

Condolences shared

By **PETER DOUGLAS**

THE Mail last week featured youth road deaths as its 'Issue of the Year', highlighting the horror year endured within the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley communities.

In response to this story, Road Safety Education (RSE), a national non-profit organisation committed to educating youth, sought to offer further support.

RSE Chief Executive Officer, Terry Birss, expressed sympathy and offered condolences to the families and friends of the youth who died on local roads around the Yarra Ranges over the past 12 months.

"On behalf of Road Safety Education, we offer our sincere condolences to the families and friends of these young people, who have tragically lost their lives," Mr Birss said.

"The impact of the loss of each of these young lives is immeasurable, both immediately and in the

future."

Mr Birss said they have felt this impact time and time again and are committed to reducing youth road trauma.

"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," he said.

"While hundreds of young people die on our roads every year; for every one of those deceased, 20 more suffer life-changing situations such as brain and spinal injuries.

"We must equip our young drivers with the tools to make safe choices on the road, both as drivers and their passengers."

Mr Birss said their national program, known as RYDA, lies at the centre of a set of programs developed for young people in years 9 to 12.

"It provides practical and pow-



Youth lives lost on our roads was the Mail's Issue of the Year in 2015. 148770

erful workshops to change the way young people think about road safety," he said.

The program has a presence in several schools in the Yarra Valley

area including Upper Yarra Secondary College, Emerald Secondary College, Monbulk College, Upwey High School and Billanook College.