

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**Education, Training and Licensing of Drivers  
Including the Special Needs of Disabled  
Drivers**

REPORT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

MARCH 1982

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# House of Representatives Standing Committee on Road Safety

## Terms of Reference

On 3 December 1980, the Committee was appointed by Resolution of the House of Representatives to inquire into and report on:

- (a) the main causes of the present high level of the road toll in Australia;
- (b) the most effective means of achieving greater road safety in Australia;
- (c) the particular aspects of the problem to which those concerned with road safety could most advantageously direct their efforts; and
- (d) the economic cost to the community of road accidents in Australia in terms of—
  - (i) material damage;
  - (ii) loss of man-hours and earning capacity; and
  - (iii) cost of treatment of accident victims.

The Committee, on 5 March 1981, resolved to inquire into and report on the education, training, and licensing of drivers including the special needs of disabled drivers.

## Membership of the Committee

<i>Chairman</i>	The Hon. R. C. Katter, M.P.
<i>Deputy Chairman</i>	The Hon. C. K. Jones, M.P.
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\* Mrs Simons replaced Mr D. W. Nairn as Committee Secretary on 30 September 1981.

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## Abbreviations

AAA	Australian Automobile Association
ACROD	Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled
ACRUPTC	Advisory Committee on Road User Performance and Traffic Codes
ADR	Australian Design Rule
ARRB	Australian Road Research Board
ATAC	Australian Transport Advisory Council
Coppin	R.S. Coppin, <i>Driver Licence and Driver Improvement Programs — A National Review</i> , Department of Transport, September 1977
CRS	Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service
'Guidelines Report'	<i>Guidelines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia</i> by Advisory Committee on Road User Performance and Traffic Codes for the Australian Transport Advisory Council, Department of Transport, July 1980
GVDTC	Goulburn Valley Driver Training Complex (in Victoria)
IAATM	International Association for Accident Trauma and Medicine
LRCS	League of Red Cross Societies
NACH	National Advisory Council for the Handicapped
PACERS	Publicity Advisory Committee on Education in Road Safety
RoSTA	Road Safety and Traffic Authority (in Victoria)
TARU	Traffic Accident Research Unit (New South Wales, Department of Motor Transport)

## Major findings

The Committee is deeply concerned about the increasing number of road accident fatalities on Australian roads. The cost for Australia of road accidents is as high as \$2,000 m per year. Initiatives in the education, training and licensing area which would in any way assist in the promotion of road safety and in saving Australian lives is to be applauded.

To this end, a few major issues which were highlighted time and time again are listed below:

- road user behaviour and attitude must be changed; (paragraph 80)
- road safety education must begin at a very young age; (paragraphs 27-8)
- parents must take a greater responsibility in teaching their children road safety; (paragraph 24)
- first aid education and instruction should be given in schools and licence applicants should be required to produce evidence of such training; (paragraph 97, 107)
- motorcyclists must receive training in handling skills before being permitted to ride on public roads; (paragraphs 202-4)
- a common standard of licensing should apply Australia-wide; (paragraphs 169-71, 289-90)
- there should be a graduated system of entry into the driving population; (paragraphs 255-63)
- compatible driver record systems must be established in each State and Territory as a top priority; (paragraphs 272-83)
- Australia-wide standards of safety and quality for driving aids for the disabled must be developed. (paragraphs 383-8)

The Committee points out that its recommendations which follow not only take into account the short term benefits that would accrue with their implementation but that they are also directed towards the continued improvement in road safety in the future.

## Recommendations

The Committee recommends that:

1. the Office of Road Safety within the Department of Transport, undertake research on the factors influencing driver behaviour, particularly risk-taking behaviour.  
(paragraph 22)
2. the Office of Road Safety undertake a national public education program to:
  - make parents aware of their responsibilities for the education of their children in road safety from an early age; and
  - impress upon parents the need to set an example of safe and considerate road user behaviour.  
(paragraph 28)
3. the Education Department in conjunction with the Office of Road Safety, support State and Territory efforts in ensuring that road safety, including pedestrian education, be taught as part of a general safety awareness program to young school children from the first year in school onwards.  
(paragraph 36)
4. the Department of Education in conjunction with the Office of Road Safety, encourage and support State efforts in establishing road safety curriculum committees which have the responsibility of co-ordinating the integration of road safety topics with other subjects in school curricula; and that representatives on the road safety curriculum committees be drawn from education authorities and road safety organisations, and be established under the auspices of each State education authority.  
(paragraph 61)
5. the Office of Road Safety continue research to establish the effectiveness of public education programs, and co-ordinate the implementation of such programs; and the Minister for Communications direct the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal to inquire into the influence on young people, of television programs which glamorize the association of vehicles, alcohol and speed.  
(paragraph 90)
6. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States to introduce legislation protecting those giving assistance at the scene of an accident from subsequent civil action as a result of that action.  
(paragraph 96)
7. the Commonwealth Education Department co-ordinate and assist State education departments in implementing first aid courses in schools as part of the curricula; and the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all State licensing authorities to implement legislation requiring that all first licence applicants provide evidence of having undertaken a training course in basic first aid within approximately four years of licence application.  
(paragraph 107)
8. the Department of Health, in association with representatives from road safety authorities, the St. John Ambulance Association and the Australian Red Cross Society assess first aid equipment available in Australia with a view to developing a standard first aid kit to be carried in cars and used to provide basic first aid assistance in the event of an accident; and the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States to include in their Draft Regulations the requirement that all new passenger and goods-carrying vehicles intended for normal road use be

- equipped with a standard first aid kit, and that the kit be carried in the vehicle at all times. (paragraph 111)
9. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all State and Territory licensing authorities to make successful completion of a course of basic riding skills a condition for obtaining a motorcycle learner's permit. (paragraph 126)
  10. the Office of Road Safety conduct an evaluation of an extended training program designed to improve the accident record of professional drivers. (paragraph 130)
  11. the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs initiate action to implement apprenticeship programs for heavy vehicle operators. (paragraph 136)
  12. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States to work with driving schools to develop a national industry code of practice. (paragraph 149)
  13. the Minister for Transport encourage the Australian Transport Advisory Council to initiate a joint multi-State research project aimed at establishing the optimum minimum licensing age. (paragraph 181)
  14. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage Australia-wide implementation of the following measures:
    - any applicant for a first licence must have previously held a learner's permit;
    - applicants for learner's permits should be required to pass a knowledge test; and
    - action should be taken to ensure compatibility of requirements for learner's permits to enable reciprocal recognition between all States and Territories. (paragraph 193)
  15. the Minister for Transport recommend to the Australian Transport Advisory Council, the establishment of a national code for licence examiners. (paragraph 202)
  16. a static visual acuity of 6/12 be adopted uniformly throughout Australia as the minimum standard for driver vision; and visual acuity tests be conducted under standard conditions. (paragraph 210)
  17. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all State and Territory licensing authorities to require that drivers renewing their licences at age 55, and every 5 years subsequent to that, produce a certificate of visual competence signed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. (paragraph 219)
  18. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all States and Territories to introduce a compulsory system of notification by general practitioners of illness or disability of their patients; that notification initially be to a panel of experts, not to the licensing authority; and an adequate appeals tribunal be incorporated in the system. (paragraph 235)
  19. the Australian Transport Advisory Council work towards a uniform licence classification system throughout Australia that:
    - is based on standard categories of vehicle types, compatible with the system recommended in the United Nations Convention on Road Traffic, 1968, which would not preclude further sub-classifications;
    - ensures that licences to carry passengers for hire and reward are restricted to drivers who have demonstrated acceptable levels of maturity and responsibility; and

- ensures that drivers licensed to carry freight are required to demonstrate such knowledge and skills required to do so safely, particularly with respect to potentially dangerous goods. (paragraph 247)
20. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all States and Territories to consider the introduction of a system for notification of a willingness to donate organs as an anatomical gift, under the provisions of the appropriate Organ Transplantation Act. (paragraph 253)
  21. a pilot study of graduated licensing be undertaken in one State, in co-operation with the Office of Road Safety. (paragraph 264)
  22. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States and Territories to establish central driver records systems using compatible techniques and standardised information Australia-wide; and the Commonwealth Government allocate funds to assist in the establishment of central driver records systems in each State and Territory on condition that the systems used are compatible and contain standardised information. (paragraph 284)
  23. the Minister for the Capital Territory, without delay, introduce a system of licensing driving instructors which ensures that instructors have had a minimum of three years driving experience, and have demonstrated an ability to teach. (paragraph 286)
  24. the Minister for Transport be requested to raise with the Australian Transport Advisory Council, at the earliest opportunity, the desirability of the introduction of a standard Australian licence. (paragraph 291)
  25. the Office of Road Safety evaluate the validity of the points demerit schemes currently operating in Australia. This evaluation should include an examination of ways to:
    - encourage greater uniformity; and
    - link points demerit schemes more effectively with other sanctioning options, and with driver improvement programs. (paragraph 305)
  26. the Office of Road Safety seek the co-operation of the Queensland Departments of Transport and Police, with a view to sponsoring the joint evaluation of a driver improvement program. (paragraph 321)
  27. the Departments of Health and Transport initiate and support studies, including pilot programs, to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitative programs aimed at modification of the behaviour of drink-drivers. (paragraph 331)
  28. the Minister for Social Security provide regional rehabilitation units in additional country centres as a matter of priority. (paragraph 346)
  29. the Federal Government make available through the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Scheme, more Commonwealth cars that can be suitably fitted with modifications and aids for use as training vehicles for the disabled; a pool of suitable vehicles be established in major metropolitan centres for loan to nominated driving schools in country areas undertaking the instruction of disabled learner drivers; and the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service make available the services and advice of qualified driving instructors to driving schools in country areas, nominated to undertake instruction of disabled learner drivers. (paragraph 360)

30. the Commonwealth Government assess the feasibility of introducing Australia-wide minimum standards of safety and quality for driving aids for the disabled. (paragraph 388)
31. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States and Territories to implement procedures for checking installation of vehicle modifications for the disabled. (paragraph 389)
32. the Minister for Social Security consider developing a manual of information and advice for disabled motorists including details of vehicle modifications and aids available both in Australia and overseas. (paragraph 394)
33. the Minister for the Capital Territory establish a system of parking permits for disabled people similar to that operating in New South Wales; and ACRUPTC give consideration to recommending the introduction of comparable legislation in other States. (paragraph 406)
34. the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States and Territories to designate disabled drivers as essential users of petrol during petrol shortages. (paragraph 407)

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

1. The behaviour of road users is one of the major factors contributing to road accidents. It is also one of the most difficult factors to influence through various safety programs. Road accidents are rarely caused by a single factor, and it is usually the behaviour of the driver that is the final link in the causes of a crash. Attempts to modify driver behaviour through education, training, licensing, and the imposition of legal sanctions are usually costly, and the results are, at best, unpredictable.

2. Road safety efforts in Australia in the past have concentrated mainly on modifications to motor vehicles, the road system and the environment. These programs have tended to be both simpler to implement and more cost-effective in reducing the incidence of accidents and severity of injury than have attempts to change road user behaviour. It has been acknowledged that the task of driving is of sufficient complexity to require that the driver be given as much assistance as possible from the environment. This is the purpose of many traffic engineering measures. Improvements in road systems and in vehicle design in recent years have been impressive. Australian road safety initiatives have led the world in some areas, such as the introduction of compulsory wearing of seat belts. We are fast reaching the stage where many more dramatic improvements in these areas are unlikely and extremely expensive. It would seem an appropriate time to take driver behaviour off the 'too hard' shelf and attempt to initiate some constructive programs in this area. This Committee's 1980 Report on *Alcohol, Drugs and Road Safety* was an attempt to move in this direction. An assessment of education, training, and licensing is the next step.

3. Programs aimed at changing driver behaviour have been based on intuition and 'good ideas' rather than well-researched measures proven to be effective. Not only is there a lack of objective and conclusive research, but there is no comprehensive data available on which to base this much needed research. Until it is possible to correlate individual driving records with crash records, research in this field will be seriously hampered.

### BACKGROUND

4. Past road safety practices have assumed that any form of driver education and training must make better and safer drivers, who consequently will have fewer crashes. Research indicates, but not conclusively, that this is not the case. It appears that an aberrant attitude to driving rather than lack of skills contributes to many crashes. For optimum effectiveness, education and training should concentrate on behavioural modification through developing improved attitudes to driving rather than skills training. As yet the best way to achieve this objective is not known.

5. Similarly, it has not been established whether the imposition of sanctions through the licensing process improves drivers. It is likely that changes in the system that offer drivers non-punitive means of improving their driving performance will have more effect than sanctions designed to punish them.

6. Many people mistakenly assume that a core of bad drivers continually have accidents and that road safety programs should be aimed at identifying this small group and either attempt to keep them off the road or make them better and more safe drivers through some form of training. In fact, research shows that most people who have a

serious accident will not have another for a very long time, if ever. Serious crashes are rare events for individuals.<sup>1</sup>

7. Because it is unlikely that a driver who has been involved in an accident will have another in a short space of time, programs aimed at influencing only those who have had accidents will not prove to be cost-effective. Measures to improve the understanding of the interrelationships between factors in the road system, and to develop the right attitudes to driving in all potential drivers from a very young age, have more merit.

8. Similarly, it is not possible to use the licensing process as a method of sifting out those drivers most likely to have crashes in the future. Screening methods have not been able to achieve this. Although driving should be considered a privilege and not a right, it is a privilege that must be extended to the great majority of the population. To do otherwise would not be equitable or feasible. Such a system could lead to greater numbers of unlicensed drivers driving. The aim of education, training and licensing should be to improve the attitudes of the vast majority of people who will become road users and those who will eventually enter the driving population.

9. Studies done by the New South Wales Traffic Accident Research Unit (TARU) reveal that many of the human factors which largely contribute to crashes are 'temporary aberrations', that is, factors which affect concentration or judgement such as worry about work or domestic problems, fatigue in the form of sleep deprivation and even colds or influenza which affect the hearing and general well-being. Many such influences are only temporary, but when they are long-term like unemployment worries, drivers do not realise that reduced concentration increases their likelihood of crash involvement.<sup>2</sup>

## SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

10. The development of a competent and safe driver begins very early in life, long before reaching the minimum licensing age. Pre-school children are already developing an understanding of the road system as pedestrians, passengers, and later as cyclists. Driver development should be seen as a sequential process from educating the very young in appropriate attitudes to general road use through to training in manipulative skills which culminates in the granting of a licence. Post-licensing driver improvement programs are also part of the process.

11. Although the process is seen as a continuing and integrated one, for the purposes of the Inquiry it has been divided into four major subject areas in Part A: education, training, licensing and driver improvement. The problems disabled drivers face are dealt with in Part B as their needs are more specific and often different from those of other drivers. Where references to the specific problems that exist for disabled drivers relate to other sections of the Report, such references have been incorporated in the relevant sections.

12. Although much of the evidence indicates that the scope for improvements in road safety based on human factors may be limited, there is little to be gained in tackling the problem with pessimism. While behaviour can be modified, results cannot be achieved over-night, as was the case with seat belt legislation. Since programs cannot be evaluated immediately it is not possible to experiment with various measures on a trial and error basis. Resources are limited and must be spent on proven measures. Since these measures cannot be developed without a more extensive data base, it would be more appropriate to use the limited resources to establish this data base, rather than directing finances to measures which are based on 'hunches' that although acceptable to the community, may achieve little in terms of road safety.

## PREVIOUS REPORTS

**13.** Although some of the issues raised in this Report have already been the subject of previous reports to Parliament, the Committee considers that if effective measures are to be introduced, driver development through education, training and licensing must be considered together as part of one process. This Committee tabled a report on *Heavy Vehicle Safety* in 1977 which referred specifically to training heavy vehicle drivers. The report on *Motorcycle and Bicycle Safety* tabled in 1978 incorporated recommendations on training and education, and the report on *Alcohol, Drugs and Road Safety* in 1980 considered the possibility of behaviour modification with respect to consumption of alcohol and drugs by drivers and of alcohol rehabilitation centres.

**114.** In September 1977 R.S. Coppin produced a report entitled *Driver Licence and Driver Improvement Programs—A National Review* at the request of the Department of Transport. In 1978-79 the Advisory Committee on Road User Performance and Traffic Codes (ACRUPTC) prepared a report on *Guidelines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia*. The Report was considered and endorsed in principle by the Australian Transport Advisory Council (ATAC) in July 1980. The Committee found these two documents of great assistance when considering the licensing process and driver improvement programs. A number of witnesses criticised the lack of action on recommendations made in the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report'.

- 
1. Evidence, p. 1147
  2. Evidence, p. 1138

## PART A.

### CHAPTER 2

## Education

15. The basic aim of driver education is to bring about a gradual change in community attitudes to the task of driving, over a comparatively long period of time. Education programs aimed at the road user should not be expected to produce instantaneous changes in behaviour. If an attempt is made to assess the effectiveness of campaigns in the short term, this may underestimate their value by ignoring any long term changes in attitude. The benefits of education programs in schools may not be apparent in road safety terms until the present school population reaches adulthood.

16. The transport system is one of the most complex systems in our society. The three fundamental elements of the system are:

- the vehicle;
- the road and related physical environment; and
- the road user and social environment.

17. Road safety education should aim to affect the behaviour of the road user within the social environment. Although road accidents are usually the result of a combination of causes, the behaviour of the driver is always the common factor. Any improvement in driver behaviour that can be achieved through education, while perhaps not immediately reducing the number of accidents, may influence one of the major factors of accident causation.

### ROAD USER BEHAVIOUR

18. There is no doubt that road accidents are a direct consequence of driver behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Because of this fact it has been a popular community belief that any attempt to reduce traffic accidents should begin by first identifying irresponsible or reckless drivers, and then implementing programs to control or treat them.

19. Although road users are the major contributors to road accidents, they are the most obstinate part of the system to change. However, it is recognised that road user behaviour must be changed if there is to be a major impact in this area. Research is required to establish how behaviour can be influenced, and how motivational factors affect road user behaviour. Some work has been done in this area recently, particularly in relation to publicity campaigns in New South Wales but most evaluations have proved negative.<sup>2</sup>

20. People drive the way they do for many different reasons. There are various different motivational effects on driving. For example, the reason a person drives at a particular speed or attempts a particular manoeuvre may be due to the need to get from one point to another within a certain time limit. There may also be other factors involved, such as the thrill of speeding or impressing one's peers. Acting against this is the perceived risk of a crash, or the perceived risk of apprehension by the police. Many drivers see the risk of losing their lives through a crash as minimal, so the motivational loading resulting from the risk of death may be very insignificant.

21. It is not possible to assess the effects on driving performance of various motivational factors without further research. Campaigns aimed at influencing driver behaviour through educational programs cannot be effectively designed without the benefit of further soundly based research projects.

22. The Committee recommends that:

- **the Office of Road Safety within the Department of Transport, undertake research on the factors influencing driver behaviour, particularly risk-taking behaviour.**

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATTITUDES

23. A distinction is usually made between driver training and driver education on the basis that training implies instruction and practice in specific skills, usually under supervision, while the term education is used to cover a wider range of activities including non-structured learning situations and the imparting of attitudes and information.

### The role of the parent

24. Road user education should begin in the home and continue throughout schooling. Socialisation in the family environment appears to be of far greater importance than institutional schemes aimed at achieving desirable behaviour patterns.<sup>3</sup> As the child moves through the phases of passenger, pedestrian and cyclist, and eventually a licensed motor vehicle user, the aspects of road safety which need to be emphasised change correspondingly.

25. Families and parents should be encouraged to set an example and to teach their children aspects of road safety at a very early age when the children are not yet mentally capable of comprehending a dangerous situation. They should be aware of the example they set. A child quickly learns to imitate the actions of parents. In most cases the first experience a child has as a road user is as a passenger in a motor vehicle. If a parent breaks the law, or exhibits discourteous behaviour and perhaps accompanies this with physical and verbal aggression, it will be seen by the small child as an example of expected behaviour. Over time a child passenger will develop an attitude similar to that of the parent. If parents are made more aware of the importance of setting a good example an added benefit may be that those who may pay little attention to road laws when alone, may come to modify their own behaviour as a result of continually instructing children to obey laws.

26. Parents should make a habit of often discussing road safety matters with their children. They should spend time instructing their children on the correct way to cross roads and to obey road laws. By the time an adolescent drives a car his or her attitudes will have already been developed. By this stage the adolescent should be familiar with road laws and accept the concept of enforcement of the law by police.

27. The Committee emphasises the importance of developing correct attitudes in children at a very early age. It recognises that governments have an important role to play in developing community awareness, but that essentially it is within the family unit that attitudes are formed and reinforced. The Commonwealth Government can be instrumental in developing correct attitudes by encouraging media advertising to inform the community of the importance of early childhood road user experiences. Advertising programs aimed directly at parents in the form of community service advertisements sponsored by media organisations should be promoted. (*See also* para. 88.)

28. The Committee recommends that:

**the Office of Road Safety undertake a national public education program to:**

- **make parents aware of their responsibilities for the education of their children in road safety from an early age; and**

- **impress upon parents the need to set an example of safe and considerate road user behaviour.**

### **Publicity Advisory Committee on Education in Road Safety**

29. The Australian Transport Advisory Council (ATAC) created the Publicity Advisory Committee on Education in Road Safety (PACERS) in 1972 to advise and co-ordinate on a national level, the conduct of educational programs undertaken by government authorities.

30. All educational materials printed by the Office of Road Safety are examined by PACERS representatives from each State. This ensures that the material is consistent with local regulations and requirements. PACERS ensures that the material is designed for specific grades from kindergarten through to high school. PACERS recently purchased a curriculum unit on bicycle education, prepared by the Victorian Road Safety and Traffic Authority (RoSTA) in co-operation with the Victorian Education Department, for evaluation purposes throughout Australia.<sup>4</sup> The Committee recognises the need for government action in this area.

### **A National Direction**

31. The evidence received by the Committee reflected considerable consensus of opinion on the significance of education in road safety. The national road safety education effort should be designed to develop safe road user behaviour; to engender public support for, or acceptance of, legislative and traffic control measures; and to provide helpful road user information to the community generally. It should also assist decision-makers and decision-influencers in determining priorities for, and attitudes towards, the safe operation of the road transport system.

32. The road safety education effort should concentrate on groups learning to cope with new experiences, like child pedestrians and learner drivers, as well as attempting to influence road user behaviour and attitudes in areas such as drink-driving and seat belt usage.

### **Earliest age to teach road safety**

33. The Committee believes that education in road safety has a place in the school system from a very early age, continuing throughout primary and secondary schooling. For young children, road safety education should be consistent with their psychological, emotional and physical development, incorporating the development of knowledge and skills initially as pedestrians, then as cyclists and later as potential motorists.

34. General safety consciousness and a positive attitude to traffic and safety should be developed in children at an early age. During a child's formative years it is possible to convey impressions and to foster levels of awareness and respect for fellow road users that will remain throughout the rest of the child's life. An awareness of hazards and a responsibility to, and consideration for, other road users is a vital part of sharing roads effectively and safely.

35. There is no clear agreement on the earliest age at which road safety education should begin. Parental guidance in road safety education should begin at about age three or four. One witness suggested the age of two would not be too early to begin instilling a consciousness of road safety.<sup>5</sup>

36. The Committee recommends that:  
**the Education Department in conjunction with the Office of Road Safety, support State and Territory efforts in ensuring that road safety, including pedestrian education, be taught as part of a general safety awareness program to young school children from the first year in school onwards.**

## **ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

### **Previous approaches**

37. Teaching to promote road safety awareness has been undertaken in Australian schools for many years. Promotion of an awareness of road safety has generally been accepted as one of the normal tasks of a school, but has not received any special emphasis. Agencies outside the school, such as the police and road safety authorities, have provided occasional support to schools.

38. External teaching sources such as road safety field officers, the police or fantasy creatures such as 'Hector the Cat' expressing road safety messages have attempted to present information in isolated sessions. The lack of formal teacher training, the large numbers of students, and the intermittancy of such programs has rendered their contribution to road safety of questionable effectiveness.

39. The traditional approach to road safety education at school has been twofold; classroom lectures on road safety knowledge and attitudes, and pre-driver education and training in late secondary years orientated towards skills training.

40. High school driver training courses aim to develop driving skills with passing the formal driver licence test in mind. The emphasis has been on practical and theoretical skills training, with considerable time spent in the vehicle. It is considered by most traffic safety education experts that this approach should be given considerably less emphasis, as it has not been possible to show that such skill training is effective in reducing accidents. Emphasis on appropriate knowledge and attitudes to the driving task are now seen to be of greater relevance. (See paras. 117-8.) However, some witnesses stressed that some in-car training should be retained to help encourage interest in the education program as a whole, rather than for any development of skills that may result.

### **Road safety education in primary schools**

41. Primary school children (aged five to eleven) have a higher pedestrian accident involvement per head of population than any other age group. (Children aged under five are infrequently exposed to road traffic, but when they do cross or play on the road their risk of accident is even higher than for older school children.)<sup>6</sup> This emphasises the need for pre-school parental involvement.

42. Traffic safety education programs based on theory alone have limited effectiveness. Theory can produce knowledge but practice in a real situation produces the modified behaviour which is the ultimate aim of a safety program. Children should never become passive recipients of knowledge and facts. They should be encouraged to formulate questions and answers about the road environment.

43. Road safety education should include instruction in pedestrian behaviour, bicycle roadcraft, riding and maintenance and the correct use of approved restraints when riding in motor cars.

44. Both theory and practice should be properly graded and sequential, emphasising learning about the road environment before attempting to use it. For example, relevant

concepts on which a road crossing procedure may depend, should be taught before the actual crossing procedure is introduced. This approach may need to be modified if teachers feel that some of their children are at risk in traffic due to unreal adult expectations.

45. The concept that pedestrian education should include a large component of practical activities is supported by West German traffic safety educators.<sup>7</sup> West German experience has found that no matter which method is used to teach children the rules of the road and to make them aware of the dangers, it is the practical experience in traffic which imparts the knowledge really necessary for their safety. With this emphasis on practical experience, and the large number of students per teacher, the involvement of parents for the practical aspects of training cannot be too highly stressed.

### **Children's traffic schools**

46. The provision of practical experience can be aided by the use of children's traffic schools. These special schools should simulate the road environment as realistically as possible. Children's traffic schools have tended to become more popular, as resources and teachers become more scarce. It has been shown however that children's traffic schools although presenting a simulated road system in a low risk situation, should only be considered as the intermediate phase between theory and experience in the real traffic system.<sup>8</sup>

47. It has been suggested by RoSTA that one of the main benefits of children's traffic schools is that they provide a stimulus to teachers to promote road safety on a continuing basis. RoSTA is investigating the feasibility of undertaking an evaluation of the Essendon Traffic School, the largest of its type in Victoria. The school provides basic training in road crossing behaviour, use of restraints and other aspects of road use to primary school children.<sup>9</sup>

### **An integrated curriculum**

48. Traffic safety programs in schools must be aimed at making children aware of the total traffic environment and their role within it. Teaching programs should incorporate as many local examples as possible to ensure that students identify with the subject matter. Safety education, although an integral part of the school curriculum should not be highlighted as a separate subject, but should be a constant theme underlying other subject areas.

