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AUSTRALIANS IMplored TO JOIN 'PAINTING PEBBLE' MOVEMENT FOR ROAD TRAUMA VICTIMS

Australian Road Safety Foundation honours Elle Underhill in new awareness initiative

As part of *World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims* (21 Nov), the Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) is calling on Australians to paint a butterfly on a pebble.

The road safety initiative is in support of Elle Underhill whose life was tragically cut short at just four years of age, and the thousands of others like her killed on the nation's roads each year.

Painting a butterfly on a pebble for Elle has become an international symbol of the importance of choosing road safety. Butterflies for Elle have been painted from Canberra to Colorado, Mexico, and even Romania.

Michelle Underhill, Elle's mother, hopes the continued uptake of the movement as part of *World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims* will remind people that road fatalities are far more than a number, they are someone's loved one or friend.

"No parent should have to endure the heartache of losing a child as we have, so we hope that by sharing Elle's story, and painting butterflies in her honour, will encourage more people to choose road safety," said Michelle.

"We'll never know exactly how many lives are saved by painting a butterfly, but even just one is worth it, because that one is someone's entire world," she said.

ARSF founder and CEO Russell White said this simple act of honouring Elle, and all road trauma victims, was also an important step in helping to educate young people on the consequences of choice on the road.

"Community engagement and awareness is essential for road safety resilience, and we need everyone to consider the safety of themselves, their loved ones, and all others, on the road," Russell White said.

"It's also a powerful way to engage children in road safety awareness, and as we've seen with our youth-focused programs, such as RoadSet, it is critical to embed road safety understanding from an early age,"

"In honouring Elle, who should be celebrating her 10th birthday this week, helps to remind people of what it is we're working towards - saving lives, and saving their friends, family and communities from the aftermath of road trauma" he said.

Parents of other road trauma victims have joined ARSF in the lead up to National Remembrance Day for Road Traffic Victims to share their own story and further enhance the importance of being mindful and responsible on the road.

Tegan and Tim, parents of eight-year-old Olivia Douglas, who was yet another life tragically taken to road trauma, has engaged Olivia's netball community in painting butterflies for their daughter, as well as Elle and all road trauma victims in the lead up to *World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims*.

With road trauma being the leading cause of death to children aged 1-14, and the second to young people aged 15-24, it is vital that education and awareness is provided to help prevent fatalities and injury on our roads.

The ARSF is asking families to paint a butterfly for Elle, for Olivia, and all road trauma victims in the lead up to 21 November 2021 - to commemorate their lives and encourage more Australians to be the change they want to see on the road by choosing road safety.

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