



Media Release

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Saving lives starts with attitude: RAC Survey

RAC is urging Wheatbelt residents to change their driving attitudes, with an alarming portion of local drivers admitting to speeding, drink driving and mobile phone use, according to the 2014 Community Attitudes Survey.

RAC General Manager Corporate Affairs, Will Golsby, said the Survey results explained why 65% of crashes in the Wheatbelt were caused by deliberate driver choices such as speed, drink driving and inattention.

“The Survey highlighted a significant disconnection between Wheatbelt drivers’ attitudes and their actual behaviour on the road,” said Mr Golsby.

“The Wheatbelt’s road fatality rate is 11 times the metropolitan rate, six times the state rate and twice nearby regions. It’s significantly higher than the rest of Western Australia.”

With over 1,300 respondents, the Survey compared the attitudes of Wheatbelt drivers against the rest of WA. It revealed Wheatbelt drivers rated themselves highly as good drivers, and yet they were most likely not to wear a seatbelt.

“One third of Wheatbelt road victims aren’t wearing a seatbelt and more than 70% of fatalities are single vehicle run-offs. That’s alarmingly high.”

More than half of the Wheatbelt respondents also admitted to speeding on country roads and one third admitted to using a mobile phone while driving in the past year.

Wheatbelt residents felt driving was the only option when heading out due to inaccessible public transport with 13% admitting to have driven over the legal Breath Alcohol Limit (BAL).

RAC has embarked on a five year Wheatbelt campaign to address these attitudes; the first stage comprising of the Elephant in the Wheatbelt. Made out of wrecked cars, the life-sized African elephant sculpture is touring the Wheatbelt to break the silence on road safety.

“It symbolises the elephant in the room. The Wheatbelt’s road fatality rate has a heavy presence but no one’s talking about it. Its aim is to generate discussion about the issue to change behaviour.

“It’s important to plan your journey home by arranging a lift or a place to stay the night. Think of the families, friends and the emergency and medical responders who are all directly affected. We all have a role to play in addressing the Wheatbelt’s road safety record and real change starts with the individual, and must be supported by the community as a whole.”

The Elephant will continue its tour in Jurien Bay, Toodyay, Bruce Rock, Grass Valley and Northam in the coming weeks. For more information visit elephantinthewheatbelt.com.au.

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rac.com.au/media