49. In the primary curriculum there is a need for the teacher to incorporate subjects dealing with general safety, including safety in the home, at school, in playgrounds and walking and riding to school. These topics would then lead on to specific issues related to walking in traffic or crossing the road. At primary school the wider issue of safety should be emphasised, not only safety in the traffic system. The Education Department of Victoria has implemented a course which follows these guidelines.

50. A report from the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra has stated that in the past schools were too concerned with specific and separate subjects like history and geography. It proposed that instead, schools should develop integrated curricula around the skills and body of knowledge necessary to better equip students to take their place in the community.<sup>10</sup>

51. In the period just prior to the minimum licensing age road safety aspects should be integrated as specific examples in other subjects in the school curriculum. An example would be the extension of traditional science subjects incorporating theories of friction,

energy, momentum and centre of gravity to applications in the design of and handling of motorcycles and motor vehicles.<sup>11</sup> There are many aspects of science, mathematics, biology and social sciences which could make use of road safety themes to convey certain principles. A student could be taught the difficulty in trying to stop a fast moving bicycle, posed as a mathematical problem rather than lecturing on stopping a bicycle in a separate road safety lesson. The Victorian Education Department has recently introduced a physics textbook into high schools based on these principles. Similarly, the use of examples of the effect of alcohol on drivers would raise an early consciousness of the problems of drink-driving. Problems based on road safety principles should also be included in examinations to increase the motivation to learn.

52. Traffic safety education in Victoria and South Australia has moved very much in this direction. The increased acceptability of traffic safety education in schools in those States is apparent. This approach is limited to material which can be readily assimilated by general teachers who are road safety laymen. Teachers can be greatly assisted by the development of special curriculum units produced by road safety experts in consultation with education experts. In Victoria such units are produced by RoSTA with the assistance of seconded teachers.

53. The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) suggested that general class teachers could be supported by specialist teachers provided by road safety organisations.<sup>12</sup> However, the Committee considers that the development of curriculum committees would be a more cost-effective way to integrate road safety and education, and would ensure optimum acceptance of curriculum units by schools.

54. Some witnesses suggested making road safety education a compulsory subject.<sup>13</sup> The introduction of a compulsory road safety subject would not be necessary if an integrated approach to a road safety curriculum were introduced.

#### **A curriculum committee**

55. For road safety education to be taken seriously within the education system and to assist development of appropriate curriculum units, there is a need for a controlling body or committee in each State. Traffic safety education embraces both education methods and road safety. The committee should therefore include representatives from the State education department and the State road safety organisation. Other organisations with particular specialist expertise in traffic safety education should also be represented.

56. In Victoria the Education Department has instituted a Traffic Safety Education Curriculum Standing Committee which co-ordinates the integration of road safety topics with other subjects in the curriculum (*see* Appendix 4). It also develops resource material units to be used by teachers.<sup>14</sup> The Education Department in co-operation with other organisations has assisted the development and rapid expansion of this area of study.

57. To ensure acceptance of traffic safety as a subject area of equal importance to other areas in the normal curriculum, it is important that the controlling committee be under the auspices of the State education department. This would ensure acceptance by the education department of the policies and resource material approved by the controlling committee.

58. The whole approach in Victoria and South Australia is to provide sufficient material to the teacher to ensure that preparation time is minimised. Consequently, little additional preparation should be necessary by the teachers and costs should be minimised. As the road safety education of children, other than by parents, is primarily carried out in the classroom, close co-operation is necessary between road safety and education authorities. Too many road safety materials produced over the last 10 years

have failed because they have been just an additional load on the teachers. Co-ordination of the program at a State or national level would reduce any costs involved.

59. The funding of such a committee's activities and products should be the responsibility of the State road safety organisation, to avoid any unnecessary drain on education department finances and to further aid acceptance of traffic safety education.

60. The committee should be supported by sub-committees concerned with operational matters such as the development of curriculum units. Three sub-committees, each covering one of the three phases of road user development, would seem to be appropriate. These sub-committees should cover:

- Pedestrian/passenger phase;
- Bicycle rider phase; and
- Pre-licence, 'learner' operator phase.

Each sub-committee should include teachers at levels appropriate to the level of education of the road user group covered by the particular sub-committee. Representatives from organisations capable of assisting the operational activities of the particular sub-committee should also be included.

61. The parent committee should be concerned with only policy aspects of road safety education. The key to success of this committee would be to ensure the status of the chairman in the education department hierarchy is high. In this way, a major step would be taken towards ensuring that the activities of the committee, and traffic safety education generally, would be taken seriously within the education authority of the State concerned. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that:

- **the Department of Education in conjunction with the Office of Road Safety, encourage and support State efforts in establishing road safety curriculum committees which have the responsibility of co-ordinating the integration of road safety topics with other subjects in school curricula; and**
- **that representatives on the road safety curriculum committees be drawn from education authorities and road safety organisations, and be established under the auspices of each State education authority.**

### **Driver education and training in secondary schools**

62. Since the operation of motorised vehicles is the most critical aspect of road user behaviour in terms of the potential for causing death or injury, the education process related to this phase should take place over a long period of time, not just during the year immediately prior to the minimum age of licensing. Students at the licensing age today inherit a far more complex road system than any other previous generation. Education and training must be geared to this increasing complexity.

63. The aim of a driver education program should be to develop an understanding of the physical, social, psychological, moral and legal factors which influence the individual's behaviour in the total traffic environment. An effective program should show evidence of developing behaviour patterns which indicate that the student has gained the appropriate knowledge and attitudes.

64. As young people near the age when they are eligible to apply for a learner's permit to drive they become aware of the emphasis our society places on the motor vehicle. It is an ideal age to prepare learner drivers for their experience as drivers by emphasising education programs aimed at developing the necessary knowledge and attitudes to make them careful and prudent drivers. The Road Safety Council of the Australian Capital Territory recommends that programs encompassing essential road safety principles, legal obligations of drivers, the effects of drugs and alcohol on drivers and vehicle maintenance should be mandatory before applying for a learner's permit.<sup>15</sup>

65. The Second Interim Report of the Select Committee on Education in Queensland recommended that:

... the Department of Education (Queensland) and other educational authorities should progress towards mandatory completion by all students of the Queensland Road Safety Council theoretical Learner Driver Course prior to their leaving school.<sup>16</sup>

66. Work is in progress to expand this course under the title 'High School Driver Education Programme'. The course is designed to encompass one full semester. It is to be implemented on a trial basis during the second semester of 1982 in six schools in North Brisbane with a view to its possible introduction throughout the education system in 1983.

67. To be consistent with road safety education courses throughout earlier school years which are aimed at developing correct attitudes to road safety, driver education in schools in the pre-licensing stage should emphasise the development of appropriate attitudes towards driving. Driver education in schools should not attempt to train students to a level which allows them to obtain a driver's licence without further preparation or guidance. The actual in-car training should be intended as a teaching aid only to show the relevance of the classroom activity,<sup>17</sup> and for motivational interest. Many witnesses stressed that the main reason for giving students behind-the-wheel training is to motivate them to take an interest in a complete program, rather than any attempt to teach them specific driving skills.<sup>18</sup>

68. Because of the role of alcohol and drugs in road accidents considerable emphasis should also be given to this aspect in safety education programs at the secondary school level. A separate curriculum unit devoted to alcohol and drugs and their effects on driving may be justified.

### **Skills training in secondary schools**

69. In recent years education authorities in a number of States have introduced programs involving practical instruction in driving skills often making use of off-road training complexes. Some witnesses questioned the effectiveness of teaching students to drive at school. It has not been proven effective in reducing the road toll.

70. As it has not been possible to show that skill training is effective in reducing traffic accidents, it is important not to concentrate on teaching manipulative skills. (See Chapter 3 for a discussion of training.) High school driver training is popular in the U.S.A. It has been shown there that high school driver education schemes do not correlate with reduced accident occurrence or violation frequency.<sup>19</sup> The effectiveness of these programs in safety terms is at best doubtful. Some witnesses called for the introduction and extension of similar programs in Australia. A number of high schools in Australia already have driver training classes, often involving the use of donated vehicles.

71. The Expert Group on Road Safety, in its 1972 Report stated that 'the continued expansion of initial driver training in Australian schools, particularly 'behind the wheel' training similar to the United States High School Driver Education Scheme, cannot be endorsed if it encroaches upon normal curriculum hours and involves expenditure of public funds'.<sup>20</sup>

72. Even if driver training in schools could be supported as a safety measure worthy of government funding there would, for early school leavers, be a gap between driver training and reaching the minimum licensing age. A scheme involving graduated entry to the ranks of licensed drivers appears to have more merit (see paras 255-63). Students who take optional driver training courses at secondary level tend to be those who are

more motivated and interested in road safety. Unless courses are compulsory they are unlikely to reach students who are most in need of them.

73. In most Victorian schools, pre-driver education is an elective subject at Year 11 level, the course sometimes being only of one term's duration. The depth of instruction in basic road safety principles is consequently limited. Because of the elective factor, and the fact that these classes are generally fairly small, they reach only a small proportion of secondary school students.

74. Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with any scientific evaluation of school driver training programs, there is no acceptable evidence to date that they lead to a reduction in accidents. It is not feasible to evaluate courses currently operating within Australia as the numbers involved are too small to reach valid conclusions. A major study is now in progress in the U.S.A. at a cost of over \$6 m. This study will be concluded in 1982, and its results could be useful in a further assessment of the value of school driver training. Should the results of any overseas studies show positive benefits, then further consideration should be given to this aspect of driver training.

75. On the basis of the evidence the Committee cannot, from a cost-effective viewpoint, support the extension of school programs which emphasise manipulative skills training. It would be of far greater benefit to concentrate the educative process on correct attitude development. The Committee accepts, however, that school driver training courses are popular, and existing ones will continue to operate. Therefore, in the interests of achieving the highest possible standards for those courses that are operating, it is suggested that worthwhile objectives for such courses should be:

1. To develop an understanding of the motor vehicle and the effect it has on our present society.
2. To develop an understanding of the operation of the vehicle and its limitations.
3. To establish correct basic skills and procedures in driving.
4. To achieve a desirable attitude to the regulation of traffic behaviour in our society.
5. To develop the ability to recognise, analyse and respond to traffic situations in a manner that demonstrates an awareness of the driving task.
6. To understand how society may attain maximum efficiency in the operation of its motor vehicle transport system.
7. To develop an understanding of both driver and pedestrian limitations, obligations and responsibilities from legal and social viewpoints.<sup>21</sup>

## **ROAD SAFETY TRAINING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

76. Children who leave school at or soon after attaining the minimum leaving age do not spend the whole of their pre-licence phase in the school system. In this case, they may not receive all of the road safety education directed at pre-licence operators. It was suggested that it should be compulsory for these early school leavers to attend further road safety courses at other institutions prior to licensing. In such cases not only would it be unreasonable to enforce mandatory attendance for these students at further road safety programs but it would be administratively costly and impossible to enforce.

## **COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION**

77. Road safety education in the past has suffered in terms of allocation of funds. Funds have been spent on other road safety programs where it has been easy to establish direct cost-effectiveness. This has often been at the expense of education

programs where benefits take longer to appear, and are difficult to correlate directly to education programs.

**78.** In its submission to the Committee the Commonwealth Department of Education said that there was no real consensus on the overall effectiveness of current driver education schemes. A 1971 review of U.S.A. and European efforts directed towards the assessment of driver education effectiveness, concluded that there was no clear-cut evidence to either support or reject the usefulness of driver education. A similar Australian review later concluded that driver education appeared to provide some improvement in traffic violations, but had no proven effect in reducing accident involvement.<sup>22</sup> There has been little research undertaken in this field, and what has been done is inconclusive. There is clearly a need for this gap in research to be filled.

## **EDUCATING THE MOTORING PUBLIC**

**79.** The effectiveness of road safety education programs in schools would be strengthened with an associated public education exercise communicated through the media aimed at all age groups.<sup>23</sup>

**80.** The community's tolerance of bad driving behaviour is a matter for concern. Despite road safety efforts in the past and the application of punitive measures, the incidence of drink-driving, excessive speed, carelessness and inattention when driving is very high. The negligence of the driver in this regard is a major contributing factor to road accidents. To achieve any major reduction in the road toll, these issues should become a priority action area for the relevant authorities. The Committee emphasises the importance of supporting attempts to change prevailing attitudes.

**81.** Although mass media education campaigns are costly, to a certain extent they have been proven effective. Their implementation has been more systematically evaluated over recent years than other forms of community education. Two campaigns in New South Wales, one designed to improve child pedestrian safety, and the other, the wearing of child restraints, have achieved some success. The television campaign designed to encourage the use of seat belts was comparatively successful.<sup>24</sup> The message was clear and it had a high credibility.

**82.** In the past public education material has been provided through the print media in the form of driver handbooks, brochures and pamphlets. However now there is increasing use of all relevant media. A recent example was the public education campaign leading up to the introduction throughout Australia of the T-junction rule. There is a growing body of knowledge in this field including, for example, the different treatments required to influence attitude or transmit information; the relative advantages of the different media; and the likely success of a number of themes.<sup>25</sup>

**83.** The education of the motoring public in relation to the hazards of drinking and driving has been a long-standing concern of the Office of Road Safety. In 1979 this included the release of the highly-acclaimed film called 'Drinking, Driving, Surviving' and in 1981 the award-winning series of television commercials using the theme 'What sort of friend are you? Would you let a friend drive if he's had too much to drink?' The Committee recognises the need to see a continuation of such programs.

**84.** Road safety education programs should incorporate specific information about the adverse effect of narcotics, sleeping tablets, tranquillisers and anti-depressant drugs on critical judgement. The fact that alcohol interacts with certain drugs and increases the degree of impairment of driving skill should also be stressed. Those prescribing and dispensing drugs should advise patients of the dangers involved.

85. Efforts should be made to educate the motoring public about the effects emotional reactions such as anger, frustration and other distractions have on the driver, including the effects of certain diseases<sup>26</sup> and fatigue.<sup>27</sup> Drivers must be warned that if they are tired, they should avoid situations which are normally conducive to sleep such as the windows in a car being wound up with the heater on and having a full stomach.

86. Of great concern to the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) is the relative absence, in educational and training programs, of instruction in the nature and purpose of traffic control devices (road signs) and of the obligations of road users with respect to these devices.<sup>28</sup>

87. A current initiative of the Office of Road Safety is in the area of motorcycling, where the objective is the promotion of more consideration between different classes of road users. The intention is to make drivers of other motor vehicles more aware of the particular hazards which normal driving situations may present for motorcyclists or pedal cyclists. Potential hazards include such simple acts as the opening of car doors.<sup>29</sup>

88. Many witnesses criticised the preponderance in the mass media and television particularly, of programs sanctifying the power of the car in terms of speed. The association of alcohol with fast cars and prestigious lifestyles, and films which emphasised high speed car chases were also criticised.<sup>30</sup> Of great concern was the influence of programs which emphasise the apparent invincibility of characters that continually smash cars into objects. The television program 'The Dukes of Hazzard' seems one of the worst offenders. Such programs destroy the credibility of road safety publicity.

89. The society we live in encourages certain types of aggressive behaviour, especially in the young. This is most obvious in the work place, in sport and in the social scene. A dilemma arises when a young person enters a car and is expected to change his attitude and to suppress any feelings of aggression towards other road users. Vehicles must not be used as outlets for aggression. Young people must be made aware of the fact that cars are potentially dangerous weapons, and when used irresponsibly can kill.

90. The Committee recommends that:

- the Office of Road Safety continue research to establish the effectiveness of public education programs, and co-ordinate the implementation of such programs; and
- the Minister for Communications direct the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal to inquire into the influence on young people, of television programs which glamorize the association of vehicles, alcohol and speed.

## FIRST AID

91. Research has indicated that between 10% and 12% of road accident victims may have survived if they had been given first aid at the scene of the accident.<sup>31</sup> Australian research has largely overlooked the value of immediate first aid for the road accident victim. In evidence the Committee received on this subject, it was generally agreed that there is unnecessary loss of life in road accidents due to the ignorance of basic first aid of bystanders and drivers at the emergency scene. In remote areas where an injury may occur far from professional assistance, the action of other drivers or bystanders may be of critical importance if a life is to be saved.

92. A study undertaken in South Australia showed that approximately 50% of fatal accidents occurred in the country. Of these approximately 12% would probably have survived and a further 14% may have survived if basic first aid treatment had been given at the scene of the accident. There is a widely held misconception that road accident victims should not be moved by those first on the scene for fear of causing further injury.

Research by the Road Trauma Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has shown that several basic first aid measures may maintain life until the arrival of trained assistance. Basic knowledge includes: clearing the airway of any obstruction for an unconscious casualty and placing them in a 'coma position' regardless of injuries; commencing resuscitation promptly for an unconscious casualty who has stopped breathing; and controlling severe bleeding with direct pressure from the hand or an improvised pad.<sup>32</sup> It is not only increasing the number of survivors that is important, but also of increasing the quality of life enjoyed by survivors by minimising neurological damage caused by lack of oxygen, and other injury. It is for this reason that the community should be educated in the principles of first aid.

93. Extensive research in Canada, now being corroborated by recent research in Australia, has exposed the direct relationship between first aid training and general accident reduction. The St. John Ambulance Association in Canada, together with researchers from the University of York, has conducted 3 independent studies. The first study from 1970-72 involved 5,000 people: 25% of a town population. The study results show a 20-30% accident reduction in employees in industry, trained in first aid. In 1973 a second study confirmed these findings. Over the period of a year the non-trained had twice as many accidents as those who were trained.<sup>33</sup>

### Legislation

94. In Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia road traffic legislation requires that any driver who is involved in an accident must render assistance to the injured, although there is no legislation to ensure that drivers have even a basic knowledge of first aid procedures for such an emergency. Effective assistance implies practical knowledge of appropriate first aid measures which cannot be achieved by the inclusion of one or two paragraphs on first aid in a learner drivers' handbook. South Australia hopes to introduce new legislation shortly, regarding tow truck drivers who are often the first persons at the scene of an accident.<sup>34</sup>

95. In an investigation of all States and Territories, the Australian Red Cross Society found that there have been no prosecutions to date against any person giving negligent first aid treatment at the scene of an accident, although in Australia there is no legislation to prevent such action being taken by an accident victim. The majority of States in the U.S.A. have a Samaritan Clause included in legislation covering motor vehicle traffic. The requirements of the clause varies from State to State but the one common factor is that individuals who give aid or assistance at the scene of a road accident can do so without fear of prosecution arising as a result of an action taken in good faith.

96. The Committee would like to stress that as legislation exists in many States requiring that those at the scene of an accident render first aid assistance, the public should be made aware of their responsibilities in this area. However, if the public is to give this assistance without fear of civil action, the legislation requiring this assistance should include a clause to protect those rendering assistance from subsequent civil action. The fact that there have been no prosecutions to date is not a sufficient safeguard. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States to introduce legislation protecting those giving assistance at the scene of an accident from subsequent civil action as a result of that action.**

### **First aid in schools**

97. Education of the priorities for action at the scene of a road accident should be an essential part of an integrated first aid course in schools. Instruction and practical skills should be adapted to suit the capabilities of the school child, so that by 15 years of age he or she can render basic life support and first aid efficiently.

98. In some European countries including West Germany and Norway where drivers must attend compulsory courses in first aid, the courses have been regarded as less effective than the method of integrating first aid training through the education system. First aid is a practical skill and to maintain proficiency, regular retraining is necessary. The logistics of ensuring this for every driver is considerable and impracticable but if the elements of basic first aid are instilled from early primary school age, there is more chance that such skills will be retained. The Committee accepts that conducting comprehensive instruction in first aid throughout the school years is an additional burden on an already heavily loaded curriculum, but considers it of such importance to deserve priority.

99. The Department of Health and the Department of Education in Queensland have established a Committee to develop an integrated first aid program in schools, from kindergarten to grade 12. Pre-school children are informed about emergency telephone numbers and the people from whom to get help, such as the police, ambulance and other support groups. They are then taught simple first aid procedures with a safety emphasis in the junior school so by about 10 years of age they can be taught the care of an unconscious person, how to turn the unconscious person on his side and clear away airway obstruction. Children are also taught resuscitation. By 15 years of age the children are instructed in proper assessment of collapse, diagnosis of cardiac arrest and cardiac pulmonary resuscitation so that they can cope with the victims of heart attack, electric shocks or road accidents, and near drownings.<sup>35</sup>

100. In South Australia the Education Department has been committed to six hours of basic life support for all year 10 students, that is, students about the age of 15 years. In addition there is a move to train teachers in first aid which is considered cost-effective. The Teachers' Registration Board in South Australia will soon require a certificate of first-aid competence before a teacher is registered. This measure will effectively ensure that first aid training is undertaken as part of teacher training.<sup>36</sup>

### **Pre-licensing compulsory first aid course**

101. In West Germany applicants for a driver's licence for a passenger car must prove attendance at a first aid course for a minimum period of three sessions of two hours each. An evaluation of this measure has shown that compulsory short courses of first aid undertaken prior to licensing have had a measurable effect on the number of fatalities per accident.<sup>37</sup> Under such a scheme the onus would be on the individual to produce evidence of meeting stated requirements. A certificate or statement of attendance would be issued to each person. The St. John Ambulance Association advised that the cost of attendance of such a course would be approximately \$10. The cost should be borne by the student. A further option is that several questions on basic first aid knowledge could be included in the written licence test.

### **Community Acceptance**

102. The arguments for compulsory versus voluntary training are not new. If the ability to render basic life-sustaining assistance is regarded as a social skill which all

road users should possess to some degree, then training should be compulsory. Those who undertake first aid training voluntarily are mostly mature citizens who are motivated to learn to be prepared to act when an emergency occurs, already conscious of their civic responsibilities.

**103.** Experience has indicated that voluntary training schemes are unsuccessful. The Macquarie Driving School in New South Wales (one of the largest driving schools in Australia) offered all successful students as part of its driving program a free St. John Ambulance First Aid course. Not one student took advantage of this offer.

**104.** An assessment of the practicality of compulsory first aid courses for first licence applicants must include a study of:

- existing successful models operating in Europe;
- the ability of Australian first aid teaching organisations to cope; and
- the costs of implementation.

Fortunately, numerous study models exist as compulsory first aid training for first licence applicants is an accepted reality in several European countries. The St. John Ambulance Association believes that existing Australian first aid teaching organisations probably already possess the manpower resources needed to conduct short, basic, first aid sessions for all first licence applicants.

### **First Aid Syllabus**

**105.** The syllabus for a basic first aid course should include the:

- assessment of incident, danger, and how to obtain expert assistance;
- management of airway, breathing, circulation, bleeding control, care of the unconscious casualty; and
- general appreciation of the needs of the injured person.<sup>38</sup>

Such a syllabus may be learnt in 6 hours, delivered in two blocks of 3 hours each. The emphasis would be on learning practical, not theoretical skills. Formal assessment is probably desirable but may not be practical within the time constraints a short course would impose. Students would receive a certificate of course completion.

**106.** The introduction of compulsory first aid courses for the first applicants for a licence to drive a motor vehicle will directly increase the numbers of trained people available to render immediate life-sustaining assistance to accident victims.

**107.** The Committee recommends that:

- **the Commonwealth Education Department co-ordinate and assist State education departments in implementing first aid courses in schools as part of the curricula; and**
- **the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all State licensing authorities to implement legislation requiring that all first licence applicants provide evidence of having undertaken a training course in basic first aid within approximately four years of licence application.**

### **First Aid Kits**

**108.** The requirement that all new motor vehicles sold and registered in Australia should be equipped with a standard first aid kit is an important adjunct to first aid training. The starting point for an investigation to set a suitable Australian standard should be the 1975 International Association for Accident and Trauma Medicine (IAATM)

and the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS) published recommendations which included:

- contents of a standardised first aid kit for motor vehicles; and
- legislation requiring that standardised kits be supplied by the selling agent of new motor vehicles.

These recommendations are now law in several European countries.

**109.** The compulsory equipping of motor vehicles would ensure that a large number of motorists are able to provide basic first aid equipment at the scene of an accident.

**110.** Since the IAATM and LRCS recommendations made in 1975, there have been improvements in the design and availability of first aid equipment. It is therefore important that a review take place in Australia before final recommendations are made. The St. John Ambulance Association believes a suitable first aid kit can be manufactured and marketed for under \$20. The emphasis should be on inexpensive small kits, rather than some of the sophisticated kits available overseas. Packaging of the kits should provide adequate long term protection for the contents. Special provision should be made for a separate storage compartment for the kit in the design of all new vehicles.

**111.** The Committee recommends that:

- **the Department of Health, in association with representatives from road safety authorities, the St. John Ambulance Association, and the Australian Red Cross Society assess first aid equipment available in Australia with a view to developing a standard first aid kit to be carried in cars and used to provide basic first aid assistance in the event of an accident; and**
- **the Minister for Transport through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States to include in their Draft Regulations the requirement that all new passenger and goods-carrying vehicles intended for normal road use be equipped with a standard first aid kit, and that the kit be carried in the vehicle at all times.**

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1. Evidence, p. 1845
  2. Evidence, p. 319
  3. Evidence, p. 319
  4. Evidence, p. 1986
  5. Evidence, p. 1309
  6. Evidence, p. 1857
  7. Evidence, p. 1859
  8. Evidence, p. 484
  9. Evidence, p. 2002
  10. Evidence, p. 753
  11. Evidence, p. 2200
  12. Evidence, p. 1854
  13. Evidence, p. 1302
  14. Evidence, p. 2200
  15. Evidence, p. 292
  16. Evidence, p. 258
  17. Evidence, p. 2021
  18. Evidence, p. 2353
  19. Evidence, p. 319
  20. *The Road Accident Situation in Australia — A National Review*, A Report to the Minister for Shipping and Transport by the Expert Group on Road Safety, AGPS, September 1972, p. 22
  21. Evidence, p. 1895
  22. Evidence, p. 421
  23. Evidence, p. 420
  24. Evidence, p. 319
  25. Evidence, p. 2564
  26. Evidence, p. 91

27. Evidence, p. 92
28. Evidence, p. 419
29. Evidence, p. 2563
30. Evidence, p. 1310
31. Evidence, p. 99
32. Evidence, p. 70
33. Evidence, p. 101
34. Evidence, p. 1601
35. Evidence, p. 1377
36. Evidence, p. 1489
37. Evidence, p. 1492
38. Evidence, p. 109

## CHAPTER 3

### Training

**112.** Driver training, for the purposes of this Report, is regarded as the practical aspect of the education process. The essential aim of driver training is to impart the skills necessary to control a vehicle. It is the part of the learning process that immediately precedes acquisition of a licence. Post-licence training is more specialised and can include advanced or defensive driving courses, special commercial driving training courses and schemes associated with driver improvement courses. Driver improvement programs for those who already have, or have had, a licence but have been involved in several crashes or have violated traffic codes will be discussed in Chapter 5.

