

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER, 2020

## **RACV RECOGNISES 50-YEARS OF MANDATORY SEATBELTS IN VICTORIA**

Today marks 50-years since mandatory seatbelt legislation was introduced in state government, with RACV using this significant milestone as part of National Road Safety Week, which is being observed across the country until this Sunday.

The Bill was introduced into the Victorian Parliament on this day in 1970 and passed right before Christmas in 1970, with the state being the first jurisdiction in the world to enforce mandatory seatbelt legislation.

It also serves as a timely reminder for motorists to wear their seatbelt, as in 2020 alone approximately one in ten deaths on Victoria's roads involved a seatbelt not worn.

Wearing a seatbelt reduces the risk of injury and death by up to 50 per cent, with RACV using this anniversary to demonstrate that we still have more work to do in road safety education.

RACV Senior Road Safety Advisor Elvira Lazar said most Victorians are doing the right thing, but unfortunately there are still too many people dying on the roads because they have failed to wear a seatbelt.

"After 50 years of Victoria's world-first law making seatbelts mandatory, the message to wear your seatbelt still needs to be delivered to many Victorians. Wearing a seatbelt is the easiest thing drivers and passengers can do to be safe on our roads. It is so simple – by putting on your seatbelt, the risk of dying is reduced by up to half."

For collisions involving a non-seatbelt wearer, Ms Lazar explained it is common for impairment to be involved, with half of those killed in crashes affected by drugs or alcohol.

With National Road Safety Week falling on the same week as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bill introduced in the Victorian parliament, it serves as an important reminder to all Victorians to take extra care on the roads.

"Encouraging safer driver behaviour is a key focus at RACV. It's not just a failure to wear a seatbelt but also fatigue, distraction, speed and impairment from alcohol or drugs that can be involved in a collision. That's why we are urging all drivers to keep safety front of mind before getting in your car," Ms Lazar said.

With a build-up of traffic expected on the roads and increased activity after the easing of COVID-19 travel restrictions, RACV is urging all Victorians to always wear their seatbelt and be extra cautious when driving.

RACV research into the failure to wear a seatbelt in Victoria also shows:

- 26 car occupants killed each year in the last five years weren't wearing a seatbelt.
- 56% were in cars that were more than 10 years old
- 89 per cent of them were male.
- 67 per cent were on regional roads.
- 69 per cent happened in speed zones 80km/h and above.

**##ENDS##**

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## **About RACV**

*Founded in 1903, RACV exists to improve the lives of Victorians by delivering valued benefits to members and their communities. RACV addresses the needs of Victorians by informing, advising and representing them through products and services spanning motoring, mobility, leisure, travel, insurance and the home. RACV seeks to help shape a smarter, safer and more connected future for Victoria.*