

**Submission  
No. 56**

## **DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY**

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### **PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO ROAD SAFETY, DRIVER EDUCATION & TRAINING**

My name is David Jackson. I migrated to Australia in 1970 and have been driving regularly during this period, however, I have **never** undertaken a driving test in Australia. I hold a class C & R licence and have had a good driving record. My wife was in the Australian Army and employed as a Truck Driver and then a Testing Officer. Over the years, we would have discussions about driving habits, road rules, driving attitudes, vehicle maintenance, driving tests, Army vs civilian culture etc. I have two teenage children who I have taught them how to drive a manual car. This exercise has assisted me in my driving skills and learning new road rules.

Education is always the key to anything. Some people don't learn as fast as others and it may take several attempts to teach them. I see far too often, drivers speeding, using alcohol and drugs and when then get caught, the courts only give them a minor punishment. We should adopt the same strategies as other States in Australia. For a first time offence, it may be a fine/suspension of licence. For a second offence, it may be on-the-spot suspension of licence for say 28 days **and** car impounded for say 90 days. For subsequent offence/s, the licence suspended for 6 or 12 months **and** the vehicle impounded for 180 days or even crushed it if the offences continue. These types of punishments would impact the driver with loss of licence, loss of vehicle, monetary costs to retrieve the car from impound and cause an inconvenience to them. The same could happen to drivers caught using mobile phones – confiscate them or destroy them for habitual offenders.

Some jurisdictions don't take the car if it is owned by another person, however, this should only be the case if they have stolen the car and then it is impounded by the Police as evidence and the impound fees are assigned to the reckless driver as punishment.

I believe that our Justice System is so weak, drivers know if they get caught, it will be treated as a relatively minor offence and given a minor punishment. Just take away the ability to continue driving reckless/drunk/drugged up/speeding by removing the vehicle.

The same should happen for those drivers caught unlicensed, suspended, disqualified, cancelled etc. Impound the car immediately so there is no way they can drive it again. If they find another car to drive, take that away too. If they don't own it, they can sort it out with whomever they took it from and suffer the consequences, plus whatever punishment the courts place on them. It is ridiculous that a suspended driver gets caught driving whilst suspended and the Magistrate just extends their suspension. They didn't learn the lesson the first time so they will continue to drive whilst suspended no matter how long the suspension is so extending it will not stop them.

When drivers come from overseas countries, they should be required to get an Australian licence if they are staying medium to long term (6 months plus). There are many drivers who don't want to change their overseas licence to NSW because they would then be under the demerit point system. Currently, their licence doesn't attract demerit points so they can never be suspended, cancelled, disqualified etc. This is unfair to the law-abiding driver in NSW who has limited demerit points versus the overseas driver who has unlimited points. We should have the same rule as New Zealand who requires overseas licence holders to convert their licence to a New Zealand one if they are staying in the country for more than 12 months. We only require the conversion of a licence within 3 months of becoming a Permanent Resident but this is not controlled so even if they have been in the country for 10 years and are stopped by the police they could say they have just arrived and there appears to be no system for the police to easily check if this is the case.

I believe all drivers should have a periodic practical driving test. I have never undertaken a practical driving test in Australia. Driving conditions would have been similar, but not the same. With the reciprocal arrangement that Australia has with many countries, there would be many thousands of drivers who would be in the same situation as me. I consider myself to be a competent driver, but I'm not sure I could pass a test tomorrow.

I know over the years, the driving assessments have changed and road rules have changed. No one asked me if I knew of any changes. The Authorities always harp on about road safety, but has anyone thought it might be the driver's fault and somewhere there was a lack of training/education that led to the incident. If drivers were retested, they would be forced to re-learn or upgrade their skills to hold on to their licence. I know a lot of my friends wouldn't pass. Sometimes you have to force people to educate themselves for their own good.

I don't believe that people who can't understand English should be allowed to drive on our roads. All of our road signs are in English, some but not all have international symbols, so it would make sense that they understand English. We appear to be bending over backwards to accommodate drivers from overseas so we don't offend them. However, the practical side of this lack of English is that I can't communicate with them if I am involved in an accident with them, they can't read a lot of road signs and they can become a hazard on the road. For example they wouldn't be able to read a "stop/slow" sign held by the traffic controller or a sign to say "do not overtake unless safe to do so" or "keep left unless overtaking". A lot of these drivers come from a country where they drive on the opposite side of the road to us and they would be more comfortable staying in our right hand lanes.

If requiring all drivers to undertake a basic English test if they want to obtain a licence to drive on our roads is seen as discrimination or racist then the question should be asked –

**What is more important, saving the lives of people or being politically correct ?**

DAVID JACKSON