



# Media Release

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## Social media a concern behind the wheel

Results from the RAC's world-first Attention Powered Car have shown social media, mobile phone use and noisy passengers to be amongst the biggest in-car distractions on the road.

RAC Executive General Manager Pat Walker said the Attention Powered Car tests were conducted under controlled conditions at the RAC Driving Centre and the results demonstrated how easily attention can be lost behind the wheel.

"Facebook had a big impact on the attention level of the five drivers tested – recording a 43 per cent drop in attention levels, on average," Mr Walker said.

"This is very concerning when you consider the 2013 RAC free2go Driver Survey revealed 20 per cent of 17-19 year old drivers check social media while behind the wheel."

The Attention Powered Car tests involved a professional driver, a p-plater, a caravanning veteran, a mum and a Wheatbelt resident. The tests were designed to highlight how quickly drivers can lose concentration, causing lives to be lost, and leaving families and friends to deal with the consequences of road trauma.

"The RAC is committed to saving lives on our roads and we have used the Attention Powered Car to assist people to understand the importance of paying attention and what are the factors distracting us while we drive," Mr Walker said.

"As well as learning more about how we think and react in a vehicle, we hope this initiative has helped Western Australian drivers to acknowledge the fact that we often don't pay enough attention behind the wheel in the way we should.

"Inattention and fatigue were a factor in 16% of deaths on WA roads in 2013. Road safety is everyone's responsibility; we lost 162 people on WA roads last year and now is not the time to be complacent."

The tests showed talking on a phone without hands free (27% drop in attention levels on average) and texting while driving (22% drop in attention levels on average) were significant in-car distractions. Noisy and playful passengers also had a big impact on attention levels, with the drivers tested recording, on average, a 37 per cent drop in attention levels. Inattention can be described as a driver failing to pay sufficient attention to the activities required for safe driving.

"We've started the conversation about inattention on our roads. We'd now like to see Western Australians continue this in an effort to keep themselves and those they care about safe on the roads."

For more information about the Attention Powered Car or to view the webisodes, visit [forthebetter.com.au](http://forthebetter.com.au).

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