



**COMMON ROADS
COMMON SENSE**

Case Study

Case Study 4: Liam Hansberry

The unfamiliarity of Australia’s road conditions is a common concern for backpackers and travellers throughout the country and for Irish tourist, Liam Hansberry, encountering large farm machinery at first posed an unexpected driving experience.

Hailing from rural Ireland, and with six-month’s experience working on farms in Australia, Liam was quick to adapt to these new conditions, however he says other backpackers often struggle to know what to do when they see a tractor, spray rig or other Large Agricultural Vehicle (LAV) on the road.

“My initial stint on a farm when I first arrived in Australia meant I could adjust quite quickly, as it gave me exposure to a range of different kinds of machinery, but I’ve had friends where this has not been the case,” Liam said.

“Some of them have found it very daunting driving on country roads and have been anxious about potentially encountering machinery just because they didn’t know what to do.

“This is why the ‘Common Roads, Common Sense’ campaign and the ‘Look out, Slow down and Take care’ message are so important.”

The NFF’s Common Roads, Common Sense, three-step approach includes:

1. Look out: Roads are built for all Australians and not all vehicles travel at maximum speed. Be aware of farmers, cyclists and trucks that might be slower.
2. Slow down: Most accidents with LAVs in Australia are rear-end collisions due to differing travelling speeds. Slow down when you see a slower vehicle ahead.
3. Take Care: when overtaking, make sure it is safe to do so and you have enough space – take a moment to evaluate the situation. When an LAV heads your way slow down and give the oncoming vehicles plenty of space.

In his travels, which span every state of Australia, Liam has found that backpackers and other general road users often don’t take pilot vehicles or oversized signs seriously enough, speeding up instead of slowing down to try to avoid the machinery, and it’s this impatience that often creates near-miss scenarios.

“There is no one right way to deal with this kind of interaction on country roads, but being aware of surroundings, slowing down, being patient, and doing what you can to get out of each other’s way is a good start,” he said.



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Having been both a driving tourist and an operator of farm machinery, Liam urges road users to take the time to understand why LAVs sometimes need to be moved on public roadways, and that farmers will do all they can to cooperate with general traffic.

He also stressed the importance of backpackers making an effort to know and understand the area they are travelling in so they can be prepared for the range of unique driving scenarios they may encounter.

“Knowing if you’re driving through a grain, horticulture or cattle region, or what season you will be travelling in, will change what sort of machinery you’ll see on the roads,” he said.

“Having a better understanding of what to expect can help to reduce stress when you do come across machinery, meaning you’ll be able to better anticipate and adapt to the situation in front of you.”

For more information, visit farmers.org.au.

About ‘Common Roads, Common Sense’

Sometimes, Australian farmers need to drive large agricultural machinery on public roadways to move from farm to farm, which can seem confusing, frustrating or overwhelming for other drivers.

Farmers are aware of the issues this can cause, and want to work with all road users to make interactions between these machines and other traffic calm and safe.

The National Farmers’ Federation’s ‘Common Roads, Common Sense’ campaign outlines simple steps to help guide driver behaviour – Look out, slow down and take care.

This project is part of the National Farmers’ Federation’s Sharing the Road Campaign (agricultural industry), funded by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator’s Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiatives Program, with the support of the Commonwealth Government.



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