

23 May 2014

'Walk Safely to School' especially near trains and tracks

The TrackSAFE Foundation is encouraging children and their parents all across Australia to take extra care when heading to school this morning for national 'Walk Safely to School Day' (WSTSD).

General Manager of the TrackSAFE Foundation Naomi Frauenfelder said that WSTSD was important as it raised awareness in the community about promoting safe pedestrian behaviour amongst young children and stressed children to take care when not only crossing roads but also when near railway lines and crossings.

"More than 250,000 school students use the rail network each day, and even more on weekends, on excursions and in school holidays, it is therefore important that they and their parents are aware of the risks involved when crossing or standing near rail lines," said Ms Frauenfelder.

"Unfortunately in Australia we see an average of 166 collisions between trains and people each year, resulting in the accidental death of 35 people and serious injury of more than 40 pedestrians each year. Out of these serious injuries 35 percent occur amongst young people.

To help address this serious issue, the TrackSAFE Foundation has initiated an Australian first national rail safety education learning resource called Be on the Safe Side, developed specifically for primary schools. Be on the Safe Side comprises a comprehensive set of units of work for teachers, including lesson plans, teacher notes and other relevant resources, to help them teach their students safe behaviour with a train and track safety theme.

"Be on the Safe Side acts as an important learning tool to improve students' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards rail safety using a strengths-based approach," said Ms Frauenfelder.

"It is funded by the rail industry, and provides consistency in rail safety education throughout Australia, empowering students to improve their own and others' safety when they are near trains and train tracks.

"I encourage all children heading to school today to look, think and act on the safe side. Stand behind the yellow line; hop off your skateboard or bike when crossing tracks; wait when the lights are flashing and gates are closed; remove your headphones at crossing and on station platforms.

"The rail industry wants to encourage children to take the train to and from school, making each trip not only an enjoyable one, but a safe one," Ms Frauenfelder concluded.

For further information on Be on the Safe Side visit www.tracksafeeducation.com.au.

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