

## Road Safety Education Limited Pre-Budget Submission

28/01/2022

# Driving Youth Road Safety Improvements

Accelerating youth road safety education to meet 'Vision Zero' through a best-practice, evidence-based, whole school approach.

Founding Partner



**TOYOTA**



**BORAL**

Community Partner



## Key Recommendations for Government

### RSE recommends the Australian Government:

- ✓ Increases its current funding commitments to the *Road Safety Awareness & Enablers* grant program from \$1m per annum to \$2m per annum (F23) increasing to \$4m per annum by F26 with a 25 per cent specific allocation to youth road safety education.
- ✓ That any new education-focused grant funding is fixed to best-practice methodologies and pedagogy as a condition of funding.
- ✓ Introduces youth education metrics as a reporting initiative (as part of the National Data Hub and delivery of the National Road Safety Strategy and National Action Plan).
- ✓ Aligns best-practice road education programs with the Keys2Drive program
- ✓ Enhances and invests in the Office of Road Safety so it continues to lead a national road safety approach – including to youth road safety education.

## Introduction

We applaud the Commonwealth Government's leadership in establishing the Office of Road Safety and in developing the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30, released prior to Christmas.

'Vision Zero' by 2050 is a long-held road safety goal for the nation, and we note the ambitious objectives contained in the 2021-2030 Strategy – to both halve the number of fatalities on our roads and reduce serious injuries by 30 per cent over the next decade.

Within this framework, and to help meet these targets, there is an opportunity for the Commonwealth Government to further support a much broader education of young road users.

Young drivers and their passengers continue to be over-represented in road safety statistics, and we must address this with a greater level of urgency to meet the objectives of the National Road Safety Strategy (and pending National Action Plan).

This education must be personalised, targeted and age relevant. It must also take a whole school approach, ensuring messaging is carried throughout the community to create a strong road safety culture.

Road Safety Education Limited (RSE), through its RYDA program has demonstrated its capacity to develop and share this broader responsibility – by developing skills and a sense of mutual citizenship in young road users (drivers and passengers) and through proven, close working relationships with all levels of government.

RSE recommends the Australian Government makes a tangible funding commitment and support for accessible, consistently delivered, best-practice education delivered at the critical age range of 15-17 years old – and that this program delivery is broadened and accelerated at a national level over the next 10 years corresponding with the National Road Safety Strategy.

The estimated economic cost of a life on our roads is \$2.4m – but the estimated cost of doing nothing is untold to the families and loved ones affected.

## About Road Safety Education (RSE) and RYDA

Road Safety Education Limited (RSE) is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission of providing world-class road safety education to youth and a vision of saving lives. RSE is the provider of RYDA, an evidence-led, best practice, whole school approach which has been delivered in Australia for over 20 years.

RSE addresses the issue of providing education essential to supporting on-road driving practice and mechanical skills; education that speaks with teens in their peer groups, helps them devise strategies to mitigate the challenges they face and develops critical cognitive thinking as both drivers and passengers to help with decision-making.

RYDA is a whole-school approach road safety education program for senior secondary school students. It is delivered under the guidance of the RSE Advisory Council – consisting of globally recognised road safety researchers, educators and psychologists and is evaluated and updated for effectiveness, quality and efficacy regularly. Through this expert group a further update to the RYDA program is being delivered in 2022, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to industry leadership.

Approximately 45,000 students from over 650 schools across Australia and New Zealand typically attend RYDA each year. (This level of attendance was impacted by Covid 19 in 2020 and 2021 – see below). In Australia, around 45 per cent of participants are from regional schools. To date, two thirds of a million students have participated in the RYDA program, making it the largest youth focussed road safety education program in Australia.

- 94 per cent of students said they are likely or very likely to apply the things they learned at RYDA as a passenger or driver in the future.
- 96 per cent of classroom teachers believe RYDA should be compulsory for senior high school students.
- 85 per cent of teachers say RYDA links with other related programs, initiatives and policies in their school.

## Executive Summary

Young people continue to die or get seriously harmed at unacceptable levels on our nation's roads. Our most vulnerable communities continue to be over-represented in these statistics. Getting in a car as a young driver, or passenger of a young driver, is among the most dangerous things a person will ever do in their lifetime.

