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ARRIVE SAFELY – THE BEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE FAMILY AND FRIENDS THIS CHRISTMAS

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, is asking all Australians to stay safe when driving this holiday season.

“Whether you are travelling a long distance to visit friends and family, or travelling home from the Christmas party, keep yourself safe by planning your journey in advance,” Dr Bartone said.

“Tragically, every Christmas and New Year we see the consequences of drivers who do not heed the warnings about speeding, driver fatigue, driver distractions, and reckless driving.

“Drivers must be extra cautious when travelling in holiday periods because of increased traffic volumes, congestion, tiredness, and people driving in unfamiliar environments.

“Remember to share the road with others, be courteous, and schedule frequent breaks.

“Inexperienced drivers, in particular, must pay attention to road rules and ensure they do not attempt long road trips beyond their capabilities.

“The best gift you can give this Christmas is to arrive safely at your destination.”

The AMA thanks in advance the police, ambulance and emergency department personnel who deal daily with road trauma caused by drivers who disobey the road rules.

As the holiday season approaches, share responsibility and start planning now for a safe trip.

The AMA recommends motorists follow these helpful tips:

- fatigue and speeding are the top two contributors to road accidents, so if you are driving for a holiday trip or to visit during Christmas, plan ahead;
- recognise the dangers of driver fatigue by having a good night’s sleep and be rested before a long drive;
- when driving long distances, stop and rest;
- avoid driving at night when your body will naturally want to sleep;
- arrange to share the driving;
- plan regular breaks from driving (use rest areas) every two hours;
- stretch and walk about when at a rest stop or on breaks;
- always avoid driver distractions, and never use electronic devices while driving;
- find out if any medicine you are taking may affect your driving; and
- driving with children in the car can be stressful, so schedule regular breaks and do not use DVDs or music that may distract the driver.

Background:

- During the 12 months ending October 2019, there were 1,209 deaths on Australian roads. This was an increase of 2.5 per cent from the 12-month period ending October 2018.

- There was a total of 100 road deaths during the month of December 2018.
 - There was a total of 119 road deaths during the month of January 2019.
 - According to a study commissioned by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) in 2017, road accidents are costing the Australian economy \$29.7 billion a year through a range of measures, including deaths, hospital care, paramedic attendance, disability care, vehicle damage, travel delays, workplace disruption, and legal and correctional services costs.
 - The cost to families, friends and communities is immeasurable.
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