**113.** All drivers receive some form of instruction in the basic aspects of the control of a motor vehicle prior to presenting for a licence test. All people hoping to obtain a licence to drive a motor vehicle must undergo written or oral tests of their knowledge of road rules, either at the learner permit or licensing stage. All licence applicants must satisfactorily complete a practical test before obtaining a licence. The knowledge and skills required to pass these tests, in effect, determine the syllabus for the initial training of drivers and riders. One objective of the licensing process is to ensure that a minimum standard of learning has been achieved.

#### FORM OF TRAINING

**114.** Training of the majority of drivers is derived from either commercial driving schools or from friends or relatives. Some States are beginning to develop publicly funded driving establishments. The first such facility was established at Mt Lawley in Perth by the National Safety Council of Western Australia. A similar facility exists at Oaklands Park in Adelaide, run by the Road Safety Council of South Australia. In Victoria the Goulburn Valley Driver Training Complex (GVDTC) is operated as part of the Shepparton Technical College. Queensland is currently establishing a driver training centre which will initially cater for professional drivers.

**115.** There is considerable debate over which form of training produces the best drivers. There is a widely held belief that formal pre-licence training must lead to fewer accidents. As yet, evaluation of existing methods of training has not been able to demonstrate this. Schemes evaluated have included commercial training schools, training complexes and the use of simulators.

**116.** The Road Safety and Traffic Authority of Victoria has recently completed a study involving 800 beginner drivers (*see* Appendix 6). The results indicate that there was no significant difference in the standard of skill reached between participants in various forms of training, but showed there was some improvement in knowledge and attitude in the group which received comprehensive training at GVDTC. As yet it has not been determined whether the effect of this improvement in knowledge and attitude is reflected in subsequent driver performance. Driver training complexes are very costly to establish and maintain. Authorities considering any extension of such complexes must consider the cost-benefits of these facilities with great care.

## SKILL VERSUS ATTITUDE

**117.** In-depth studies of accidents tend to indicate that it is not usually a lack of driving skill that causes crashes, but rather bad attitudes to driving.<sup>2</sup> A study in the U.S.A. has shown that top amateur racing drivers, when tested against the general population, have a much higher crash and traffic violation record. In this study samples were matched for age, sex and miles driven per year. Driving skill, or lack of it does not appear to be a major factor in accident causation.<sup>3</sup>

**118.** By their nature, driver training complexes tend to emphasise the development of manipulative skills rather than heightening comprehension of the traffic scene. The same is true of most commercial driver training schools. Research undertaken by RoSTA and discussed in paragraph 116, seems to indicate that the effectiveness of driver training could be increased by changing the way drivers are trained. More emphasis should be placed on developing the correct mental attitude to driving, and less on manipulative skills. Although most driving schools acknowledge this need, it is not accepted by the general public. Until parents and learner drivers are made aware of the importance of attitude, the emphasis will remain on skills. Driver training schools must offer courses which satisfy public needs if they are to stay in business. The lead must come through education programs in schools and media campaigns supported by government. It is not feasible to expect driving schools to change their teaching methods without a demonstrated public need.

**119.** The Committee was told that on several occasions the ARRB has been approached by community groups seeking assistance to establish driver training centres. ARRB has been asked for assistance in the design and construction of such centres and through moral and financial support. In view of the weight of evidence against driver training centres, ARRB has consistently refused to support such ventures.<sup>4</sup>

## COMPULSORY TRAINING

**120.** As the evidence seems to indicate that different forms of training have little influence on driving skills, the introduction of compulsory professional training for all drivers prior to licensing cannot be recommended. However, it is important that the results of various training programs continue to be monitored. If changes in training methods used by driving schools result in better safety records for their drivers, consideration could be given to making pre-licence training compulsory.

## MOTORCYCLISTS

**121.** The number of crashes per unit distance travelled for motorcycles is approximately seven times that for passenger cars. The probability of injury resulting from a crash is also much higher for a motorcyclist than for a car driver.<sup>5</sup> Accident data confirms that the highest risk period is in the first twelve months of riding.<sup>6</sup> Riders with less than six months riding experience are at very high risk of crash involvement.<sup>7</sup> Almost 30% of motorcycle riders killed were on learner's permits.<sup>8</sup>

**122.** In the past, motorcycle training has been virtually non-existent. Research points to the fact that many young motorcyclists do not know how to handle their bikes correctly. For example, studies have shown that many do not know how to stop a bike effectively, that is, using both front and rear brakes.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, learner motorcyclists are different to learner drivers. Manipulative skill has been shown to be more important for motorcyclists than drivers. There is a clear need for the rider to develop

vehicle control skills before being exposed to traffic. As there is a major problem during the pre-licence phase before a rider obtains a licence, riders should be tested for an ability to handle a bike off-road, prior to issuing a learner's permit. Instructors cannot accompany a learner as easily on a motorbike as they can in a car so once a rider obtains a learner's permit, he is virtually on his own.

123. With this in mind, it is likely that training programs for motorcyclists, particularly off-road training, could have a real benefit in road safety terms. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, at paragraphs 202-4.

124. Several States are now developing off-road training facilities of a modest nature, for motorcycle training alone. Queensland has operated a comprehensive program since 1976. The course is of 18 hours duration and is spread over four weeks. It covers both theory and practice with an emphasis on riding skills.<sup>10</sup> It is available in Brisbane and several other major cities. A mobile course is also being developed which can be presented in provincial areas. The course is very popular and is continuously booked out.<sup>11</sup> Similar facilities are also being developed in Victoria, where two experimental training centres to instruct learner riders in basic riding skills are being established.

125. Tasmania is in the process of establishing a pre-learner permit motorcycle training course. It began in Hobart in October 1981 as a pilot test, and it is expected to become State wide during 1982. Under the scheme, learner riders who live within a prescribed distance of the training complex must attend a course of three, 3-hour lessons mainly consisting of off-road practical instruction. At the end of the course the learner undertakes a difficult test, and if successful obtains a learner's permit. Applicants can undertake the test without completing the training program, but it is designed to require such a degree of skill that few people could pass without doing the course first. The cost of the course is \$25. Although it may not be possible to insist that all learner riders throughout Tasmania undertake the pre-learner permit licence test, making the test compulsory for those within a certain radius of the available facilities, will ensure that the majority reach a minimum standard of riding skill.

126. It may be some time before an evaluation of the Tasmanian scheme is available, but should it be proven effective in reducing motorcycle crashes, consideration should be given to introducing similar schemes in other States and Territories. The Committee therefore recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all State and Territory licensing authorities to make successful completion of a course of basic riding skills a condition for obtaining a motorcycle learner's permit.**

127. In an attempt to improve the training available to motorcyclists, PACERS will make available in the near future a series of films developed in the U.S.A. by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. Particular emphasis is given to what can be termed roadcraft, illustrating for the novice rider, how to predict and identify potentially hazardous situations. Several States have stressed the value of these films, and supported their use as a useful supplement to training programs.

## PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS

128. Extended driver training appears to have a place for professional drivers, and for driving instructors. Some companies claim to have reduced collision costs by an average of 40% after drivers have attended extended training programs. Many companies are convinced of the cost-effectiveness of these programs, and insist that their drivers do a course annually to maintain their improved record.<sup>12</sup>

129. A major transport company stated that over a six year period corresponding with the introduction of a training program both the number and severity of crashes were dramatically reduced.<sup>13</sup> However, carefully controlled research programs must be designed to scientifically evaluate the use of company training programs. Although it does appear possible for training programs to favourably influence crash records, it is not possible to assume this without a properly designed evaluative study.

130. A preliminary survey was conducted in this field in 1975.<sup>14</sup> It would be appropriate for this work to be updated and evaluated. The Committee recommends that:

**the Office of Road Safety conduct an evaluation of an extended training program designed to improve the accident record of professional drivers.**

131. Insurance companies also appear convinced of the value of driver training for commercial drivers. Australia's largest insurance company offers reductions in premiums to its fleet clients if their drivers undertake extended training programs.<sup>15</sup>

132. Although some industries operate their own training programs, many are engaging specialist driver trainers to develop programs specially suited to their particular requirements. The GVDTC in association with training personnel in relevant industries has developed many specialised programs particularly in the oil and chemical industries and in the transport of dangerous goods.<sup>16</sup> Tanker operators believe in the value of the training programs and are now requesting, through trade unions, that all members participate.<sup>17</sup>

133. In Victoria all ambulance officers have to undertake, and satisfactorily pass, a two-week driver training program at the Goulburn Valley complex as part of their training. All Victorian bus drivers wishing to carry passengers into hazardous areas, as defined in Victorian legislation, have to have a special endorsement on their licence. To obtain this endorsement, they must undertake a two-day assessment program or a four-day training program.<sup>18</sup>

## APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

134. Representatives of heavy vehicle associations claim there is at present no satisfactory training establishment for those wishing to pursue a career as a heavy vehicle driver. There appears to be a need for a training centre where the potential driver can be taught to drive a vehicle by professional instructors. These drivers should also be taught other related skills that affect road safety like loading and tarping, and obtain an understanding of the sophisticated mechanical aspects of the vehicle. Facilities to provide this type of training need be neither extensive nor expensive. Programs of this type could form part of an apprenticeship. Such a system operates in West Germany.<sup>19</sup>

135. The number of young people trained in transport operators yards is very small.<sup>20</sup> Heavy vehicle suppliers do not train many either. It is understood that New South Wales technical colleges are developing heavy vehicle mechanic's courses, but as yet none are available. Some transport companies are also developing apprenticeship systems for heavy vehicle operators.<sup>21</sup> It was suggested that by attending a centralised driving instruction complex for perhaps one year, apprentices could significantly reduce their training time in the trade.<sup>22</sup> Thomas Nationwide Transport for example, envisage a 6 year apprenticeship.

136. The Committee supports the development of apprenticeships for heavy vehicle operators, and believes training should place particular emphasis on skills which affect road safety. This would include loading and tarping, vehicle maintenance and mechanical aspects of vehicles including brake and transmission systems. The National Training Council, administered by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs

advises the Minister on measures designed to stimulate training programs for all sectors of industry and commerce, and measures to promote the value of training to industry and commerce. The Council is supported by training committees for individual industries one of which is the National Road Transport Industry Training Committee. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs initiate action to implement apprenticeship programs for heavy vehicle operators.**

## **DRIVING INSTRUCTORS**

**137.** Although it is difficult to determine the number of commercial driving schools currently operating in Australia it would appear to be in the vicinity of 400 to 500. The Committee received many critical comments about the standard of instruction of some driving schools. As many learner drivers will continue to require professional training, there is an obligation on governments to ensure that the standard of training is as high as possible.

**138.** Many driving instructors who gave evidence to the Inquiry called for more stringent controls on the quality and standard of driving schools.<sup>23</sup> The industry itself is concerned to improve its image with the public, and is looking to government for support.

**139.** The prosperity of driving schools relies heavily on the number of students who pass the licence test. Many witnesses consider that the test is not an adequate examination of driving skills, and tends to encourage instructors to teach their pupils how to pass the test, rather than how to become good drivers.<sup>24</sup>

**140.** Many representatives of the driving instruction industry believe that if the standard of driving instructors is improved, it is likely that research will begin to show an improvement in the crash statistics of drivers who have been taught professionally.<sup>25</sup>

### **Instruction in heavy vehicles**

**141.** Training learner drivers in heavy vehicles presents financial problems for driving schools. Evidence was given on the cost to instructors, of purchasing, registering and maintaining heavy vehicles to be used for instruction purposes. It is not financially practical for driving instructors to pay expensive registration and insurance fees on vehicles which may only be required intermittently. Instruction is therefore often carried out on the smallest vehicle in any one class. Installing dual controls on sophisticated trucks is also extremely expensive. The financial disincentives of offering heavy vehicle driver training may mean that standards are lowered.

**142.** Many witnesses claimed that the licence test for heavy vehicle drivers is inadequate in terms of testing manipulative skills. There were complaints that routes selected by examiners for practical tests are often not appropriate for heavy vehicles. For example several instances were given of examiners requiring applicants driving articulated vehicles to execute U-turns where it was physically impossible to do so.<sup>26</sup> Driving heavy vehicles is a special skill which requires specialist training. The introduction of specialised training courses as discussed earlier would overcome many of these difficulties.

## Qualifications

143. At present the qualifications required for driving instructors vary from State to State. It is likely that standards of instruction also vary. One way of achieving an improvement in instruction standards would be to register driving schools.<sup>27</sup> Any person instructing a learner should have held a licence of the same class for at least 3 years.

144. Evidence showed that in South Australia driving instructors must pass a difficult examination prior to being issued with a professional driving instructor's licence.<sup>28</sup> In Queensland, driving instructors must be licensed and instruct on behalf of a registered driving instruction school. To obtain an instructor's licence, applicants must undergo a number of medical checks and written and oral knowledge tests, as well as a practical test of driving and instructing ability. (See Appendix 3 for further details of requirements of all States and Territories.)

145. In the U.S.A., not only do instructors have to be licensed to teach, but owners and/or operators of driving schools must be licensed. Each licence has certain qualifications relating to education, funding, insurance and property.<sup>29</sup> The aim is to protect the consumer from disreputable driving schools.

146. In Australia, the only State or Territory where instructors do not require a special licence is the Australian Capital Territory, where a driver may establish a driving school the day after obtaining his first licence. This situation is totally unsatisfactory (see para. 285). Western Australia and Victoria are the only States that require satisfactory completion of a driver instruction course.

147. If agreement was reached nationally on a code for licensing, it would then follow that both licence examination and driving instruction could be improved. Such a national code need not call for complete uniformity. It could incorporate individual State requirements whilst maintaining a common standard. This will be discussed in more detail in the next Chapter.

148. There is considerable scope for self-regulation within the driving school industry. If a national code of practice for driving schools could be established, then schools whose instruction is in compliance with the national code of practice should have an advantage in attracting clients over schools which do not. A national publicity campaign should be developed in conjunction with the national code of practice, to ensure the public is aware that some driving schools may provide higher standards of instruction.

149. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States to work with driving schools to develop a national industry code of practice.**

## DEFENSIVE DRIVING COURSES

150. Defensive driving is defined as 'driving in such a manner as to avoid being involved in a collision despite the incorrect actions of others, or the presence of adverse driving conditions'.<sup>30</sup> Most reputable driving schools would teach an element of defensive driving to all learner drivers, although defensive driving courses are usually considered an additional form of training taken after the licensing stage.

151. In contrast to courses in advanced driving which emphasise technique, courses in defensive driving emphasise appropriate defensive responses to, and anticipation of, the actions of other drivers. Overseas studies have shown defensive driver training to be beneficial for participants in terms of accident reduction. Evaluation of such courses,

which mainly involve volunteers, is difficult since the results obtained by a highly self-motivated group may not be applicable to drivers as a whole.

**152.** The Queensland Road Safety Council offers a defensive driving course similar to those operated in the U.S.A. and Canada. It has conducted courses for more than 70,000 drivers. A major insurance company recently decided to offer concessions of 5% on premiums to motorists who had completed the course.<sup>31</sup> The Office of Road Safety is currently undertaking an evaluation of the effectiveness of this course.

### **ADVANCED DRIVER TRAINING**

**153.** Advanced driving courses are those which emphasise the handling of conventional vehicles in hazardous situations. Despite the widespread belief that driver training involving the development of specific manipulative skills will have a beneficial effect on safety, advanced driving courses have not been shown to reduce the subsequent accident involvement of participants.

**154.** In the U.S.A. a study was undertaken to test the feasibility of granting concessions like reduced insurance rates, to holders of a proposed 'Master Driver's Licence'. The study showed that competition drivers who had been certificated by the Sports Car Club of America as having the necessary skills, in fact had substantially worse driving records, both in terms of accidents and violations, than a matched sample of ordinary drivers.<sup>32</sup> The drivers concerned, whose average age was in the mid-thirties, could have had other characteristics pre-disposing them to accident involvement, such as aggressive or competitive natures. The results suggest a need for caution regarding any assumption that driver training emphasising the manipulative skill component is likely to lead to reduced accident involvement.

**155.** A study has recently been undertaken in Australia of the types of drivers who attend advanced driver training courses. This study confirmed that there are substantial differences in attitudes to driving between drivers attending advanced driving courses voluntarily, drivers attending as a result of company policy, and drivers drawn at random from the licence register.<sup>33</sup> Such differences compound the difficulties involved in any evaluation.

**156.** Many witnesses spoke against advanced driver training courses, saying that possessors of advanced driving certificates often are convinced that they are such good drivers that their skill alone will get them out of any difficulties. As a result they tend not to drive defensively. In view of these points, advanced driving courses are not considered as valuable in improving road safety as defensive driving courses.

### **DEFENCE FORCE TRAINING**

**157.** Evidence given to the Committee suggests that when compared with equivalent age groups, off-duty members of the Defence Force are three times more likely to be killed in road crashes than the civilian population.<sup>34</sup> This poor record is attributed to a number of causes. Defence Force bases are often situated in isolated areas necessitating long distance travel by personnel to places of entertainment and to visit friends and relatives. A further contributing factor is that members of the Defence Force may generally be more predisposed to risk-taking behaviour than the general population.

**158.** In an attempt to overcome the high accident involvement record, the Armed Services have implemented many programs including driver education and training, publicity campaigns, free car checks, and bringing entertainment to the bases. So far these measures have only been of limited success.

**159.** The Defence Force provides basic driver training for about 1100 members annually. Separate training is undertaken by each of the three services with all instructors trained at the Army School of Transport at Puckapunyal in Victoria, which ensures a common professional standard. The Armed Services sends military instructors as students to the Goulburn Valley Driver Training Complex in Victoria to undertake ambulance drivers' courses, the hazardous conditions bus drivers' course and the bulk fuel tanker drivers' course.

**160.** Service driver training is formal and intensive by comparison with training procedures available for the majority of civilian road users. Service driving instructors and testing officers also receive formal training before they can conduct driving courses or tests. Training programs are constantly under review, and subject to further modifications.

**161.** Although Service drivers are not required to hold civil driving licences before gaining Service licences, the majority already hold them when they are recruited. Similarly, the majority of Service drivers, including all those without a civil driving licence, attend a formal driving course of six weeks. Upon qualification the holder of a Service licence has achieved a standard that is never less than that required by civil authorities.

**162.** The Armed Services have acknowledged that they have a poor road safety record. Well-based research programs are underway to determine the most effective way of improving their safety record. Training programs have a major place in these programs and evaluations of the programs are underway.

**163.** Unfortunately the statistics provided to the Committee by the Defence Force were not sufficiently comprehensive to allow a sound evaluation of the effect of training programs. The statistics included only deaths and not accidents, and was only over a very short time period. The Defence Force has an ideal opportunity to study the effects of special training programs, and the Committee would urge that comprehensive statistics be collected to allow thorough examination of the effect of training programs.

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1. G. B. Skelly, *Aspects of Driving Experience in the First Year as a Qualified Driver*, Crowthorne, Berkshire, Road Research Laboratory, Ministry of Transport, 1968; J. Marek, & T. Sten, *Traffic Environment and the Driver: Driver Behaviour and Training in International Perspective*, Springfield, Illinois, Thomas, 1977.

2. Evidence, pp. 728, 2459

3. Evidence, p. 1624

4. Evidence, p. 416

5. Evidence, p. 440

6. Evidence, p. 436

7. Evidence, p. 1630

8. Evidence, p. 2004

9. Evidence, p. 1625

10. Evidence, p. 258

11. Evidence, p. 1427

12. Evidence, pp. 579-80

13. Evidence, p. 986

14. Evidence, p. 82

15. Evidence, p. 577

16. Evidence, p. 719

17. Evidence, p. 706

18. Evidence, p. 702

19. Evidence, p. 999

20. Evidence, p. 1002

21. Evidence, p. 972

22. Evidence, p. 1027

23. Evidence, p. 603

24. Evidence, p. 1777

25. Evidence, p. 1122

26. Evidence, p. 1015
27. Evidence, p. 603
28. Evidence, p. 1520
29. Evidence, p. 1772
30. Evidence, p. 842
31. Evidence, p. 1427
32. Evidence, p. 1624
33. D. R. Perry, P. McK. Strang, & R. S. James, *A Taxonomy of drivers attending an advanced driver training course*, Proceedings 9th ARRB Conference, 9(5), pp. 298–303.
34. Evidence, p. 1948

## CHAPTER 4

### Licensing

**164.** Licensing of drivers has traditionally been seen as a screening process, with the aim of keeping unsafe drivers off the road. However, at the present time no system of testing licence applicants has been developed that could be used to deny licences to those highly likely to be involved in accidents, without at the same time denying licences to very large numbers of drivers who would subsequently be accident free.

**165.** Almost half the Australian population owns a motor car and any action which would drastically restrict driver licensing would have a considerable impact on the daily life style of those involved. It is unlikely that any licensing program that does not permit most people to drive if they wish to, would be accepted by the community. Such a scheme would lead to a greatly increased number of unlicensed drivers on the road, which would be counter-productive in road safety terms.

**166.** Statistics indicate that once involved in one crash, it is highly unlikely that that driver will be involved in another for a considerable period of time, if ever. It has been suggested that it should be possible to identify potential 'bad' drivers when they first apply for a licence. Such proposals are based on the view that 'bad' drivers display discernible characteristics, and can be screened out by an appropriate test procedure. This view is simply not supported by research undertaken over many decades in the area of accident proneness. Despite much attention to this area, the ability to predict the incidence of accidents in the driving population remains poor. It is almost impossible to identify characteristics which predispose people to road crash involvement.<sup>1</sup>

**167.** Existing licence tests primarily test driving skill rather than attitude to driving, and research has shown that it is not lack of skill which leads to the majority of crashes.<sup>2</sup>

**168.** No psychological screening tests have been produced to date capable of establishing a driver's attitude towards the task of driving with any degree of accuracy.<sup>3</sup> It would be unacceptable to deny licences to a large number of people using testing procedures which are, at best, questionable. The key study in this area was carried out in California.<sup>4</sup> In this study the most recalcitrant drivers were identified and subjected to a battery of psychological and biographical inquiries of a type which ordinarily would be seen by many as a gross invasion of privacy. Even these methods were unable to predict future accident involvement with reasonable accuracy.

**169.** With these issues in mind, the Committee believes the licensing system should attempt, by comparatively simple changes, to improve the standard of all drivers, rather than exclude some people from receiving a licence. Appendix 3 summarises current licensing practices in all States and Territories.

### UNIFORMITY

**170.** The Committee would like, at the outset, to clarify the issue of uniformity. Almost all witnesses called for standardisation in licensing as well as a uniform traffic code. Although the Committee supports the concept of an Australian licence, this should still allow each State or Territory sufficient flexibility to modify the system to cope with regional differences. However, these variations should not influence the development of common standards in many areas.

**171.** Uniformity purely for the sake of uniformity is not necessarily advantageous. In some cases a uniform code of licensing would mitigate against innovation. For example,

if compulsory seat belt legislation had not been introduced until all States had reached agreement, it may never have been introduced. The same is true of random breath testing and motorcycle training programs. There are considerable benefits to be gained by allowing one State to 'blaze the trail'. Other States can assess the effect of changes, and can benefit from operational experience. Any move towards uniformity must recognise the need to retain this flexibility.

172. The Committee recognises the important co-ordinating role the Office of Road Safety plays in this area through the support it provides for ATAC's Advisory Committee on Road User Performance and Traffic Codes.

#### MINIMUM LICENSING AGE

173. The minimum age at which a learner's permit can be obtained is: 16 in South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory; 16 years 9 months in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory; and 17 in Queensland and Victoria. The minimum age at which a licence can be obtained is currently 16 in South Australia, 18 in Victoria and 17 elsewhere. In some States licences can be issued below these ages to those with special needs.<sup>5</sup> (See Appendix 3 for details.)

174. There is considerable controversy over the optimum minimum age for licensing. In a car orientated society those without a licence are restricted in travelling to work, educational institutions and for recreational purposes. As young people leave school and become more independent they have a greater need to travel. Often the public transport system does not adequately serve these needs. An equitable licensing system should permit as many young people to drive as is consistent with reasonable road safety. Working against this is the fact that the lower the age, the greater are the number of young people at risk of accident. A balance must be struck between these two factors. Statistics show that young, inexperienced drivers, have a far greater likelihood of crash involvement than any other section of the driving population. Raising the licensing age to 25 would undoubtedly save a large number of lives, but it would not be practical or acceptable to the community.

175. Unfortunately research has not been able to indicate conclusively what the optimum minimum age is. Each State and Territory believes its own licensing age to be the most appropriate, and is able to produce arguments and statistics in support of these claims.

176. Those who favour lowering the licensing age argue that 16 year olds are usually still dependent on their parents and are therefore more receptive to parental guidance and influence. They usually do not have the finances to purchase a car and the ability to withhold the keys of the family car would allow parents to exert a much greater influence on the driving behaviour of their children. Licensing at age 16 would seem to correspond more logically with education and training programs at school. The time gap between theoretical learning and practical experience would be minimised.

177. The strongest argument in favour of licensing at a younger age is that 18 is the legal age at which people are allowed to consume alcohol. Theoretically, it is injudicious to allow people to begin to drink and to drive at the same time. Driver licensing prior to the legal drinking age would allow young people to gain driving experience before experimenting with alcohol rather than experimenting with both at the same time. This argument is of course based on the assumption that those under 18 do not drink. In practice this does not seem to be the case for a significant proportion of those under the age of 18.

**178.** The arguments against a low minimum licensing age are that although drivers licensed at 16 may have a better crash record in the first years of driving than those licensed at 18, 16 and 17 year old drivers are still exposed to the dangers on the road. Proponents of this argument do not consider that the number of drivers killed under the age of 18 are compensated for by an equivalent drop in the number of drivers killed after 18.

**179.** Several States are currently attempting research to clarify this major issue. Research is handicapped by a lack of uniformity in crash reporting statistics from State to State. This problem will be discussed in detail later in this Chapter.

**180.** At present there is not sufficient evidence to recommend a standard minimum licensing age throughout Australia. However, the Committee believes advantage should be taken of the current variation throughout Australia to initiate a joint multi-State research project to firmly establish the optimum licensing age. This would eliminate the current criticism that each State tends to concentrate on research results that support the status quo in that State. The Committee believes there would be an advantage in establishing a standard minimum licensing age throughout Australia and considers attempts should be made to determine what the optimum age is.

