

# STUDENT ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMME BOOSTED

Thursday, 29 October 2015

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A programme to change the way young people behave on the road is being boosted with funding to extend it to east Auckland schools.

Road Safety Education offers a one-day programme called RYDA for senior high school students. It aims to change their thinking as drivers and passengers.

To date, more than 36,000 students across New Zealand have graduated from the RYDA programme since its introduction in 2007. In the same period the road toll in the 15-19 demographic dropped by 64 per cent.

The Ministry of Transport released figures last week showing that 247 people were killed on New Zealand roads this year and had increased for the past two consecutive years. In 2014 the road toll was 212 and in 2013, 197.

In contrast road toll statistics are down for youth.

Auckland schools such as Baradene, ACG Strathallan, and Kings Colleges are participating in the programme in Term 4. Last week sponsors BOC Gases and NZ Steel, with Rotary, committed to partially funding the programme for schools in the Eastern Bays area.

Road Safety Education NZ programme manager Simone Randle says a fatal accident in Pakuranga involving a Year 13 student highlights the importance of teaching young drivers and passengers how to reduce risks.

Evidence suggests young people are most at risk of a serious crash in the first six months of becoming independent drivers.

“But the loss of a single life is one too many,” Ms Randle says.

“Every month in New Zealand on average, five young people aged between 15 and 24 years of age die on our roads.

“These accidents are a tragic loss for friends, family and whole communities.”