

**Submission
No. 77**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

Name: Mr Bill Woods
Date Received: 11/06/2017

Mr G Aplin,
Member for Albury,
Parliament House
Sydney



Dear Mr Aplin,

I am writing to you in your capacity as the chairman of Staysafe. In a recent newspaper article you expressed your disappointment at the lack of suggestions from pensioner groups as to how the current requirement of driving tests for all drivers aged over 85 years could be improved. I have a suggestion that would greatly relieve the stress on older drivers, save the government money and help reduce the impression amongst older drivers that the RMS is keen to get them off the road as soon as possible.

There is no question that medical tests should be required for older drivers. There is even a case for requiring them for drivers less than 75 years old. But the driving test is a different matter.

Driving tests are a useful guide to ability for new drivers and those being re-tested after having lost their licence, but do not compare with the certainty of a proven safe driving record over many years.

The insurance companies that deal in comprehensive motor insurance policies are pretty good at picking out the safe drivers – they have to be, otherwise they would go bankrupt.

Consideration could be given to exempting from the driving test those who are listed in a comprehensive policy carrying the maximum no claim discount. However the possible pitfall with this is that unsafe drivers may elect to have their cars repaired themselves in order to retain the discount.

The best suggestion would be to look at drivers who have a ten year clear gold licence with no demerit points lost in that period.

I am certain that this subset of older drivers would have a driving safety record far better than average drivers 30 and more years younger.

There are only two possibilities for drivers in this category:

Firstly, that they do not drive (in which case they are no threat to other road users).

Or secondly, that they have driven safely for more than ten years.

I would therefore suggest the following rule change:

“NSW drivers who have attained the age of 85 years, who have passed the required medical tests, and who hold a clear gold licence with no demerit points deducted in the last ten years, should not be required to take a driving test unless and until they lose a demerit point for any reason.”

Most of these drivers would be age pensioners who would not have to pay for their licence. However there is a small proportion who are self-funded retirees, and who never get a discount on

anything. It would be a nice gesture and cost the government very little if this group were to receive their licences for free as a thank you for many years of safe driving.

Yours sincerely.

(W. M. Woods)