

INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Organisation: New South Wales Fire Brigades
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Mr Russell Keith
Committee Manager
Staysafe Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Mr Keith

The NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) has developed the Road Safety Education (Rescue Ed) Program specifically to reduce the frequency and severity of the tragedy and trauma caused by motor vehicle accidents within 17 – 25 year old age group.

Rescue Ed aims to promote positive perceptions of firefighters as rescuers with 'street credibility' to talk to young people about their safety on the road. The emphasis is on firefighters sharing their first hand experiences of the often tragic consequences of road accidents and thus guiding young people to reflect on the causes and consequences of such accidents.

Rescue Ed is a road safety and education initiative of the NSWFB where firefighters with experience in motor vehicle rescue, deliver an innovative motor vehicle accident prevention program to potential learner drivers in high schools.

The program is based on an original concept from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority (QFRA), known as 'RAAP' or 'Road Accident Awareness Program'.

The NSWFB, in consultation with the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) modified the RAPP program for use in NSW schools. This adapted program, named Rescue Ed, meets the learning outcome requirements of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) syllabus for years 9 and 10.

All materials have been developed in accordance with road safety education and curriculum guidelines established by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and the DET.

A key component of the NSWFB approach has been the development of a DVD case study '*Tim's Story*', based on the experiences of a young man Tim Rafton, (who is the son of a NSWFB firefighter) who was involved in a serious motor vehicle accident (MVA) some years ago in which he lost both legs.

The DVD recreates an MVA scene and realistically portrays the horrific experience of being a trapped patient while avoiding needless graphic or shocking details.

The Rescue Ed program consists of firefighters (with rescue experience) visiting high schools to give a presentation about motor vehicle accidents and their consequences.

The NSWFB Rescue Ed presentation is divided into 4 activities. The total time allocated to the entire presentation is 1 hour 50 minutes.

The activities are designed to complement the school's existing PDHPE program for Stage 5 students. A member of the NSWFB presents the activities with support from the classroom teacher.

- Activity 1 – Rescue Extrication Demonstration which is a practical demonstration by firefighting crews simulating the rescue of a person from a motor vehicle by cutting up a car wreck in the school playground.
- Activity 2 – DVD Case Study (*Tim's Story*) involving the viewing of a DVD exploring the factors that may lead to a road accident and the resultant consequences.
- Activity 3 – Discussion of causes and consequences and the issues faced by firefighters who attend the scene of a road accident: Risk Reduction "What Could You Do? Discussion of being involved in a road traffic incident and identifying strategies to reduce risk.
- Activity 4 – Evaluation by students and teachers who complete an online questionnaire about the presentation.

The key objectives of the Rescue Ed program are:

1. To promote discussion amongst young adults of attitudes, behaviours and road knowledge that can contribute to road accidents;
2. To encourage young adults to reflect on the consequences of accidents (including the physical, social, emotional and financial burden);
3. To enhance school based driver education teaching and learning programs; and
4. To complement other RTA road safety education curriculum resources such as *Road Risk Your Choice* and *Shifting Gears*.

The target group for participation in the NSWFB Rescue Ed Program is students 15 - 17 years of age who, over the next few years, will be in a position to gain their motor vehicle drivers licence within NSW.

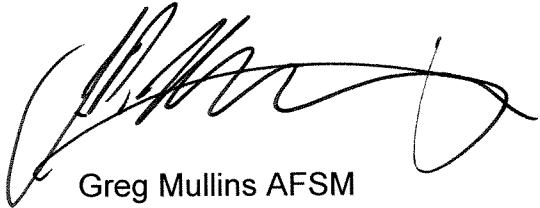
The Rescue Ed Program is a free service delivered by NSWFB firefighters to NSW State High School students and participation is voluntary. The NSW Fire Brigades:

- Coordinates the program across New South Wales;
- Delivers Rescue Ed face to face to NSW high school students;
- Monitors and regularly reviews Rescue Ed; and
- Reports on Rescue Ed progress to relevant stakeholders.

Research into the Queensland fire service road accident prevention program indicates that in the early years after RAAP's introduction across Queensland, there was an approximate 30% reduction in road accident injuries and deaths to 17 – 25 year olds per year.

Certainly while this reduction in part can be attributed to the building of safer roads, safer cars and broader road safety campaigns like reducing drink driving and speeding, it has been argued by the QFRA that a proportion of the reduction was directly related to the delivery of RAAP by firefighters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Mullins', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner**