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Parents urged to help teens survive the Schoolies drive

As tens of thousands of Year 12 students count down the days to Schoolies, RACQ is urging parents to have a crucial conversation with their teenagers to keep them safe on the road.

The Club's Young Drivers Survey found distraction and fatigue are the most common safety issues for young drivers – and with the excitement of a week-long party with their friends, these are likely to become even bigger issues.

RACQ Education Officer Dave Webber said parents play a huge role in equipping their children with the strategies and skills they need to make responsible choices behind the wheel.

“Some students will be driving significant distances to get to Schoolies, and we want to make sure they remember this party of a lifetime for all the right reasons,” Mr Webber said.

“All we want is for our young drivers to make it there, and home, safely. The best option for parents would be to drive your kids to Schoolies yourself, so they can leave the car at home.

“If that's not possible, it's critical to have a conversation about road safety and whether driving is their only option. If they make the choice to drive, they need to consider how their choices outside of the car can affect their driving.”

Mr Webber said it is vital for parents to help their children plan ahead.

“For P-plate drivers, they need to choose what to do with their phones to avoid the temptation of using them while driving by either turning them off, setting them to Do Not Disturb, putting them on silent or giving them to a person they can trust while they drive.

“For parents, it's not a matter of if, but when your teens will find themselves in a dangerous situation, either as a passenger or driver,” he said.

“Equip your teens by discussing their options in advance and having a plan for what to do when something goes wrong. They need to consider how their choices from the day or night before could affect them the next day.

“Fatigue, distraction, and drug or alcohol use will significantly affect their abilities behind the wheel.”

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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.