 5.1%; Usually: 2.5%; Sometimes: 1.5%; Never: 0.3%.
- Crash & Infringement History (past 2 years): Involved in any crash: 14.0%; Cited for speeding: 16.0%; Cited for failing to stop: 3.8%; Cited for other offences (e.g., mobile phone): 3.7%.

PARENTS’ RISKY DRIVING BEHAVIOUR

Participants’ responses	Mean (SD)	Min, Max	Cronbach’s α
DBQ: Errors (Max = 55)	1.59 (0.73)	1.00, 5.55	0.95
DBQ: Lapses (Max = 30)	1.84 (0.73)	1.00, 5.88	0.84
DBQ: Aggressive violations (Max = 15)	1.77 (0.79)	1.00, 6.00	0.74
DBQ: Violations (Max = 40)	1.73 (0.76)	1.00, 5.25	0.89

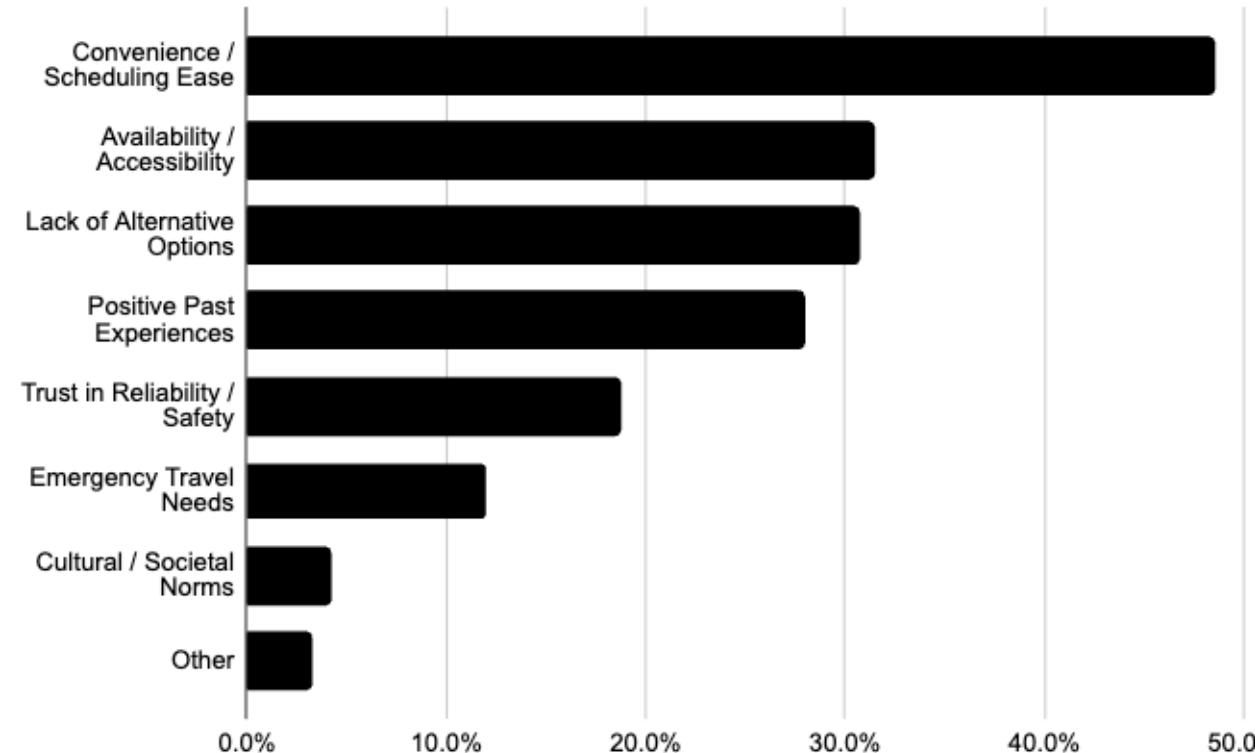
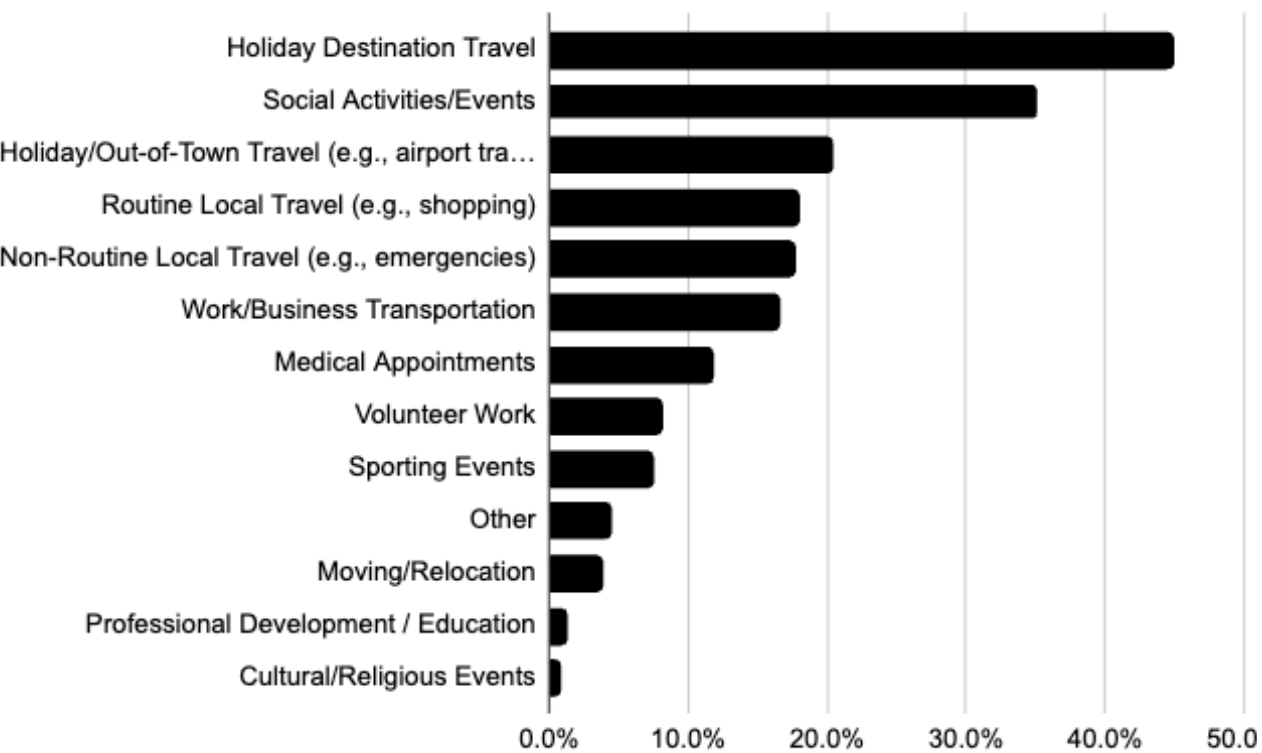
RESULTS

