

MEDIA RELEASE

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Making our roads a safer place

Over 150 senior high school students will be attending a potentially lifesaving road safety education program to be conducted next week. The RYDA road safety education program is a community based initiative that is coordinated through local Rotary Clubs to help make our roads a safer place.

The RYDA Program was developed in response to the tragic loss of young people in road crashes; young people aged 17-25 represent less than 15% of the population yet account for around one quarter of deaths and injuries on our roads. RYDA is presented by road safety professionals including police and driving instructors and to date over 250,000 high school students across Australia have had the opportunity to attend this potentially lifesaving program.

RYDA is being coordinated by members of local Rotary Clubs with generous support from corporate sponsors including BOC, Toyota Australia, Kmart Tyre & Auto Service and Suncorp Insurance. Local Rotary Club representative said "RYDA delivers practical road safety information targeting the attitude and awareness of young drivers and passengers". He added that "Peer pressure from passengers has a major effect on the way young people behave behind the wheel and by addressing students as both drivers and passengers; the program aims to change the environment in the car rather than focusing solely on the driver". At RYDA, students get to meet and speak with a person who has experienced a devastating road crash; to see the distance it takes to stop a vehicle travelling at different speeds and to realise that an extra 10 KPH can in some circumstances have tragic consequences.

RYDA Program Director Greg Rappo said that "RYDA is an evidence based educational program that has been developed in consultation with relevant Government Departments and is designed to complement and supplement the school curriculum and government road safety messages". He added that "The RYDA Program includes six sessions that are designed to be interactive and cover a broad range of topics including a practical demonstration of stopping distances, hazard perception, distractions, alcohol and fatigue. All vital information to know before young people get behind the wheel or travel with their mates in a car"

"Young people continue to be over represented in deaths and injuries on our roads – it is a national tragedy that one young person aged 17-25 dies nearly every single day of the year on Australian roads. Many more young people are left with serious life changing road trauma injuries. Our community must do more to ensure that P Plate drivers are better prepared before they get behind the wheel of a car and through the delivery of the well researched, evidence-based RYDA Program, we are providing practical life saving information for young people at the beginning of their driving lives", Mr Rappo said.

For further information please call the National Office of Road Safety Education Limited on 1300 127 642 or visit www.rse.org.au

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