

## Media release 05 September 2024

### Tasmanian youth empowered to drive change in road safety

Students from across the North West have improved their road safety skills this week, undertaking distracted driver training and other activities to help equip them for life on Tasmania's roads.

RACT Community Coordinator Hayley Brown said the interactive exhibit, held at the Don Centre carpark, was aimed at students in grades 10, 11, and 12 and encouraged them to think critically about safe driving habits.

"The interactive expo equips students with road safety knowledge and provides the opportunity for practical experience and talking to experts that help to build driver confidence," Ms Brown said.

"It's a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and engage students on being safer behind the wheel.

Despite making up only 11 per cent of the Tasmanian population, young people make up 21 per cent of all deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

"Each year, 67 young Tasmanians aged between 16 and 25 are killed or seriously injured on our roads, that's 67 young people whose potential was cut short or severely impacted by road trauma.

The expo showcased multiple exhibits, including RACT's Distracted Driver training, Tasmania Police and Tasmania Fire Service and other road safety stakeholders.

"Under the instruction of RACT's professional driver trainers, the students were also immersed in some of the driving challenges by simulating real-life distractions behind the wheel of a dual-controlled driver training car.

"The course includes the distractions of texting and wearing vision impairment goggles to simulate driving under the influence and experience the real impact of texting while you are driving," Ms Brown said.

"Distractions, including mobile phone use and passengers, contribute to 24 per cent of fatal and serious injury crashes in Tasmania each year, so it's crucial to ensure the next generation of road users are educated on safe road practices.

"RACT's Distracted Driving program also highlights the risks of speeding or drink driving and is complemented by a classroom presentation 'Ready for the Road.'

"We know that young Tasmanian drivers are overrepresented in crash statistics, and we want to reduce these numbers by raising awareness of distracted driving risks early in their driving journey.

Ms Brown said equipping young and vulnerable road users with knowledge and decision-making tools creates understanding and promotes safer driving habits.

“It is important we educate vulnerable road users about driver safety and support them the tools they need to make informed decisions about how they act on and around our roads.”

RAC offers a diverse range of road safety education programs, for more information visit our [Community Education page](#).

**ENDS**