**181.** The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport encourage the Australian Transport Advisory Council to initiate a joint multi-State research project aimed at establishing the optimum minimum licensing age.**

## THE LICENCE TEST

**182.** There is considerable disagreement over the current standard of licence testing. Many witnesses consider it is far too easy to obtain a licence, and that more difficult tests would automatically screen out the bad drivers and lead to fewer road crashes. Although this sounds logical, in practice there is no guarantee that more stringent testing would be rewarded by a reduction in accidents. Accident data indicate that lack of skill in handling a vehicle is not often the cause of crashes.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, improvements in driving skill as a result of more stringent testing are not likely to lead to a significant reduction in crashes.

**183.** The basic aim of licence testing is to motivate licence applicants to undergo an appropriate course of instruction. It is therefore important to incorporate questions on a wide range of driver-related issues, not just road laws. Measures to counter drink-driving and other elements of safe driving behaviour should also be included.

**184.** This does not apply in the case of motorcyclists. (See Appendix 3 for details on motorcycle licence tests.) An expert witness from the Road Accident Research Unit of the University of Adelaide does not believe any research in Australia has indicated that a high score on a written knowledge test or the practical driving test is a good indicator of that person's subsequent accident involvement or violation experience.<sup>7</sup>

**185.** Some expert witnesses believe the current testing procedures to be adequate.<sup>8</sup> The problem is that once the licence is obtained, many drivers forget, or at least do not practice, the rules and precautions used to pass the test.<sup>9</sup>

**186.** Even though there appears no justification for increasing the technical difficulty of basic licence testing, there are many other aspects of the testing procedure which were criticised. The training of licence testers has been questioned, particularly in relation to heavy and commercial vehicles. The qualifications of the examining agencies have to be at least equal to the standards of people responsible for driver training. This appears often not to be the case and has led to wide criticism of licensing in general,

which has perhaps contributed to a general down-grading of the effectiveness of licensing in the eyes of the community.

**187.** Licence testing procedures are often seen as being inconsistent. Not only do standards vary from State to State, they also vary within States. Tests conducted in metropolitan areas may vary dramatically to country areas.<sup>10</sup> Although it is clearly difficult to ensure that all licence applicants receive identical tests, there should be a core of items, for both theory and practice, common to all regions and States which must be tested thoroughly. The ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report' suggested basic test syllabi, and these are reproduced at Appendix 7.

**188.** Licence testing procedures for heavy and other commercial vehicles received much criticism. The New South Wales Road Transport Industry Training Committee encourages transport and bus companies to undertake additional, more stringent testing of any prospective employees. Many companies already do this. Individual records show the specific type of vehicle used in the test, and should an employee wish to drive a heavier vehicle, they are re-tested, and if necessary receive tuition from the company.

### **Learner permit test**

**189.** Learner drivers should have a thorough knowledge of road laws prior to obtaining a learner's permit. Satisfactory completion of a knowledge test prior to obtaining a permit ensures that learner drivers at least have a reasonable understanding of the road system and traffic codes. The Committee believes it should be mandatory to pass a knowledge test on road laws prior to obtaining a learner's permit. (Appendix 3 gives current requirements for issue of a learner's permits in all States and Territories.)

**190.** In Western Australia and Tasmania obtaining a learner's permit prior to undertaking the licence test is not compulsory. It is highly desirable that novice drivers operate under the instruction of an experienced driver before receiving their licence. Even though their skills and knowledge may be adequate, the Committee considers supervised driving experience is necessary. When a learner is driving it is important that it is for the purpose of instruction, not purely for social purposes. It is therefore important that the instructor not be in the same age group as the learner driver, particularly for young learners. To eliminate this problem, it should be made mandatory that any person instructing a learner driver have a minimum period of three years as a licensed driver.

**191.** The differences that exist in testing requirements for learner's permits has hindered reciprocity of recognition between States. Currently those States who insist on a test for the learner's permit will not recognise learners from States who do not. This anomalous situation would best be remedied by compatible requirements for which a test, preferably written, is essential.

**192.** The Committee supports the recommendations on learner's permits made by ACRUPTC in its 'Guidelines Report' on licensing.

**193.** Accordingly the Committee recommends:

**the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage Australia-wide implementation of the following measures:**

- any applicant for a first licence must have previously held a learner's permit;
- applicants for learner's permits should be required to pass a knowledge test; and
- action should be taken to ensure compatibility of requirements for learner's permits to enable reciprocal recognition between all States and Territories.

## **Theory test**

**194.** The theory test associated with the issue of a licence should concentrate on interpretation and application of road laws, rather than rules alone. Some States are beginning to up-date their theory tests to incorporate these elements. New South Wales has recently included questions on driving techniques, road behaviour and an awareness of the drink-driving problem. Questions for motorcyclists will include questions on motorcycle care.<sup>11</sup> The test should also include questions on the application of driving skills and behaviour associated with different locations, in particular the difference between city and country hazards. The Committee considers it highly desirable that these practices should be introduced Australia-wide.

**195.** Research by ARRB<sup>12</sup> has indicated that road users do not have a thorough knowledge of devices used to inform, guide and control their behaviour. With the growing complexity of road traffic, traffic management has become more sophisticated. ARRB does not believe driver training manuals and handbooks cover this change adequately. Learner permit theory tests should also cover traffic control devices such as signals and signs in more detail. ARRB has begun research directed ultimately at the development of materials to remedy this deficiency. Licence tests should incorporate suitable questions to remedy this deficiency as soon as possible. Consideration should also be given to ensure theory tests apply to the class of vehicle for which the licence will be valid.

**196.** Those applicants who cannot read and write, or without sufficient fluency in the English language must also be catered for. Illiterates usually only require the tester to read out the questions, and are able to answer orally. Non English-speakers may require translated testing forms. This service is already provided in some States. Other States provide interpreters. (See Appendix 3 for details.)

**197.** Some witnesses criticised the ambiguous wording and complicated language of some of the questions. It was suggested that the main qualification required to obtain a high score on the theory test was excellent comprehension of the English language rather than a knowledge of road laws. This problem could be substantially overcome if questions are represented diagrammatically as much as possible.

## **Practical test**

**198.** The function of the practical test is to ensure that all applicants reach a satisfactory standard of car control to ensure safe driving. The standard of the test should be high enough to establish that applicants have undergone an appropriate course of training.

**199.** The syllabus should include a core of basic manoeuvres required for safe driving both in heavy traffic and on the open road. The tests should be standardised as much as possible to ensure that all applicants have similar test experiences, although it is recognised that it is not possible to replicate heavy traffic situations in many country areas. Examiners should not use the same route constantly, or this could favour applicants who are aware of the common route. (See Appendix 7 for the basic core of items suggested in the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report' for inclusion in all practical tests.)

## **Licence examiners**

**200.** The Committee heard many criticisms of the standard of licence examiners, particularly in relation to special classes of licence. Evidence was given of applicants being asked to do impossible manoeuvres, occasionally resulting in damage and collisions.<sup>13</sup> The reason for this is that the examiners themselves may not understand the limitations

of the vehicles used for the examination, as applicants use their own vehicles. This can be a serious problem with heavy vehicles. Further instances were cited of examiners requiring motorcycle riders to ride in ways specifically discouraged at National Safety Council and Police Driver Training Schools.<sup>14</sup>

**201.** There is considerable variation in the qualifications required for licence examiners from State to State. It is considered preferable for examiners to be current holders of the classes of licence for which they are examining. This may cause difficulties in provincial areas, but it should be mandatory for metropolitan areas. However, this should not be seen as the only requirement necessary to become a licence examiner. At present there are unqualified examiners which lead to unqualified instructors and ultimately to poorly trained drivers.

**202.** The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport recommend to the Australian Transport Advisory Council, the establishment of a national code for licence examiners.**

### **Licence testing for motorcyclists**

**203.** As discussed in the previous Chapter accident data for motorcyclists indicates that handling skills play a much more significant role in motorcycle accident causation than they do in the case of cars. The potential for an improved skills test for motorcycle riders is therefore much greater. A simple test of the handling skills of motorcyclists has been developed in California with some degree of success.<sup>15</sup>

**204.** A strong case was made for compulsory learner permit skills tests for motorcyclists, as it is not possible for learners to always be under close instruction of a licensed rider. This was supported by the Auto Cycle Union of Tasmania.<sup>16</sup>

**205.** Tasmania has introduced special tests for applicants for motorcycle learner's permits in Hobart. The test requires the rider to demonstrate handling skills, and is considered quite difficult. The aim is to force learner motorcyclists to attend a training program prior to receiving a learner's permit. Although they can do the test without any training, the test has been structured so it is unlikely that they would pass, unless they have previous experience.<sup>17</sup>

### **Vision testing**

**206.** The standard of vision required to obtain a licence varies considerably from State to State. This is because standards were set arbitrarily before data was available on visual acuity necessary for safe driving,<sup>18</sup> or on the deterioration of vision with age. Static visual acuity is a measure of a persons ability to identify stationary objects. (Normal static visual acuity is described as 6/6; 6/12 means that someone can see at 6 metres what someone with normal vision can see at 12 metres; at 6/18 someone can see at 6 metres what someone with normal vision can see at 18 metres, etc. The level of legal blindness is 6/60.) The standard of static visual acuity required to obtain a licence varies from 6/9 in Tasmania, to 6/12 in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia to 6/18 in Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. No State or Territory requires drivers to demonstrate normal vision to obtain a licence. It is understood that traffic engineers design road signs and traffic signals on the assumption of 6/12 static visual acuity.

**207.** Although it is extremely difficult to reach a true correlation between poor vision and road crashes as a result of the interaction of many factors in any one crash, defective vision is likely to be a contributory factor in some cases. A study undertaken in the

U.S.A. found that drivers who have frequent accidents are twice as likely to have poor rather than good visual acuity.<sup>19</sup> Drivers with poor vision may also be a greater threat to pedestrians and cyclists than drivers with good vision.

**208.** It would not be difficult, or costly, to improve the standard of vision required to obtain a licence. No new tests would be required, simply an up-grading of the standard required to pass. Almost 99% of the population are able to obtain visual acuity of 6/12 with correction, so increasing the standard would not mean denying a licence to many people. It is also important to ensure that testing is done under uniform conditions as tests performed in different lighting situations produce different results.

**209.** Although it is not possible to give an accurate indication of how many lives would be saved or how many fewer crashes there would be if this measure was introduced, it would be administratively simple, and comparatively cheap to implement.

**210.** The Committee recommends that:

- a static visual acuity of 6/12 be adopted uniformly throughout Australia as the minimum standard for driver vision; and
- visual acuity tests be conducted under standard conditions.

**211.** There are many other forms of vision testing. Detection of colour blindness is considered to be adequate. Dynamic visual acuity is a measure of the ability to identify moving objects. There is evidence that reduced dynamic visual acuity is a significant factor in the causation of traffic accidents, particularly those occurring in daytime.<sup>20</sup> However, this form of vision testing at present requires expert personnel and it is questionable if testing this function as a routine procedure could be justified on a cost-benefit basis.

### **Vision re-testing**

**212.** Around the age of 45 the most significant changes in vision related to ageing begin to occur (*see* Appendix 9). If the visual standards which are applied to drivers seeking their licence were to be applied to drivers aged 55, almost 8% would fail the test without some optical correction for distant vision. And yet, in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland re-testing is never required. In the Australian Capital Territory drivers from 51 years of age on are tested at each licence renewal. In the Northern Territory, all drivers are tested every 6 years. The Northern Territory is convinced of the cost-effectiveness of its vision re-testing program.

**213.** It seems illogical to require a vision test on obtaining a licence, when statistically young people have the best vision, and not to require further re-testing, even when drivers reach an age where vision is likely to deteriorate significantly.

**214.** One argument against re-testing is that drivers are often aware of some degree of visual impairment, and compensate for their disability in some way, by perhaps driving slower, only during daylight, or turning their heads more if they have field of vision problems.

**215.** Even if this is accepted, there are undoubtedly some who are unaware of visual defects, possibly because the onset of visual deterioration is usually a slow process. Re-examination of drivers would not result in large numbers of people losing their licences, but may indicate if they need the assistance of glasses.

**216.** The Australian Optometrical Association recommends that consideration be given to requiring drivers aged 55 years and over, on renewing their licences, to present an optometrist's or ophthalmologist's certification of vision adequate for driving. Testing the adequacy of vision of an older person is far more complex than testing that of a younger person, and requires fuller and more subtle techniques provided only by experts.

217. The Association advised that the fees to perform required tests would be \$7.50 for a person not recently examined, and \$3 for someone who had recently had a test. The association believes that most drivers over 45 years of age would fall into the recently examined category.

218. The Committee is aware that many road safety experts are not in favour of requiring re-testing of vision more frequently on the grounds that statistical evidence has not yet shown that it would lead to fewer accidents. However, due to the degree of difficulty in proving a case in favour of re-testing, the Committee does not agree that this measure should be held in abeyance until a water-tight case can be made in its favour. The suggested fee is not high when compared with the normal running costs of a car. The cost should be borne by the motorist.

219. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all State and Territory licensing authorities to require that drivers renewing their licences at age 55, and every 5 years subsequent to that, produce a certificate of visual competence signed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.**

220. The Committee is aware that acceptance of this recommendation could cause problems as licence renewal periods vary from State to State. However, it is considered that, through ATAC, satisfactory compromises could be reached.

221. There is at present no evidence to suggest that compulsory eye tests after accidents would be cost-effective in reducing further accidents.<sup>21</sup> Procedures already exist where if, in the opinion of police officers at the scene of an accident, the crash was caused by the defective vision of a driver, that driver can be required to undertake a vision test. The Committee is concerned however, that this procedure may only be used with the most obvious of cases, and not for many accidents where vision may be only one of a number of causal factors.

222. Although the Committee believes that there should be more vision testing of drivers required after accidents, it is considered that if the previous recommendation is accepted this may help solve the problem before an accident occurs. Police should continue to notify authorities if they consider faulty vision to have been a possible contributor to any crash.

### **Medical screening**

223. Drivers in all States are required to notify illnesses and disabilities to licensing authorities on licence application. Notification is also required at each renewal thereafter in all States, except Western Australia. (See Appendix 3 for details.) Considerable concern has been expressed that the current system does not make it clear that drivers are under an obligation to report medical conditions or disabilities, even between renewals. Nor is it clearly stated what penalties may apply if disabilities are not notified to the authority.

224. Those who do not report a disability on obtaining or renewing a licence may not be covered by insurance.<sup>22</sup> Drivers who do not report disabilities may become unregistered drivers.<sup>23</sup> There should be more publicity of this aspect. The licence itself should also prominently display the obligation of the holder to report a disability, rather than just requiring an applicant to certify 'no disabilities' on a renewal form.

225. Although some accidents are caused by illness of the driver, the great majority of these involve sudden illness that could not have been reasonably predicted. It would not be possible to screen out these drivers with more stringent medical testing without also screening out a large number of drivers who will probably never have an accident as a

result of an illness.<sup>24</sup> Many witnesses called for compulsory notification of illnesses by doctors, and suggested various schemes. Most States and Territories operate systems where doctors voluntarily notify licensing authorities if they consider their patients are at risk when driving. Most doctors agree that informal notification is both desirable and necessary and is indeed undertaken by most medical practitioners. Many prefer to have the flexibility to treat each case differently, to contact relatives, and apply pressure in different ways.<sup>25</sup>

**226.** The Queensland Road Safety Council issues a publication entitled 'A Guide for Medical Practitioners in Determining Fitness to Drive a Motor Vehicle' which is produced by the Queensland Branch of the Australian Medical Association.<sup>26</sup>

**227.** Tasmania requires drivers to advise the licensing authority of any physical disabilities on renewal of their licence. The Registrar then writes to the applicant and requests a letter from a doctor explaining the likely effect of the disability on driving competence.<sup>27</sup>

**228.** In Western Australia if a driver's disability is reported from any source, he is referred to the district medical officer, and a panel of doctors assess the patient's ability to drive. The district medical officer advises the Road Traffic authority who then acts upon the recommendation.<sup>28</sup>

**229.** In New South Wales where an accident report from police at the scene of an accident indicates that, in the opinion of the police, the state of health or competence of the driver may have contributed to the crash, that driver's medical fitness is then examined, and if necessary a further driving test may be required.<sup>29</sup> Medical practitioners are legally required to notify the licensing authority of any disabilities or illnesses likely to affect the driving performance of their patients.

**230.** South Australia operates a system of compulsory notification. The procedure normally is that a doctor advises a patient to surrender their driving licence voluntarily, and at the same time advises the licensing authority. If the patient does not give up the licence, the licensing authority writes to the patient requesting it, and at the same time suspends the licence. The patient receives a note advising him that should his medical condition improve, his licence will be re-issued on receipt of a satisfactory medical report.<sup>30</sup> If the patient can find a specialist who disagrees with the doctor's opinion that the licence be withdrawn, the decision of the specialist is accepted by the licensing authority. The Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (ACROD) has suggested that this scheme should be introduced throughout Australia.<sup>31</sup>

**231.** The South Australian scheme has received much criticism from different sources. Many doctors oppose it,<sup>32</sup> and consider it can damage the doctor/patient relationship. Patients may not divulge the full extent or seriousness of their illness to their doctor if they consider the doctor may stop them driving.

**232.** The doctor's legal position has also been questioned. Could a doctor be sued for damages if a patient had an accident which was shown to result from a medical condition, if the patient's doctor had not advised the licensing authorities of that condition?<sup>33</sup> As yet this has not been tested. Doctors wish to be able to initiate a chain of events which lead to a proper objective assessment on whether or not a patient is capable of driving.<sup>34</sup> When a doctor considers a patient has medical problems which may effect driving ability, there should be an objective assessment done by professionals within the field, so that the onus is not put entirely on the doctor. Otherwise the doctor/patient relationship may be in jeopardy. This would make the procedure more acceptable to both doctors and patients.

**233.** It has been suggested that the doctor should refer the patient to an assessment panel in the first instance, rather than direct to the licensing authority. That panel could then decide whether referral to the authority is necessary. This would take the burden

of the final decision away from the patient's doctor. Conscientious doctors would then not suffer the reputation of informers. One witness claimed that several patients who were able to drive competently, 'got on the wrong side of doctors' and as a result the doctors recommended against issuing licences. Some form of appeals tribunal must be provided to guard against this possibility.<sup>35</sup>

234. The current system of voluntary, though obligatory, notification by individual drivers is not considered an adequate screening measure. The Committee considers some form of compulsory notification by doctors is warranted. However, if doctors are required to report patients they do not consider capable of driving, a very thorough assessment procedure by a panel of experts, followed by an appeals system, must be developed.

235. The Committee recommends that:

- the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all States and Territories to introduce a compulsory system of notification by general practitioners of illness or disability of their patients;
- that notification initially be to a panel of experts, not to the licensing authority; and
- an adequate appeals tribunal be incorporated in the system.

236. Some witnesses claimed that there should be no special medical assessment for disabled drivers. Disabled drivers should be subject to a standard driving test, and treated no differently to non-disabled drivers throughout the testing procedure. This should apply for most physically disabled people, but is not adequate for the mentally disabled. Some brain damaged applicants may be perfectly capable of passing a licence test which is not designed to identify deficiencies such as limited attention span, impulsiveness, aggression, or faulty decision-making. Some brain damaged people are unable to modify their behaviour in response to errors, and continue to make the same mistakes.<sup>36</sup> However, if compulsory notification of disabilities by general practitioners is introduced, this difficulty may be overcome. (The special problems of disabled drivers are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.)

237. Patients who have had accidents and are admitted to a rehabilitation hospital should receive an assessment from a rehabilitation team which is taken into consideration should they wish to drive again. Some Provinces in Canada have a scheme where, for patients undergoing rehabilitation, an occupational therapist must submit a detailed assessment of the patient before the road traffic authorities would issue a licence. (See Appendix 10 for an example from Manitoba.)

### **Licence re-testing with age**

238. Many witnesses called for periodic licence re-testing of both the theory and practical aspects.<sup>37</sup> The major difficulty with re-testing is the availability of resources to implement such a program. Re-testing would also shift the emphasis from young drivers with the worst accident records to older drivers with better accident records. It is unlikely that it would lead to significant reductions in accidents.

239. Statistics show that older drivers have far fewer accidents than young drivers. This is not all related to a lower exposure. Older drivers' accidents tend to be during the day, whereas younger drivers' accidents are at night. This seems to indicate that elderly drivers tend to select the conditions under which they feel confident and competent to drive.<sup>38</sup>

240. The States and Territories vary considerably in their opinions on whether periodic re-testing should be required, and if so, at what age (see Appendix 3). This is one aspect

of licensing that the Committee feels should be uniform. Again, older people tend not to have a high accident involvement rate, but it has been shown to increase after 60 years of age (see Appendix 8). The Committee believes acceptance of the Committee's recommendations on vision re-testing and medical screening would achieve more in road safety terms than theory or practical driving re-tests.

## LICENCE CLASSIFICATIONS

241. There is considerable variation in licence classification systems between the States and Territories (see Appendix 3). A standardised classification system would facilitate recognition of inter-State licences, particularly for special classes of vehicle, and would also assist in the exchange of licensing information between jurisdictions.

242. The ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report' recommended the introduction of a system based on a standard categorisation of vehicle types, which would also be compatible with the system recommended in the United Nations Convention on Road Traffic, 1968 (see Appendix 11).

243. Some witnesses believe the current classification systems are not adequate. It was suggested that with heavy vehicle licences the size and gross mass of the vehicle used for the test should be stated on the licence. For example, in New South Wales both 3½ tonne and 38 tonne vehicles qualify as Class 5 vehicles. In some States the licence to drive a heavy articulated vehicle can be issued after a test on a small utility with a trailer. Tests should be conducted on vehicles more accurately representative of the class.

244. Licensing systems develop in response to needs. However, they never change as rapidly as technology, and this is the major reason why licence classification systems are outdated, and may not be adequate for current types of vehicles.<sup>39</sup> With this in mind consideration should be given to including an additional class for extra large or long heavy vehicles, say over 30 tonnes, or in excess of 15 metres in length.

245. Drivers who are licensed to carry people for hire and reward should be required to demonstrate a high level of responsibility. It is therefore appropriate that the licensing system should ensure that applicants for such licences have adequate driving experience, are reasonably mature and preferably have a personal and driving record free from major offences, including drink-driving convictions.

246. The licensing system should also operate to ensure that drivers carrying potentially dangerous goods have the skill and knowledge to handle these goods safely in an emergency. Many procedures relating to the handling of dangerous goods in the event of an accident are standard. It would not be difficult to include questions on basic procedures in the theory test required for a licence to drive vehicles of 3½ tonnes or more, used to carry freight.

247. The Committee supports the recommendations on licence classifications made in the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report', which has been endorsed in principle by ATAC. Accordingly the Committee recommends that:

**the Australian Transport Advisory Council work towards a uniform licence classification system throughout Australia that:**

- **is based on standard categories of vehicle types, compatible with the system recommended in the United Nations Convention on Road Traffic, 1968, which would not preclude further sub-classifications;**
- **ensures that licences to carry passengers for hire and reward are restricted to drivers who have demonstrated acceptable levels of maturity and responsibility;**
- and**

- ensures that drivers licensed to carry freight are required to demonstrate such knowledge and skills required to do so safely, particularly with respect to potentially dangerous goods.

## TOWING

**248.** Many complaints were received about the traffic hazards caused by inexperienced drivers towing caravans, trailers and broken-down vehicles. Some witnesses believe it should be necessary to pass an appropriate skills test and receive licence endorsement before being eligible to tow a caravan or trailer.<sup>40</sup> It was suggested that an articulated vehicle licence should be required, as caravans particularly tend to be more difficult to control than many heavy vehicles.

**249.** TARU carried out a research project on traffic crashes related to caravan towing which indicated that caravans are not involved in more crashes than they could be expected to be.<sup>41</sup> Many drivers only tow caravans two or three times a year, and any specific skills tested at an examination would be quickly lost if not constantly practised. It was considered that problems with towing caravans may be reduced more effectively through the application of engineering developments like the use of the self-levelling hitch, rather than more stringent licensing requirements.<sup>42</sup>

**250.** At the present time there is not sufficient evidence to justify compulsory testing and licensing of those who tow caravans and trailers. However, it is recognised that many cars towing caravans cause 'bottlenecks' by travelling slowly which cause frustration and impatience in other drivers. Public education campaigns aimed at drivers who tow caravans, emphasising consideration for other road users, could be more effective than changes in the licensing system. The Standards Association of Australia is aware of design and engineering problems of caravan towing, and has recently established a committee of car and caravan manufacturers to review aspects of stability, controllability and braking.

**251.** The Committee is concerned about inexperienced drivers towing broken-down vehicles, often with improvised tow ropes. Precautions should be taken to ensure that vehicles being towed do not break away, become loose or run over the tow rope.

## IDENTIFICATION ON LICENCES

**252.** Personal information specified on licences must be sufficient to enable identification of the driver for law enforcement purposes, and for licence renewal. If the information contained on licences is sufficiently standardised throughout Australia to allow the functioning of driver records systems, it can also serve the purpose of driver control. (This will be discussed in detail later in this Chapter.)

**253.** Only the following should appear on the face of the licence: name, address, driver licence number, expiry date, date of birth, licence conditions or restrictions including classification, sex and driver's signature. The Road Trauma Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons suggested that a place should be reserved on the licence where the driver could indicate a willingness to donate certain body organs in the event of a fatal crash. As the majority of donor kidneys for transplants still come from victims of road accidents, this measure would enable better salvage of suitable organs for saving the lives of others. The Committee supports this suggestion in principle and recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage all States and Territories to consider the introduction of a system for notification of a willingness to donate organs as an anatomical gift, under the provisions of the appropriate Organ Transplantation Act.**

**254.** The possibility of using photographs on licences for identification purposes was raised many times throughout the Inquiry. In 1978, South Australia undertook preliminary investigations into requiring photographs on licences. They found that the cost would have been prohibitive. The inclusion of photographs on licences does not necessarily solve the problem of identification, or eliminate multiple licence holding. The use of disguises would still allow the criminal element to avoid detection. There are also technical difficulties in outback areas. It would not be possible to make photographic equipment constantly available to all centres. In 1979 the Western Australian Government announced it would require photographs on licences, but this has not been implemented. The Committee is not convinced of the merit of photographs on licences.

**255.** It was suggested that use of finger prints would be a more foolproof method of identification,<sup>43</sup> but this raises objections on the grounds of civil liberties.

## **GRADUATED LICENSING**

**256.** The concept of a more structured form of graduated entry of young people into the driving population than that operating under the present system, is consistent with the basic philosophy of progressive development of attitudes and knowledge needed for safe driving.

