

Media release



Wednesday 9 April 2014

Stark reality of distracted driving on show

More than 6000 students in Year 10, 11 and 12 will get a glimpse into the realities of road trauma when the RAC, WA Police, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, St John Ambulance and Royal Perth Hospital stage *bstreetsmart*.

RAC Group CEO Terry Agnew, said students attending *bstreetsmart* will observe the re-enactment of a crash scene caused by distracted driving.

“bstreetsmart is designed to be an up-close, uncompromising and honest look at how poor decisions behind the wheel can change lives forever,” Mr Agnew said.

“We do this through a 40 minute dramatisation of a crash scene which uses actors as victims and real-life police, paramedics and firefighters to demonstrate and explain how the emergency services respond in a crisis.

“Young drivers aged 17 to 24 are over-represented in the fatal crash statistics. These drivers make up 18 per cent of road fatalities, yet only account for 11 per cent of the population.”

Director of Trauma Service at Royal Perth Hospital, Dr Sudhakar Rao, said he too regularly sees the consequences of distracted driving.

“As WA’s State Major Trauma Service, part of our job is to try to put these young people back together after a crash. We hope that by giving young drivers a taste of what we see, they will put away their phones and pay greater attention to the road.”

WA Police Inspector Dominic Wood said *bstreetsmart* is another step forward in educating our young and most inexperienced road users on the very real dangers they face when they start driving.

“We hope the realistic sight and sounds of this event will help students to become better and safer road users. We are trying to instil good attitudes and behaviours into these young drivers by showing them what can happen.”

Department of Fire and Emergency Services Operations Deputy Commissioner Lloyd Bailey said firefighters worked closely with other emergency services at the scene of road crashes and this collaboration continued through initiatives such as *bstreetsmart*.

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St John

“Firefighters see the devastation road crashes cause when they attend to free injured or trapped people. Ultimately we would all like to see crashes be avoided in the first place and this is why we wholeheartedly support initiatives such as *bstreetsmart*.”

St John Ambulance WA General Manager Metropolitan Ambulance, James Sherriff, said the cost of road trauma to the community is enormous.

“Almost on a daily basis our paramedics see young lives shattered because of road accidents. Many factors contribute to motor vehicle accidents, but education of drivers, particularly younger drivers, is important as it saves lives.

“It is also important that all take on the responsibility of learning first aid which is a vital part of the chain of survival in ensuring the best possible outcome for the patient in road traffic accidents, you being able to assist in those critical moments is vital when being confronted with such incidents.”

An RAC survey of 700 17-19 year olds found 43 per cent read or send text messages while driving, and a further 20 per cent check social media behind the wheel.

This is the third year *bstreetsmart* has been held in Western Australia. For more information visit rac.com.au/bstreetsmart

The re-enactment begins at 10:30am Wednesday 9 April at Perth Arena. Media are invited to attend the re-enactment and interview the emergency services spokespeople directly after.

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