



Monday, 16 November 2020

Tasmanian students learn dangers of distracted driving ***2020 National Road Safety Week***

The RACT is using this year's Road Safety Week to shine a light on the issue in Tasmania after a horror year on our roads.

Driving while distracted and drink/drug driving contribute to nearly half the fatalities and serious injury crashes in Tasmania each year.

To change this RACT actively educates young Tasmanians on just how dangerous it can be to drive while distracted, or after drinking or taking drugs.

Distraction is a contributing factor in 24% of fatalities and serious injury crashes in Tasmania each year. Similarly, drink/drug driving is also a contributing factor in 24% of fatalities and serious injury crashes in Tasmania each year.

"This is why we undertake practical distracted driving and drink driving sessions with Tasmanian students," RACT Chief Member Experience Officer Stacey Pennicott said.

"Our Distracted Driving program is intended to introduce students in years 10-12 to the responsibilities of driving and managing distractions when behind the wheel.

"We do this by giving learner drivers first-hand experience in managing distractions when driving by allowing them to text while driving in a safe environment. We then get them to wear vision impairment goggles to simulate the impact of a high blood alcohol content rating. For both activities the students attempt, usually unsuccessfully, to navigate around a course without hitting cones."

Here are some tips to stop people from using a mobile phone while driving:

- Put your phone somewhere you can't get to it
- Set up your Bluetooth hands-free before you drive
- Turn on Do Not Disturb while Driving
- Check out the AAA's [Drive in the Moment](#) campaign, which teaches drivers the dangers of mobile phone use and helps with strategies/tips to keep their hands on the wheel. It also contains a range of statistics from AAA research.
 - Summary of the AAA research is in this [release](#)

And here is our advice to help people avoid drink driving:

- Call a taxi or book an Uber after a big night
- Stay at a friend's or family member's house if you've been drinking
- Keep an eye out for your mates and make sure they don't drink drive

While we educate the community about mobile phone use and drink driving, we also support a number of opportunities to curb these behaviours.

- The enforcement of distraction by Tasmania Police. This includes the development and rollout of technology that detects mobile phone use, which is currently being considered by the Road Safety Advisory Council, as well as motorcycle lane filtering
- The development and rollout of vehicle and mobile technology that prevents motorists from using mobile phones when a car is started.
- Additional resourcing for Tasmania Police to undertake random breath and drug tests as well as alcohol interlocks for recidivist drink drivers.

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