



Building Safer Roads; Creating Safer Drivers.

EMBARGO: 7am Thursday 31 July 2008

Leighton Contractors: *Building Queensland Roads; Creating Safer Drivers.*

BRISBANE, 31 July 2008 – Queensland Education and Training Minister Rod Welford today launched Leighton Contractors' Youth Drive Safe Initiative.

The innovative program will provide five hours of free driving lessons to each of the 500 selected Brisbane, Ipswich and Caboolture high school participants.

Using custom-fitted Toyota Corollas, purchased by Leighton Contractors Northern Region, two RACQ recommended driving schools will take the secondary students through accredited driving tuition over the next six months.

Leighton Contractors Northern Region General Manager Darren Weir says the Youth Drive Safe Initiative was part of the company's plan to create legacies which benefit the wider community.

"Leighton Contractors may be known for building roads, but now we also want to focus on building safer drivers," Mr Weir said.

Following 18 months of research and consultation with bodies including Queensland Transport, Queensland Police, Education Queensland, CARRS-Q and the RACQ, Leighton Contractors Northern Region decided to focus on young drivers as a priority.

"Our research showed a number of areas of interest, but one which really stood out was the fact that the road fatality rates for 17-20 year-olds are two-and-a-half times those of the rest of Queensland's population," Mr Weir said.

"We decided the best way we could assist in educating young drivers in that vital first six months while they are gaining their learner's driving licence – giving them the lessons they need to be safer on the road."

Mr Weir said the initiative was being launched now to provide education for young drivers before the dangerous Schoolies and Christmas period.

"We'll complete this initial round of training and then, just before that critical end of year period, we'll provide a refresher kit to participants to reiterate key road safety themes," Mr Weir said.

Mr Welford commended Leighton Contractors Northern Region for its progressive approach to road safety, and said corporate Australia should consider how they too could make a difference.

"It's great to see a big company like Leighton Contractors launching the Youth Drive Safe Initiative in Queensland," Mr Welford said.

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“Anything we can do to better educate and inform our young road users is a step in the right direction and other companies should look at following Leighton Contractors’ lead and think about how they can give back to their communities.”

Youth Drive Safe Facts

- The Leighton Contractors Youth Drive Safe program is an initiative of Leighton Contractors Northern Region.
- Leighton Contractors Northern Region will provide four vehicles and 2500 hours of driving instructor time (five hours per student) to provide free, accredited driving training to young drivers.
- The Leighton Contractors Youth Drive Safe Initiative supports local business and uses qualified, accredited instructors from RACQ recommended driver training schools.
- Coastwide Driver Training and Roadwise Driver Training were selected after a call for interest from local driver training providers.
- Students can access their free driver training from tomorrow (August 1, 2008).
- All training will be done under the triple time accelerated learning agreement aligned with the current Queensland Graduated Licensing System.
- Positions in the Youth Drive Safe Initiative were offered to eligible senior students at 10 selected schools, from the Greater Brisbane, Ipswich and Caboolture regions, with a draw held to select the final winners.
- Leighton Contractors is one of Australia’s leading construction, mining, services and telecommunications groups with over \$8 billion work in hand, employing more than 7,500 people across Australia and New Zealand.

What: Launch of the Leighton Contractors Youth Drive Safe Initiative
Who: Hon. Rod Welford, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts
Darren Weir, General Manager, Leighton Contractors Northern Region
When: 8am Thursday, 31 July 2008
Where: Ferny Grove State High School, McGinn Road, Ferny Grove

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For further information, interviews or images please contact:

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