

Rotary leads youth driver awareness



Clive Edwards, Barbara Nuthall, Joe Camilleri, Peter Chivers, Debbie Hall, Anthony King, Pam Martin, Brooke O'Donnell. In front: Matthew Dreserman, Sam Cooke.



Constable Joe Camilleri was not surprised when Tegan Deighton, YHS, sent the breathalyser to .3577 after using mouth-wash.



Miranda Richens, Jade Whitaker, Trudi Sommerfield and Carina Sims were impressed with the experience of the presenters.



Pam King from Goulburn described how easily accidents can happen.



Katie Blair, YHS, helps Brooke O'Donnell and Pam King (in car) demonstrate pedestrian accidents.

THE 2009 Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Program was held on 27 February at the Young Airport. The day was well attended with 160 Year 11 students from the Young High School, Hennessey College and Harden Murrumburrah High School.

"The participation level this year is very gratifying, probably because we have now moved the program to first term in the school year" said program coordinator, Rotarian Barbara Nuthall.

Seminar rooms were set up under marquees and in the hangar facilities at the airport and the runway was used for practical demonstrations of breaking distances.

Students appreciated the in-depth discussions on subjects such as car insurance, blood alcohol and accident risks. "The instructors here are more experienced than at school on this topic" said Carina Sims from Young High School.

"We learnt a lot of new things today. I heard about car insurance for the first time" said Mel Bell, also from Young High School. Trudi Sommerfield said that she learnt a lot more about blood alcohol.

The course focuses strongly on accident risks. Students heard how a night out celebrating can be done safely, how seemingly simple road maneuvers can lead to tragic outcomes, and they watched a film of an 18 year olds' birthday party ending in total tragedy.

Distances needed to stop a motor vehicle were also demonstrated on the airport tarmac. "I really thought breaking distances would be shorter" commented William Hansen. "And I was interested in the impact of alcohol, too" he said.

Students were silent as Sam Cook from Carcoar told how his life was changed by a car accident which left him wheelchair bound. His mates walked away with a couple of scratches. None of the students present asked Sam any questions. Perhaps his story was hard to comprehend: aged 19, decided to get a lift home with someone else after having a few drinks, everyone in the car was relaxed and happy travelling within the speed limit of 80km. But Sam was not wearing a seatbelt. The cause of the accident was never decided.

Ms Brooke O'Donnell from the Sydney RYDA office and Rotarian Peter Chivers, Orange assisted Rotarian Barbara Nuthall during the day.

"We can't thank everyone enough for making the day such a success. Ms Pam Martin, Driving Instructor from Goulburn; Rotarian Clive Edwards who talked about financing a motor vehicle; Anthony King from Young Community Health on 'Safe Celebrating'; Constable Jo Camilleri, Youth Liaison Officer, NSW Police; Constable Matthew Dreserman, Young Highway Patrol; and Sam Cook, farmer from Carcoar.

"We also had an enormous amount of help from the town. Staff from Young Council, Don Wilkinson provided buses, and Grove Estate lent a marquee. I must also thank Craig Sargent who pulled out two planes, cleaned and prepared a hangar for us to use for lectures, and the students who helped pull down the marquees at the end of the day" Mrs Nuthall said.

"Sixteen Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Young gave up a day to ensure that everything was set up, guided students between sessions, catered for the crowd and, at the end of the day along with Young Council, returned the Airport to its original state. This was a great day for our Club" said President Debbie Hall.

The Rotary Club of Young plans to conduct the next Youth Driver Awareness Program early in 2010 for Year 11 students.