**257.** A limited type of licence grading applies in most States and Territories at present in the form of restrictions placed on drivers with 'L' plates and 'P' plates. There was considerable criticism over the 'P' plate system, particularly with reference to the 80 km/h speed limit. Many witnesses believe a driver limited to this speed driving on the open highway in good conditions leads to 'bottlenecks' and creates dangerous situations where other drivers may take risks.<sup>44</sup> A study by Solomon<sup>45</sup> has shown that accident involvement increases with increased variation in travel speed from the mean, both slower and faster. There is a need for an assessment of the effectiveness of the restriction placed on probationary licences.

**258.** Given the fact that young novice drivers are involved in more crashes per driver per kilometre driven than drivers from older age groups, the basic aim of the licensing system should be to allow novices to gain driving experience as safely as possible. The current system does not appear to achieve this goal. Instead, 'L' and 'P' plates publicly label inexperienced drivers, who are immediately recognisable to the police. If a probationary driver violates the law in any way, his licence is usually withdrawn as a form of punishment. Rather than disqualify a young driver for minor offences, the system should allow the novice an opportunity to learn through experience. Preventing him from driving will not make him a better driver when his licence is regained.

**259.** New Zealand has introduced a scheme where new licence holders are restricted in the times of day, and size of vehicle they are allowed to drive. They cannot drive at night without an experienced driver with them.<sup>46</sup> In many States in the U.S.A. drivers can obtain a conditional licence which allows those below the full licensing age to drive during daylight hours.<sup>47</sup>

**260.** Graded licences could also carry alcohol restrictions. For example, during a provisional period, either 1 or 2 years, a driver may not be permitted to drive with any measurable alcohol content in their blood. Should they be caught doing so, they would be treated as having exceeded the legal limit. This scheme is operating in Tasmania. In

South Australia if a probationary licence-holder is convicted of having a blood alcohol content of .05 or more, their licence is suspended automatically for three months. They must then re-commence their 12 month probationary period.

261. It was suggested that due to the poor accident record of learner motorcyclists, a person should not be eligible to obtain a motorcycle licence until they have held a car licence for a year. The idea is for the novice to obtain on-road experience in the comparative safety of a car, rather than on an unprotected motorcycle. Consideration should be given to a campaign to discourage people from riding motorcycles without the experience of driving a car. Although the idea has merit in theory, it would be extremely difficult to implement in practice. Motorcycles tend to be cheaper to buy and are certainly much cheaper to run than cars. Notwithstanding this, many young people simply want to ride motorcycles and have no interest in cars. Many may not own cars, or may not have access to them. It would be unfair to handicap one sector of the community. It is unlikely that the idea would receive community support, and would probably lead to an increase in unlicensed riding. The answer to the problem of inexperienced motorcyclists seems to lie in training instead. There are also compelling reasons for restricting the power/weight ratio of vehicles for young drivers.

262. An example of how a graded system could operate is as follows:

Age*	Supervision required		Type of licence
	Daytime	Nighttime	
16	Yes	Yes	Learner's permit
17	No	Yes	Pre-full licence
18	No	No	Full licence

\* No alcohol consumption allowed until over age 19.

Progress to the next phase would be dependent on the driver having a clean driving record. Should a traffic violation or crash occur, the young driver should be asked to diagnose the reasons, and perhaps take another test. The young driver would not progress to the next stage until a period of 12 months free of both accidents and violations had been completed in the previous phase. The purpose should not be to punish, but rather to remind the driver that he is still in a learning phase and that it will take several years to acquire the skills necessary for responsible driving.

263. The Committee believes the idea of a graduated licence system has merit, and would like to see a pilot study operating as recommended in the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report'. The Committee believes the study would be of greater benefit if undertaken in one of the States, but acknowledges that it may be difficult to obtain support. Should a pilot program not be implemented in one of the States, consideration should be given to implementing one in the Australian Capital Territory.

264. The Committee recommends that:

**a pilot study of graduated licensing be undertaken in one State, in co-operation with the Office of Road Safety.**

## LICENSING OF DISABLED DRIVERS

265. The Committee was told of several instances where physically disabled people have faced a much tougher licence test than normal applicants.<sup>48</sup> Those people whose disabilities can be compensated for by the use of mechanical aids should not be treated any differently from able people. Physically disabled people applying for a licence to

drive should, as far as possible, be treated in the same way as applicants who are not disabled and undergo the same testing procedures. The assistance of medical experts may be necessary in some cases, for example those with certain forms of brain damage as mentioned earlier in this Report.

**266.** However, if recommendations made by this Committee concerning compulsory notification of disabilities by medical practitioners are adopted, it will not be necessary for the licensing process to identify people who are not medically fit to drive. In fact, it is questionable whether it would ever be possible for any other licensing procedure to detect these people.

**267.** Disabled people also criticised the delay of from 3 to 6 weeks in the issue of a licence to disabled people in Victoria.<sup>49</sup> The delay is theoretically due to the need to have the licence endorsed by the Chief Commissioner of Police. This delay does not occur in other States and Territories even though the necessary endorsements must still be made. It appears that in Victoria it is a case of unnecessary discrimination against disabled people. If the procedure cannot be streamlined, then the driver should be issued with an interim licence.

**268.** There was a call for the standardisation of licence endorsement for disabled drivers throughout Australia. Identification of the type of vehicle, and the type of modification required for drivers should be adequate. Licence renewal would then not be required if the car is exchanged, as is the case in Queensland at present.

## SPECIAL LICENCES

**269.** In some States and Territories there is provision for granting a special licence to someone who has had their licence cancelled or suspended for any reason (*see* Appendix 3). In most cases the driver must apply to the court for a special licence, and explain why one should be granted. A special licence is generally granted if the applicant needs a licence to earn his living.

**270.** In some States it is much easier to get special licences than others. In Western Australia, evidence was given that special licences are very easy to get.<sup>50</sup> In the Northern Territory there is a waiting period of two months before a driver can apply for a special licence. It is even possible to be given a special licence twice. In many cases, the licensing authorities are against the issue of special licences, but the decision rests with the courts. In the Northern Territory, the licensing authority is advised of all applications for special licences, and a representative can then attend the court to argue against granting the licence if it is considered that the applicant's driving record is such that a special licence should not be issued. This system appears to have merit, and its introduction should be considered in States and Territories where it is not operating.

**271.** The Committee is against the granting of special licences to traffic offenders in principle and would like to see the issue of these licences restricted as much as possible. It is understood that under the present system those who can afford legal representation are more likely to be granted a special licence than those who cannot. The Committee finds this system unacceptable. It would prefer that only those drivers whose income is genuinely derived from the use of a motor vehicle be eligible to apply for a special licence and that it not be possible to apply for the first 31 days after disqualification.

**272.** The Committee feels it would be unreasonable to grant special licences to drivers who are engaged in the carriage of passengers and who are convicted of drink-driving offences. Special licences should not be easy to get. Drivers are disqualified in order to

be punished. Forfeiture of licence will not have the desired effect if it is comparatively easy to regain a licence. Special licences should not be issued to the same driver twice.

## DRIVER RECORDS SYSTEMS

273. The most important defect of the licensing system as it now operates is that, except in Queensland, accident involvement is not noted on a driver's individual record. Although it is recorded in Queensland, it is done manually and the information is not readily available for research purposes. The Committee was constantly hampered throughout the Inquiry by a lack of basic research findings. It is not possible to assess the effects of policies designed to reduce road accidents if the driving history of those who have had accidents is unknown.

274. Given the huge cost of road accidents to the taxpayer, it is time road safety authorities stopped acting in the dark. With the dramatic improvements in computer technology in recent years, establishment of computer-based driver records systems should not be difficult to achieve. It must be the top priority in efforts to reduce the road toll. The following table indicates the type of recording systems operated by each State and Territory at the present time, and whether accidents or convictions are recorded.

<i>State</i>	<i>Type of system</i>	<i>Convictions recorded</i>	<i>Accidents recorded</i>
New South Wales	Computer	Yes	No
Victoria	Manual*	Yes	No
Queensland	Manual	Yes	Yes
Western Australia	Computer	Yes	No
South Australia	Computer	Yes	No
Tasmania	Computer	Yes	No
Australian Capital Territory	Computer	Yes	No
Northern Territory	Computer	Yes	No

\* only points demerit file is computerised.

275. The Expert Group on Road Safety in its report *The Road Accident Situation in Australia in 1975* said that 'the Australian Government can play a major role in improving the quality of road accident information by first using its co-ordinating influence to promote uniformity in the information gathered by the States, and secondly by providing financial assistance for integration of records and data analysis'.<sup>51</sup> The report went on to recommend that the Commonwealth should provide financial and technical assistance to the States to establish integrated statistical systems, working to common guidelines and incorporating information on accidents, licence holders, vehicle registration and indexes of exposure to risk. Unfortunately over six years later, there has been no action on this recommendation.

276. The Committee cannot accept that it is possible to link traffic violations to a driver, but not accidents. Convictions, although raising significant revenue, do not correlate well with accidents. Some States, of which New South Wales is one, have detailed accident recording systems, but they are of limited value unless they are cross-referenced to an individual driver's record.<sup>52</sup>

277. The most important recommendation of the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report' is that relating to the establishment of a proper data record system to integrate driver licensing records with accident records, vehicle registration, and to specify the sort of information that should be collected about each driver.<sup>53</sup> This recommendation was

endorsed by almost every witness who gave evidence to the Inquiry. The Committee fully supports the recommendation.

**278.** In past Reports, this Committee has made reference to the lack of uniformity of accident report forms. This lack of uniformity has constantly hampered research efforts directed towards accident causation. It is refreshing to see that agreement has been reached between the States and Territories on at least a basic core of information to be recorded on accident report forms.

**279.** The Committee is aware of reticence on the part of some States towards participating in a national driver register. Although a nationally based system would be preferable, it is not essential. As long as systems established in each of the States and Territories are compatible, and the information collected is standardised, a great deal could still be accomplished. Records should contain at least the following basic information:

- licence application information including name, address, age, sex and licence test reports;
- involvement in reportable traffic crashes;
- conviction for traffic violations;
- licence sanctions taken whether by court, or licensing authority; and
- all vehicles registered in the name of the licensee.

**280.** The design and implementation of driver records systems must ensure there is a data base from which to carry out evaluative studies of the driver licensing and driver improvement programs. The system must also recognise the need for co-operation and co-ordination from several different administrative jurisdictions including clerks of courts and the police, if records are to be complete and up to date. If it is not possible to obtain agreement Australia-wide on the development of driver records systems, then consideration should be given to implementation in one State or Territory as a pilot program.

**281.** Certain misgivings have been expressed over the establishment of centralised driver records systems with respect to the possible infringement of civil liberties. The public should understand that such a system would be implemented in order to assist drivers not to harass them. This is one case where the general good likely to accrue to the community must prevail over any perceived infringement of the rights of the individual. The Committee does not accept that the establishment of centralised driver records systems would infringe civil liberties. Each driver would have the right to inspect or question his own record to verify or dispute its accuracy.

**282.** Establishment of a central driver records system in each State would facilitate the exchange of information between States on sanctions applied to drivers. Although not completely fool proof, it would also assist in detecting those who hold multiple licences in order to avoid enforcement of various sanctions. A witness from the New South Wales Police Department said that millions of dollars of traffic fines are outstanding because warrants can't be executed, partly as a result of the use of fictitious names and addresses and the use of multiple licences.<sup>54</sup>

**283.** The Committee considers the establishment of central driver records systems incorporating individual accident records is of such importance that the allocation of Commonwealth funding is warranted. The offer of Commonwealth funds could also be used to ensure compatibility of computer techniques, and that the information stored is standardised.

284. The Committee recommends that:

- the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States and Territories to establish central driver records systems using compatible techniques and standardised information Australia-wide; and
- the Commonwealth Government allocate funds to assist in the establishment of central driver records systems in each State and Territory on condition that the systems used are compatible and contain standardised information.

## DRIVING INSTRUCTORS

285. Although research tends to indicate that there is little difference in road safety terms whether a driver has received professional driving instruction or not, there is some obligation on the licensing authority to protect the public from inexperienced driving instructors. It is clearly desirable that those who elect to have professional instruction, are assured of an instructor who has an ability to teach, a good knowledge and understanding of the traffic system and the role of the driver within the system.

286. The Committee is aware that all States and the Northern Territory require driving instructors to be licensed. Licensing arrangements should ensure that applicants have adequate driving experience, and an ability to communicate effectively. They should have held a valid licence for a continuous period of three years for the class of vehicle on which they intend to teach. Witnesses representing driving schools support these measures. As it is only in the Australian Capital Territory where driving instructors are not licensed, the Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for the Capital Territory, without delay, introduce a system of licensing driving instructors which ensures that instructors have had a minimum of three years driving experience, and have demonstrated an ability to teach.**

287. One method of improving the standard of driving instruction would be to develop an industry code of practice. If the industry itself could develop a national code for driving instructors, reputable companies could advertise that they train in accordance with the national code.

## CO-ORDINATION OF PROGRAMS

288. An improvement in the licensing system throughout Australia would require the co-operation of a great many authorities, institutions and individuals working towards a common aim. There is considerable scope for the sharing of knowledge and experience through frequent meetings of representatives from relevant bodies. The Committee believes there should be greater co-operation and interaction between licensing, traffic enforcement, safety education authorities and the courts in the development and evaluation of driver improvement programs and associated records systems.

289. As a result of Coppin's recommendations, a Sub-committee of ACRUPTC was established on Driver Licensing and Improvement which subsequently produced *Guidelines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia*. The 'Guidelines Report' contained many recommendations on licensing systems and has since been endorsed in principle by ATAC. ACRUPTC's Licensing Sub-committee is currently considering how particular recommendations in the 'Guidelines Report' can now be implemented. The Sub-committee includes representatives from all State and Territory licensing authorities.

## AN AUSTRALIAN LICENCE

**290.** The Committee believes that ATAC, in endorsing in principle the 'Guidelines Report' has already acknowledged the need for a standard licensing code and has gone some way towards achieving it. The 'Guidelines Report' recommends a basic core of items that should appear on all licences issued in Australia and also recommends a uniform system of licence classifications. The Committee supports these recommendations.

**291.** This Inquiry has highlighted a multitude of differences in current licensing procedures throughout Australia. This applies to all variables from minimum licensing age to vision testing, medical screening and licence classifications. The Committee notes that some action has already been taken on a number of issues including reciprocal recognition of learner's permits, licence classifications, personal identification on licences and driver improvement programs. This would indicate the feasibility of a uniform licensing code leading ultimately to a standard Australian licence. State and Territory authorities would of course maintain responsibility for administrative control of the licensing system. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport be requested to raise with the Australian Transport Advisory Council, at the earliest opportunity, the desirability of the introduction of a standard Australian licence.**

1. Evidence, p. 2318
2. Evidence, p. 800
3. Evidence, p. 1230
4. Evidence, p. 2575
5. Evidence, p. 1760
6. Evidence, p. 432
7. Evidence, p. 1635
8. Evidence, p. 886
9. Evidence, p. 1677
10. Evidence, p. 721
11. Evidence, p. 1149
12. Evidence, p. 416
13. Evidence, p. 1795
14. Evidence, p. 1771
15. Evidence, pp. 432-3
16. Evidence, pp. 883-4
17. Evidence, p. 902
18. Evidence, p. 237
19. Evidence, p. 243
20. Evidence, p. 244
21. Evidence, p. 736
22. Evidence, p. 527
23. Evidence, p. 508
24. Evidence, p. 1738
25. Evidence, p. 1223
26. Evidence, p. 263
27. Evidence, p. 916
28. Evidence, p. 1741
29. Evidence, pp. 890, 1146
30. Evidence, p. 1606
31. Evidence, p. 2542
32. Evidence, pp. 651, 1528
33. Evidence, p. 1553
34. Evidence, pp. 511, 1183
35. Evidence, p. 1696

36. Evidence, p. 511
37. Evidence, p. 1519
38. Evidence, pp. 1135-6
39. Evidence, p. 1675
40. Evidence, p. 1086
41. Evidence, p. 1133
42. Evidence, pp. 1134, 1751
43. Evidence, p. 1170
44. Evidence, p. 585
45. D. Solomon, *Accidents on Main Rural Highways Related to Speed, Driver and Vehicle*, U.S.A. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, Washington, 1964.
46. Evidence, pp. 1829-30
47. Evidence, p. 446
48. Evidence, pp. 543, 1256
49. Evidence, p. 281
50. Evidence, p. 1814
51. *The Road Accident Situation in Australia in 1975*, A Report to the Commonwealth Minister for Transport by the Expert Group on Road Safety, AGPS, Canberra, 1977, p. 7.
52. Evidence, p. 1128
53. Evidence, p. 430
54. Evidence, p. 1169

## CHAPTER 5

### Post-licensing driver improvement

**292.** The licensing process has not yet realised its potential to monitor and perhaps assist in improving a driver's capabilities. Many experts consider the licensing authority should have a greater role in this process.

#### DRIVER CONTROL

**293.** In Australia it is usual for a bad driver to come to notice after the initial licence issue, only through the prosecution and penalty process. These penalties may take the form of fines, licence suspension or cancellation and jail sentences. In addition in all States but neither Territory, drivers may incur demerit points, the accumulation of a certain total of which may result in action by the licensing authority against the driver.

**294.** As discussed in the Chapter on Licensing, it is very difficult to identify 'bad' drivers or to predict the likelihood a driver may have of accident involvement.

#### PENALTIES AND SANCTIONS

**295.** The application of sanctions to aberrant drivers can be expected to have a deterrent effect when:

- the law imposing the sanction is well known, generally approved and quite explicit;
- the probability of detection of any violation of the law is high; and
- the sanction applied is seen to be appropriately severe.<sup>1</sup>

This deterrent effect has been shown to be effective to some degree in the random breath testing programs recently introduced in several States.

**296.** For sanctions to operate as a deterrent, the driver must be receptive to the threat of punishment. This may not be the case if a driver is intoxicated, depressed, angry or upset. The 'Guidelines Report', recommended further investigation of driver control programs based on penalties so that their effectiveness might be maximised.

**297.** Many witnesses questioned the appropriateness of sanctions as a device for driver improvement. Some studies have recommended changes in the use of sanctions, that disqualification be imposed only for relatively serious offences, and that minor offenders (particularly drivers holding probationary licences) be diverted into driver improvement programs.<sup>2</sup>

**298.** The Australian Automobile Association recommends an evaluation of the effectiveness of driver control programs which are based on sanctions. It believes that the present punitive approach adopted by courts in convicting drivers for traffic offences is inappropriate and tends to be unsuccessful in rehabilitating such drivers.<sup>3</sup>

**299.** If the system of controlling drivers is to continue to be based on the licensing process, then considerable improvements are necessary. Licensing is not the only means of achieving this aim. The current system of penalties and sanctions which is familiar and entrenched is resistant to change. The more radical the innovation the less likely it is to gain uniform acceptance within the Australian federal system. Difficulty can be anticipated in achieving even limited administrative reforms which would make the present arrangements more effective.

## Points Demerit Systems

300. Coppin stated that the original purpose of the points system first introduced into the U.S.A. was to identify drivers for corrective action on the basis of a point score, accumulated through traffic offences with various demerit values. That is, it was to be the basis of selecting problem drivers into a program.<sup>4</sup>

301. Points demerit systems operating in most States in Australia tend not to be considered as driver improvement programs but part of the law enforcement process. Such mandatory programs operate more as a part of an enforcement system of driver control.

302. Some witnesses, particularly those associated with the heavy transport industry, indicated to the Committee that due to transport drivers' increased exposure on the roads, the maximum point suspension level is restrictive although they did concede that the courts apparently take this into account. There is also a widely held view that because of the size and weight of heavy vehicles, added responsibility is placed on the driver of such vehicles.

303. The points demerit schemes operating in the States differ from each other in both form and content. The allotted weighting of points to similar offences in the States varies widely. There is clearly no consensus across Australia on the relative seriousness of individual offences. In addition as Coppin pointed out in his report, in many cases the assigned point values do not appear to have any relevance to crash probability.<sup>5</sup> He goes on to say that the unauthorised use of a vehicle in Western Australia brings 9 points (being 3/4 of the suspension level) while it takes three offences of driving through a red light (being 3 points each) to reach the same level. Again in Western Australia failing to stop at a stop sign earns 2 demerit points. In Victoria improper passing brings only one point while the same offence in Western Australia brings 3, even though both States have the same 12 point suspension level over 3 years. There is clearly a lack of co-ordination between the States in assigning point values to offences.

304. Many of the schemes operating in Australia simply identify, for purposes of licence suspension, drivers who have accumulated a given number of demerit points. Such action has been taken as part of the administrative process without further recourse to the courts except where a driver appeals. To the extent that points demerit systems operate in an automatic manner for the sole purpose of disqualifying drivers, the potential to provide a basis for directing drivers to forms of driver improvement is lost.<sup>6</sup>

305. The Committee recommends that:

**the Office of Road Safety evaluate the validity of the points demerit schemes currently operating in Australia. This evaluation should include an examination of ways to:**

- encourage greater uniformity; and
- link points demerit schemes more effectively with other sanctioning options, and with driver improvement programs.

## Administrative sanctions

306. Post-licensing control rests primarily with the courts. Some schemes which exist outside this system take the form of administrative sanctions applied by licensing authorities. There are differences between the States in the types of administrative sanctions applied to drivers as part of post-licensing control.

307. Apart from Tasmania and the two Territories, all States send warning letters to drivers informing them that they are approaching the point of disqualification of their licence. In Queensland there is a provision for further action to be taken against a driver

in the form of a 'show cause' hearing where the driver must convince the licensing authority why he should be allowed to continue to drive.

**308.** A system of controlling drivers based on the licensing process has been introduced in South Australia. In that State a Consultative Committee commenced operation in July 1971. The Committee is comprised of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles as Chairman, a senior officer from the Police Department, who is normally the Chief Superintendent, Prosecutions, and a senior Crown Law Officer of at least five year's standing.

**309.** The Consultative Committee has the right to review all licences in South Australia, irrespective of classification. The criteria for this action is usually an accumulation of 12 or more demerit points within a short period of time, or a series of offences which cast reasonable doubt upon the general driving attitude of a licence-holder. The driver is summoned before the Consultative Committee to prove why he should be permitted to continue to drive in South Australia. The Committee has the power to recommend that drivers have probationary conditions endorsed on their licences. There is no right of appeal against the decisions of the Consultative Committee.

**310.** A driving instructor who incurs 6 demerit points is sent a letter from the Consultative Committee asking him to justify why he should continue to be a driving instructor. Similar action is taken in respect of a bus or tow truck driver. If the Consultative Committee is not satisfied, the licence is cancelled. When drivers who have had their licences cancelled regain their licences, they must display 'P' plates for 12 months. As many drivers find this embarrassing the Consultative Committee considers the stigma associated with this requirement may form a significant part of the sanction process.

## **DRIVER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS**

**311.** In contrast to driver control programs, driver improvement programs have a less punitive intent focussing on motivational and educational aspects. Driver improvement programs should aim at influencing attitudes and behaviour in a positive manner, that is, doing things **for** drivers rather than **to** drivers. Driver improvement programs represent an opportunity to re-direct action and resources away from traditional practices of doubtful validity towards those which show greater promise.<sup>7</sup>

**312.** A driver improvement program in California which has been operating for some time has demonstrated some degree of success.<sup>8</sup> The program treats drivers who come under notice for having more than one accident or traffic conviction in a specific period. Initial treatment is a warning letter, followed by a group discussion session if the driver again comes under notice through either a traffic conviction or an accident. Those committing further offences are called to a personal interview, and possibly are issued with a restricted licence.

**313.** It is important to note that an approach designed to diagnose and then remedy driving problems such as that advocated by Coppin, should be aimed at the total population of drivers and not just those considered to be problem drivers. Various aspects of driver improvement programs including warning letters, individual counselling, group educational meetings, rehabilitation programs for drink-driving offences and referral to training and instruction programs, have been assessed in the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report'.<sup>9</sup>

**314.** Involvement in an accident is a rare event when related to the overall number of journeys undertaken and is difficult to predict on an individual basis. Therefore successful driver improvement programs must concentrate on measures which can be applied to groups of drivers who can be identified as having a higher than average risk of subsequent accident involvement.

**315.** In order to select drivers for participation in driver improvement programs, and to test the effectiveness of different programs, an extended data base is required. It is therefore essential that information on accident involvement, as well as traffic violations, be included in driver records. The Committee has already recommended that this measure be introduced. This was also a key recommendation of the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report'. Opposition to this measure based on the grounds of civil liberties surfaced briefly in Western Australia early in 1981 when the Road Traffic Authority decided to expand the licence record system in this way. It is important that the public understand that the reason for expanding licence records to include accident involvement statistics is to assist drivers to avoid accidents in the future.

**316.** The operation of a points demerit scheme would be more effective if it led to the application of an array of treatments or administrative actions. For example:

- advisory or warning letters (either of a low or high threat variety);
- assignment to group safety educational or rehabilitation programs;
- show cause hearings where the individual must indicate in a personal interview with the licensing authority why they should not have their licence suspended or cancelled;
- restrictions on the licence;
- probation of the licence (deferred action); and
- suspension or cancellation.

**317.** In the Coppin Report it was stated that Queensland was the most similar State in its operation of a driver improvement program to that typically found in the U.S.A. In Queensland both conviction and accident data is recorded on driver records. If driver improvement programs are to be effective in reducing the number of accidents it is imperative that this information be available. At half the level of demerit points required for suspension, the Queensland Police Department sends a low threat letter to the driver advising of the multiple entries on the drivers' record. The tone of the warning letter is friendly and encouraging. Included with that letter is a letter from the Commissioner of Transport inviting the driver to attend the Defensive Driving Program conducted by the Queensland Road Safety Council. Evidence indicates that the use of warning letters has been very successful. Low threat letters appear to be more effective than high threat ones. Other States and Territories also have 're-education' programs available to people with poor driving records. New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have re-education programs which are conducted by the police force. South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have no such courses, while in Victoria, RoSTA is implementing a pilot program.

**318.** Queensland is the only State at present which schedules a driver to a 'show cause' hearing when the full points demerit limit has been reached as a routine part of the licensing process. A 'show cause' hearing is conducted by a member of the Police Department. The meeting takes the form of a discussion where the driver must convince the police why he should retain his licence. The Committee supports the concept of 'show cause' hearings and would like to see schemes developed in other States and Territories.

**319.** The Committee agrees with the comment by Coppin that it appears that Queensland would offer an excellent pilot site for a driver improvement program. Queensland would be the most suitable site for the development and evaluation of a program for two major reasons. Firstly, the driver history records contain both convictions and accidents and offers the central source of scheduling and follow-up data which will be enhanced with computerisation. Secondly, the administrative structure

and expertise exists within the Department of Transport in co-ordination with the Queensland Police Department, to undertake the planning and development of a model driver improvement program.

