

## **INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Organisation:** RYDA Australia Ltd.  
**Name:** Mr Terry Birss  
**Position:** Chair  
**Date Received:** 29/11/2007

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Rotary in NSW, South  
Australia, Tasmania  
Approved project of Districts  
9680, 9690, 9700, 9830  
Participating Districts  
9750, 9640, 9650,  
9500, 9520

# RYDA

## Australia Limited

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**29<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**Secretary  
NSW Parliamentary StaySafe Committee  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney, NSW 2000**

*by email*

**SUBJECT:**

Enquiry Into Young Driver Safety And Education Programs

Self Referred

**TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

Paragraph (e)

***The efficacy of young driver education programs and the potential for development and expansion of these programs, subject to proper evaluation***

**SUBMISSION**

**INTRODUCTION**

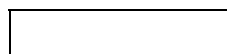
Youth road safety education - a continuum of learning from K to12 - is seen in the context of those broad elements that influence outcomes on our roads: vis the standards of our roads, the enforcement of the road rules and the education of (potential) road users.

The need for education in public health generally and road safety specifically is well established. The efficacy of education, how that education influences attitude, behaviour and ultimately changed outcomes will be to an extent, reflected in the quality of that education including its reinforcement through integration with learner drive programs, popular media and the education system.

The extent to which such education programs are successful depends very much on how they are communicated within an environment where the youth of our country is subjected to a multitude of other influences on a day to day basis. The participation of our youth in road safety education programs has to be viewed by them as a necessary and desirable thing to do as one element in their development to adult status. The ability to communicate the need for road safety education to our youth is paramount.

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***RYDA believes in a fair go for our youth. They must be given the opportunity of receiving an education not only in road rules, but an education which also includes such things as developing increased perception and heightened awareness, the influence of alcohol or substance abuse and fatigue and the consequences of poor decisions with a view to encouraging our youth to accept responsibility for their behaviour on our roads in line with accepted community standards All this needs to happen before they are subjected to the penalties for breach.***

RYDA's Mission is to deliver a quality road safety education program that incorporates all the above elements and more – the RYDA Program - to young Australians who are venturing onto the roads both as new drivers and as passengers in cars driven by their peers. We do not encourage early driving and seek to deliver strategies to passengers to empower them to have an influence on driver behaviour.

The Program is designed to ensure currency, relevance, uniformity and consistency in its content and presentation and is directed to all year 11 students within the NSW education system without being demanding on school resources. RYDA seeks to be part of a community solution by encouraging all organisations having a responsibility for, and/or an interest in the safety of our youth, to partner with them in the pursuit of this objective.

RYDA delivers the Program in consultation with road safety and educational professionals. It is presented by experts including police, drug alcohol councillors and representatives from within the road safety community.

## **RYDA THE ORGANISATION AND ITS PROGRAM**

Following a series of fatal road accidents in 2000 that involved young new drivers and young passengers, a community initiative that included support from local government, school principals, local health officials, the police, local emergency services and Rotary clubs was undertaken to develop a program designed to improve young driver education. RYDA Australia Limited (RYDA) was established as a result of this initiative.

RYDA is a non profit public company limited by guarantee controlled by members of Rotary. The RYDA National Office comprises paid management and support staff at North Ryde in Sydney and is currently funded by BOC in a private sponsorship arrangement.

RYDA makes its Youth Driver Awareness program (RYDA Program) available through Rotary clubs which tap into many communities throughout Australia. It is a professionally developed and presented Program which, engages with and encourages the support of, local communities and governments. RYDA has a long term commitment to road safety education for our young people.

The RYDA Program seeks to educate year 11 students in the key issues of road safety including the rights and responsibilities of drivers, the impact of personal behaviour on driving, the influence of alcohol and other substances, community concern and responsibility, the purchase and insurance of a motor vehicle and the practical issues involved in the safe operation of motor vehicles.

The inclusion of the RYDA program in Year 11 curriculum generates an economically feasible environment in which to train almost all potential new drivers and their young passengers, using technology and skilled personnel in a manner not normally available to individuals or schools. The Program complements the existing RTA curriculum based road safety education program in the schools' PDHPE curriculum.

The RYDA Program focuses on a one day event held out of school but within school hours and comprises six sessions each of which is presented by a qualified expert in their field (see

Appendix). The sessions are designed to be interactive and the size of the groups in each session is limited to typically effective classroom numbers. The content is designed to integrate with the school based program.

## **WHAT HAS RYDA ACHIEVED SINCE INCEPTION?**

The RYDA Program has been operating in the Rotary district covering the northern metropolitan Sydney for eight years and over that time has developed a level of knowledge that has allowed it to take the Program into others areas of Sydney, regional New South Wales and into other States of Australia.