PARENTS' RIDESHARE USE (PAST 3 MONTHS)

- 62.6% (n=408) used rideshare services:
 - Daily: 1.1%; Weekly: 9.0%; Monthly: 17.5%; [Less than monthly: 25.6%](#)
- 37.4% had NOT used a rideshare service.

PARENTS' SEATBELT USE IN RIDESHARE (AMONG USERS, N = 408)

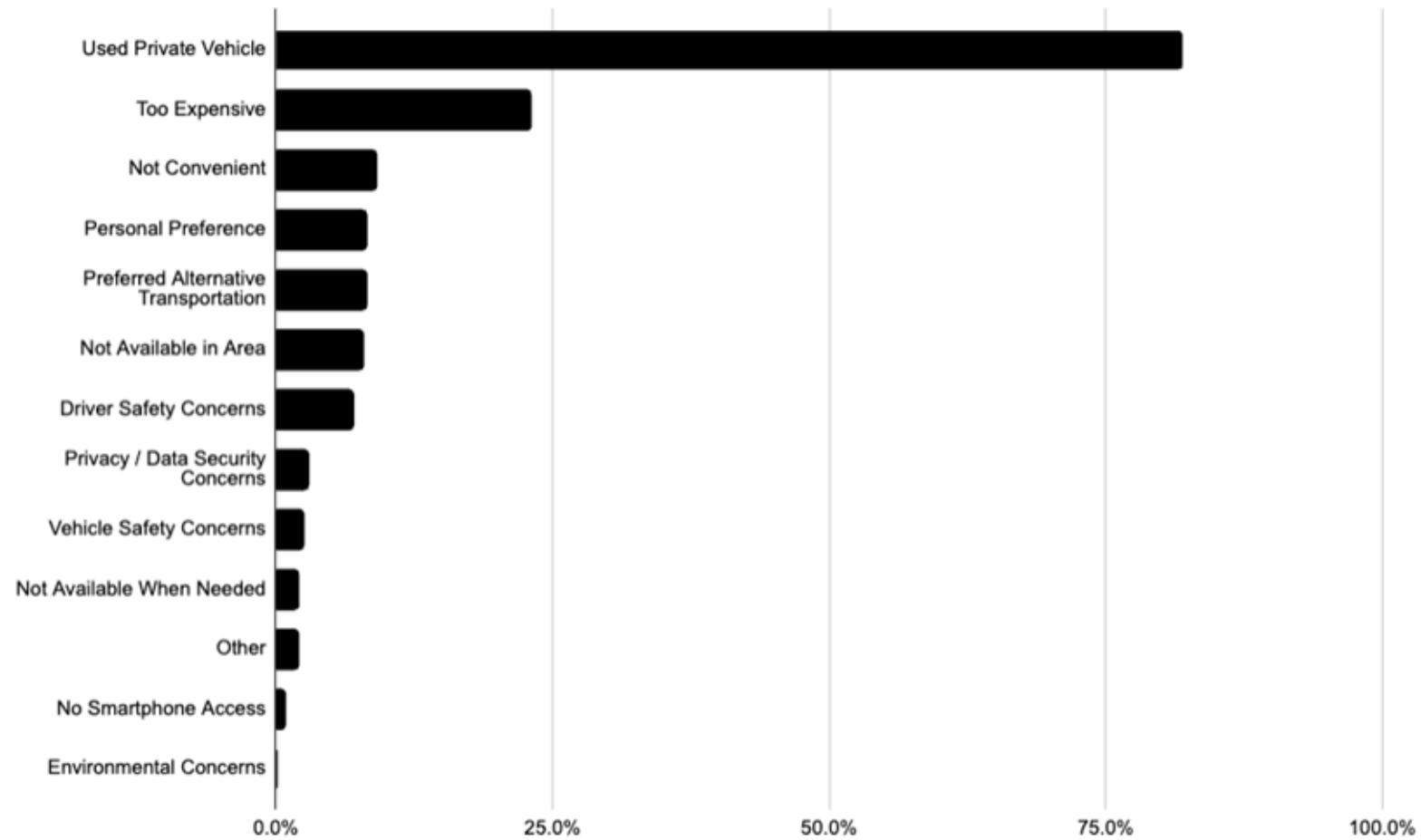
- [Always: 79.9%](#); Almost always: 8.8%; Usually: 5.4%; Sometimes: 4.2%; Almost never: 1.7%.
- Significantly more likely to 'always' wear a seatbelt in their own vehicle (86.5%) than in rideshare vehicles (79.9%) ($\chi^2(1) = 109.65, p < 0.001$).



RESULTS

PARENTS' RIDESHARE NON-USE (PAST 3 MONTHS)

- 37.4% (n=244) had NOT used rideshare.



