

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Road crash survivor empowers young drivers

Monday, 12 October 2020

Lachlan Miller had the world at his feet after completing his apprenticeship and playing in a rugby union grand final – but it all came crashing down when he was left in a coma after a road crash.

Next week, he will share his recovery journey with high school students in the Yorke Peninsula as part of the emotionally powerful Road Awareness Program (RAP).

MFS RAP Coordinator Josh Byerlee said many people, especially teenagers, do not believe they could be involved in a road crash and they become complacent – with distraction and inattention being some of the common causes of road trauma.

“Drivers and passengers should be responsible for decisions made on the road - being distracted for a split second could affect other road users and change lives,” MFS RAP Coordinator Byerlee said.

“We want young people to lead by example and encourage them to speak up against dangerous road behaviours.”

One of RAP’s key messages is, ‘You can choose to take a risk, but you can’t choose its consequences’.

“During the RAP presentation, students will learn that driver fatigue contributes to an estimated 20-30% of regional road fatalities in Australia every year.ⁱ RAP teaches young drivers solutions to combat fatigue and empowers them to speak up to save lives,” MFS RAP Coordinator Byerlee said.

Lachlan’s life was turned upside down as he lay in a coma for 38 days after he crashed and was ejected from his car on a regional road. He broke his spine, lost 30 per cent feeling on the right side of his body and has a brain injury that affects his memory.

Now the 28-year-old shares with students the long-lasting physical and mental impact that being involved in a road crash has had.

“I am still dealing with the effects of my brain injury acquired from the crash in 2013. That crash also had an impact on my family and loved ones,” Lachlan said.

“If my story could help one person, I’m willing to share my experience.”

The MFS RAP, a finalist in the Community Achievement Award and Australian Road Safety Award for a number of years, reaches up to 85% of secondary school students across SA each year.

The program is generously supported by our partners THINK! Road Safety, SA Power Networks, RAA, and the Australian Professional Firefighters Foundation (APFF) charity.

WHAT: MFS Road Awareness Program (RAP) presentations (session details below)

Date	Time	Location	Speakers
Monday, 19 October 2020	9.30 AM	Kadina Memorial School	Josh Byerlee, Lachlan Miller
Tuesday, 20 October 2020	8.45 AM 1.10 PM	Moonta Area School Harvest Christian College	Josh Byerlee, Lachlan Miller
Wednesday, 21 October 2020	12.45 PM	Minlaton District School	Josh Byerlee, Lachlan Miller

Media are welcome to attend the RAP sessions listed above for filming, photograph and interview opportunities. MFS RAP Coordinator Josh Byerlee and road crash survivor Lachlan Miller will be available for interview.

ⁱ <https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/action-plan/2018-2020/fatigue>

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