

## **Are young New Zealand drivers getting the message? – AA Insurance**

Auckland – 10 June 2008 – New Zealand may be about to see a new generation of responsible drivers. That's the conclusion from the AA Insurance Youth Driver Poll of 1,500 year 10 students, who have either recently started or are just about to start driving.

The poll canvassed students from the Northland and Auckland regions who participated in the RYDA New Zealand Limited programme, an initiative of Rotary in New Zealand, a one-day education programme for young people about road safety.

The RYDA programme, of which AA Insurance is a sponsor, targets 15-year-old students as both drivers and passengers so that when they start driving they have received the best possible road safety education from experts such as local road safety and driving instructors, the New Zealand Police, road crash victims, drug and alcohol educators and AA Insurance.

The students were polled about who they thought should teach them to drive. Some 70 percent believed their parents would be their main teachers. However, some 76 percent believed that it should be compulsory for all young drivers to do a safe driving course.

The message, "Don't drink and drive" seems to be getting through to learner drivers, according to the poll. Almost three quarters (73 percent) of the learner drivers polled by AA Insurance agreed with the zero alcohol tolerance for people driving on a restricted licence.

"Learning to drive and owning a car are major milestones in a young person's life, bringing real freedom," says Chris Curtin, CEO, AA Insurance. "It is heartening that these poll results show that these young people appreciate the responsibilities of driving, and the message that alcohol and driving don't mix is recognised by the teens going through the RYDA programme."

The students' attitudes about texting and driving also showed insight into the risks this behaviour poses. Some 61 percent of those polled believe it is not okay to text while driving, and 55 percent believe it is not okay to talk on a mobile phone while driving.

"While this may not be a comprehensive survey, it is still a snapshot of a substantial number of new learner drivers. And these poll results are valuable because we don't hear directly from youth very often."

"There will always be an irresponsible few that make the headlines. But this poll suggests that education is key to changing attitudes and forming good habits. This new generation of

drivers are keen for education, they want to develop good driving habits and they recognise good behaviour.

Almost three quarters of those polled believe it is important to purchase car insurance.

AA Insurance is committed to helping young people get ready for the responsibilities of driving through young driver education programmes.

## **ENDS**

### **About AA Insurance**

AA Insurance was launched in 1994 and is a joint venture between New Zealand Automobile Association and Suncorp-Metway Limited.

AA Insurance has over 300 staff servicing 130,000 plus customers and manages almost 300,000 policies. Over half of those policies cover motor insurance risks including cars, bikes, caravans, and motor homes, and the remainder are house and contents insurance.

AA Insurance Limited has an A+ (Strong) insurer financial strength rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd on 17 May 2008. For further information visit [www.aainsurance.co.nz](http://www.aainsurance.co.nz)

### **About RYDA**

RYDA New Zealand Limited is an initiative of Rotary Clubs in Australia and New Zealand. A not for profit organisation, RYDA has developed a programme which targets 15 year old students as both drivers and passengers so that when driving commences they have received the best possible road safety education.

The RYDA programme targets awareness and attitudinal change and seeks to encourage young people, who are on the verge of driving or at least who are actively thinking about it, to take a more responsible attitude to motoring.

The programme includes six sessions and is a one-day event held at a non-school site. It co-ordinates the efforts of local road safety experts, driving instructors, the New Zealand Police, recovering victims of road crashes, drug and alcohol educators and insurance and financial services experts. The programme is conducted so that students are made aware of the privilege and responsibilities of owning and driving a motor vehicle.

[www.RYDA.org.nz](http://www.RYDA.org.nz)

### **For more information please contact:**

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