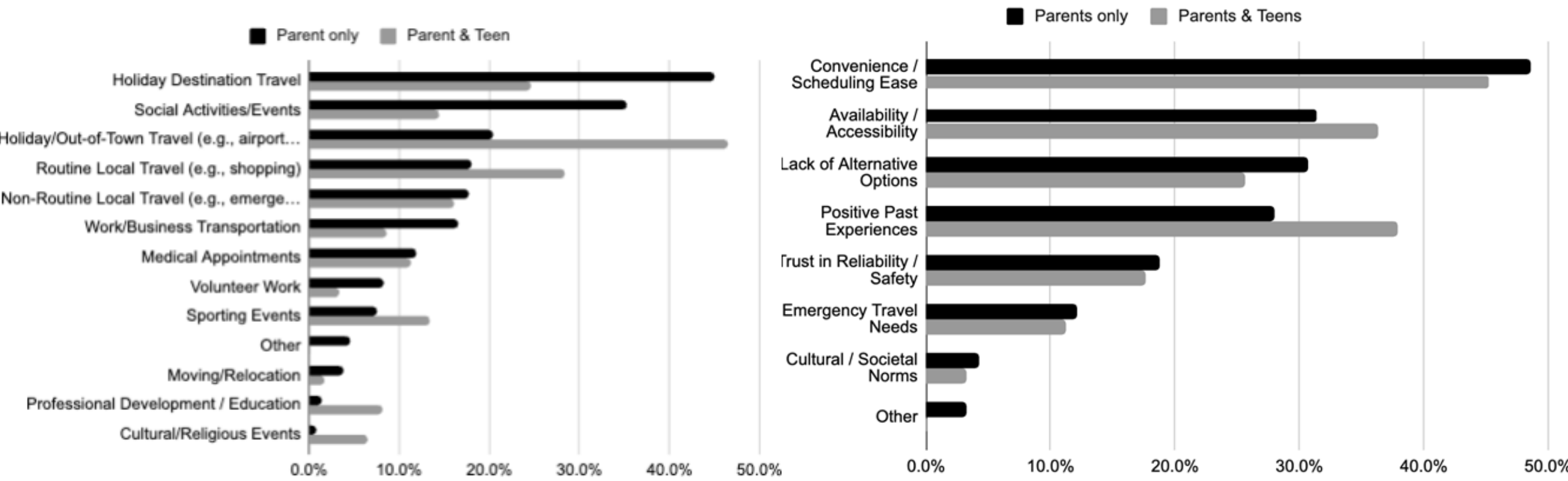
RESULTS

RIDESHARE USE WITH TEENS (PAST 3 MONTHS)

- 46.1% (n = 188) used a rideshare service with teen.

TEENS' SEATBELT USE IN RIDESHARE (N = 188)

