

South Canterbury high school students learn safer driving

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Mountainview High School year 12 students get taught about stopping distances from driving instructor James Morrison at the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness course held at Timaru International Motor Raceway.

South Canterbury high school students have been given a crash course in avoiding crashes.

Around 300 year 12 students from Timaru Boys' High School, Mountainview High School, Opihi College and Waimate High School have been attending the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness (RYDA) course held at Timaru International Motor Raceway over the last three days.

Students spent a day at the course rotating between six interactive sessions, learning about stopping distances, hazards, distractions and risks, the affect alcohol and drugs have on driving, road choices, and vehicle safety.

They were also given a presentation by a crash survivor with a brain or spinal injury as a result of a vehicle crash.

Day manager Russell Finlay, from the Rotary Club of Timaru, said the students sat in stunned silence when the crash survivor was talking. He said it really shoots home the message of how bad crashes can be.

During a session about stopping distances, students are given a demonstration by a police car, showing the distance it takes to stop a vehicle travelling at different speeds, highlighting the impact an extra 10km/h can have.

Aotearoa Driving Academy instructor James Morrison, based in Christchurch, said it was getting the students to think about the reality of how long it takes a car to actually stop. A dummy was also placed on the track to add more impact to the demonstration

Students got the chance to get in the car during the exercise. "They're always quite shocked when they see and feel it," Morrison said.

The flagship RYDA course is delivered to approximately 50,000 15-17-year-old high school students across Australia and New Zealand each year. This was the third year it had been run in South Canterbury.

- The Timaru Herald

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