



Media statement

1 May 2018

Traumatic toll of youth

Tasmanians aged between 17 and 25 are 11 percent of the population but 30 percent of the serious casualties (fatalities and serious injuries) from road trauma. Road trauma is the second leading cause of death of young people.

That's why the Road Safety Advisory Council held the Young Driver Symposium today, Chair Garry Bailey said, to help raise awareness and to gain a greater understanding of this tragic problem.

"This week is National Road Safety Week, so it is fitting we're having such an important symposium this week. Road safety events are being held throughout the country this week.

"In Tasmania, the Road Safety Advisory Council is partnering with Police, the RACT and Southern Cross Television to raise awareness about road safety.

"Landmarks throughout the state will be lit in yellow, the RACT site at AGFEST will have a driving simulator and the winner of a competition to create a road safety television commercial will be announced in Friday."

Young driver expert Associate Professor Teresa Senserrick and road crash survivor Sam Cawthorn spoke at the symposium.

Associate Professor Senserrick is internationally renowned for her expertise on young and novice drivers, particularly regarding driver training, education and graduated licensing. Her work includes novices, new motorcyclists and disadvantaged youth and communities.

"Some key changes that occur in the brain during the teenage years are part of healthy development, but can nonetheless predispose young people to driving risks and so need to be managed," she said

Mr Cawthorn relived his own experiences when he fell asleep while driving and hit a semi-trailer at a combined speed of 206km/h in 2006. He described how easy it is to think that 'it won't happen to me', but "road safety is everybody's responsibility," he said.

Associate Professor Senserrick and Mr Cawthorn were part of a panel that discussed the challenges young drivers and road safety authorities' face in preventing young trauma on the roads.

Mr Bailey said the symposium was attended by police, medical associations, the RACT, driving instructors, local councils and young people.

“It’s an opportunity for us to benefit from Mr Cawthorn and Associate Professor Senserrick’s experience and expertise. We’ll be taking what we learn today and looking at how we can do more to reduce the terrible toll of death and injury among young people.”

Road Safety Week (additional information)

Tasmania Police will pay particular attention to one road behaviour a day:

Monday, 30 April: Restraints/seatbelts

Tuesday, 1 May: Driving tired

Wednesday, 2 May: Speeding

Thursday, 3 May: Inattention/distraction

Friday, 4 May: Alcohol

Other activities

AGFEST: a Monash University Accident Research Centre driving simulator will be at the RACT site. The simulator will provide users with a real driving experience.

Competition: Tasmanians aged between 16 and 19 were invited to make a 30-second road safety video that has the theme ‘towards zero’. The first prize is \$5000. Second prize is five RACT driving lessons and one year’s roadside assistance. Then winner will be announced on Friday.

Television commercials: one for each road behaviour for each day (see Police activity above).

Lighting: landmarks to be lit in yellow:

- Burnie Makers Centre
- Launceston Town Hall
- Launceston’s Ritchie Mill
- Hobart Town Hall