320. The Australian Automobile Association also strongly supports the evaluation of a pilot program of driver improvement in view of its potential contribution to improving driver behaviour.

321. The Committee recommends that:

**the Office of Road Safety seek the co-operation of the Queensland Departments of Transport and Police, with a view to sponsoring the joint evaluation of a driver improvement program.**

322. A further scheme to encourage an improvement in driver performance suggested during the Inquiry is linking third party insurance premiums to licences, rather than to vehicle registration. It was suggested that the licence fee should contain a third party insurance component which initially is substantial. A no-claim bonus scheme would operate, reducing the premium to accident-free licence holders at subsequent renewals.

323. For the scheme to have any influence on driver behaviour the financial penalties would need to be extremely high. The cost of a crash is already very high, and an additional penalty of even \$50, when compared to the total cost and inconvenience of crash involvement would be so small as to be virtually irrelevant.

#### **ALCOHOL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS**

324. It was reported in this Committee's Report on Alcohol, *Drugs and Road Safety* in 1980 that research indicated that alcohol was a factor in over 50% of crashes involving a fatality.<sup>10</sup> **Abuse of alcohol by road users is the greatest single contributing factor to fatal and serious traffic accidents.** The Committee cannot overstate the importance of finding appropriate measures to reduce this abuse. Programs designed to rehabilitate drivers who have been convicted of drink-driving offences should be regarded as an important part of the total approach to driver improvement. Its application will probably be more effective with younger, less addicted drinkers than with chronic problem drinkers.

325. All alcohol rehabilitation programs should be adequately planned with built-in mechanisms for evaluation. An essential part of any evaluation is:

- random selection of subjects into treated and non-treated (or minimal treatment) groups;
- use of evaluation criteria sufficiently sensitive to detect likely program effects within a reasonable period of study (say three years); and
- commitment of course personnel to evaluation of their program.

Only through systematic planning efforts, can the treatment effects be determined. The Committee sees a need to evaluate programs currently operating. Some programs underway may not be as effective as possible.

326. The Road Trauma Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons considered that drivers convicted with a blood alcohol concentration greater than 0.15 milligram per cent, should have their licences automatically cancelled. The Road Trauma Committee claims that sixty per cent of this group have a chronic disabling illness which is both psychiatrically and physically debilitating, and that over half of them would be considered alcoholics by World Health Organisation standards.<sup>71</sup> According to the Road Trauma Committee, for some people alcohol is a habituating drug, for others it is addictive. They suggest that it would be possible for an expert medical panel

to distinguish between the two types and to determine whether a change in the pattern of alcohol consumption has been, or is likely to be, achieved. The Road Trauma Committee believes this group of drivers should be assessed by a medical panel and undergo a rehabilitation program and then be permitted to re-apply for a licence. This process is followed overseas in many European countries.

327. The proposed medical panel would be composed of a doctor who specialises in alcohol problems, a social worker and a rehabilitation officer. The doctor would be required to make a statement on progress being made under treatment. A statement would also be required from the rehabilitation unit which the driver has to attend. The social worker would be the source of information in the family context and of any other social problems that may exist. Such requirements, according to the Road Trauma Committee, would be the evidence required to indicate that a person has an altered approach to the use of alcohol. These requirements should be met before another licence is granted.

328. The Australian Automobile Association supports these views and added that drivers convicted of drink-driving offences should not have their licences restored at the end of the period of disqualification until satisfactory medical evidence is submitted that their drinking/drug taking habits, do not present an undue danger to themselves or to other road users.<sup>12</sup>

329. At the moment in Victoria a magistrate may order a driver to attend a rehabilitation course but no demonstration of intent to reform is required.

330. The *Alcohol, Drugs and Road Safety* Report discussed alcohol rehabilitation programs in detail and it is not intended to reiterate those points in this Report. Alcohol rehabilitation programs warrant continued support and additional resources from governments. Assessment centres should be established where convicted drink-drivers should be matched to appropriate rehabilitation programs.

331. This Committee is disappointed to see that, as yet, little action has been taken regarding the rehabilitation program recommendations specified in the *Alcohol, Drugs and Road Safety* Report of 1980. The Committee therefore, reiterates its recommendation published in that Report that:

**the Departments of Health and Transport initiate and support studies, including pilot programs, to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitative programs aimed at modification of the behaviour of drink-drivers.**

The Committee hopes some action will soon be taken on this recommendation.

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1. *Guidelines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia*, prepared by the Advisory Committee on Road User Performance and Traffic Codes for the Australian Transport Advisory Council, 4 July 1980, p. 38.
  2. Evidence, p. 1873.
  3. *Guidelines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia*, p. 38.
  4. R. S. Coppin, *Driver Licence and Driver Improvement Programs—A National Review*, Department of Transport, September 1977, p. 119.
  5. Coppin, p. 121.
  6. *Guidelines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia*, p. 40.
  7. Evidence, pp. 1874, 1996.
  8. Evidence, pp. 1996-7.
  9. *Guidelines for Driver Licensing and Driver Improvement Programs in Australia*, p. 40.
  10. *Alcohol, Drugs and Road Safety*, Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Road Safety, AGPS, May 1980, p. 18.
  11. Evidence, p. 2434.
  12. Evidence, p. 1902.

## PART B

### CHAPTER 6

#### The special needs of disabled drivers

332. The special needs of disabled drivers were found to extend far beyond the specific areas of education, training and licensing. As the major part of the Inquiry coincided with the International Year of Disabled Persons, it was considered appropriate to cover the general needs of disabled drivers, beyond the specific categories of education, training and licensing. The Committee was fortunate to receive so much assistance from so many groups representing the disabled. Their evidence provided insights into the nature of the particular difficulties encountered by the disabled, many of which cannot be covered in this brief Chapter. The Committee would like to place on record their appreciation of this help.

333. Mobility is a key factor in rehabilitating the disabled. Many studies of the problems of handicapped people have found that, regardless of whether the survey dealt with housing, education, employment, allowances, recreation or other areas of concern, each stressed the problem of transportation as the major issue.<sup>1</sup> As one witness described it, 'a car becomes a magic carpet that releases them from the narrow cell of boredom', and gives them opportunities for employment, cultural and social activities.<sup>2</sup> Most of all it provides independence.

334. Research results indicate that disabled drivers may have a marginally better safety record than non-disabled drivers. Studies suggest that disabled drivers are involved in proportionally fewer serious accidents and receive fewer convictions for traffic offences.<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to define a 'disabled driver'. A disability can range from a major problem such as loss of a limb or paralysis to lesser problems such as arthritis. Disabled drivers are not a homogenous group, and include those with mental as well as physical disabilities. The degree of impairment which results from any given disability varies considerably from case to case.

335. It is against this background of the great need for the disabled to drive if their disabilities allow it, and their good safety record, that this Chapter should be viewed.

336. It is not possible to assess how many disabled drivers there are in Australia. Licensing procedures vary from State to State, and recording methods do not allow easy identification of disabled licencees. The information either does not exist, or is not easily accessed. Establishing compatible central driver records systems in each State and Territory as recommended in Chapter 4 would facilitate research into this comparatively undocumented field.

337. Similarly it is not possible to assess the number of disabled people who do not drive, but whose disabilities would not preclude them from driving if they had access to expert advice and facilities.

#### DRIVER TRAINING FACILITIES

338. Driver training for the disabled is usually of two types: re-training a person who has already held a driving licence, but has since become disabled; and training a disabled person who has never driven before. Both groups need specialist tuition in learning to use any driving aids that may be required as a result of their disabilities.

339. Special driver training for the disabled is available in the major metropolitan areas of Australia but is not available in many country areas. Access to special driver training

is often dependent on the type of disability or on involvement in a particular rehabilitation program or institution. The immediate availability and standard of training varies markedly from State to State. Often demand far exceeds the facilities available.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Commonwealth rehabilitation service scheme**

**340.** The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) is administered by the Department of Social Security. CRS operates nine general rehabilitation centres throughout Australia. Any person within the broad working-age group, (between the ages of 16 and the aged pension age) with a substantial disability, a long-term or potentially long-term disability and can benefit substantially from the services provided, is eligible for treatment under the CRS. Under the CRS scheme a disabled person may be provided with driver tuition and/or vehicle modifications or aids. The range of facilities offered varies from centre to centre. It is now possible for a person to be referred to the CRS solely to undertake driver training, but this is a recent development.<sup>5</sup> However, there is a long waiting list for admission to such training courses and acceptance is on a needs basis.

**341.** Under certain conditions individuals accepted for a rehabilitation program may receive driving instruction free of charge. Some centres provide their own modified vehicle and instructor, while others contract out driving instruction to commercial driving schools. If a person is accepted for a rehabilitation program and can provide a car, the cost of any vehicle modifications is met.

**342.** The Department of Social Security advised the Committee that driver training may be sponsored by the CRS if, during the treatment program, assessment indicates that an ability to drive would substantially assist in rehabilitation. The decision as to whether driving tuition should be provided is made by a specialist casework team following assessment of the rehabilitee's capacity to adequately control a vehicle under normal driving conditions. In some cases the Department may need to seek the opinion of the State licensing authority. The cost of providing driving tuition is a very small component of the total cost of rehabilitation. The Department of Social Security advised that the guidelines covering the provision of driving tuition are interpreted liberally. All those accepted by CRS for treatment are given driving tuition if they would benefit from it.

**343.** The Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled is a federation of organisations and individuals concerned with all needs of the disabled. ACROD believes the Department of Social Security actually applies far more stringent guidelines in selecting people for driving tuition than that quoted above. ACROD advised that Social Security guidelines state that instruction is provided only if it is considered an 'integral part of the therapeutic program or an essential factor in a defined employment goal. Driving instruction could be appropriate in certain non-vocational cases where it would increase independence immediately'. This implies the immediate availability of a vehicle for the person to drive rather than the intention or hope that a vehicle will be obtained at sometime in the future. ACROD stated that car ownership for the disabled can often be an unrealistic expectation. It seems unjust to discriminate against those disabled people who do not have a 'defined employment goal'. The positive psychological impact of the successful mastery of driver training for disabled people should not be underestimated. It can significantly improve self confidence and encourage further attempts to overcome disability.<sup>6</sup>

**344.** Some of the Department of Social Security's treatment centres have a Commonwealth vehicle which has been specifically modified to provide assessment and driving tuition. Five Commonwealth cars have been converted for this purpose.<sup>7</sup> At other

centres this type of service has been provided by private driving schools which have developed specialised facilities and techniques for training disabled drivers.

345. In 1979-80, the CRS accepted 5,500 disabled people for assistance, and of this number 420 rehabilitees were provided with driving tuition. Modifications and/or driving aids were provided to 72 vehicles owned by rehabilitees, as part of their rehabilitation program.<sup>8</sup> If a person is accepted for a rehabilitation program and can provide a car, the cost of any vehicle modifications is met.

346. As well as the nine major CRS centres, 16 regional rehabilitation units have been established at provincial centres throughout Australia. The Committee was advised that within two years this network will be extended to 20 regional units. The units usually consist of a rehabilitation counsellor, a social worker, a nursing sister and a part-time consulting medical practitioner. These teams have the power to call in other specialists as required and to make use of any local services. Driving schools are within this ambit. CRS also have plans to develop a number of pilot mobile teams for regular visits to small towns and remote country areas. The mobile teams will become operational when staffing resources permit. The casework staff of regional rehabilitation units currently provide some mobile services to clients within their regions. Throughout the Inquiry the Committee was constantly reminded of the special difficulties of disabled people in rural areas, and would like to see an extension of this scheme. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Social Security provide regional rehabilitation units in additional country centres as a matter of priority.**

#### **Driver training provided by hospitals**

347. A number of public hospitals have rehabilitation programs and some of these include aspects of driver assessment and training. In some hospitals physiotherapists and occupational therapists are actively involved in assessing and preparing patients for the actual in-car instruction. The facilities available at each hospital vary substantially. Royal Perth Hospital has a simulated vehicle which provides training for transfer to and from a vehicle, plus a specially modified car which can be borrowed by a motor school. Royal Adelaide Hospital Spinal Injuries Unit has a modified car jointly financed by the South Australian Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Associations. They accept referrals for training from outside their unit, but they have an increasingly long waiting list. They will need an extra car and staff to cope with the demand adequately. The therapists at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and at the Regency Park Special School are the only specialist driving instructors available to disabled drivers in South Australia. The instructors receive special training from the South Australian Road Safety Council.

348. The Committee commends the driver training work done by dedicated specialists in hospitals throughout Australia, including doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, engineers and others, and would like to encourage further development and provision of such facilities. A worthwhile objective of rehabilitation units in Australia would be to aim for one modified vehicle and one permanent specially trained driving instructor per unit. This is the case in most rehabilitation units in the U.S.A.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Driver training by other organisations**

349. The Committee acknowledges the work undertaken by many associations and commercial driver training schools in helping the disabled learn to drive. Unfortunately it is not possible to mention them all. Throughout Australia many different groups have responded to the need for specialist driver training for the disabled in different ways. The New South Wales Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association employs a qualified

driving instructor specially skilled in training disabled drivers and owns a specially modified vehicle suitable for even the severely disabled. In Victoria, the RACV Driving School will provide an instructor if a car is supplied by the Association of Disabled Motorists (Victoria). This group also provides driving aids to a commercial instructor in Traralgon for the purposes of instructing disabled people.

350. The ABC Driving Schools in Melbourne and Sydney are amongst a very limited number of commercial driving schools which offer instruction specially designed for disabled people. As schools rarely have cars with power steering and power brakes, they are sometimes prepared to accept pupils with their own cars. However, instructors with no special training may not appreciate the special needs or problems of disabled drivers. Greater contact and improved co-ordination between client, instructor and therapists could help overcome this difficulty.

### AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED INSTRUCTION

351. A number of associations representing disabled drivers stressed the need for specially trained and experienced driving instructors. Instructors training a disabled driver must be aware of the limitations of various disabilities as well as possessing the usual teaching skills.<sup>10</sup> The instructor must understand the individual's particular restrictions on driving performance, both covert and overt, as well as understanding the operation of driving aids that may be required. Instruction is usually needed on the correct and most efficient use of driving aids. There are some common problems experienced by disabled drivers, like getting feet caught below foot pedals. An experienced instructor would be able to indicate appropriate remedial action immediately.

352. Not all witnesses agreed with this attitude. Some argue that once disabled drivers are shown how to use driving aids, it has not yet been demonstrated that they need to be treated any differently to other learner drivers. Correct use of driving aids and modifications should be demonstrated to the disabled driver when they are fitted to the car. This argument was supported to an extent by some expert witnesses who believe that instructors must be aware of the limitations of the disabled, but consider it is not difficult or time-consuming to impart the necessary knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

353. Beyond the metropolitan areas there is very little specialist training available for disabled people. Families or friends usually provide the necessary instruction. Disabled learner drivers frequently need special training to use the complex driving aids necessary for driving. This sometimes means they cannot be taught adequately by a friend or relative but must pay for the services of a specially qualified driving instructor.<sup>12</sup> Assistance is also available with the cost of travel for those who must travel to larger centres to receive training.

354. If the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service casework teams are provided in additional country areas, this would greatly assist many disabled people who, although meeting the existing criteria for eligibility for a CRS program, are unable to benefit as a result of geographic isolation.

355. Should the Commonwealth be prepared to take a lead in providing specially qualified instructors to teach the disabled in country areas, many societies and groups associated with the disabled have indicated their willingness to assist with the provision of aids and modifications.<sup>13</sup>

356. Given the small numbers of disabled people who require driver training it is unrealistic to expect normal driver training schools to undertake additional training at

their own expense to become qualified to teach the disabled. However there is a demonstrated need for qualified instructors, and the Committee considers this need should be met with assistance from the Commonwealth Government.

**357.** It is not economically feasible for all disabled country people wishing to learn to drive to move to a metropolitan area, while they undertake driving instruction. Many handicapped people require an extended period of training or re-training. It is therefore necessary to ensure that both instruction, and suitably modified vehicles, are available where they are required. One way of overcoming this problem would be to have a pool of Commonwealth cars available in each of the major metropolitan areas, under the administration of the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Scheme. At present only 5 Commonwealth cars are available for this purpose. The cars are fitted with the necessary aids and modifications when required for driver training purposes, but are also used for everyday departmental requirements.

**358.** Under the proposed scheme a disabled person wishing to learn to drive, could make an application and have a suitable car made available to a nominated driving school as close as possible to the home of the disabled person, for the duration of the training time. The car could be delivered to the local instructor by an instructor specially qualified to teach the disabled. The qualified instructor could explain the controls and the individual difficulties and requirements of the person who is to be taught to drive, when delivering the car to the local instructor. In some cases it may only be driving aids that are required, and not a car, depending on local availability of a suitable car.

**359.** It is not realistic to expect a disabled person who wishes to learn to drive to make the necessary financial outlay for a car and special modifications before learning to drive. There is of course no guarantee that the necessary standard for licensing will be reached.

**360.** The Committee recommends that:

- the Federal Government make available through the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Scheme, more Commonwealth cars that can be suitably fitted with modifications and aids for use as training vehicles for the disabled;
- a pool of suitable vehicles be established in major metropolitan centres for loan to nominated driving schools in country areas undertaking the instruction of disabled learner drivers; and
- the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service make available the services and advice of qualified driving instructors to driving schools in country areas, nominated to undertake instruction of disabled learner drivers.

## **FUNDING DRIVER TUITION**

**361.** At present, a disabled person who is accepted into a Commonwealth Rehabilitation Scheme for driving tuition has this provided free. If they own a car the necessary modifications are supplied and fitted free of charge. However, as mentioned earlier CRS schemes can only cater for a small proportion of those in need.

**362.** It has been estimated that it would cost the average disabled driver between \$300 and \$350 to learn to drive through a private school teaching disabled drivers.<sup>14</sup> There is then an additional cost of approximately \$200 to fit driving aids to a car. These are extra burdens for an already financially disadvantaged group.

**363.** Consideration should be given to providing financial assistance for driver tuition for all disabled people who require it, not only for those who have access to Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED DRIVERS

364. Although not falling directly within the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee is aware that the question of financial assistance to the disabled to assist with mobility is of major concern to the disabled. The Committee believes that many of the schemes designed to provide assistance to the disabled adopt a 'band-aid' response to the problem. Many of the schemes are inequitable and do not provide adequate assistance to those in most need. For example, the fact that some disabled people may have received substantial compensation payments may not be considered when determining eligibility for certain assistance programs. If there is widespread community support for a more equitable system of assistance to the disabled, there is a role for the Commonwealth Government to consider alternative programs through the social security system. Although no specific recommendations are made in the following sections, the major issues are canvassed.

### Assistance to purchase a car

365. In 1960 a scheme was introduced to allow sales tax exemption on the purchase of a new motor vehicle, and replacement parts, for use in the transportation to and from gainful employment, of a person who has lost the use of one or both legs to an extent that precludes use of public transport.<sup>15</sup>

366. During 1978-79, 1,904 applications for sales tax exemption were received and Certificates of Exemption were issued for 1,253 motor vehicles.

367. The nature of the sales tax exemption has received continuing criticism for a number of reasons.

- Assistance is arbitrarily confined to people with lower-limb impairments. Armless people are not eligible, nor are other people suffering from severe chronic disabilities which affect mobility without necessarily affecting the use of one or both legs.
- The person purchasing the car must require it for transport to and from gainful employment.
- Assistance goes only to those who can afford to purchase a new car.
- Those who can afford more expensive cars receive greater reductions.

368. It has been argued forcibly throughout the Inquiry that this scheme should be extended to cover all disabled people who cannot use public transport. It is particularly imperative for students and housewives. There has been a dramatic change in life style since the scheme was introduced over twenty years ago. Shopping facilities have become centralised and the emphasis is on self-serve outlets. Use of a car is more necessary now than it was then, and this applies particularly to the disabled.

369. Employment is hard to find, more so for the disabled than for others. The sales tax exemption does not apply unless the applicant has a job, and it is difficult to get a job without transport.

370. The Committee strongly believes that the current system of sales tax exemption is inequitable. Those with the greatest means benefit most. Certain particularly needy categories of disabled people are specifically excluded. If the system is retained, it should be extended to include all disabled people incapable of using public transport.

### Mobility allowance

371. There is widespread support for the concept of a mobility allowance. The allowance would be a flexible payment based on needs. The major advantage of a mobility allowance is that it allows a considerable degree of flexibility for individual needs. Each

disabled person could decide how to spend the allowance according to his or her personal requirement, whether it be driving tuition, vehicle running costs, taxi fares, or paying someone else to drive them. Control of such an allowance would lead to much greater independence and self esteem, both so important to rehabilitation. Those eligible for a pension receive generous public transport concessions. In the case of the disabled, this is usually of no benefit whatever, as public transport is totally inaccessible.

**372.** It is understood that Victoria is in the process of introducing a mobility allowance-type scheme. New South Wales has introduced a system of 50% taxi subsidies. Social welfare payments are a significant part of the income of most disabled people. If schemes are introduced in some States and not others, it could reach the stage where disabled people living in one State are greatly disadvantaged compared with those in another. Social welfare payments should be equitable throughout Australia.

**373.** A mobility allowance scheme such as this has operated successfully in the United Kingdom since 1976. The allowance has recently been raised to £ 16.50 per week. It is payable to disabled people aged between 5 and 65, and is indexed to the cost of living. The allowance is treated as earned income and is taxable. A mobility allowance also operates in the Netherlands where the payment is the equivalent of \$1,200 per annum.

**374.** The possibility of a mobility allowance scheme is referred to the Minister for Social Security for his consideration.

#### **Import duty**

**375.** The Committee received complaints from many witnesses regarding the level of import duty on various items for use by the disabled. At present an import duty of 36% is payable on items imported for which there is a 'readily available, suitably equivalent' item manufactured in Australia. If a person wishing to import an item can demonstrate that there is no such equivalent manufactured in Australia, the import duty is reduced, under By-law, to 2%. The system was introduced to protect Australian manufacturers. Most associations representing the interests of the disabled agree that fostering local production is important as it helps with parts requirements and items which require individual fitting. In practice it is difficult to obtain the 2% duty. Lengthy delays in availability, or the fact that Australian items are inferior in quality to imported items, are not taken into consideration.

#### **Bounty system**

**376.** The option of a bounty system to protect local manufacturers rather than an import duty was considered. Under a bounty system local producers would be subsidised by a grant which should reduce the price of the item to the consumer. Australian-made items should then be able to compete with goods imported at a lower rate of import duty.

**377.** The Committee suggests that these options should receive the consideration of the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs.

#### **Low interest loans**

**378.** In addition to the Mobility Allowance that operates in the United Kingdom, a voluntary organisation called 'Motability' has been established on Government initiative. It is designed to help people with disabilities obtain maximum value for money in using their Mobility Allowance to obtain a car. It offers two types of schemes: leasing

and hire purchase. Payments are pegged to allowance rates. The organisation attempts to provide an already financially disadvantaged group some access to independent mobility and to increase their options. There are no such schemes available in Australia to assist disabled people. The Association of Disabled Motorists (Victoria) have proposed the establishment of a special fund either by Government or by large private financial institutions from which disabled persons could borrow at a low rate of interest for the purchase of a motor vehicle. Many disabled people are not employed and so may not be able to meet the high rates of interest, often 18% or more, involved in ordinary personal loans or hire purchase agreements.

**379. The Committee draws this suggestion to the attention of the Treasurer, and asks that it be given consideration.**

#### **Vehicle registration and third party insurance**

**380.** The cost of motor vehicle registration and third party insurance, and eligibility for concessions are matters for individual States and Territories. As a result, rates and concessions vary throughout Australia. However, in most States pensioners and totally and permanently incapacitated ex-service personnel receive generous concessions. The Committee believes it would be appropriate for similar concessions to be granted to the civilian disabled. **Accordingly, the Committee suggests that the Minister for Transport draw this suggestion to the attention of the Australian Transport Advisory Council for consideration.**

#### **Commonwealth program of aids for the disabled**

**381.** The Commonwealth is currently funding a scheme to provide various types of aids to disabled people on indefinite loan. A list of categories of aids available under the program is at Appendix 13. At present car modification aids for disabled drivers are not included.

**382.** The only eligibility requirement under this scheme is that a doctor must certify that the aid is required, and the applicant must not be eligible for provision of the aid under any other program. When introducing the scheme the then Minister for Health, the Hon. M. J. R. Mackellar, said 'the basic aim is to increase the level of independence of disabled people in the community setting'. The program is currently under review, including a reassessment of the categories of aids available. It is understood that car modification aids are being considered for inclusion in the scheme.

**383.** Given the significance of mobility in the rehabilitation of disabled people as outlined earlier in this Report, the Committee considers provision of car modification aids of great value to the disabled. **Accordingly, the Committee suggests that the Minister for Health consider the extension of the Provision of Aids for the Disabled program to include car modifications and aids for disabled drivers.**

#### **STANDARDS FOR DRIVING AIDS**

**384.** In the U.S.A. there are standards of safety and quality for car modifications and aids. In Australia no similar standards have yet been developed. In the U.S.A. driving aids are also tested for resistance to fatigue and destruction.<sup>16</sup> Witnesses advised the Committee of several aids currently on the market which they consider quite dangerous, and which would be unlikely to pass a safety standard should one exist. One

example was given of a road death as a result of a crash caused by a disabled driver using an improvised aid for acceleration.<sup>17</sup>

385. The most commonly used controls, the Ross and the Spida control are regarded as safe and satisfactory if correctly fitted. However, evidence was given of the availability of inferior spinner knobs, which are perhaps the most common modification of all.<sup>18</sup>

386. At present equipment is being designed and sold by different outlets in each State. Many witnesses expressed a need to have a standard established throughout Australia. The consequence of equipment failure for a disabled motorist can be severe and may result in an accident.

387. Whilst agreeing that there would be many advantages in developing standards of safety and quality for aids and modifications for disabled drivers, it is imperative that any such system be extremely well assessed before it is introduced. Flexibility is the key word in designing and supplying aids to the disabled, not uniformity. Many engineers design and fit special aids to suit each particular disability. Before regulations or standards are implemented, a careful assessment must be made of whether the system will lead to any unnecessary restrictions.

388. Until it is certain that any proposed standards will be effective in what they attempt to achieve, the current system should continue unchanged. The Committee recommends that:

**the Commonwealth Government assess the feasibility of introducing Australia-wide minimum standards of safety and quality for driving aids for the disabled.**

389. A further problem encountered with driving aids is when they are not fitted by experienced tradesmen. Although it is required by law that vehicle modifications be checked by licensing authorities, this frequently does not happen. It is often left to the disabled motorist to ensure that the car is expertly fitted out and safe. State licensing authorities have a responsibility to ensure that car modifications are checked as required. Establishment of standards for aids would facilitate this operation. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States and Territories to implement procedures for checking installation of vehicle modifications for the disabled.**

## MANUAL OF INFORMATION ON DRIVING AIDS

390. A further problem encountered by disabled drivers is a lack of information about the availability of various types of aids. ACROD would like this information to be readily available throughout Australia. Sometimes very specific information is needed on the advantages and disadvantages of different types of controls and the ideal location in the car for adaptive devices. This sort of information is hard to obtain at present. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience amongst the disabled community which could be documented in the form of a manual.

