

## Push for teens to have safety lesson

TasRail train driver Grant Youd has called for Tasmanian schools to teach students about the dangers of ignoring railway crossing warning signs when they become motor vehicle drivers.

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A VETERAN train driver has called for a rail safety awareness program to be implemented in Tasmanian schools.

Grant Youd has experienced multiple horrific collisions with pedestrians and vehicles on the state's rail network during his 24 years as a train driver.

The senior driver and trainer carries the emotional scars of the collisions and wants to see fewer incidents between TasRail trains and the public.

It's a common theme among drivers involved in collisions with some developing post-traumatic stress and never returning to work.

Mr Youd told the *Mercury*, on the eve of R U OK Day today, that changing the culture started in the classrooms by targeting "the drivers of tomorrow".

The Burnie resident has taken it upon himself to visit several schools to deliver a powerful and personal message of safety.

"There's over 100 Year 10 students in the room and you can hear a pin drop," he said.

"They absolutely understand this is not a bureaucrat, this is a real train driver speaking about their life, with tears streaming down my face. I have their undivided attention.

"I'm a firm believer that we must get to the Year 10 students because they're the ones who are going to drive a car next year."

R U OK Day will be acknowledged today with Australians encouraged to take the time to ask a friend or work colleague, "Are you OK?" and listen to the an-



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swer. The idea is to help people struggling in life to feel connected long before they even think about self-harm.

Mr Youd's suggestion comes as TasRail cites an increase in the amount of reckless behaviour on its tracks.

The number of reported level crossing vandalism incidents rose 89 per cent in 2016-17 while near misses occur weekly.

Mr Youd said there was a culture among "a minority" of drivers of ignoring rail crossing warnings to stop.

"I see lots of drivers who come along and take us on at rail crossings. Deliberately, knowingly, wilfully take us on. They measure us, they work out our speed, they see where they are geographically and they make a decision."

But he said crossing lights were no different to a set of traffic lights and the drivers needed to respect that.

"If we can change that, over a generation we can make a difference," he said.

"I'm not saying for a minute we can't change the attitude of the older adults but I think ... it's in the classroom we need to make the biggest impact because they are the drivers of tomorrow."

Mr Youd urged all stakeholders in rail safety to implement a school rail safety program.

TasRail has confirmed it is investigating a more formal program to deliver rail safety messages in schools.