

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**20 March 2008**

**Kiwis want mobile phone use banned while driving, with some exceptions**

The majority of Kiwis think that using a mobile phone while driving should be made illegal, Research New Zealand polling shows.

Research New Zealand Director Emanuel Kalafatelis said that the poll showed 86% of New Zealanders believe that it should be illegal to use a mobile phone while driving. Only 13% disagreed that it should be made illegal.

When asked about hands-free mobile phone options, 50% of those who thought mobile phone use while driving should be banned said the use of hands-free phones should be outlawed, Mr Kalafatelis said.

This means that the other 49% felt it would be acceptable, meaning that New Zealanders are polarised in terms of their opinions.

“Overall, about four in every 10 believe it should always be illegal to use any type of mobile phone while driving, another four in every 10 believe there should be an exception in the case of hands-free options. And just one in every ten believe the use of mobile phones while driving should not be legislated against,” Mr Kalafatelis said.

“On the surface, this appears to be a very clear cut result. It’s obviously an issue New Zealanders feel strongly about. However, when we dig deeper, what it tells us is that many of us are prepared to make exceptions.

“Furthermore, there appears to be little variation in these results by groups in the population. In fact, the only differences we see are based on age. Those in the 15 to 29 age groups were less likely to agree that mobile phone use in cars should be banned (71%), and those in the 60-plus age bracket were more likely than the average to think phones should be banned (93%). Younger people were also more likely than older people to agree that the use of hands-free options were OK,” Mr Kalafatelis said.

So far the Government has rejected a call for a ban on phones while driving, but earlier this month both Vodafone and Telecom backed a call from the Greens to legislate against the use of mobile phones in cars.

Driving while using a mobile phone is illegal in many parts of the world including Australia.

Polling was conducted between 11 March and 19 March.

*The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between the 12 and 18 March. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.4 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.*

**Participants were asked:** *Do you agree or disagree that it should be illegal to use a cell phone when you're driving?*

**Table 1: Cell phone use while driving (by gender)**

*Do you agree or disagree that it should be illegal to use a cell phone when you're driving?*

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	500	194	306
	%	%	%
Agree	86	83	88
Disagree	13	16	11
Don't know	1	2	1
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 2: Cell phone use while driving (by age)**

*Do you agree or disagree that it should be illegal to use a cell phone when you're driving?*

	Total	15 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60+
Base =	500	64	82	98	113	143
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	86	➤71	88	82	89	➤93
Disagree	13	26	12	18	9	6
Don't know	1	3	0	0	2	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

➤Denotes a statistically significant difference between other sub-group, shading denotes significant difference between total.

**Table 3: Using hands-free phone while driving (by gender)**

*Even if it's a hands-free phone?*

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	434*	161	273
	%	%	%
Yes, agree hands-free phone should also be illegal	50	46	52
No, using hands-free phone is okay	49	53	45
Don't know	2	1	3
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*Sub-sample based on those who agree that it should be illegal to use a cell phone when driving.

**Table 4: Using hands-free phone while driving (by age)**

*Even if it's a hands-free phone?*

	Total	15 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60+
Base =	434*	46	72	81	102	133
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, agree hands-free phone should also be illegal	50	40	49	41	56	57
No, using hands-free phone is okay	49	60	51	59	39	40
Don't know	2	0	0	0	5	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*Sub-sample based on those who agree that it should be illegal to use a cell phone when driving.

**Research New Zealand is an independent, New Zealand-owned research organisation undertaking social and business research.**

[www.researchnz.com](http://www.researchnz.com)