391. Many disabled people do not know where to go for assistance and advice. Although some of the required information is available at present, it is usually from many different and sometimes obscure, sources. The point was made clearly to the Committee, that those who know the system obtain very good assistance. Those that don't, miss out.<sup>19</sup>

392. It was also suggested that a manual containing a wide variety of information for the disabled driver, or a disabled person who hopes to learn to drive in the future, could also include advice on the sorts of emergencies or problems that may occur on the road as a result of their disabilities.<sup>20</sup> To assist the disabled driver, the manual should also

contain details of the legal requirements that apply to them,<sup>21</sup> for example advice on notification to licensing authorities of changes in the degree of disability.

393. The Department of Social Security should have responsibility for preparation of the proposed information manual. Although separate sections would need to be prepared for each State and Territory, all information should be contained in one manual as an Australia-wide document and distributed to all those who need it. It is likely that there will be a variation in aids and services in different States, and an Australia-wide manual would allow the disabled to choose from a wider range of aids.

394. As much of the required information is available at present, the cost of production of the manual would not be excessive. Many associations for the disabled have offered to assist in any way possible. The Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Social Security consider developing a manual of information and advice for disabled motorists including details of vehicle modifications and aids available both in Australia and overseas.**

395. It must be kept in mind that inventories of information alone do not answer all the questions disabled people might have. Photographs of various aids may all look similar even though the aids themselves work in very different ways. It was suggested that there is also a need for an annual or two-yearly exposition of disabled persons' aids.<sup>22</sup>

#### **AVAILABILITY OF SOPHISTICATED AIDS**

396. Disabled people in some overseas countries, including Scandinavia, the U.S.A., Canada and the United Kingdom have access to more sophisticated driving aids than are available in Australia. For example, quadriplegics with no wrist movement are unable to drive in Australia. In the U.S.A. there are many people with this type of disability driving, using specially designed equipment.<sup>23</sup> It is not only the equipment that is required, but the expertise necessary for installation and to carry out repairs where necessary.

397. The Committee is aware of the many dedicated people working in the area of engineering and development of aids for the disabled. There is very little government recognition or support for the valuable work that is being undertaken in this field. Any Government initiative in this area could, with a comparatively modest outlay, bring mobility and independence to a significant number of disabled people.

398. Rehabilitation engineers function in direct contact with the disabled in need of aids and appliances. Ideally, they operate in close collaboration with the medical and paramedical professions. The National Advisory Council for the Handicapped (NACH) has established an Expert Committee on Rehabilitation Engineering which is concerned with advancing the cause of rehabilitation engineering in Australia. In the U.S.A. there are 20 rehabilitation centres funded by the Government. Although it is difficult to make a comparison, a conservative estimate suggests that Government support for rehabilitation engineering in the U.S.A. per head of population is more than ten times that of Australia.

399. The National Advisory Council for the Handicapped believes that at least one adequately staffed rehabilitation engineering centre should be established per 1.25 million people. NACH claims that at present not one of the five centres that do exist is adequately staffed. NACH believes that proper funding of rehabilitation engineering centres is of primary importance in advancing the rehabilitation effort. **The Committee draws this evidence to the attention of the Minister for Social Security and asks that it receive his consideration.**

## **OTHER PROBLEMS FACED BY DISABLED MOTORISTS**

### **Parking**

**400.** Parking presents two problems to the disabled: the first is getting an adequate parking place close to their destination; the second is the length of stay permitted without incurring a fine. Although provision and control of parking is primarily a matter for State and local governments, the Committee would like to draw attention to the many difficulties faced by the disabled with respect to parking. The Commonwealth has a responsibility to ensure that parking facilities of an adequate standard are provided at all Commonwealth owned buildings where there is a need.

**401.** Specifications have been established (Standards Association of Australia, Design Rules for Access by Disabled—Australian Standard 1428-1977) for suitable parking for disabled drivers, but only a small amount has actually been made available. Parking areas designated for disabled drivers should be clearly marked, and policed more stringently than other parking areas.

**402.** There are both State and municipal differences throughout Australia regarding fixed-time parking for disabled people. In New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria a permit system has been introduced. In New South Wales and South Australia there is legislation which allows a disabled person to exceed the sign-posted time limit where the period is longer than 30 minutes. In South Australia the time is limited to an additional 90 minutes, while in New South Wales it is indefinite. (See Appendix 12 for sample of New South Wales disabled persons parking authority and conditions for use.) The individual must display a disabled persons parking permit to enjoy these privileges.

**403.** In Victoria the Government has proposed to municipalities that permits be used allowing double time on a meter. However, it is up to each municipality to co-operate. Although it is pleasing to see the needs of the disabled receiving consideration, this scheme does not seem to acknowledge the fact that disabled people frequently travel long distances. It would be extremely confusing if municipalities adopted different practices, even if the permit itself is common across the State. Disabled people travel inter-State and it would be helpful if there was reciprocal recognition by other States and Territories, and that the rules that apply are uniform.

**404.** In the Australian Capital Territory a disabled driver receives a parking ticket for exceeding the stated time limit, in any parking zone as does any able driver. On receiving the ticket a disabled driver has two options: pay the penalty; or write to the Registrar setting out the circumstances under which the 'offence' was committed and plead for leniency. Some witnesses suggested that this process was humiliating and discriminatory. The Committee was informed that there were no set rules for these cases but that each case was dealt with on its merits.

**405.** In the interests of uniformity, and the fact that the Australian Capital Territory adjoins New South Wales, it would be most appropriate that any system introduced in the Australian Capital Territory be as similar as possible to that operating in New South Wales. The New South Wales scheme is also recognised by many associations representing the disabled, as the most satisfactory currently operating in Australia.

**406.** The Committee recommends that:

- **the Minister for the Capital Territory establish a system of parking permits for disabled people similar to that operating in New South Wales; and**
- **ACRUPTC give consideration to recommending the introduction of comparable legislation in other States.**

### **Difficulty in obtaining petrol**

407. Most disabled motorists do not have the option of using public transport because of their disability. As a result, they are greatly disadvantaged during disputes in the petrol industry. The Committee believes disabled people should be regarded as essential users when petrol rationing systems are instituted. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that:

**the Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Advisory Council, encourage the States and Territories to designate disabled drivers as essential users of petrol during petrol shortages.**

408. Disabled motorists are also alarmed at the proliferation of self-service petrol stations. Many are unable to serve themselves. Although some can serve themselves it is a lengthy process involving the use of their wheelchair. In a busy garage it would hold up a pump for some time. The majority need assistance with the ancilliary services of checking water, oil, batteries or tyres. Many associations representing disabled motorists have written to oil companies drawing their attention to the problem. One proposed solution is that each service station indicate one pump offering attendant service to drivers with special needs. It is unlikely that this will be accepted as it would severely limit the use of the pump, and it would cause staffing difficulties in one-operator service stations.

409. The second proposal is that it be mandatory for each self-service station to display a sign indicating the location of the nearest attended service station. This idea would involve the service stations in only a modest financial outlay. It would assist not only disabled drivers, but many other motorists who require drive-way service, particularly if the motorist is beyond his local area. The Committee supports the principle of mandatory notification of the nearest attended service station, at all self-service petrol stations.

### **DISPLAY OF 'DISABLED DRIVER' SYMBOL**

410. The issue of whether or not disabled drivers should display a sign indicating to other motorists, the fact that they are disabled, was raised many times throughout the Inquiry. Those in favour of displaying a notice believed it would lead to greater courtesy towards disabled motorists. Those against felt it would be a form of discrimination. By obtaining a licence, disabled drivers have proved they are as capable of driving as any other motorist, and they feel they should not be singled out in any way. It could also put disabled people and their property in jeopardy from the criminal element should they become stranded.

411. Symbols are available, and should disabled motorists wish to display one, then they are at liberty to do so. The Committee could not support making display of such symbols mandatory, particularly as so many disabled people are against such a move.

412. Distress flags are also available. If a disabled motorist is stranded, then the motorist can decide whether they wish to use such a flag to seek assistance, depending on circumstances.

**R. C. KATTER**  
*Chairman*

25 March 1982

1. Evidence, p. 2549
2. Evidence, p. 287
3. Evidence, p. 220
4. Evidence, p. 102
5. Evidence, p. 1238
6. Evidence, p. 2539
7. Evidence, p. 1302
8. Evidence, p. 223
9. Evidence, p. 2540
10. Evidence, pp. 1693, 2267
11. Evidence, p. 1187
12. Evidence, p. 471
13. Evidence, p. 283
14. Evidence, p. 789
15. Evidence, p. 223
16. Evidence, p. 1281
17. Evidence, p. 1692
18. Evidence, p. 793
19. Evidence, p. 2292
20. Evidence, p. 429
21. Evidence, p. 1236
22. Evidence, p. 1589
23. Evidence, p. 802

## APPENDIX 1

### Witnesses and Submissions

List of witnesses including date of appearance before Committee and transcript reference number.

BAIRD, J. A.	Administrator, Newcastle & District Physically Handicapped Association, Mayfield, (6 July 1981), pp. 1054-67.
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BARAGWANATH, J. A.	Deputy Chairman, State Council (Governing Body), Confederation of Australian Motor Sport, Camberwell, Vic., (23 June 1981), pp. 618-45.
BARBER, R. N.	Chairman, Legal Sub-committee (Queensland), IYDP, Brisbane, (8 July 1981), pp. 1390-407.
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BENNETT, J. W.	Managing Director, Bennett Commercial Electronics Pty Ltd, Fyshwick, A.C.T., (15 October 1981), pp. 2498-510.
BONES, R. G.	Delegate for the Auto Cycle Union of Tasmania, Launceston, (25 June 1981), pp. 872-85.
BOULTON, J. B.	Executive Director, National Safety Council of Western Australia, Mt Lawley, (22 July 1981), pp. 1650-80.
BRITTEN-JONES, Dr R.	Chairman, South Australia Centre, St John Ambulance Association, Eastwood, (21 July 1981), pp. 1567-86.
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BULLOCK, Prof. K. J.	Head of Department, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Queensland, St Lucia, (8 July 1981), pp. 1408-25.
BURKE, Dr D. C.	Medical Director, Spinal Injuries Unit, Austin Hospital, Heidelberg, Vic., (23 June 1981), pp. 798-811.
BURNISTON, Dr G. G.	President, Australian College of Rehabilitation Medicine, Coorabell Rehabilitation Hospital, Ryde, N.S.W., (7 July 1981), pp. 1218-35.
BURNS, Dr R. J.	Associate Professor of Medicine, Department of Medicine, Flinders Medical Centre, Bedford Park, S.A., (21 July 1981), pp. 1527-41.
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- STANFORD, M.H. Senior Chief Superintendent, Traffic Director, South Australian Police Department, Adelaide, (21 July 1981), pp. 1587-620.
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TYLER, Sister E.P.	Director of Training, South Australian Division, Australian Red Cross Society, North Adelaide, (21 July 1981), pp. 1484-96.
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WATT, J.T.	Driver Training Officer, TNT Australia, St Peters, N.S.W., (6 July 1981), pp. 966-93.
WEBB, Dr F.B.	12 Colin Grove, Perth, (22 July 1981), pp. 1811-39.
WEBCKE, L.	Registrar of Motor Vehicles, Department of the Capital Territory, Canberra, (11 September 1981), pp. 2317-29; (25 September 1981), pp. 2452-62.
WEIR, S.J.	Project and Administrative Officer, Premier's Department, Adelaide, (21 July 1981), pp. 1587-620.
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WIGHT, M.	Honorary Secretary, Disabled Motorists (Vic.), Balwyn, (22 June 1981), pp. 519-45.
WILKINS, B. B. E.	Sub-Committee Chairman, N.S.W. Taxi Council, Surry Hills, (6 July 1981), pp. 1033-53.
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YOUNG, I. R.	Secretary, Road Safety Council of the A.C.T. (Inc.), Canberra, (11 September 1981), pp. 2330-44.

The following individuals and organisations assisted the Committee by providing written submissions but were not required to appear at a public hearing:

Advanced Driver Training Club, N.S.W.  
 Australian Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation, N.S.W.  
 Australian Federation of Deaf Societies, Vic.  
 Australian Institute of Criminology, A.C.T.  
 Colyvan, Mr J.  
 Farrell, Mr E.  
 Geelong East Technical School, Vic.  
 Gillett, Mr R. M.  
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 Institute of Professional Driving Instruction, S.A.  
 Jones, A/g Prof. R. F., Spinal Injury Unit and Rehabilitation Medicine, The Prince Henry Hospital, N.S.W.  
 Koop, Mr P.  
 Lander, Mrs W.  
 Motorcycle Rider's Association, S.A.  
 Pacy, Dr H.  
 Rawlings, Mr G. L.  
 Royal South Sydney Hospital, N.S.W.  
 Stewart, Dr L.  
 Westhaven Association, N.S.W.  
 Wilkie, Mr K.

## APPENDIX 2

### Exhibits

#### 1. Australian Road Research Board:

- (a) *Problems of the Disabled Driver* by P. Cairney.
- (b) *A Review of Driver/Rider Licensing in Relation to Road Safety* by C. Cameron and W. Macdonald.
- (c) *Motorcycle Safety, Transport and Traffic Control Overseas Visit: Japan (August 1977)* by M. Wigan.
- (d) *Driver Instruction: Some Issues in Pre—and Post—Licence Instruction in Australia* by D. Perry.
- (e) *A Taxonomic Analysis of a Driving Survey Questionnaire* by D. Perry, P. Strang and R. James.
- (f) *Australian Moped Users* by M. Wigan and A. Carter.
- (g) *Motorcycle Safety: A Review of Information Gathered from Overseas: January 1978* by M. Wigan.
- (h) Australian Road Research Board, *The 9th ARRB Conference, Brisbane 1978, Traffic Engineering*.

#### 2. Disabled Motorists (Victoria):

- (a) Disabled Motorists (Victoria) Brochure: *Independence—Wheels Are Freedom*.
- (b) Extract from the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Disabled Motorists (Victoria), April 1981.
- (c) Letter to Assistant Commissioner Traffic, re six weeks delay before issue of licence, dated January 22, 1979.
- (d) Letter from Esso Australia Limited, dated 16 December 1980.  
Reply from Esso Australia Limited, dated 29 December 1980.
- (e) Letters re self service petrol stations:
  - Disabled Motorists to Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, 4 June 1979.
  - Acknowledgement from Business and Consumer Affairs.
  - Letter from Department of Business and Consumer Affairs, 16 October 1979.
  - Disabled Motorists to Shell Company of Australia Limited, 8 April 1979.
  - Shell Company of Australia Limited, 30 April 1979.
  - Disabled Motorists to Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, 8 April 1979.
  - Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, 20 April 1979.
  - Letter from Department of Motor Transport, N.S.W.—re parking regulations for disabled persons.

#### 3. Disabled Motorists (Victoria):

Letter from Commonwealth Minister for Health,—re proposals that grants be extended to cars.

#### 4. Camelot Driving School:

Appendixes 1—5 to the submission.

#### 5. Essendon Children's Traffic School:

- (a) *Practical Road Education for Primary Schools* by M. Camiller.
- (b) *Camelot—Road User Education, Accepting the Challenge* by F. Camiller.

#### 6. Corporate Fleet Loss Control Pty Ltd:

- (a) 'A Crash Course in Survival', *The Australian*, 8 April 1981.
- (b) Letter from Secretary, Victorian Road Safety Committee, 15 June 1981.
- (c) 'Courses Attended and Places Visited on Six Weeks Study Tour in America and Canada, 1980' by J. Murcott.

#### 7. Confederation of Australian Motor Sports (CAMS):

*What Does Motor Sport Have to do with Road Safety?*

8. **Australian Optometrical Association:**  
'Blind Driver Kills Three'.
9. **Goulburn Valley Driver Training Complex:**
  - (a) Attachment
    - *A Traffic Safety Education Program Incorporating the 'Careful Cobber Theme', Shepparton, Victoria, 1981, Preparatory Group, Book 1, Grade 1, Book 2, Grade 2, Book 3, Grade 3, Book 4, Grade 4, Book 5, Grade 5, Book 6, Grade 6, Book 7, Scope and Sequence Plan, 1981.*
  - (b) Attachment
    - *We Train Today the Driver of Tomorrow.*
    - *Component of the Shepparton Technical College.*
    - *Enrol NOW in the Caravan Care and Control Course.*
    - *Careful Cobber Cassette.*
    - *Shepparton Tourist Guide, June 1981.*
10. **Victorian Government:**
  - (a) *Licensing of Drivers in Victoria, including Disabled Drivers.*
  - (b) Appendix A: *Before You Drive*, the official guide to the Victorian Government Learner Driver's Permit Test.
11. **Dr S. H. Haskell:**  
Appendixes 1—8 to the submission.
12. **Mr B. Coogan:**  
'Surgeons Aim to Cut Road Toll by 1,000', 23 April 1981.
13. **New South Wales Road Transport Industry Training Committee Ltd:**
  - (a) Submission to Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, Proposed Course—Bus Driver Training.
  - (b) Enrolment Form.
  - (c) N.S.W. Road Transport Industry Training Limited, Seminar and Course Programme, February to June 1981.
  - (d) 'Store Keeping and Warehousing Course'.
  - (e) 'Transport, Business Administration Course'.
  - (f) 'Transport, Fleet Control, including Fleet Maintenance, Vehicle Selection and Safety of Loads'.
  - (g) 'Driver Assessor—Training Course'.
  - (h) 'Instruction—Communication Course'.
  - (i) 'Household Furniture Removal Course'.
  - (j) Instruction—Communication Course, Freight, Bus, Taxi, pamphlet.
14. **New South Wales Government Department of Motor Transport:**
  - (a) Appendixes A—I to the submission.
  - (b) *Motor Traffic Handbook.*
  - (c) *Motor Cycle Rider's Manual.*
  - (d) Photographs of Disabled Driver's Assessment Centre.
15. **Mrs M.R. Reece:**  
*A Report to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, Canberra, Australia, on the Complete Driver Training Facilities for the Physically Disabled Person in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States of America* by M. Reece.
16. **Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of New South Wales:**  
*Monarch Mark 1 Automotive Hand Control for the Physically Limited.*
17. **Queensland Department of Transport and Queensland Road Safety Council:**  
Attachments 1—9 to the submission.
18. **Australian Red Cross Society:**  
*Motorists, the Law Says if You're Involved in an Accident—You Must Render Assistance. Enrol NOW with Red Cross and Learn What To Do.*
19. **St John Ambulance Association:**
  - (a) First Aid Kit.
  - (b) First Aid For Motorists, Accident Action, Those Vital First Minutes.
  - (c) Accident Action.

- 20. South Australian Government:**
- (a) R-12 Road Safety Curriculum Committee, *Road Safety and Driver Education, Syllabus Outline and Curriculum Guide, R-12*, Education Department of South Australia, 1979, First edition.
  - (b) Registrar of Motor Vehicles:
    - *Annual Reports 1978-79, 1979-80.*
    - *Examination Questions for Applicant for a Licence to Drive a Motor Vehicle.*
    - *Road Traffic Code.*
    - *Before You Drive in South Australia, A Guide for Applicants for a South Australian Driver's Licence.*
    - *Learner/Driver Information.*
    - *Practical Driving Assessment.*
    - *South Australia — Motor Vehicles Act.*
    - *Be a Better Rider.*
    - *Application for Renewal of Learner's Permit.*
    - *Certificate of Practical Driving Test.*
    - *Application for Duplicate of Learner's Permit.*
    - *Application for Re-issue of Probationary Licence.*
    - *Application for Duplicate Probationary Licence.*
    - *Application for Learner's Permit for change of Licence Classification.*
    - *Application for Renewal of Driver's Licence.*
    - *Application for a Learner's Permit or Application for a Driver's Licence.*
    - *Important Notice to Holders of Learner's Permits and Probationary Licences.*
    - *Summary of Functions of the Consultative Committee.*
    - *Demerit Points Statistics for weeks Between 15 June 1981 and 20 July 1981.*
- 21. Road Accident Research Unit, University of Adelaide:**  
*Evaluation of a Road Safety Programme for Automotive Apprentices* by O. Holubowycz and A. McLean.
- 22. National Safety Council of Western Australia Inc.:**
- (a) Appendix B: *Road Safety and Driver Education Programme in Schools — Programme Outlines*, March 1979.
  - (b) Appendix C: *Road Safety and Driver Education Programme in Schools—The Driver Training Course — Syllabus and Notes*, revised May 1980.
- 23. Mr J. Fentiman:**  
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- 24. Western Australian Government:**  
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- 25. Dr F. B. Webb:**  
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- 26. Mr P. W. Milne:**  
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- 27. Professor T. O. Brophy:**  
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- 28. Mrs M. R. Reece:**  
*Impact Studies of Wheelchairs in Simulated Crash Situations*, Stiftung Rehabilitation Centre, West Germany.
- 29. Australian Road Transport Federation:**  
*O/Ds Reject the Cowboy Image.*
- 30. Dr R.J.E.D. Higgs:**  
Paper entitled *If a highly skilful driver is what we have today heard called a highway cowboy —if that is his nature —what do you do with him? How do you give him a sense of responsibility?*

- 31. Royal Perth Rehabilitation Hospital:**
- (a) Ontario Crippled Children's Centre — Driver Education — Pre-Training Evaluation.
  - (b) Ontario Crippled Children's Centre — Driver Training for Physically Disabled.
  - (c) Letter from Co-ordinator, Driver Education Programme, Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, Ontario, to successful licensee (form letter).
  - (d) Driving Education, Therapy Department (form — proof of completion of course).
  - (e) Information on Driver Examination Centres of the Government of Ontario.
  - (f) Driver and Traffic Safety Education, Course outline.
  - (g) Letter to individual appointed for training (form letter).
  - (h) Brochure on eligibility for courses.
  - (i) Traffic Engineering and Safety Department, American Automobile Association, Driver Analysis Form, based on A.A.A. Psychophysical Test Scores.
  - (j) Driver Education Programme.
- 32. Department of Social Security:**  
*Personal Licensed Vehicles for the Disabled*, Report of a Workshop, June 14 — June 17, 1976.
- 33. Department of the Capital Territory:**  
*Road Traffic Handbook*.
- 34. Department of Defence:**
- (a) *Army Deaths Resulting from Personal Accidents — 1980*.
  - (b) *The Professional Driving Instructor in Australia*, A Seminar, 10 and 11 September 1981, Army School of Transport.
- 35. Department of Transport, Office of Road Safety:**  
Documents
- (a) Hector Cat.
  - (b) What we are learning about road safety?
  - (c) Children's highway code.
  - (d) Don't drive before you read this.
  - (e) Defensive driving.
  - (f) Be a better driver.
  - (g) How to tow a caravan or trailer.
  - (h) Maintenance and safety checks.
  - (i) Guide signs.
  - (j) Accident Action.
  - (k) Left something behind?
  - (l) Town planning and road safety.
  - (m) The human collision — seat belts and road safety.
  - (n) Australian design rules for motor vehicles.
  - (o) Cycle safety.
- 36. Road Trauma Committee — Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Victoria:**  
*Road Trauma — the Modern Epidemic*.
- 37. Road Trauma Committee — Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Victoria:**
- (a) *Driver Education and Examination in Finland*.
  - (b) *The Norwegian Driver Training System* by G. Hole.
  - (c) *Central Organisation for Traffic Safety — Finland*.
  - (d) Correspondence between Manager, Automotive Safety Planning, Ford, U.K., and the Executive Director of the Road Trauma Committee, together with attachments.
  - (e) Correspondence with the Executive Director of the Japan Traffic Association with attachments.
  - (f) *Handicapped in the City*.
  - (g) *La Prevention Routiere Internationale — Resolution on Disabled Persons in Traffic — France, 1981*.
- 38. Department of Veterans' Affairs:**  
*Repatriation Facts and Figures*, May 1981.

**39. Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works:**

- (a) Northern Territory Department of Education, *Student Driver Education, Part A: Course Outline and Notes—Secondary Schools.*
- (b) Road Safety Council of the Northern Territory, Research Sub-committee, *Northern Territory Road Accident Statistics—1980.*

**40. Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works:**

*Licence Renewal Notice.*

**41. Northern Territory Office of Road Safety:**

- (a) *Road Traffic Accidents Involving Towing in Queensland.*
- (b) *Draft letter from Minister for Transport dated 3 October 1973.*
- (c) Proceedings from the Seminar on Driving—1979 Road Traffic Safety Research Council, Wellington, New Zealand, *Driver Training and Licensing—Future Guidelines*, by J.B. Toomath.
- (d) *Road Traffic Accident and Casualty Rates: Australia and Selected States, 1971 and 1976* by A. Carter.
- (e) *A Common Core of Traffic Accident Data Items*, April 1978, ACRUPTC.
- (f) Samples of eight Accident Report Forms of each State and Territory.

## APPENDIX 3

### State and Territory Survey of Driver Licensing Practices<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The first section of this Appendix is an update of a table which appeared in Coppin in 1977. Additional survey information has also been included.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
<b>PRIVATE PASSENGER VEHICLE LICENCES</b>								
<b>Learner's Permits</b>								
Minimum age to apply for learner's permit?	16 years 9 months	17 years	17 years	16 years	16-18 years	16 years	16 or 17 years	16 years 9 months
Fee charged for the learner's permit?	\$5.00	\$20.00	\$4.00	\$8.00 <sup>1</sup>	Free	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$4.00
Must every new driver obtain a learner's permit?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Length of time permit is valid for?	3 months	12 months	12 months	First permit issued for 6 months; subsequent permits for 3 months	12 months	Depends on age at issue	3 months <sup>2</sup>	3 months
Tests administered before issuance of a learner's permit								
a. Written test	No <sup>3</sup>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes <sup>4</sup>	Yes
b. Oral test	Yes— for rider's permit	No	No	No	No	No	Yes <sup>5</sup>	No
c. Visual acuity test	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> First permit issued for 6 months for \$8.00; subsequent permits for 3 months for \$4.00.

<sup>2</sup> Written knowledge tests to be introduced within few months—to be passed before issue of learner's permits for drivers and riders.

<sup>3</sup> Or length of course for student driver education scheme.

<sup>4</sup> Motorcyclist only.

