

Thursday 12 March 2015

OMG! Don't get *DISTRACTED*

Texting, talking and listening to music on a mobile device is a vital element in the lives of most young people, but when coupled with walking and crossing the road, alarm bells ring.

Distracted? is a pedestrian safety awareness campaign that will run across ten northern Sydney councils aimed at persuading people to put their heads up and their mobiles down while walking.

35 pedestrian casualties were reported in the City of Ryde in 2013 according to figures from the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), with almost half aged under 25 years. Many of these incidences could have been avoided if people were more alert when crossing the road.

Young people in particular are vulnerable when texting or listening to music while crossing the road. Reminding them to STOP and be aware of all the potential dangers before stepping off the kerb would reduce at least some collisions involving pedestrians.

Wearing headphones limits hearing the sounds around you and reduces concentration, so pedestrians become more vulnerable when stepping out from the kerb if their head space is occupied with their music and mobile phones.

Pedestrian safety tips:

- Head up phone down
- Don't walk and text
- Be especially aware in heavily trafficked areas
- If you do need to text, move to one side, stop, then text
- Always use pedestrian crossings, if available
- Never assume an approaching driver can see you or will stop
- At intersections, check for turning vehicles before you leave the kerb.

Distracted? is a joint initiative of ten Northern Sydney Councils including Ryde, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Warringah, Manly, Hornsby and Willoughby in conjunction with the RMS and will include print advertising, face-to-face promotions and various types of outdoor advertising designed to engage young pedestrians.