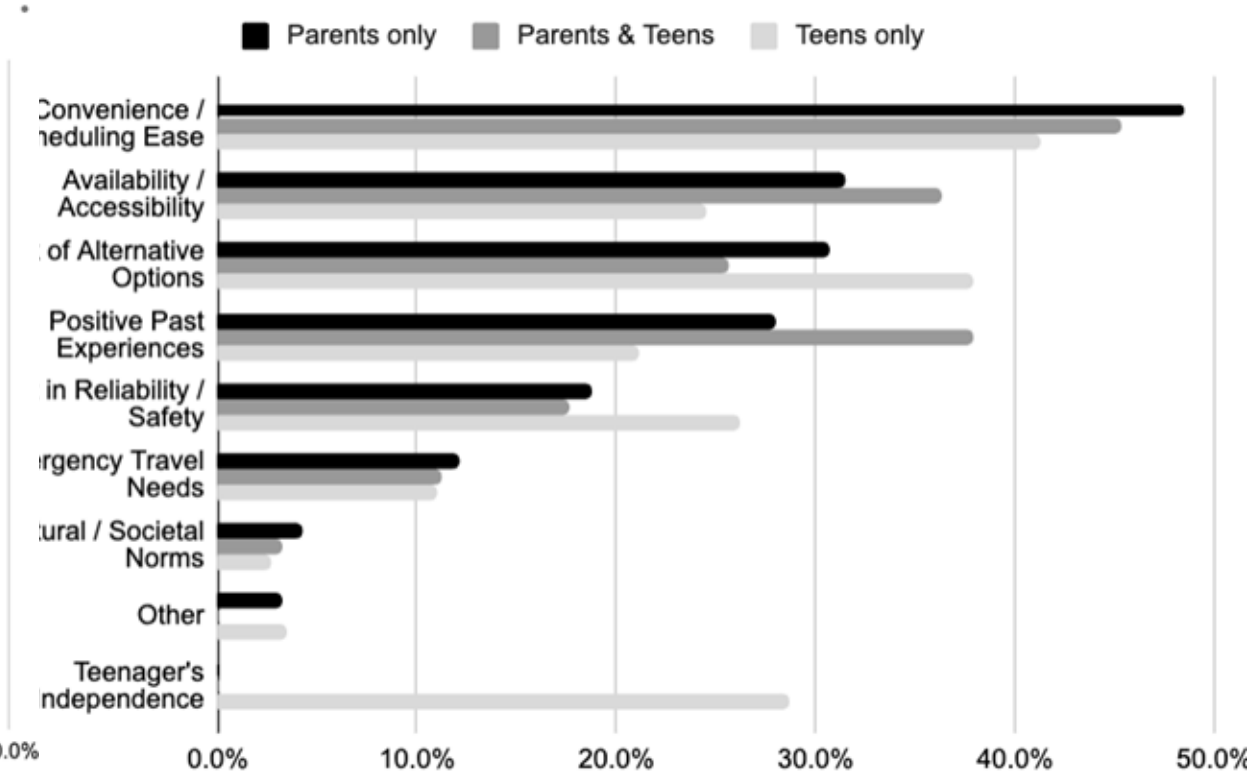
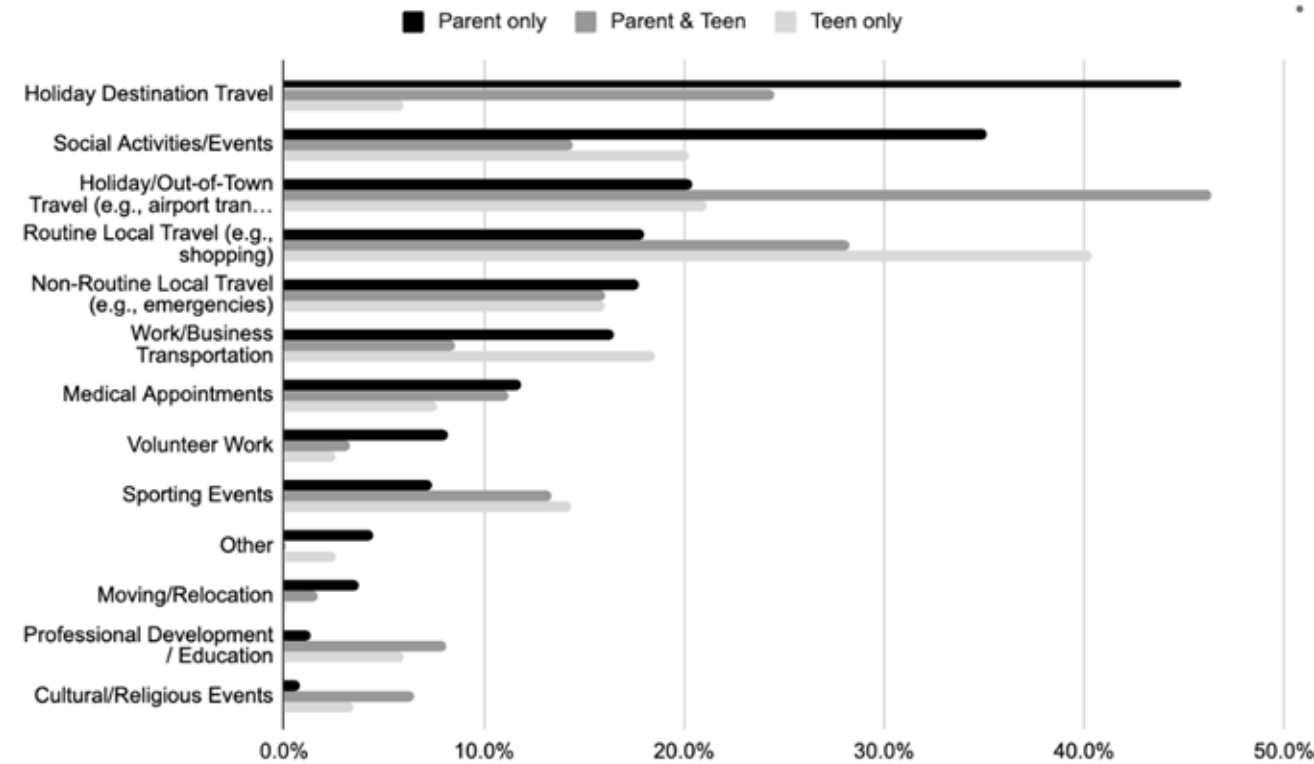
- Always: 73.4%; Almost always: 10.1%; Usually: 11.2%; Sometimes: 4.3%; Almost never: 1.1%.
- Teens were significantly more likely to 'always' wear a seatbelt in their own vehicle (82.4%) than in rideshare vehicles (73.4%) ($\chi^2(1) = 76.99, p < 0.001$).



