

So, who's the real crash dummy?

Tomorrow and next Friday won't be easy again for the crash dummy of Victor Harbor. For the past three years he's stood there on the road as part of a driving demonstration on how far it takes to stop a car at various speeds, and each time the paper mache inside a wet suit has been splattered.

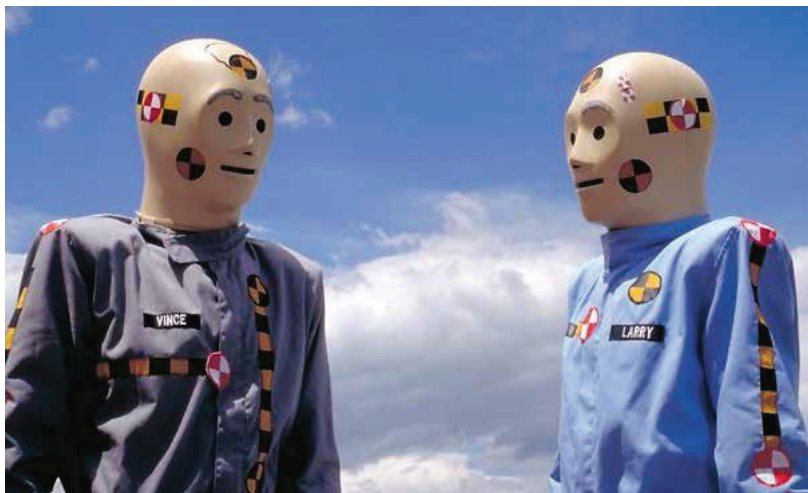
Rather chilling actually, as will be another four presentations for 280 Year 10 students from Victor Harbor High, Mount Compass and Yankalilla area schools, Investigator College both campuses, and those from the brilliant Flexible Learning Options program.

It is part of a national campaign called RYDA – Rotary Youth Driver Awareness – and locally presented by the Rotary clubs of Encounter Bay, Goolwa, Victor Harbor and Yankalilla which share the costs of almost \$7000. For this, the kids get a feed and a lesson of a lifetime.

And those of us who have seen a few winding roads in our time, we say: "great... today's young drivers need something like this". They do, but when Shane Wade, who with other local driving instructors Sue Healey and Ray Barlow plays a big part in this course, explains how us older drivers are repeat offenders of slowing down but never stopping at the Torrens St and Crozier Rd intersection like we should, it is a reminder that we all could do with a road safety lecture.

Bob McFarland, a member of Encounter Bay Rotary and co-ordinator of the local program, said the theme of the program was *Your Life. Your choice.*

"We are not going to teach the students how to drive; we just want them to think about driving," Bob said. "You can teach them the basics of driving, and what we are trying to



appreciate the importance of this scheme and learning to drive well. Driving is a skill... it needs to be developed and not taken for granted."

Bob, 74, said the five presentations were each vital learning tools before taking on our roads, and while he has an impeccable record as a safe driver over the years he said each RYDA program made him think more about road awareness and safety.

The emotion has ran deep too when a now-retired police officer talks of the

time he took his son to play football and late that night had to knock on a door to say the full forward had been killed in a car accident. Bob also feels for a local person who years ago was on the way home from a game when the driver leaned across to change the radio station and our man woke up six months later.

"He can only talk in a slow manner, and says things like, 'I will never have a family, I can't work, I will never have a wife', and so on," Bob said. "All of a sudden the kids have grief and despair on their faces. And the kids think about another presentation on how many people are also affected when someone has an accident."

We could fill this magazine with examples or lectures for young and older drivers, but as Bob and Shane stress, it's all about attitude. *The My Life. My choice* options are really for young and old. The good news is that our Rotary clubs work hard in a widespread quest to reduce the number of times our police need to knock on doors on a Saturday night. This alone should make you want to buy a Rotary raffle ticket.

do is send them out with the right attitude. "You cannot quantify or qualify the impact of the program. All you can do is hope that we have got messages across to these kids. The satisfaction we get is that we feel we have equipped them better to drive well." Shane said today's youth needed driving instruction more than ever, not because they were more irresponsible than perhaps some of us were at their age, but due to the condition of roads compared with years ago. "Everything has changed," Shane said. "About 30 years ago there were only a third of the cars on the road, 25 per cent fewer road rules, street signs and all the hazards that go with them, and probably 75% older people on the road. It is harder now; there are so many more obstacles."

Shane said the overwhelming thing new drivers need to understand is the reaction time and stopping distance – how long it takes to see a hazard, to move your foot across the brake, break, slow down and bring the car to a stop... how long you actually travel at certain speeds for that to take place. "It surprises the kids," Shane added. "It gives them a good understanding how they need to be alert at all times.

"I enjoy working with youth, and I can

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