

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



MFS targets generational change on our roads

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

Amid a terrible escalation in South Australia's road toll, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is taking a powerful road safety message to high school students across the state.

MFS Road Awareness and Accident Prevention (RAAP) Program Coordinator, Rod Campbell is a firefighter with two decades of experience cutting injured and deceased people from car wrecks.

"It's tragic and unacceptable that our road toll was so high in 2009. In 2010 we're seeing signs of another bad year. This is something we should not sit back and tolerate.

"Let's make 2010 the year South Australia stands up and commits to generational change on our roads. The way to create generational change is to focus on new drivers, so that in years to come they will set the standard for all drivers," Mr Campbell says.

"Twenty years ago it was acceptable to smoke inside a restaurant and blow smoke in the faces of other diners. In 2010 this would not be tolerated.

"Why then do we tolerate our mates and fellow Australians driving under the influence or speeding, which are two of the biggest causes of death on our roads? Generational change on our roads *is* possible."

From today, MFS firefighter Rod Campbell will start the **first** of 80 RAAP programs, visiting thousands of Year 11 students at high schools across Adelaide and country areas in 2010.

"Feedback from students shows the program hits its target, giving them no room to hide from the visual, physical and emotional realities of the consequences of bad driving.

"But they leave the presentation in a positive frame of mind, empowered with knowing they can lead the way in being safer on our roads.

"Students have described the program as life changing, giving them pause to think about their own mortality at an age they're first getting their drivers licence," Mr Campbell says.

Road crash survivors Eli Murn and Jason Austin co-present the RAAP Program. Eli has an acquired brain injury while Jason is a paraplegic as a result of separate road crashes. Both take responsibility for their crashes and share how they continue to live with the consequences of bad driving.

Statistics show that road crashes are the number one cause of death for 16 to 24 year olds throughout Australia. In the first four years of the RAAP program, road deaths in this age group dropped significantly. Given the recent jump in the road toll, the MFS is redoubling its efforts to instill the road safety message in new drivers.

MFS RAAP Program Coordinator, Rod Campbell says, "Our message to new drivers is that through **concentration and commonsense**, almost all road crashes are avoidable.

"The MFS RAAP Program pulls no punches. Year 11 students are presented with graphic and real visual displays of the consequences of bad decision making on the roads," Mr Campbell says.

The program is sponsored by AAMI and the Australian Professional Firefighters Foundation (APFF), reaching 44 % of year 11 students across the state every year.

WHAT: Media are invited to Gawler High School for the first MFS RAAP Program for 2010. The high school is located on Barnet Road, Evanston.

WHEN: Tuesday, 2 February 2010. From 1.30 pm with interview opportunities at 2.30 pm.

VISION AND INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

Media are welcome to film and photograph the RAAP presentation. RAAP Coordinator, Rod Campbell and road crash survivor Eli Murn will be available for interview from 2.30 pm.

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Members of the public should call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours for further information. Country callers 1300 737 637.

www.mfs.sa.gov.au