



Free lessons to curb toll

By BRENT O'NEILL

A PROGRAM aimed at reducing the disproportionately high fatality rates among young Queensland drivers was launched on Friday.

After a successful pilot last year, the 2009 version of the Leighton Contractors' Youth Drive Safe Initiative will give 625 school-based learner licence holders – or those eligible for a learner licence – from Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan, Caboolture, and Townsville five hours of free learner-driver training in a bid to promote road safety.

Last year, Queensland road users aged 17-24 accounted for 22 per cent of the state's road toll, despite representing just 12 per cent of the population.

That statistic, Leighton Contractors strategic development manager Renaye Peters said, made the second instalment of the initiative a necessity.

"It's about improving the understanding and respons-

ibility young drivers take on when they get their learner's licence," Ms Peters, whose construction group is carrying out the Ipswich/Logan interchange upgrade on the Ipswich Motorway, said.

"We hope the kids get some great skills and share them with their peers. One parent involved in the pilot said: 'Even if this program saves one life, it's worth it'."

That one life may well have been that of Morayfield State High School's Sara Hines, who was a member of the pilot group.

"It's definitely made me a safer driver. It helped you to understand driving more. I'm much more confident."



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■ Safety first ... Leighton Contractors' Renaye Peters with Mabel Park State High student Richard Grant at the launch of the Youth Drive Safe initiative.