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RACQ backs tougher stance on distracted drivers

The State's peak motoring body has welcomed increased fines for drivers nabbed using mobile phones, however insisted tougher police enforcement was vital if it was to change this deadly driver behaviour.

The Queensland Government today announced the penalty for a motorist caught using their phone behind the wheel would increase from \$391 to \$1000.

RACQ Head of Technical and Safety Policy Steve Spalding said distraction was one of the deadliest epidemics on our roads and the Club wanted camera technology implemented in Queensland.

"From this weekend New South Wales will begin using the camera detection of drivers using mobile phones at 45 different sites," Mr Spalding said.

"The higher fines announced today will only work if people think there's a good chance they'll get caught, so that means we need effective enforcement, such as more police on the roads and the trialling of camera technologies in Queensland.

"We always call for strong education and enforcement in the first instance, but the behaviour of too many motorists hasn't changed, so this harsher penalty is warranted.

"The changes also mean P-platers will lose their licence on the first offence, and open licence holders will lose it on the second offence."

Mr Spalding said educating drivers about the huge risks was also part of the solution.

"In July this year, we launched the 'Set your phone, then leave it alone' campaign to encourage motorists to change their behaviour," he said.

"We want people to switch their phones to Do Not Disturb every time they get in their car.

"When you're looking at your phone, you're not looking at where you're going or thinking about driving. You probably don't even have your hands on the steering wheel.

"It's simple, using your phone behind the wheel means you're putting yourself and others in danger and it's simply selfish."

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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 the 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.