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Survive your drive this holiday period: RACQ

RACQ has urged drivers in the Mackay and Townsville regions to take extra care as they hit the road for the start of school holidays, after it was revealed RACQ's Air Rescue Network had responded to a distressing number of motor vehicle crashes this year.

Club spokesperson Clare Hunter said while there were still a few weeks left in 2020, already RACQ CQ Rescue had attended 51 motor vehicle incidents.

"Christmas and New Year periods are such a high-risk time and we're concerned that we will see a spike in our already high road toll," Ms Hunter said.

"Sadly, we've already lost 257 people on Queensland roads, nearly 23 percent higher than the total lives lost for 2019.

"These are not just numbers – they're people who have died and it has a devastating ripple effect on their family, friends and community.

"We are urging everyone before you hit the road, make sure you're up to the task of driving and plan your trip carefully.

"Get enough rest and take a break every two hours, buckle up, put away distractions like phones, and don't speed or get behind the wheel if you've had a too many drinks or are affected by drugs."

RACQ CQ Rescue CEO Ian Rowan said the startling new figures showed an almost 50 percent increase in the number of patients airlifted to hospital by the region's rescue helicopter with injuries from car and bike crashes.

"Drivers are injuring people — pedestrians, cyclists, motorbike riders, their own passengers, and themselves — at a much higher rate this year compared to last," Mr Rowan said.

"Figures show RACQ CQ Rescue has airlifted people injured in motor vehicle accidents, including dirt bikes and quad bikes, on 51 occasions already this year, compared to just 34 for the entire of 2019 and 38 in 2018," Mr Rowan said.

"This is incredibly worrying with the holiday season approaching given total travel was down dramatically this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic."

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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.