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Majority of Qld students driven to distraction

Almost two thirds of young drivers admit to being distracted while driving, according to new survey by Queensland's peak motoring body.

RACQ spokesperson Lauren Ritchie said the Club surveyed year 12 students across the State as part of its award-winning Docudrama road safety program and found 68 percent admitted to having been distracted while behind the wheel.

"Distracted driving is the fastest growing problem we have on Queensland roads so it's very concerning to see this statistic remain as high for the second year in a row," Ms Ritchie said.

"More students in the regions admitted to being distracted than those who lived in metro areas, and it's more common among private school students than in state schools.

"The overwhelming majority of students surveyed told us they believed it was ok to use a mobile phone to play music, to make a loudspeaker call and as a GPS, all behaviours that are illegal for P1 licence holders.

"Mobile phone use while driving is one of the leading causes of distraction in the car, and we know it only takes a moment of being a distracted driver for a tragedy to unfold."

Ms Ritchie said distracted drivers were four times more likely to have a crash.

"Young drivers are consistently overrepresented in our road toll, so add mobile phone distraction to their inexperience, and it's a crash waiting to happen," she said.

"Distracted driving can be as dangerous as drink driving so it's really disappointing so many young drivers are putting themselves and others at risk.

"We're pleading with novice drivers, don't get into bad habits, put your phone on Do Not Disturb and put it out of sight, so you can focus on driving safely."

Media inquiries: RACQ spokesperson Lauren Ritchie 0427 137 022; Media Advisor Kate Leonard-Jones 0419 543 514.

RACQ is Queensland's largest club and peak independent motoring organisation. We were formed in 1905 to represent the interests of the State's first motorists and today campaign for safer drivers, vehicles and roads on behalf of more than 1.7 million members who own the Club. We offer those members a vast range of motoring, insurance, banking, entertainment and travel services and benefits, and each year respond to more than a million calls for roadside assistance.