RESULTS

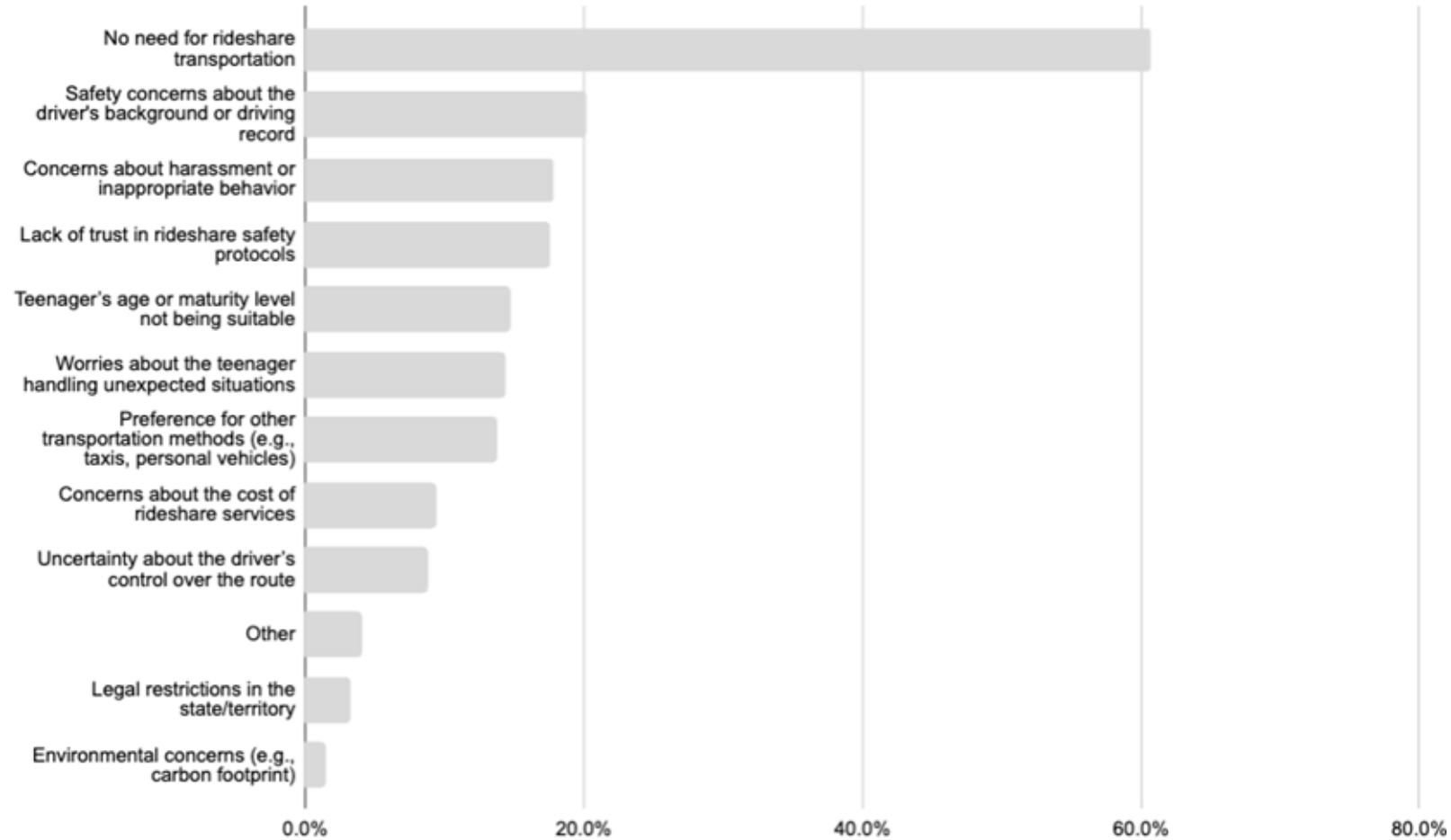
TEEN UNACCOMPANIED RIDESHARE USE (PAST 3 MONTHS)

