

Media release Sunday, 16 May 2021

RACT calls on Tasmanians to make road safety a year-round priority

The RACT is using this year's National Road Safety Week to call on thousands of Tasmanians to make a formal pledge to drive safely all year round.

The RACT today unveiled a major public awareness campaign to launch the start of National Road Safety Week alongside community leaders, key stakeholders and members of the public.

National Road Safety Week is an annual initiative from the Safer Australian Roads and Highways (SARAH) Group, commencing today, and will see a range of events take place across the country. SARAH Group was founded by Peter Frazer in 2012 after the traffic death of his daughter Sarah on the Hume Highway in New South Wales, with the first Road Safety Week held in May 2013.

“This week is an important time for all of us to reflect on the state of road safety in Tasmania and, importantly, consider our behaviour on the road,” RACT Group Chief Executive Mark Mugnaioni said.

“The most influential way we'll be sharing this message is by calling on businesses, community leaders, road safety advocates, RACT members and the broader community to make a pledge to drive safely on our website.

“Our platform will allow Tasmanians to commit to making a pledge to improve on behaviours that contribute to the fatal five causes of deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

“We already have a number of community leaders, stakeholders and members of the public ready to make the pledge to road safety today, and we urge Tasmanians to do the same.”

RACT will also be running education programs and media events, with videos of our staff sharing near-miss experiences to highlight the dangers we face on the road each day. We'll even be lighting up RACT House in yellow in a nod to road safety.

RACT's growing focus on road safety follows the disastrous year on our roads in 2020, with 36 people losing their lives and 284 being seriously injured. This was the highest death rate per head of population among all states, at 6.6 per 100,000 people. If Tasmania had Victoria's death rate of 3.17, 19 lives could have been saved last year.

“The story isn’t any better this year,” Mr Mugnaioni said. “So far in 2021, 10 people have died and more than 100 people have been seriously injured on our roads. This is tragic for the many families and friends affected.

“Road safety is a serious issue for all Tasmanians, which is why it is important to shine a spotlight on the issue every day of every year.”

Mr Mugnaioni said RACT will continue to push for a holistic look at road safety in Tasmania.

“This includes investment in safer roads, safer cars, improved enforcement and making road safety a community-wide responsibility. It includes looking at leading research and data, national and global best practice, as well as gaining tri-partisan support in Parliament.

“We had support from all major parties for 10-year plans for our major highways during the State Election. We now need the new State Government to develop, fully-fund and implement these plans.

“We also want to see speed camera revenue reinvested in the latest speed and mobile detection technologies.

“However, perhaps the most important aspect of road safety is changing the attitudes and behaviours of the people that use our roads through education and training around the Fatal Five.

“Having the safest roads and the safest cars are important tools in road safety, but if people aren’t willing to exhibit safe behaviours, then we cannot achieve a reduction in deaths and injuries.

“We urge Tasmanians to always take accountability for the role they play in keeping each other safe on our roads. We can all do this by observing the speed limit and driving to the conditions, paying attention and leaving your phone alone, never drinking and driving, wearing your seatbelt and not driving when fatigued.

“We proved that we can keep each other safe other during the COVID-19 lockdown, so we need to do the same on our roads. This should be every day of every year, not just during National Road Safety Week.”

Head to www.ract.com.au/community/advocating-change/road-safety-week to make your pledge.