

26 September 2005

Media release

For comment, please contact

Clive Hamilton 02 6125 1270 or 0413 993 223

City 4WD owners a breed apart

A statistical profile of city owners of large 4WD vehicles shows them to be more individualistic, more aggressive and less community orientated than other drivers, according to a new report by The Australia Institute.

The ‘typical’ city driver of a large 4WD is an obese male in his forties or fifties in full-time work with an income somewhat higher than average. He is more likely to dislike homosexuals, to have lower regard for Indigenous culture and be less sympathetic to public and charitable support for disadvantaged people.

Using data from Roy Morgan Research collected across Australia from 24,718 respondents aged 14 and over, the study focuses on owners of large 4WDs - such as the Toyota LandCruiser and Nissan Patrol - and includes an analysis of drivers of luxury 4WDs such as the BMW X3.

“Those who drive large 4WDs tend to see themselves as rugged individualists who like physical activity”, said Institute Executive Director Dr Clive Hamilton.

“Perhaps with implications for how they drive, they are more inclined to say they sometimes use force to get their way. They see themselves as ‘Mr Fix It’ types yet also admit to being bamboozled by computers.”

The study shows that the profile of city drivers of luxury 4WDs differs markedly from that of owners of large 4WDs. They are younger, wealthier and more likely to be female. Although less likely to be obese, they worry more about their weight.

While city owners of large 4WDs prefer beer - Australian, not imported - city drivers of luxury 4WDs prefer wine and spirits.

“There is a widespread view that those who drive large 4WDs in the city tend to be selfish and belligerent”, said Dr Hamilton.

“Large 4WDs are less safe, less fuel efficient and less welcome on the roads than many other vehicles, yet the profile shows their owners are more aggressive and less concerned about the impact of their decisions on others.

“This suggests that instead of relying on the social conscience of these drivers to change to safer vehicles, it would be more effective to use mandatory measures such as special licences and high taxes.”

The report can be read under What’s New at www.tai.org.au.