



7 August 2020

RACT launches new resource to help Tasmanian drivers stay off their smartphones

RACT has launched a new online resource to help Tasmanian drivers overcome one of the major road safety challenges – the use of smartphones while driving.

Based on findings from research commissioned by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA), *Drive in the Moment* helps road-users better understand the risk of using mobile devices while driving and develop effective strategies to keep their hands on the wheel and minds on the road.

RACT Chief Member Experience Officer Stacey Pennicott said the study behind *Drive in the Moment* is one of the first studies to look at the new ways we are using our phones while driving, beyond just calling and texting.

“Our phones are more advanced than they were even five years ago. They allow us to be more connected, have more entertainment options, and are more integrated into the vehicle,” Ms Pennicott said.

“With this comes the temptation to use our phone while driving. It’s not just taking a call; it’s checking notifications, using a GPS app, changing a song, watching a video, the list goes on.

“Looking into the motivations and influences for these different uses helps us understand why we are using our phones while driving and how to counteract them.

“We now understand more clearly that there are different motivations for using our phones in the car, and there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to reducing smartphone use while driving.”

“The AAA research shows that too many people still think it is socially acceptable to use their phone while driving.

“We are trying to change that with this resource, by comparing the risks of distracted driving to other less socially acceptable behaviours like speeding, driving under the influence, and driving while very tired,” she said.

“We want drivers to reduce their distractions and ‘drive in the moment’.

“Our new evidenced-based approach helps drivers change their behaviour, by having a plan to change their thinking the next time they are tempted to use their smartphone behind the wheel.

“The good news is we can see from the research people are trying to reduce their use, and we hope this new approach is one way that can help those who want to change their behaviour.”

The *Drive in the Moment* online resource is free and available here - <https://ract.driveinthemoment.com.au/>

Summary of the AAA research –

- 93 percent of younger drivers and 79 percent of experienced drivers have tried to reduce their in-vehicle smartphone use
- 61 percent of younger drivers believe turning the phone off is effective for reducing use, but only 5 percent use that strategy
- 46 percent of young drivers and 28 percent of experienced drivers acknowledge using their phones in hand-held mode in a typical week
 - Of those young drivers who use their phones in hand-held mode, 74 percent engage with music/entertainment apps in free-flowing traffic
 - Of those experienced drivers who use their phones in hand-held mode, 53 percent engage with calling/texting apps in free-flowing traffic
 - Of those young drivers who use their phones in hand-held mode, 12 percent engage with social media in free-flowing traffic, compared to 15 percent of experienced drivers
 - Of those young drivers who use their phones in hand-held mode, 24 percent engage with social media in stop/start traffic or at the lights, compared to 31 percent of experienced drivers
- 31 percent of younger drivers and 25 percent of experienced drivers use voice commands on their phone while driving in a typical week
- 24 percent of younger drivers have used Do Not Disturb mode compared to 7 percent of experienced drivers