

18 December 2024

“Drive safely deer” – rein in your speed and be ‘present’ if driving this Christmas

Planning on driving interstate via country roads for Christmas, New Year or the summer holidays?

Drive extra safely – and stay focussed on your driving – to ensure your destination is not the hospital emergency department, or even worse, the morgue.

That’s the message from the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), which is urging road users to take extra precautions, and not take any risks, when driving on country roads over the coming weeks.



“While Santa and his reindeers don’t have to contend with oncoming traffic when they are hurtling through the night sky, unfortunately the rest of us need to deal with holiday traffic that is far busier than usual, with drivers who are much more distracted and impatient” **RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski, said.**

“Clearly, this is a recipe for tragedy – and as we see every year, far too many people are seriously injured or killed on the roads as a result.

“Fortunately, there are things you can do to minimise the chances of being involved in a serious accident.

“First, modify your own driving to ensure you are not speeding, you are staying more focused, and you are showing patience behind the steering wheel.

“Everyone has seen that person who overtakes three cars in a row on a blind corner, only to have pulled up a few minutes down the road for a coffee or to refuel.

“There really is no point in overtaking if the traffic is rolling along at a decent speed, even when it’s under 100 kilometres per hour – the difference in arrival time at your destination will be negligible. What’s the point in risking everyone’s lives to save such a small amount of time?

“Patience is a virtue...particularly on the roads!

“It’s also critical that you pull off the road for a rest if you are tired, and don’t allow yourself to be distracted by your mobile phone, selecting a radio station on the car audio system, or telling the kids to stop fighting in the back. As the driver, you have to stay fully focussed on driving – you have one job!

“Great drivers are also defensive drivers – be ready for anything on the roads, including oncoming cars crossing over the centreline or attempting to overtake too early, wildlife, and traffic entering your lane at country intersections (even when they don’t have the right of way).

“Expect the worst when you are on the roads this coming holiday season, and drive defensively for these situations, as this can make a huge difference in the survival of you, your family and others.”

Staying safe on country roads comes down to some very simple strategies:

- plan your journey and give yourself plenty of time to reach your destination
- drive to the speed limit and conditions, and watch for wildlife
- don't drink and drive
- don't tailgate – leave yourself enough time to stop safely if the car in front of you brakes in a hurry
- pull safely off the road and have a rest if you're tired
- don't get distracted – stay focussed
- don't make risky decisions that are driven by impatience or intolerance of slower drivers
- if you are a slower driver, or in a slower vehicle, consider pulling safely off country roads at rest areas or parking bays to enable vehicles behind you to pass

Find more information about avoiding accidents here:

www.mynrma.com.au/cars-and-driving/driver-training-and-licences/resources/how-to-avoid-the-5-most-common-crashes

Photo of Dr RT Lewandowski

[Please click here](#)

Available for interview:

RDAAs President, Dr RT Lewandowski
State specific contacts are also available

Media contact:

Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890