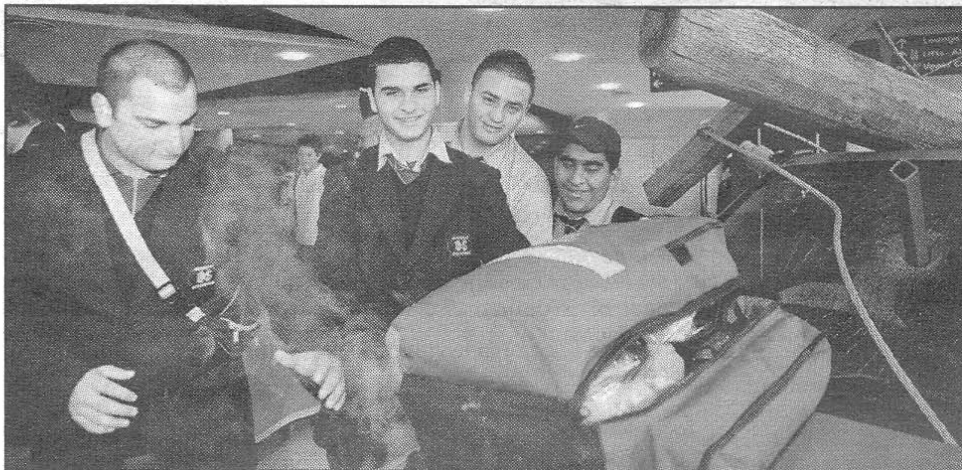


Trauma class boosts safety



At a stall at the Australian Youth and Road Trauma Forum, Ambulance NSW paramedic Peter Dawson demonstrates monitoring equipment for students from Al Faisal College, including 'patient' Layal Kanj, Rahiel Kanj and Deema El-Masri.



Looking at how quickly things can go wrong for young drivers, students from Granville Boys High School visited stands at the Australian Youth and Road Trauma Forum last week.

Photos by GEORGE VOULGARPOULOS

OVER three days this week, thousands of students witnessed simulated fatal car smashes at Acer Arena as part of the Australian Youth and Road Trauma Forum.

As part of efforts to reduce the death and injury rates among young drivers, students from schools, including Al-Faisal College and Granville Boys High School, also heard about from young people who suffered brain injury in road accidents.

Westmead Hospital Trauma Coordinator and Forum organiser Julie Seggie the crash situation that was reenacted daily from Tuesday to Thursday, was quite confronting and "very, very real".

Ms Seggie said research conducted by the University of New South Wales Injury Risk Management Research

Centre showed that students leave the Forum with a changed attitude to driving and are more likely to retain road safety messages for an extended duration.

"They take notice when they have to witness what can quickly become a reality for them or someone they know," she said.

"Students have told us it is this reality that has the most impact. Driving is a privilege and a responsibility and young people need to be aware of that.

"Education is the key to minimising trauma. We all learn in different ways so the material needs to be presented in different mediums."

During the afternoon, the students from Years 10 to 12 also visited a range of interactive displays aiming to educate them about a variety of road safety related issues.

The annual Forum is organised by Sydney's Westmead Hospital Trauma Unit and is co-funded by The Balnaves Foundation. In March this year, Premier Barry O'Farrell committed to fund the program for four more years.

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