

RYDA PRESS RELEASE – BLACKTOWN

Putting the brakes on Blacktown's P plate casualties.

There is surely no more heartbreaking grief than that of burying your child; never seeing their smile again, never hearing their laughter, never feeling their embrace, never enjoying the milestones as they become adults and parents themselves.

We hope and pray that it will never happen to our families - but for the parents of too many young drivers and their passengers, it does. NSW government figures show that between 2008 and 2012 alone, 523 17 to 20 year old drivers holding P plates in the Blacktown Local Government Area died or were casualties in car crashes. 523 young lives destroyed in a moment. 523 families devastated forever.

According to The George Institute for Global Health Australia, young people aged 17 to 25 years of age represent 15 per cent of our population, but account for approximately 25 per cent of the deaths and injuries on our roads. Too often simply because they got their P plate; their licence to freedom and tragically, for too many, their licence to die.

While communities across Australia, including ours, mourn the mounting toll of tragic teen road deaths, many such deaths could be averted if our high school students are given access to a one-day road safety education program, costing as little as \$25 per student, called RYDA.

Created by Road Safety Education Limited (RSE), a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to reducing youth road trauma, the RYDA program is an award-winning, highly-researched and evidence-based program which provides essential life-saving education for all young people; whether they are driving now, planning to drive in the future or will be a passenger travelling with a young P plate driver.

Over 300,000 high school students across Australia and New Zealand have "graduated" from RYDA, with over 50,000 joining their ranks each year, however RSE needs community support to have the program delivered to more schools so they can further reduce the incidence of youth road trauma.

"Youth road death statistics are tragically high but we know, from our work, that effective road safety education for high school students can make an impact in reducing those statistics," RSE's CEO and Managing Director, Terry Birss, said.

"RSE offers an industry-leading youth road safety education program through RYDA, which we have made as affordable and accessible as possible so students can participate, but many schools and parents aren't aware of what we do.

"We are urging parents, teachers and schools to ensure that every high school student attends this life-saving road safety education program," Mr Birss explained. "Parents should contact their school to ask for the RYDA Program for students, while parents and teachers can go to our website to register their school so we can contact them."

"We also urge members of the public to go to our website and donate to support RYDA, because their donation may not only save a young driver – it may save a member of their family."

FACTS BOX:

SAVING YOUNG DRIVERS

WHAT: The RYDA Road Safety Education Program is available to all Australian high schools

COST: As little as \$25 per student

HOW: Visit www.rse.org.au and click on "Contact Us"

SUPPORT: Visit www.rse.org.au and click on "How you can help"

DETAILS: www.rse.org.au or phone 1300 127 642