### The Issue

- Between 2016 and 2020, 863 17–25-year-olds lost their lives on our nation's roads.
- Young Australians continue to be over-represented in road trauma statistics. 17–25-year-olds make up 23 per cent of all driver and passenger fatalities, yet are only 11 per cent of the population.
- It is even more of a concern for indigenous young Australians. The road injury rate for young indigenous Australians is twice the national average compared to non-indigenous youth.
- At an estimated economic cost of death of \$2.4 million – youth road fatalities have cost more than \$2 billion over the last four years alone.
- The cost and emotional harm to families, friends and loved ones is incalculable.
- Dramatic change is needed if Australia is to meet its ambitious 2030 National Road Safety Strategy targets and Vision Zero by 2050.
- Covid-19 has dramatically affected in-person learning – with an estimated 40 per cent reduction in young people accessing best-practice youth driver education in States hardest hit by the pandemic.

### The Opportunity

- Best-practice, evidence-based, youth road safety education is well-understood, agreed and practiced in Australia with little to no Federal Government support.
- The right educational approaches are proven to reduce crash risk, harm and improve community resilience and safety awareness: The 13-year DRIVE study (2003-2016) showed participants were 24 per cent less likely to have had any crash, and 42 per cent less likely to crash in darkness than non-participants.

### The Solution

- The Federal Government has an opportunity to embrace and drive youth road safety education outcomes by expanding the current *Road Safety Awareness & Enablers* grant program from \$1m to \$4m per annum and allocating at least 25 per cent of this funding to best-practice youth education initiatives.
- An increase in funding in line with the best practice requirements, could enable an immediate expansion of education to be delivered in 2023 and beyond. Depending on the quantum of funding and grant program process, approximately 40,000 additional students could receive the training ramped up over a four year-period.
- Integration of youth road safety education measures into the National Road Safety Strategy National Action Plan.
- Enhancing and investing in the Office of Road Safety to drive improved national road safety initiatives, policy and alignment including a national approach and integrated pathway to youth driver education.

## The Issue

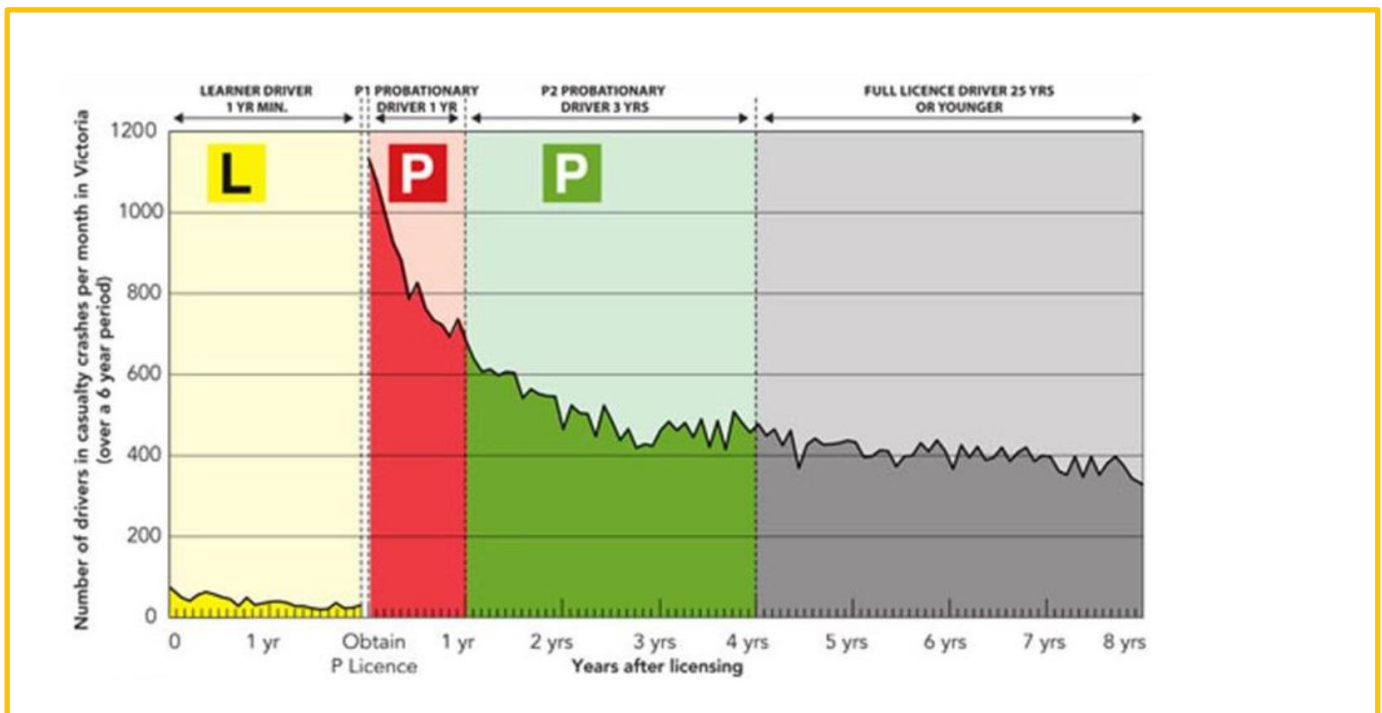
### Young People Continue to be Killed Disproportionately

