



19 November 2020

RACT calls for legislation to protect roadside assist workers ***National Road Safety Week 2020***

With three quarters of RACT roadside workers experiencing a “near miss” on the job in the last 12 months, RACT is calling for roadside assistance vehicles and tow trucks to be included in slow down for emergency vehicles legislation this National Road Safety Week.

According to a recent survey of RACT roadside patrols, 60 per cent of respondents experienced more than one near miss in the twelve months prior, with 30 per cent reporting a near miss in the week prior to taking the survey.

RACT General Manager Mobility Services Darren Moody said the Government had a responsibility to extend slow down for emergency vehicle laws to cover all roadside vehicles as it reviewed the legislation introduced last December.

“RACT Roadside Assist workers and tow truck drivers experience the same risks as emergency services vehicles, regularly reporting near misses and dangerous situations at the roadside and should be granted the same safety benefits of this legislation,” he said.

“While our Roadside Assist workers are provided with extensive risk assessment and training aimed at working safely at the roadside, they cannot control every situation – particularly with increasing instances of distracted driving.

“They can’t control where a vehicle will break down, can’t set up signage and speed limit reductions like other road workers and don’t have red and blue flashing lights. However, they are just as vulnerable and at risk from passing traffic, particularly on high speed roads.

“As it has been one year since the implementation of these laws, they are now due for review by the government. As part of this review, RACT urges the government to include the amber lights of Roadside Assist vehicles and tow trucks in this legislation.

“This would be similar to laws in Western Australia, which cover all emergency and roadside assistance vehicles when they are “displaying a flashing light other than a turn indicator light or hazard warning light”.

“With RACT Roadside Assist workers attending an average of 184 callouts a day in 2019-20, with roughly one in five of these callouts to roadside locations where the speed limit is 90km/h or above, it’s vital this legislation is extended before it’s too late.”

Key facts:

- **RACT Roadside Assist workers attended 67,000 callouts in 2019-20, on average 184 a day. Of these, roughly 12,000 breakdown callouts are to roadside locations where the speed limit was 90km/h and above.**
- **A recent survey of RACT roadside patrols found 75 per cent experienced a near miss in the previous 12 months, with 60 per cent of those experiencing more than one near miss. Additionally, 30 per cent reported a near miss in the week prior to taking the survey.**
- **Anecdotal evidence also suggests that drivers/riders are often distracted when there is a road incident or breakdown.**

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