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Qld students fearful in passenger seat

A survey by the State's peak motoring group has found almost three quarters of year 11 and 12 students felt their life was at risk while travelling in the passenger seat of a car.

RACQ surveyed high school students across Queensland as part of its award-winning *Docudrama* road safety program and found 74 percent of students had found themselves in a terrifying situation as the passenger in a vehicle.

RACQ Education Officer Dave Terry said students reported feeling unsafe with a range of drivers, including family members, friends of a similar age or strangers.

"The reasons for feeling unsafe were very broad - from the driver lacking skills to specific behaviours like speeding, being under the influence and making dangerous choices," Mr Terry said.

Another concerning finding of the *Docudrama* survey was the number of students who had admitted to getting in the car with a driver they believed was drunk.

"This was more common in regional Queensland, where 52 percent of students admitted to putting themselves in that terrifying situation, compared to 38 percent for year 12 students at metro schools," he said.

"We know alcohol affects judgement, vision, coordination and reflexes and significantly increases the risk of crashing. It's dangerous behaviour and it's disappointing that so many drivers are putting themselves and others at risk."

In 2021, 8,317 Queensland students participated in *Docudrama* across 76 schools. The education program empowers students with important skills to make better choices whenever they get in a vehicle – whether as a driver or passenger.

"Young drivers are consistently overrepresented in our road toll, so ahead of these school holidays we want to ensure they're making safe choices whenever they get into a vehicle," Mr Terry said.

"We're urging young Queenslanders not to let themselves get into dangerous situations and develop bad habits behind the wheel and we'll be teaching them the skills they need to ensure they keep themselves and their passengers safe."

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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.