

22 December 2020

## Don't let a flat steal your Christmas cheer

RACQ has urged drivers to check their cars before heading off on a Christmas road trip, after it was revealed its Roadside Assistance patrols attended nearly 17,000 calls for help last festive season.

Club spokesperson Lucinda Ross said the Christmas Eve to New Year's Day period was always a busy time on the roads with flat batteries and flat tyres the most common reasons for call outs.

"Heat can be a real killer of batteries and with more warm summer days ahead, there are a few simple things you can do to extend the life of your battery," Ms Ross said.

"Don't leave lights or any vehicle accessories on when the engine isn't running. If your car feels sluggish to start, it could be a sign you need to replace your battery.

"You should also check your tyres regularly – look for foreign objects in the rubber, make sure the treads are in good condition and the air pressure is correct.

"Remember those other basic maintenance tasks like checking your oil and water levels before you leave. Hopefully you've treated your car to a regular service throughout the year, otherwise, make that your New Year's resolution."

Ms Ross said if travellers did experience a breakdown, they should follow a few important steps.

"If you get stuck and breakdown, stay calm, find a safe place to pull over and pop on your hazard lights. Assess whether it is safer to stay in your car or get out," she said.

"If it's safe to do so, get out of your car on the passenger side to avoid traffic and get behind a guard rail or as far away from the road as possible. If you're staying in your car, keep your seatbelt buckled.

"No one wants a flat battery or a break down this Christmas, but if you do get caught out, our Roadside Assistance team is available to help, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - just give us a call on 13 1111 or use the RACQ Roadside Assistance app."

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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.