- 18.3% of teens travelled unaccompanied
- Teens who used rideshare service unaccompanied were significantly older ($M = 15.5$, $SD = 1.3$) than those who did not ($M = 15.0$, $SD = 1.4$), $t(650) = -3.762$, $p < .001$
- Gender was not associated with unaccompanied use, $\chi^2(1) = 0.150$, $p = .699$
- Type of rideshare service used:
 - Teen-specific service: 28.6%
 - Standard rideshare: 52.9%
 - Not sure: 18.5%



RESULTS

- For the 81.7% of teens who had NOT travelled unaccompanied.



RESULTS

Logistic regression model significantly predicted teenagers’ unaccompanied rideshare use, $\chi^2(5)=106.608$, $p<.001$, showing good fit (Hosmer–Lemeshow $p>.05$); explaining 24.6% of the variance (Nagelkerke R^2), correctly classified 82.5% of cases, & demonstrating acceptable discrimination (ROC=0.789).

		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	Sig.	95% C.I.
Parent used rideshare service in the past three months	No	-	-	-	-	-
	Yes	0.999	0.338	2.715	< .01	1.401, 5.262
Parent used rideshare service with teenager in past three months	No	-	-	-	-	-
	Yes	1.186	0.255	3.272	< .001	1.985, 5.394
Parents’ age		-0.027	0.013	0.974	< .05	0.950, 0.998
Teenagers’ age		0.425	0.086	1.529	< .001	1.292, 1.810
Driving-related lapses		0.359	0.139	1.431	< .05	1.090, 1.879

DISCUSSION

Unaccompanied use reflects familiarity, opportunity and age

- Only 18.3% of teenagers had travelled unaccompanied by rideshare.
- Unaccompanied use was more likely among:
 - Older teenagers
 - Families in which parents had used rideshare
 - Families in which parents and teenagers had used rideshare together
- Suggests that parents may permit independent use progressively as teenagers get older and the family becomes more familiar with rideshare.

Safety concerns constrain use—but are not the only consideration

- Lack of need was a common reason for non-use.
- Concerns about drivers, harassment and rideshare safety protocols were also important.
- Parental decisions appear to balance safety, convenience, available alternatives and adolescent independence.

Rideshare may disrupt established seatbelt practices

- Both parents and teenagers were less likely to “always” wear a seatbelt in rideshare than in private vehicles.
- The consistency of this pattern across generations suggests a rideshare-specific safety issue requiring further investigation.

LIMITATIONS

Study design

- Cross-sectional findings identify associations, not causal relationships or changes over time.

Parent-reported behaviour

- Parents reported both their own and their teenager's behaviour.
- Recall and social-desirability bias may have affected responses.
- Parents may not accurately know what teenagers do when travelling unaccompanied.

