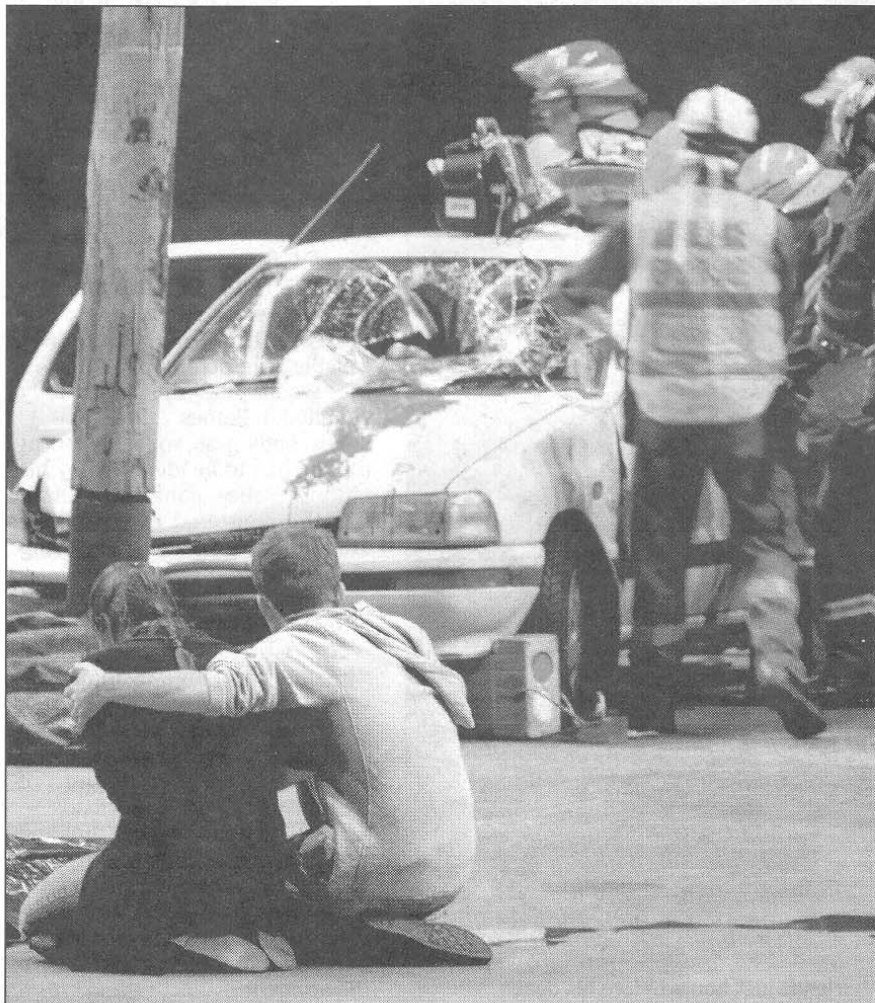


Shocking crash reality



Graphic: Actors watch emergency services personnel yesterday Pictures: Tracee Lea

Rhys Haynes
Transport Reporter

TEENAGERS had to be treated for shock and fainting after watching a bloody car crash re-enactment in the name of road safety at Sydney's Acer Arena yesterday.

Students spilled out from the audience into the venue's foyer during the show, with some seen vomiting, short of breath, crying or sitting in shock with their heads in their hands.

One student fainted and was given oxygen, along with two others. Ambulance crews also tended to a teenager complaining of stomach soreness.

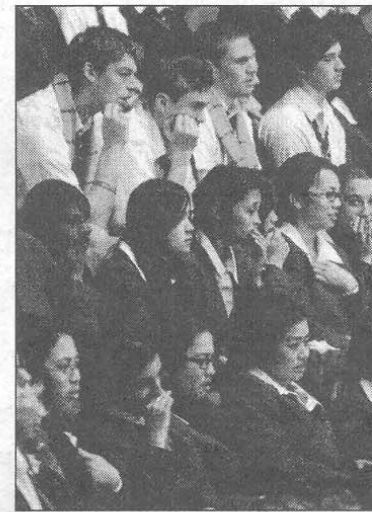
More than 12,000 high school students will watch the brutal Youth and Road Trauma Forum demonstration when its three-day run ends tomorrow.

Students had been warned by teachers beforehand that they would witness graphic scenes.

A blunt Premier Barry O'Farrell opened the show, telling the audience it was likely at least one of them will die in coming years — and many could be hurt — as a result of car accidents.

"If (this program) can help you, when you get your licences, to think about the consequences of driving, if it can help keep you alive ... I'll be happy," Mr O'Farrell said.

"This is a program conceived by medical staff at Westmead Hospital



Captivated: Students in the audience

who are tired of trying to put people back together again."

The show featured a live re-enactment of the aftermath of a car accident involving "Nikki", a hysterical girl trapped in the front seat of a vehicle that had slammed into a power pole.

Covered in blood and cuts, she can see her friend dead on the road after being thrown through the windscreen.

In-car camera footage shown on large screens was too much for some students, who were seen spilling out into the foyer, too shocked to watch any more.

"I just don't like the sight of



blood," Adam, of Hawkesbury High School, said afterwards.

Many young female students were seen crying, one bending over and vomiting as she ran to the bathrooms with her friends.

The students also heard stories from young people who have suffered traumatic brain injuries as a result of car crashes.

"Each year nearly 1500 people are killed in motor vehicle accidents around Australia," forum organiser and Western Sydney Area Health Services trauma coordinator Stephanie Wilson said.

"Of these, around a third involve young people aged 17 to 25.

"We see the consequences of these crashes every day in our emergency department, intensive care wards and brain injury unit."

Studies by the University of NSW Injury Risk Management Research Centre show that students leave the forum with a "changed attitude to driving" and are more likely to retain road safety messages.

Many students said they were shocked by the show and had learnt about the hazards of texting when driving, and driving dangerously when on P-plates.