

# Driving home RRISK message

## High school students targeted by drug and alcohol program

By SUSANNA FREYMARK

DON'T abandon your friends on a night out. Plan how to get home together. Look after your mates and know how to handle a drug or alcohol emergency.

More than 3600 students from 48 North Coast high schools will hear these messages, as well as advice on safe driving, in a North Coast program starting today at Southern Cross University in Lismore.

The Reduce Risk, Increase Student Knowledge (RRISK) program rolls out for its 11th year.

RRISK is credited with reducing road crash numbers for young people by 44 per cent, according to DRIVE, Australia's largest study of young drivers involving 20,000 P-plates in NSW.

With the added risk of 20,000 schoolies arriving in the Byron Bay area over a two-week period, the dangers of driving while under the influence of alcohol and

### DRIVERS AHEAD FOR RRISK

- Northern Rivers drivers involved in car crashes:
    - 27.1 per cent of all crashes
    - 11.1pc of fatal crashes
  - For drivers of the same ages across NSW:
    - 25.4pc of all crashes
    - 21pc of fatal crashes
- 2009 RTA statistics, for the last nine months

drugs, and knowing how to deal with an accident, is accentuated.

RRISK is described as a 'resilience-focused' program by North Coast Area Health Service alcohol projects co-ordinator Reyna Dight.

"RRISK works because it doesn't only focus on road safety, but looks at risk taking in your social life," she said.

The program includes a one-day seminar with peer training workshops and a scenario of a car accident played out onstage to show young people how to give the



**RRISK MANAGEMENT:** Helping raise awareness about the dangers of drink-driving through a dramatic enactment of the consequences are police school liaison officer Snr Const Kim Mewing, NCAHS alcohol projects co-ordinator Reyna Dight (right) and Trinity Catholic College Lismore students (from left) Joash Vincent, Anna Higgins, Erica Tarlinton and Daini Stephenson (in car).  
Picture: JAY CRONAN

right information to emergency services.

It also illustrates the issues of drinking the night before, but still having alcohol in your blood the next morning, and the legal consequences

of an accident.

"Young people take risks, it is a part of growing up," Ms Dight said. "Our program helps young people make better decisions."

Ms Dight said previous

evaluations of RRISK found an increase in a range of protective behaviours from students who participated in the program. RRISK seminars will be held at Southern Cross University until Thurs-

day, with further seminars at Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie.

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## Charges laid after weekend crackdown

LOCAL police arrested 13 people were also charged with breach of hard work of the officers involved