



Rebecca Watson

takes for the car to stop.

"We teach them about tyres and seatbelts, and we teach them about not putting your legs on the dashboard because the airbags will blow your legs off."

Other sessions include Mind Matters, where students look at the role of mood as road risk factors, and a unique session where students speak to a crash survivor about an event that changed their lives.

Geoff says they receive positive feedback after the Ryda sessions, both from the students and their teachers.

"We give the teachers an evaluation form and a typical comment we get is, 'this program should be compulsory'."

Senior Sergeant Johnson says officers from the Sunshine Coast Highway Patrol (SCHP) are actively involved in the Ryda program here in the region.

"Several officers have received the Paul Harris Fellow award from Rotary for their involvement in Ryda.

"Police don't seek recognition for the work they are passionate about, however it is appreciated when this happens."

Another program that is delivered on the Sunshine Coast by SCHP officers is LAW (Life Awareness Workshop).

"This program is delivered to every school on the Sunshine Coast and has a road safety message with some hard-

hitting facts, videos and real-life experiences around road trauma," he says.

Senior Sergeant Johnson knows first-hand what it's like to receive a phone call to advise that your child has been in an accident. "My son was 19 years of age when his car was written off due to the



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Senior Sergeant Mark Johnson

mistake of another driver. He wasn't hurt in the crash, but when you receive a phone call like that, your heart sinks.

"Cars can be repaired, but sometimes you can't put people back together."

He says the most challenging part of his role is dealing with the small percentage of drivers who don't learn from their mistakes and continue to make risky decisions on the road.

"The impact of these risky decisions can be huge. Families are left to pick up the pieces and to try and move on with their lives when the most important thing in their life is gone," he says.

"I have heard of instances where parents of young drivers lost in crashes have left their child's bedroom the way it was the day they died.

"These bedrooms are like time machines, taking them back to the age of their child when they were killed.

"What some people don't realise is that these crashes also impact on first responders from the Queensland Police Service, fire department and ambulance service. It's particularly hard for them when young people are involved."

It was also hard for Rotarian Geoff Leddy, who, as a civil engineer, was called as an expert witness in many court cases involving car accidents.

"Some of those were heart-wrenching. I heard plenty of evidence about people being wrapped around trees."

The experience motivates Geoff to keep helping young people stay safe on the roads. In the past three weeks, he has attended eight Ryda workshops and he's not stopping anytime soon.

As for Rebecca, she is making good progress with her driving skills.

"At first, I was nervous but now I'm more confident," she says.

"The scariest parts were other drivers and parking. Now I'm getting better and I'm actually a good parker. I'm looking forward to getting my P plates and driving with my best friend, Chloe."

For more about Ryda, visit rse.org.au/about-ryda/.



Billy Slater

QUEENSLAND ROAD SAFETY WEEK

Queensland Road Safety Week (QRSW) will shine a spotlight on road safety across the state from August 18 to 22.

This year's theme, We're one team Queensland, let's drive like it, features Maroons coach Billy Slater in a series of online videos.

The videos focus on driving on rural roads, towing a caravan, horse float or trailer, campervan driving, strapping in (you're nine times more likely to be killed in a crash if you're not wearing a seatbelt), the dangers of fatigue, speeding, drink-driving, and distractions such as mobile phones.

To view the videos, see streetsmarts.initiatives.qld.gov.au.

During QRSW, Sunshine Coast Highway Patrol will step up enforcement around the leading causes of road deaths in Queensland – the Fatal 5: speeding, distraction, drink and drug driving, seatbelts and fatigue.

Highway patrol members will also take part in community activities.