- Road trauma is the second most prevalent cause of death for young Australians. Eleven per cent of all deaths of young adults is caused by road trauma, much higher than any other age group.
- People aged 17-25 make up 23 per cent of all driver and passenger fatalities.
- Between 2016 and 2020, 863 17–25-year-olds lost their lives on our roads, with many times that number receiving life changing injuries.
- The road injury rate for indigenous youth is twice the national average for non-indigenous youth.

Youth road trauma is both horrific and unacceptable. Lives are lost, futures are ruined, and families are put through never-ending distress.

Students in Year 10-12 are approaching the most dangerous stage of their driving lives. The well-known graph below (VicRoads 2012) shows the spike in casualty (serious) crashes following the supervised learner stage.

Specifically, it shows crash frequency increases by more than a factor of thirty in the brief time a learner moves to solo (unsupervised) driving.



**Inequity and Harm Increases in the Communities that can least afford it**

There is a strong correlation between regions that experience high rates of road trauma per capita and socioeconomic disadvantage, meaning that those areas where the need for road safety education is critical are also those where the capacity for user-payment for that education is lowest and cost of delivery often higher.

As such, our poorest and most at-risk communities have limited access to the right education but remain exposed to the highest levels of risk on our roads.

**Regional and Remote Australia have the greatest incidences of road fatalities:**

[Analysis of 2020 BITRE car accident statistics by insurer Budget Direct](#) demonstrates regional Australia represent the highest risk locations by road fatality numbers.

Rank	SA4 Name	Number of road fatalities (2020)
1 <sup>st</sup>	Wide Bay (Qld)	45
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Latrobe – Gippsland (Vic)	28
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Capital Region (NSW)	24
4 <sup>th</sup>	South Australia – SE (SA)	23
5 <sup>th</sup>	Gold Coast (Qld)	22
5 <sup>th</sup>	Townsville (Qld)	22
6 <sup>th</sup>	Central West (NSW)	21
6 <sup>th</sup>	Logan – Beaudesert (Qld)	21
6 <sup>th</sup>	Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday (Qld)	21
6 <sup>th</sup>	Northern Territory – Outback (NT)	21
6 <sup>th</sup>	Riverina (NSW)	21

## Road Trauma Creates Inter-Generational Harm and Cost

The AAA estimates the annual economic cost of road trauma in the order of \$30 billion.

RSE conducted its own social impact analysis in 2016 which recognised the cost of crashes includes a long list of direct and indirect outcomes including loss of life and life quality, loss of output due to temporary incapacitation, medical costs, legal costs and property damage costs.

- The estimated economic cost of a death is \$2.4 million, and for life threatening injuries is between \$1.8 million and \$3.8 million.
- Losses for a hospitalised injury approximately \$214,000 per injury (including disability-related costs). Losses for non-hospitalised injury are approximately \$2,100 per injury.
- Serious crashes causing profound impairment result in a loss of \$3.82 million and severe impairment \$1.78 million per person.

