



Media Release

Thursday 15 October 2015

Road safety program gives young offenders second chance

Through Western Australian Police and the Department of Corrective Services, RAC's [Community Education Team](#) is delivering a crucial road safety program to young people aged 13 to 18 who have committed driving offences.

RAC Senior Manager Media and Government Relations Liz Carey said the program, which launched last year, delivers road safety classes in Joondalup, Mount Lawley, Belmont and Rockingham each Monday.

"We teach young offenders the importance of safe driving and the effects of alcohol, drugs and reckless behaviour on driving and being a responsible passenger," Ms Carey said.

"Last year, 184 people died in road crashes in Western Australia, making our State's fatality rate the worst in the country. Drivers aged 17 to 24 accounted for 22 per cent of all WA road fatalities despite only making up 12 per cent of the population.

"50 per cent of our most recent young driver survey respondents used their phone while driving, while a further 20 per cent checked social media behind the wheel. These results are worrying, and reinforce the need to educate, not just penalise, young drivers."

The program includes a presentation from the Paraplegic Benefit Fund (PBF) to address the consequences of sustaining a spinal cord or permanent injury from a road trauma event.

PBF presenter Rob Pike shares his own personal road trauma story with attendees to explain how different life is when living with a permanent disability. At the young age of 17, Rob lost both of his legs, as well as his three of his friends in a catastrophic car crash.

"Often young people come in with a negative attitude and trivialise their offence as not serious. When I talk about my life-changing experience, they usually change their tune pretty quickly," Mr Pike said.

Western Australian Police Senior Constable Taj Wrona said the class is part of an action plan to educate the young person about their offence and is supported by their families, victims and police. If a young person successfully completes this plan, no traffic or criminal conviction is recorded.

"Many young people go through an anti-social or difficult period in their teenage years and sometimes it can be a one-off incident. The program encourages the young person to change their offending behaviour and to speak up when placed in a dangerous situation, keeping themselves and their friends safe," Senior Constable Wrona said.

"Drug driving is a rising problem in WA so we ask the young drivers to try on the fatal vision goggles to get a feel for the loss of balance and vision that drugs and alcohol can cause. We ask them, "would you get in a car with someone like that?" to really get them thinking about the dangers," Ms Carey said.

"These teenagers are our next generation of drivers and we want to ensure they have a good understanding of road safety and the consequences of bad decisions."

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