Sampling and service context

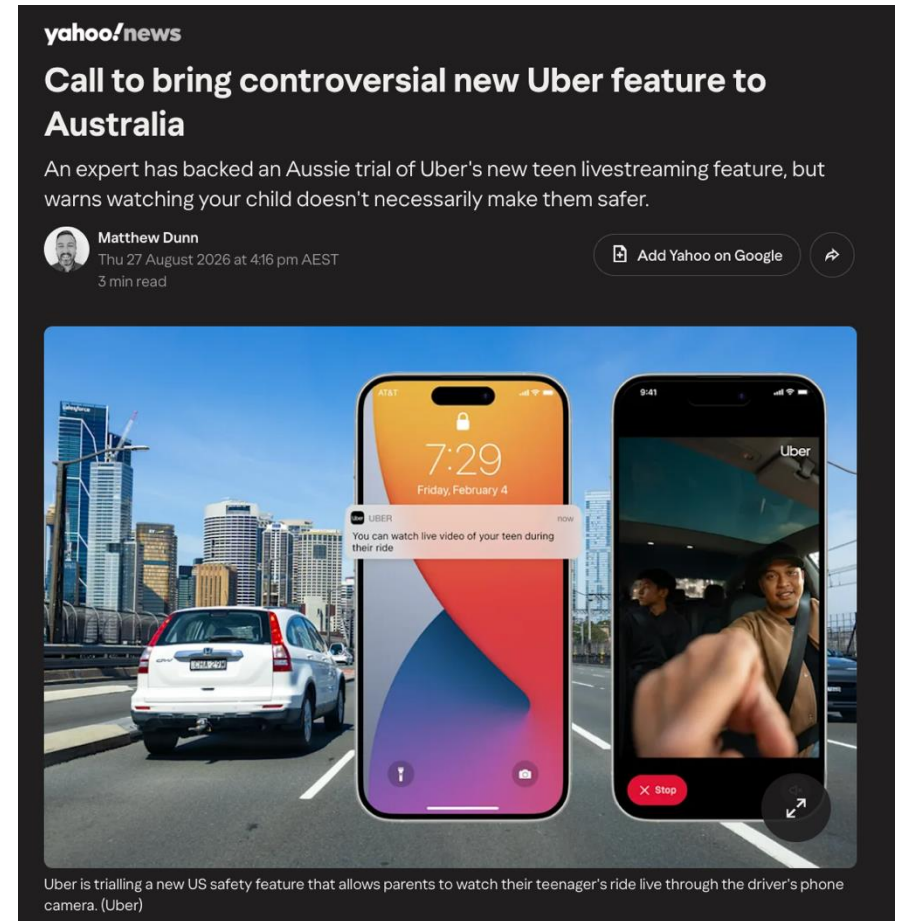
- Social-media recruitment and eligibility restricted to parents who drove at least weekly may limit generalisability.
- Data were collected during the early Australian rollout of Uber Teen.
- Experiences may differ across locations, platforms and service types.

Teen perspectives were not captured

- Teenagers' motivations, experiences and perceptions must be examined directly.

THE TECHNOLOGY—AND THE DEBATE—ARE ALREADY EVOLVING

- Uber is trialling live in-vehicle video for US parents of teenagers travelling alone.
- Technology may provide an additional layer of reassurance—but parental visibility does not necessarily equal safety.
- New features should be carefully designed, independently evaluated and considered alongside fundamental safety behaviours, including seatbelt use.



Monash University Accident Research Centre Professor Sjaan Koppel, who has [studied Australian parents' attitudes towards teenagers using rideshares alone](#), said the technology could provide another layer of reassurance and oversight.

"I would support a carefully designed and independently evaluated Australian trial, rather than immediate widespread implementation," she told *Yahoo News Australia*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

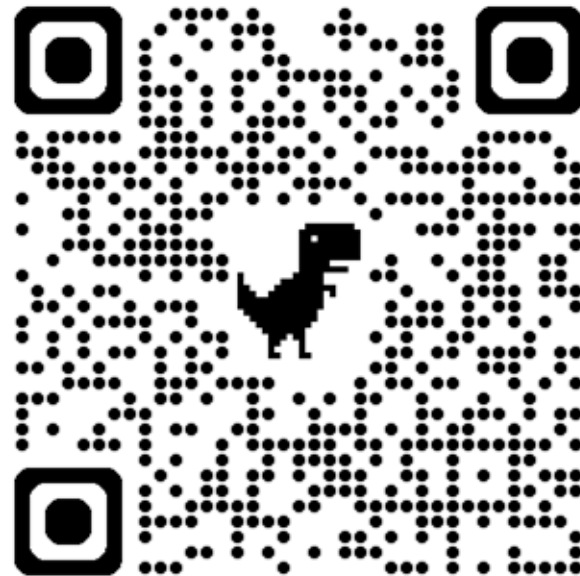
Associate Professor Sjaan Koppel

Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC)

21 Alliance Ln, Monash University VIC 3800 Australia

T: +61 3 9905 4739

E: Sjaan.Koppel@monash.edu



@SjaanKoppel



@SjaanKoppel



@a_prof_sjaan_koppel



@sjaan.koppel.bsky.social