On the above calculations young driver's dying on our roads has an economic cost of more than \$500 million per annum, or close to \$2.1 billion over the last four years (863 deaths for 17-25 year-olds, 2016-2020).

RSE notes that in this context, the current Federal Funding for Youth Road Safety Education is disproportionately low, with the largest quantum committed to the *Keys2Drive* program, which focuses on drivers and their supervising driver, while very few initiatives focused on evidence-based education for young people – drivers and passengers providing them with the tools to reduce risk-taking behaviour.

## Covid-19 has exacerbated the Youth Road Safety Risk

While students have been incredibly resilient throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the effects on learning have been well documented.

Research by [Price Waterhouse Coopers](#), [the Grattan Institute](#) and [Save the Children](#) all show that Covid-19 has impaired learning outcomes for students, but even more concerningly, disadvantaged students will have slipped further.

According to the Grattan research, students tend to learn less when their schooling is done remotely rather than in the classroom. The longer they are away from regular classes, the worse the damage can be. The research notes Australian teachers believe students learnt at only about 50-to-75 per cent of their usual pace during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Disadvantaged students experience even greater impacts.

RSE's concern is that we have also lost two years of learning and associated education programs as it relates to youth road safety. Specifically, we estimate a potential loss of vital road safety education delivery of approximately 40 per cent overall, and 60 per cent in the States hit hardest by lockdowns.

In the period 2015 to 2019, an average of 40,000 students [39,923] participated in RYDA in Australia each year.

In 2020 participation fell to just 18,230, rising to 28,640 in 2021. So, the average participation rate in 2020 and 2021 is 41.3 per cent below the previous 5 years, with the two years seeing 32,977 less students than would have been predicted based on the previous 5 years' attendance. With an average of 120 students per workshop, this equates to 275 lost workshops over the past 2 years.

This impresses the need to both recover this lost education and accelerate learning opportunities – particularly for our most disadvantaged.

## The Opportunity

### Best Practice Saves Young Lives

The 13-year DRIVE study (2003-2016), which followed a NSW Health Program similar to RYDA, represents one of the strongest pieces of Australian research available, and demonstrates best-practice education methods work in reducing crash risk and severity – and the skills learned are embedded over time.

The Study showed the students who took part in a resilience program in Year 11 were much less likely to have a crash in their early years behind the wheel.

Participants were 24 per cent less likely to have had any crash and 42 per cent less likely to crash in darkness than non-participants

There is an opportunity for the Australian Government to dramatically improve road safety outcomes for young Australians – particularly in areas of greatest risk and disadvantage.

Road safety research demonstrates evidence-based educational interventions:

- ✓ reduce crash risk and severity.
- ✓ support and enhance road safety culture.
- ✓ increase safe road user behaviours.
- ✓ whole-school approach leading to increased local community road safety capability

RSE recommends dedicated Australian Government funding and support for best-practice, whole-school education as described in the following.

### Understanding a 'Best-Practice' Education Approach for Young Road Users

The key risk areas for young road users are speeding, impairments (alcohol, drugs and medications), seatbelts, fatigue and distractions. Evidence recognises that young people need time and experience to develop cognitive thinking skills, are at higher risk when driving with peer passengers and need social resilience and mitigation strategies to eliminate distractions and manage risk.

To support the vision of zero road deaths and serious injuries, best-practice education programs that provide a road safety intervention addressing all the key risk areas and focussing on developing higher order skills and critical thinking are essential. Further, programs must be designed to support a whole school approach to learning – learning that is ongoing and embedded in the curriculum, reflected in school policies and communicated to, and supported, by the wider community (parents, school partners, etc).

The school environment is a rare and fleeting opportunity for young people to set goals and build strategies alongside the friends they will most likely be riding with, as drivers or highly influential passengers. The whole school approach of extended learning and ongoing conversations creates a positive road safety culture for generations to come.



#### At the School Level

Ideally road safety education needs to happen over time, be school wide and be developmentally appropriate throughout students' school lives. It needs to be based on the best evidence about effective teaching and learning.



