

# Media Release

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## Genevieve's story is making our roads a safer place

The tragic impact on family and friends of a young person killed in a road crash was highlighted to over 150 local high school students who recently attended the RYDA road safety education program. Experiencing the story of 18 year old Genevieve being killed in a road crash may have caused a few tears but the message was clear that our novice drivers and their passengers need to take greater responsibility before they face the challenges of driving solo or being the passenger of a novice driver.

The RYDA road safety education program is provided by the not-for-profit organisation Road Safety Education Limited and operates under the guidance of an expert advisory council to ensure that students receive the best possible "learning for life messages". Established for over ten years and conducted at 90 venues around Australia and in New Zealand, the RYDA Program has grown to be the largest and most successful youth road safety education program in Australia.

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 road users yet account for over 20% of deaths and injuries on our roads. RYDA is presented by road safety professionals including police and driving instructors and to date over 400,000 high school students across Australia and New Zealand have had the opportunity to attend this award winning road safety education program.

RYDA is coordinated through local high schools and the student attendance cost is kept at an affordable level through volunteer assistance provided by local Rotary Clubs and generous support from corporate sponsors including BOC and Toyota Australia. The local Rotary Club President 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".

RYDA also gives the students a unique opportunity to experience a practical "Speed & Stopping" demonstration, to appreciate the distance it takes to stop a vehicle travelling at different speeds and to realise that an extra 10 Km/hour can have tragic consequences. Greg Rappo from Road Safety Education Limited said that "RYDA is designed to empower students in a supportive environment and give students the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions to stay safe on the road". RYDA is also very supportive of the government graduated licensing scheme with a focus on the key "big five" road safety issues of speeding, drugs & alcohol, fatigue, seatbelts and distractions as well as the importance of driving as a social responsibility.

Mr Rappo added that "It is a national tragedy that 300 young people die on our roads each year with many more left with serious life changing road trauma injuries. Our community must do more to ensure that our P Plate drivers and their passengers are better prepared before they get behind the wheel of a car. We owe it to the following generation to provide them with practical life-saving information at the beginning of their driving lives".

For further information please call the National Office of Road Safety Education Limited on 1300 127 642 or visit [www.rse.org.au](http://www.rse.org.au)  
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