Approximately 20,000 students participated in the Program in 2006/2007 taking the total number of participants to more than 60,000 since inception.

With the assistance of on-going sponsorship support, RYDA plans to double this level of participation in 2007/08 and ultimately to a stage where every year, all year 11 student in Australia are given the opportunity to participate in the Program.

It is anticipated that the RYDA Program will ultimately involve more than 125,000 students across Australia in any one year with the same number rotating on an annual basis.

Because of the charitable environment in which RYDA operates the RYDA Program is affordable. A modified 'user pays' principle is adopted with the contribution from students considered to represent approximately 15% of the Program's commercial value – this varies between \$10 and \$15 per student with Rotary Clubs picking up the entire cost in cases of hardship. Bus transport to the venue is in addition to these costs and can be a significant additional cost.

An objective of RYDA is to have the Program reflected in the school curriculum fulfilling a practical and important need articulated by school principals. Continuity of the Program is crucial and whilst there is no coercion, one measure of success and relevance is schools do return to the Program year after year.

## **HOW THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT CAN ASSIST WITH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

RYDA seeks to further develop their Program by consolidating their relationship with the NSW Government in a number of specific ways as detailed in the following.

1. Continue to develop established links with NSW Government designed to:
  - Encourage and assist with inter departmental and agency coordination and support and to seek financial and/or in kind assistance as appropriate from each of Roads, Transport, Police, Education, Health and Fair Trading areas of Government.
  - Facilitate the NSW Government's desired outcomes.
  - Assist with NSW schools' curriculum development.
  - Assist with the development of strategies that include making strong recommendation to schools about the Program.
  - Encourage support from other sectors of the community with all elements of society caring and also sharing the burden.

2. Assist with research and evaluation programs.
3. Assist with gaining Federal Government support.
4. In addition to point (1) above, provide additional financial assistance:
  - Renew from time to time the current RTA/RyDA agreement on terms appropriate to ongoing circumstances including a per capita grant included in a recurrent funding proposal.
  - Support the research, program development and evaluation strategy.
  - Support the student cost of their transport to and from the venue (submissions have been made to the Roads Ministry and the RTA in this respect.)
  - Provide separate funding to RyDA to train potential presenters as part of a rehabilitation program for road (brain) injury victims.

## **PROGRAM RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STRATEGY**

During 2005, Dr Elkington published an evaluation report of the RyDA Program. The evaluation confirmed the efficiency of the program in communicating the RyDA message. It also confirmed that further program development work was required to prolong the effect of the program as recall of information recedes after presentation unless there is ongoing reinforcement.

In line with the recommendations and outcomes contained in Dr Elkington's report, RyDA has already introduced a number of these recommendations.

RyDA is also investigating the establishment of a research program into an enhanced RyDA Program especially in the area of information retention and its subsequent evaluation and is currently exploring the parameters for the design and funding of such a research program and evaluation.

RyDA is seeking funding for the costs of the design of the evaluation and in turn the research work associated with this project.

## **THE EFFICACY OF THE RYDA PROGRAM**

The RyDA Program is very effective and forceful in terms of communicating its message and can be measured against the following results.

- **Participation Rates** are increasing with the Program now installed in 13 NSW locations and still expanding.
- **Cost** is contained due to the public/private/community nature of the program enabling a program to be delivered to students at approximately 15% of the cost of a fully commercial program.
- **Ease of school involvement** for both staff and students because the program is time efficient and its design recognises the time constraints on school communities in year 11.

- **Organisation** of the professional Presenters for multiple presentations.
- **Positive judgement and analysis** relating to the effectiveness of the Program is high in the school community as confirmed from the comments of teachers and principals and from surveys and interviews and the subsequent re-booking rate.
- **The efficacy and value** of the Program is high in the broader community as confirmed by the ongoing participation of sponsors and volunteers in the program.
- **Reaching its targeted audience** through the participation of year 11 students and thereby efficiently targeting the potential new drivers and their young passengers.
- **The RYDA Program** efficiently delivers a modern road safety message that is reviewed by experts in the Police, RTA and DET which is professionally delivered.
- **The timing of the Program** when students are just on their L's or are thinking about learning to drive.
- **Target participation** of all students in year 11 including passengers as well as drivers, facilitating exposure to such strategies as passenger empowerment/positive peer pressure.
- **An event** is created with the Program held out of school but in school time. By making the day special it dramatically highlights the subject.
- **It is delivered** by professionals with actual life experience of their subject matter.

Additional information is included in this communication in the Appendix attached.

Yours sincerely

**Terry Birss**  
 Chairman  
 For and in behalf of the board of  
 RYDA Australia Limited

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