#### At the Classroom Level

Learning should be interactive and should encourage students to develop social competence and resilience. It should be relevant and focused on individual learning needs.



#### At the Student Level

Students should consider the needs and voices of pedestrians, cyclists, passengers and drivers. They should be encouraged to be active citizens who consider our roads a shared space and should be given opportunities to use their learning to make a difference for themselves and others.



## Guidelines for best practice youth safety education are universal, but not always applied

### What Works?

Small groups catering for individual/personalised learning needs.

Explicit, age appropriate, contextually relevant and appropriately challenging content.

Targeting risk behaviour.

Supporting the curriculum with the ability to co-design resources.

Delivered across time (whole school/year approach).

Evaluated for impact.

### What Doesn't Work?

Fear and shock tactics/focus on trauma and long-term consequences.

One-off approaches/one day events.

Presentation of information to large groups of students.

One size fits all approaches.

Not allowing for each student's voice to be heard.

A focus on vehicle emergency handling skills.

Promotion of early licensure.

## How Best Practice is Reflected in RSE's RYDA program

As a youth development program, RYDA helps students build social resilience and the ability to anticipate and manage risk. The RYDA program features a highly engaging workshop which sees students attend six interactive sessions at a dedicated venue over the course of a school day. Before the workshop, teachers are invited to assign pre workshop activities which helps facilitate personalised learning as students engage with practical demonstrations, real-life narratives, videos, quizzes and interactive role play. Back in the classroom, RYDA gives teachers everything they need to continue the learning throughout the school year, using road safety as an authentic context for classroom teaching and creating a safety culture to support active, responsible road citizens.

## Enhancing Local Community Capability

The additional benefit of whole-school and whole-of-community approach to youth road safety education is that it builds long-term capability, safety awareness and resilience throughout the community.

Local education providers (RYDA selected and trained facilitators) also bring an inherent understanding and knowledge of local social and cultural factors, that is not possible through 'fly-in, fly-out' providers. Nor is it possible from a solely web-based or digital program.

Once established, the RYDA program becomes embedded within each community – whilst ensuring a professional product is delivered. RSE work closely with the Police, LGAs (RSOs), youth workers and local facilitators whom they select and train, as well as Rotary in terms of workshop organisation.

RSE have now built capability among approximately 600 Rotary volunteers nationally and provided locally based work for RYDA facilitation, for former teachers, youth counsellors and other professionals. All receive a comprehensive multi-module training program free of charge.

Additionally, teachers, are significant beneficiaries of the education program delivery – with 84 per cent of teachers saying RYDA has increased their own awareness of road safety issues, equipping them with the tools and knowledge they need to lead the learning back in the classroom and through the curriculum.

## Investment and Implementation

RSE recommends the Australian Government makes a sensible increase in its current Grant program funding to match its National Road Safety Strategy ambitions.

Specifically, we recommend the Australian Government:

- Increases its current funding commitments to the *Road Safety Awareness & Enablers* grant program from \$1m per annum to \$2m per annum (F23) increasing to \$4m per annum by F26.
- That there is a 25 per cent specific allocation of this grant funding to youth road safety education.

A funding commitment of this nature would enable the potential cumulative delivery of nearly 272,500 students receiving best-practice youth road safety education across the country (with a prioritisation on highest-risk areas and community need).

### Recommended Australian Government Investment

Table: Education Reach and Australian Government Investment					
	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	Total
Education Reach (# students participating in RYDA)	47,500	62,500	75,000	87,500	272,500
Australian Govt Investment	\$300,000	\$400,000	\$500,000	\$600,000	\$1,800,000
% Australian Govt contribution	12.6%	12.4%	12.6%	12.7%	12.6%

*Forecasts are subject to risk including the risk of Covid 19 pandemic.*

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*“This past Friday, my friends and I were driving with another friend who has her P’s, and as she started to drive, she asked us to keep it down while she was driving and we all agreed and respected [what she] asked, thanks to what we had learned at RYDA. It really helped to take these things seriously, and not start laughing or make fun of someone if they ask for something like that while they’re driving.”*

- Student, St Peter’s Lutheran College, Indooroopilly