

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Road Safety Education has cause for a double celebration**

[ROAD Safety Education Limited](#) (RSE) – the leading road safety educator in Australia and NZ – will have two good reasons to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its award-winning program, [RYDA](#), in the Illawarra on 21 October 2015.

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RYDA will officially welcome its 15,000th high school student, as part of the one day program being run for all local schools at the Croome Road Sporting Complex, Albion Park, from 13 October to 5 November 2015. The really good news though comes with the release of the [national road trauma statistics](#) – and there is much to be celebrated!

The statistics reveal the number of young people aged 17-25 years killed in road crashes has decreased over the past decade by an amazing 47%, significantly more than the overall road toll that has fallen by around 29% over the same period. This means that young people are no longer the highest risk group, with road users aged over 65 now accounting for 21% of all road deaths.

CEO of RSE, Terry Birss, has said “the reduction in youth road trauma is due to many factors, but we know that [best practice](#), evidence-based education programs such as RYDA has a significant role to play and is helping to save the lives of our young drivers and their passengers.”

“This outcome is certainly very positive, but there's still much more work to be done.” More than 1300 young people aged 17-24 years were killed on Australian roads over the past five years. “This is a national tragedy that needs urgent community attention,” said Birss.

RSE has seen over 400,000 students attend its flagship program since it began in 2001, with 50,000 students now attending it annually across 90 venues.

It's a significant achievement for a small, not-for-profit organisation that relies heavily on voluntary support and donations from local [sponsors](#) and the community. It is this local community involvement and support that can be attributed to RYDA's ongoing success.

The RYDA program is a community-based initiative coordinated through local Rotary clubs and high schools and facilitated by local police and driving instructors. It provides young students with lifesaving skills and knowledge in a supportive environment to empower them to change their attitudes and behaviour. They are then able to make informed decisions on the road to stay safe, with the ultimate goal of reducing youth road trauma.

Guided by an expert [Advisory Council](#), RYDA ensures that students receive the best possible ‘learning for life’ messages and addresses students as both drivers and passengers acknowledging that both have the potential to change the environment in the car.

Local Rotary club member, David Hooper, said “peer pressure from passengers has a major effect on the way young people behave behind the wheel.”

Evidence suggests that young people are most at risk of being involved in a serious crash in the first six months after transitioning from being a supervised learner to an independent provisional driver.

Greg Rappo, National Program Director at RSE, says “we must do more to ensure our young drivers are better prepared at the beginning of their driving lives. We, as a community, owe it to them,” he added.

**END**

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