<sup>5</sup> Other drivers, 3 items only.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
d. Colour vision test	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
e. Hearing test	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
f. Medical examination	No	No	No <sup>1</sup>	No	No	No	No (only if med. cdn)	No
Must learner drivers display 'L' signs?	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Restrictions associated with use of learner's permit?	Speed restricted to 70 km/h	Speed less than 80 km/h, cannot tow any vehicle	No special restrictions	Must not exceed 80 km/h. Must not exceed .05 blood alcohol concentration	Speed less than 72 km/h, cannot drive on freeway	Speed less than 60 km/h in built-up areas & 80 km/h in others	No special restrictions	No special restrictions
Who may tutor the learner driver?	Any licence holder except 1st year provisional driver	Over 21 years who has held a licence for 3 years	A private instructor who has held a licence of same class for 1 year—3 years in the case of a professional instructor	Any S.A. licensed driver of same class	Anyone who has held a licence for four years	Anyone who has held a licence for over 1 year	Anyone with a valid licence	Anyone with a valid licence
Are parents' or guardians' signatures required before issuance of a licence to a minor?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Is learner's permit cancelled upon one conviction? (excluding drink-driving)	Optional for court	Optional with court or department	Optional with court or department	Optional with court or department	Optional with court	Optional with court or department	Optional with court	Optional with court
If person fails the knowledge test for a learner's permit, how many times can he retake the test?	Knowledge test not given for learner's permit at present	No limit	Knowledge test not given	No limit	No limit	Knowledge test not given	No limit	Three attempts permitted at one attendance then must wait at least one day before next attempt

<sup>1</sup> Unless medical condition declared.

<sup>2</sup> May be condition of permit.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
How long must the applicant wait before the second test?	—	Not set	—	2 days	1 day	—	No set period; approx. 14 days	Three attempts permitted at one attendance then must wait at least 1 day before next attempt
Can the learner's permit be extended?	Yes, may be renewed for further three months	Yes	No—a new learner's permit required	Yes	Yes	No—a new learner's permit is required	Yes	Yes
Is an additional fee required to extend the learner's permit?	Yes—\$5.00	Yes—\$5.00 (three months extension)	—	Yes—\$4.00	No	—	Yes—\$3.00	Yes—\$4.00
<b>First Drivers Licence</b>								
Minimum age to obtain a licence	17 years	18 years	17 years <sup>1</sup>	16 years	16 years (moped only)	17 years	16 or 17 years <sup>2</sup>	17 years
How long is first licence valid	1 year	3 years	12 months (provisional)	1 year (probationary)	1 or 3 years	1 year	1 year	1, 2 or 3 years
Fees charged (including any appointment fees and testing charges)	\$10.00	\$45.00	\$1.70 per year	Practical test \$5.00 Probationary licence \$8.00	1 year—\$30.00 3 years—\$50.00	\$15.00	\$11.20	1 year—\$17.50 2 years—\$22.50 3 years—\$27.50
Testing fee charged?	None	\$10.00	None	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$5.20	None
Tests administered for first licence in this State and not previously licensed elsewhere								
a. Written test	No	No	Yes	No	Yes <sup>3</sup>	No	Yes	Yes
b. Oral test	Yes	No	Yes—if illiterate	No	No	Yes	No	No

<sup>1</sup> Effectively 17 years and 6 weeks since a learner's permit of 6 weeks duration is given at age 17.

<sup>2</sup> Upon completion of driver education, a 16-year-old can be recommended for a licence test. For disabled drivers, any age at discretion of Registrar.

<sup>3</sup> Taken if applicant did not hold learner's permit.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
c. Vision test	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes
d. Hearing test	No	No	Yes	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>	No	No	No
e. Skill or parking test	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
f. Practical road test	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Test administered for first licence in this State who holds a valid licence from another State or country								
a. Written test	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Optional	No
b. Oral test	No <sup>3</sup>	No	Yes—if illiterate	No	No	No	No	No
c. Vision test	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
d. Hearing test	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
e. Skill or parking test	No	No	No <sup>4</sup>	No	No	No	Optional	No
f. Practical road test	No	No	No <sup>4</sup>	No	No	No	Optional	No
g. Medical	No	No	Depending on any medical condition declared	No	No	No	No	No
Is the first licence probationary?	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Must 'P' plates be displayed	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
How long?	1 year <sup>2</sup>	1 year	—	1 year	1 year	1 year	1 year	—
Must drive at reduced speed?	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
What speed?	80 km/h	80 km/h	—	80 km/h	80 km/h	80 km/h	80 km/h	—
Is the probationary licence cancelled for certain convictions (excluding drink-driving)?	Yes	Yes	Court optional and accumulation of 4 demerit points	Yes	On some offences, court optional on others	No	Court option	—

<sup>1</sup> Taken if applicant did not hold learner's permit.

<sup>2</sup> Except where a N.S.W. rider's licence or a licence issued in another State or country has been held for more than 12 months.

<sup>3</sup> Oral test required for applicants from outside Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Provided it has been determined that person had previous test on appropriate class of vehicle.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
Before reinstatement is a complete new test required?	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes (practical road test)	Yes <sup>8</sup>	—	Yes	—
<b>Motorcycle Licences</b>								
Minimum age to apply for a learner's permit?	16 years and 9 months	17 years and 9 months	17 years	16 years	16 years and 9 months	16 years	16 or 17 years	16 years and 9 months
Is applicant given a different written or oral test?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	5 Questions on motorcycles	Yes but in addition to normal road rules test
Must learner rider:								
a. Display 'L' sign?	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>4</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
b. Travel at reduced speed?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
c. What speed?	70 km/h	80 km/h	—	80 km/h	72 km/h	80 km/h	—	—
Can learner rider:								
a. Carry pillion passengers?	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes <sup>4</sup>
b. Ride at night?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
c. Ride on freeways?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
How long is motorcycle permit valid?	3 months	1 year	1 year	First for 6 months, subsequent for 3 months	1 year	1 year	3 months	3 months
Are parents or guardians signatures required before issuance of motorcycle licence to a minor?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

<sup>1</sup> On cancellation must take driving test only.

<sup>2</sup> Only when being tutored by licensed instructor or a person who has held a motorcycle licence for 2 years.

<sup>3</sup> Provided persons holds current S.A. motorcycle licence.

<sup>4</sup> May be condition of permit.

<sup>5</sup> Only when being tutored by licensed instructor.

<sup>6</sup> Only when the passenger has been licensed to ride a motorcycle for 2 years. Passenger to be seated in a side-car.

<sup>7</sup> Provided person has held motorcycle licence for 3 years and is in the process of tutoring.

<sup>8</sup> Including written test, vision test, skill test and road test.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
Is first motorcycle licence probationary?	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes—unless applicant already holds non-prob. licence	Yes	Yes	No
Must 'P' signs be displayed?	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Must drive at reduced speed?	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
What speed?	80 km/h	80 km/h	—	80 km/h	80 km/h	80 km/h	80 km/h	—
Are separate motorcycle licences based upon size?	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
What is the size limit?	250 cc	250 cc	250 cc	Class 4A up to 250 cc Class 4 over 250 cc	250 cc	—	E1—up to 250 cc E2—up to 600 cc E3—any motorcycle	—
<b>Heavy Vehicle Licences</b>								
What is the minimum age to be licensed for the following:								
a. Articulated trucks or large truck/trailer	19 years	1 year licence	17 years	18 years	20 years	21 years	17 years	21 years
b. Other large trucks	18 years	1 year licence	17 years	18 years	18 years	19 years	17 years	21 years
c. Public or private buses	20 years	1 year licence	21 years	18 years	21 years	20 years	18 pub. 17 private	21 years
d. Taxi	19 years	1 year licence	Licence for continuous period of 3 years	18 years	21 years	20 years	18 years	21 years
<b>Theory Testing Procedures</b>								
What is format of theory test?	Oral	Written	Written—oral if illiterate	Written	Written	Oral	Written	Written (plus oral for motorcycle)
How many questions are asked on the theory test?	14	32	30	40	30	18	20 (drivers) 25 (riders)	30

<sup>1</sup> Requires 1 year licensing on under 250 cc cycle before eligible for licence to operate larger cycle.

<sup>2</sup> Except where a N.S.W. driver's licence or a licence issued in another State or country has been held for more than 12 months.

<sup>3</sup> Except when another class of licence held for 1 year.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
How many questions must be answered correctly?	14	28	25	30	26	18	Testing officers discretion	26
What types of questions are used?	Oral response	Multiple choice	Multiple choice	Multiple choice	Multiple choice	Oral response	Written answer with some true/false	Multiple choice
How long ago was the test revised?	1 year	Under review at present	Continuous	3 years	1 year	1 June 1979	Constant revision, major 18 mths ago	May 1978
Content of theory test?	Traffic laws <sup>1</sup>	Traffic laws, driving practices	Traffic laws	Traffic laws, driving procedures	Traffic laws, driving procedures	Traffic laws	Traffic laws	Traffic laws
Are there any questions on road signs and markings?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are incorrect theory test items discussed with applicants?	Yes	No	Yes	When requested	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is applicant provided a copy of test results?	No	No	No	No	No <sup>2</sup>	No	No	No
Is theory test given in any language other than English?	Yes, with interpreter	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes, with interpreter	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes, with interpreter	Yes, with interpreter	Yes, with interpreter	Yes <sup>4</sup>
Is a separate theory test given for the following:								
a. Applicants for licence to drive taxi	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
b. Applicants for licence to drive truck	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
c. Applicants for licence to drive buses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> New written tests will include questions on safe driving technique and vehicle care.

<sup>2</sup> Written test in 10 languages.

<sup>3</sup> Multiple choice system in 9 major languages. Fill-in-type of test in nine minor languages.

<sup>4</sup> However applicant is shown questions missed and can go over these before leaving examination room.

<sup>5</sup> Theory tests available in Serbo Croatian, Finnish, Italian, Arabic, Spanish, Greek, Vietnamese and Cantonese. For other languages an interpreter is available.

<i>Questionnaire item</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>
<b>Practical Road Test Procedures</b>								
Is a standard route used at each test site?	No	No	No	Yes (several routes)	No	No	No	No
Does one person approve all routes used?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Is a testing officer given full discretion in selecting a route for each test?	No—allocated by Motor Registry officer	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is a score sheet of some type used?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Does the score sheet assign numerical values in order to objectively evaluate applicant performance?	No, pass/fail for each manoeuvre	Yes, points taken off	—	Yes (8 points results in a failure)	No, grading uses fair/poor, with 4 fair = 1 poor	Yes	—	Yes
Seating position of testing officer during test?	Front passenger	Rear left	Front passenger <sup>1</sup>	Front passenger	Front passenger	Front passenger	Rear left usually	Front passenger
Is a skill or parking test given?	Yes	Yes	Yes—motorcycle only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Before start of test, does testing officer explain what is to take place on the test	Yes—details also set out on permit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes

<sup>1</sup> Instructor or other tutor allowed to silently observe from the rear seat.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
What is the purpose of this explanation?	To put applicant at ease—on permit to indicate training needed	To explain what is expected	Ease tension and explain what is expected	Ease tension and explain what is expected	Ease tension	Ease tension and explain what is expected	Ease tension and explain that instructor is not to prompt	Explain the procedure
Approximately how many minutes does the test take?	25 (1 hour for disabled and advanced age tests)	30	30	30	30	30	20	20
Which of the following will cause outright failure on the road test:								
a. Failure on the skill or parking test	Yes	No	Yes—motorcycle only	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
b. Unsafe manoeuvre with near accident	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
c. Violating a traffic law (speed, give way, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Yes
Upon completion of the test does testing officer explain test results:								
a. to applicants who have passed?	No	No	Yes	Yes (briefly)	Yes	Yes	Yes—judgment of testing officer	No
b. to applicants who have failed?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes (briefly)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is applicant provided with a copy of road test results?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Must applicant pay another fee for a second test?	No	Yes—\$15	No	Yes—\$5	No—\$20 application fee valid for 2 tests	Yes	Yes	Yes—\$5
Is a waiting period required before the second attempt?	Yes—7 days	No	No—to end of the waiting list	Yes—14 days	No	14 days	Yes—not fixed—about 14 days	Yes—14 days

Questionnaire item <sup>1</sup>	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
What is the general procedure used for conduct of motorcycle road test?	Visual observation of slow riding and braking skill and performance in traffic	Followed by testing officer on motorcycle through traffic	Follow in car, motor cycle or visual observation	Followed by testing officer on motorcycle, hill start, turns, etc.	Followed by testing officer on motorcycle through traffic	Visual observation of skill and sent into traffic	Visual observation of skill and traffic test	Followed by testing officer in vehicle, skill, figure 8 etc.
<b>General Licensing Procedures</b>								
Are renewal reminder notices sent out?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is this done by computer or manual?	Computer	Manual	—	Computer	Computer	Computer	Computer	Computer
What is the fee (per year) to renew a licence?	\$10	\$10	\$1.70	\$8	\$10	1: \$10, 2: \$19.50, 3: \$28	1: \$6, 2: \$10, 3: \$15	\$10 <sup>6</sup>
What is the term of renewal of a licence?	1 or 3 years	3 years	Variable <sup>3</sup>	3 years	1 or 3 years	1, 2 or 3 years	1, 2 or 3 years	1, 2 or 3 years
Does renewal of licence require personal appearance?	No, until age 80 <sup>4</sup>	No	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No, until age 70 <sup>4</sup>	No, until age 75 <sup>5</sup>	No until age 70	Only when vision test required every 6 years	No until age 50—must take vision test
Must applicant with previous licence in another State (in Australia) give it up when licensed in your State?	No	No	No—but requested to surrender licence	No	No	No	No	No
Is previous State notified that person is now licensed in your State?	No	No	Yes—N.S.W. only	No	No	No	No	No
Is home State notified if one of their licencees is convicted of an offence in your State?	Yes, if disqualified	Yes, if disqualified	Yes, if disqualified	Yes, if disqualified	Yes, if disqualified	Yes, if disqualified	Yes, if disqualified	Yes, if disqualified

<sup>1</sup> Person aged 80 to 85 must submit a medical certificate and at age 85 must submit medical report and pass road test annually.

<sup>2</sup> Except person out of country who is allowed renewal by mail with medical certificate.

<sup>3</sup> Up to and including 62 years—5 years; over 62 years—to expire on 67th birthday; over 66 years—annually.

<sup>4</sup> Persons over age 70 must take road test each year and at age 75 eye test required.

<sup>5</sup> Persons age 75 and 78 must take road test and vision test and upon reaching age 80 must do so annually.

<sup>6</sup> Fee for 1 year term. Applicants can renew for 2 years at \$15 or for 3 years at \$20.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
If notified of licence action against licence of your State, do you suspend home State licences?	No, but offences involving disqualification are recorded on driver's record	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes after 'show cause' action	No
Are traffic infringement notices used?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (from 1.1.82)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Which of the following are sent to the driver registry to form the driver record:								
a. All traffic infringement notices	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (from 1.1.82)	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>	No	No
b. All court convictions for traffic law violation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	Yes	No
c. Only court convictions where demerit points are to be assigned	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
d. Only court convictions not involving licence disqualification	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
e. Only court convictions where licence is disqualified by court	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
f. Report of accident involvement	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Is the motor registry driver's licence record on computer?	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the driver registry operate a points demerit system?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
What is the range of point values?	2-4	1-4	1-4	1-6	2-9	1-4	—	—
Are warning letters sent informing the driver that he is approaching point of disqualification?	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>	No	—	—

<sup>1</sup> For research purposes to TARU only.

<sup>2</sup> Points demerits file only.

<sup>3</sup> Includes an invitation to attend Road Safety Council Defensive Driving Program.

<sup>4</sup> Provided demerits points are assigned.

<sup>5</sup> Letter is sent each time points are added to the record.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
Point level required for licence action?	12 in 2 years	12 in 1 or 3 years	9 in 2 years	12 in 3 years	12 in 3 years	9 in 3 years or 4 in 1 year (provisional)	—	—
What action results?	Licence cancelled and placed on 12 months probation (Provisional licence issued but no 'P' plates required)	3 months' licence suspension—3 years 6 months—1 year	Schedules driver to 'show cause' hearing	3 months' licence disqualification	3 months' licence suspension	3 months' licence suspension	—	—
After disqualification under the points system are the points reduced to zero?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—
Before regaining a licence removed by the points system are any licence tests required?	No	No	No, except for licence cancellation	No	Probationary driver. Yes—vision, written and road test	No	—	—
Are there any re-education programs available to persons with poor driving records??	Yes	Pilot program being implemented	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Who conducts such programs?	Police	RoSTA	Queensland Road Safety Council	—	Police <sup>2</sup>	—	—	Police <sup>2</sup>
Are there any programs where persons on drink-driving charges are referred for treatment?	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do prosecutors (Police) maintain a separate file of convictions for traffic law violations?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is this prosecutors file used as the record of priors for court purposes?	—	—	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Present program under review.

<sup>2</sup> Provided for in certain cases as an alternative to police prosecution.

<i>Questionnaire item</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld.</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>
Does the driver registry maintain a complete history of all licence actions taken?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is this record on computer?	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Does court always notify the driver registry of licence suspension no matter what length of suspension?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
On the average, how long does it take the notice of suspension to reach the registry?	30 days <sup>1</sup>	2 days	14 days	7 days	15 days	14 days	7 days	3 days
Are medical practitioners required to report persons with medical conditions which could affect driving, to the motor registry?	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Is there a procedure whereby police can notify the driver registry of possible medical conditions?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the driver registry require a medical examination as a result of the Police notification?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can the person be placed on conditional or restricted type of licence?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Daily advice by teleprinter shortly to be introduced.

<i>Questionnaire Item</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld.</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>
Is driver record information (points, convictions) considered confidential and therefore only available to the driver, his authorised agent, police or courts?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is this restriction of use by law or administrative policy?	Administrative	Administrative	Administrative <sup>1</sup>	Administrative	Administrative	Law	Administrative	Administrative
<b>Basic Workload Statistics</b>								
Number of drivers licences on register as at 1 November 1981	3 129 333	2 204 764	Est. 1.2 million	756 225	819 606 (8.10.81)	241 181	85 010	139 611
Number of new licences issued in last 12 months.	263 027	116 058 (31.12.81)	360 859	33 390	47 193 (1.7.80 to 30.6.81)	20 105 (financial year end 30.6.81)	9 105 (to 31.10.81)	13 192
<b>Driving Instructors Licences</b>								
What agency licences and regulates private driving instructors?	Department of Motor Transport	Transport Regulation Board	Department of Transport	Department of Transport	Police	Department of Main Roads and Transport	Registrar of Motor Vehicles	None
Which of the following criteria must be met to be granted an instructor's licence:								
a. Evidence of good character	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
b. At least 21 years of age	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No <sup>2</sup>	—
c. Holder of valid driver's licence for 3 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
d. Conviction free driving record over past 3 years	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	—

<sup>1</sup> Policy is based upon law of defamation.

<sup>2</sup> But 3 years' driver licence experience required.

<i>Questionnaire item</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>
e. Satisfactory completion of practical road test	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>	—
f. Satisfactory completion of road laws test	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	—
g. Satisfactory completion of driver instruction course	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>	No	No	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	No	—
What is the fee charged for instructor's licence?	\$12.00	\$100.00	\$54.00	\$50.00 (3 years)	\$10.00	\$30.00	10.50	—
What is the term of instructor's licence	1 year	3 years	1 year	3 years	1 year	3 years	1 year	—
How many instructors are licensed?	2 020	1 425	425	382	625	64	132	—

<sup>1</sup> Evaluated by observation of a simulated driving instruction lesson.

<sup>2</sup> Certification by the National Safety Council.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
<b>Notification of Disabilities and Illnesses</b>								
Are disabilities and illnesses required to be notified on licence application and on renewal?	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Application—Yes <sup>1</sup> Renewal—No	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Is the obligation to notify the licensing authority of illnesses and disabilities stated on the driver's licence?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Assistance at Scene of Accident</b>								
Does any legislation exist in the State which requires a person to render assistance at the scene of an accident?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
<b>Special (Extraordinary) Licences</b>								
Is there any provision in the State for special/extraordinary licences?	No	No	No	No	Yes <sup>6</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes
If so, how many were issued in the last year?	—	—	—	—	2045 (1980-81)	796 (1980-81)	232 <sup>2</sup>	235
Number of disqualifications in the same period?	—	—	—	—	18574 (1980-81)	6659 (1980-81)	2336 <sup>3</sup>	1080
Number of special licences issued as a proportion of total number of disqualifications in last year?	—	—	—	—	11.01%	11.95%	9.93%	21.75%
How long are special licences valid?	—	—	—	—	At court's discretion	Period of disqualification <sup>2</sup> Yes—renewable except for DUI offence	Period of suspension <sup>3</sup>	Period at court's discretion <sup>4</sup>
Can a person be issued with a second special licence?	—	—	—	—	Yes, renewable	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are licensing authorities advised of all applications for special licences?	—	—	—	—	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> For a listing of these, see footnote (a) at end of chart.

<sup>2</sup> Or shorter period specified by Registrar.

<sup>3</sup> Less first 2 months in which application cannot be made. Period set by magistrate or 12 months whichever is shorter. For suspension longer than 12 months, renewed automatically.

<sup>4</sup> About 95% are for three months.

<sup>5</sup> These figures are estimates based on December quarter figures.

<sup>6</sup> Extraordinary licences may be issued on application to court.

Questionnaire item	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.
<b>Periodic retesting of licence holders</b>								
	<i>Age at which required</i>	<i>Road test</i>		<i>Medical report</i>		<i>Vision test</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
N.S.W.	80-84	See <sup>(1)</sup> below		Yes		Yes		At renewal of licence
	85 onwards	Yes		Yes		Yes		Annually
Vic.	No requirements							
Qld	At renewal of licence	No				Yes		1-5 years depending on age <sup>(2)</sup>
	70 onwards	No		Yes <sup>(3)</sup>		Yes		Annually
S.A.	70	Yes		No		No		
	75	Yes		No		Yes		Annually
W.A.	75	Yes		No		Yes		
	78	Yes		No		Yes		
	80	Yes		No		Yes		Annually
Tas.	75	Yes		Yes		Yes		Annually
N.T.	All drivers	No		Yes <sup>(4)</sup>		Yes		Every 6 years
A.C.T.	50	See <sup>(5)</sup> below		No		Yes		
	59	See <sup>(5)</sup> below		No		Yes		
	65	See <sup>(5)</sup> below		No		Yes		
	68	See <sup>(5)</sup> below		No		Yes		
	70	See <sup>(5)</sup> below		No		Yes <sup>(6)</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> Road test required at 70 for public vehicles, at 80 for motorcycles and class 3 and 5 drivers. <sup>2</sup> Up to and including 62 years—5 years; over 62 years—to expire on 67th birthday; over 66 years—annually. <sup>3</sup> If medical condition declared. <sup>4</sup> B and D Class drivers required medical report annually. <sup>5</sup> Not required unless disabled. <sup>6</sup> From 70 to 75 years vision test is required every 1 or 2 years depending on medical advice. After 75 years, it is required annually.

Footnote (a)

*New South Wales*

Wear spectacles; suffer from diabetes; treated with insulin; suffer from epilepsy, fits, frequent fainting or giddy attacks; permanent disability to hand, arm, foot, leg or eye; physical disability likely to affect efficiency in controlling motor vehicle.

*Victoria*

Loses limb or part of limb; suffers any physical or mental disability or infirmity which affects efficiency in driving motor vehicle.

*Queensland*

Epilepsy, fits, attacks of fainting or giddiness; diabetes; disability to leg, foot, hand, arm, eye or deafness; disease or physical or mental disability likely to affect efficiency in driving motor vehicle.

*South Australia*

Diabetes or epilepsy, sudden periods of unconsciousness; cardiac disease, fainting, giddy attacks, high blood pressure; physical disability to any limb, disabling muscular, joint or bone disorders; faulty sight, use of spectacles; other illness that could impair driving.

*Western Australia*

*Licence application*—Fits, fainting, epilepsy or giddiness, diabetes and any physical or mental disability that would affect ability to control a motor vehicle or any complaint or disease for which drugs are taken.

*Tasmania*

*Licence Application*—Convicted for drunkenness; wears glasses, colour blindness; dependence on medication; blackouts; attacks of giddiness; nerve trouble; any doctor's advice not to drive; must have full consciousness, power, control and movement of arms, legs, hands and feet; have legs, arms, fingers, feet and toes complete.

*Renewal*—Diabetes, epilepsy, periods of unconsciousness; cardiac disease, dizziness, fainting, giddy attacks, high blood pressure; physical disabilities to any limb; disabling muscular or bone disorder; glasses; drug-related problems.

*North Territory*

Epilepsy, fits, petit mal or unconsciousness; paralysis, diabetes; hearing disease; permanent disability to hand, arm, foot or leg.

*Australian Capital Territory*

Poor visual acuity; diabetes; epilepsy, fits, petit mal, unconsciousness; fainting or giddy attacks; permanent disability to hand, arm, foot, leg or eye; physical disability likely to affect efficiency in controlling motor vehicle.

## Driving Licence Classifications

<i>Class</i>	<i>Minimum age</i>	<i>Type</i>
<b>New South Wales</b>		
Learner's Permit	16½	To learn to drive vehicles or ride motorcycles of not more than 250 millilitres
Cycle Rider	17	Motorcycles or scooters
Driver, Class 1	17	Cars (but not public passenger vehicles), lorries weighing not more than 2 tonnes unladen, tractors and implements
Driver, Class 2	19	Small public passenger vehicles, motor vans weighing not more than two tonnes unladen and other vehicles described under Class 1
Driver, Class 3	18	Lorries of any weight (except articulated lorries and heavy lorry-trailer combinations) and other vehicles described under Class 1
Driver, Class 4	20	Large public passenger vehicles, motor vans weighing more than 2 tonnes and other vehicles described under Classes 1, 2, and 3
Driver, Class 5	19	Articulated lorries, heavy lorry-trailer combinations and other described under Classes 1 and 3
Taxi-cab Driver	19	Taxi-cabs in Sydney Metropolitan, Newcastle and Wollongong areas and other vehicles described under Classes 1 and 2
Provisional	17	Driver (Class 1) or Cycle Rider. Generally issued to persons making their first application, usually imposing restrictions such as the display of 'P' plates, 80 km/h speed limit. Provisional cycle licences restrict the holder to ride motorcycles of not more than 250 millilitres engine capacity
Driving Instructor	21	To engage in the occupation of teaching others to drive
Tow Truck Drivers Certificate <sup>1</sup>		Tow truck used in connection with towing a vehicle damaged in an accident
<b>Victoria</b>		
Learner's Permit	17	To learn to drive a motor car
Motorcycle Learner's Permit	17½	To learn to drive a motorcycle up to and including 260 cc
Probationary Licence	18	Licence issued for the first time or after cancellation

<sup>1</sup> Driver must hold appropriate Driver's Licence. Offsider (Non-driver) must be 15 years of age or over.

<i>Class</i>	<i>Minimum age</i>	<i>Type</i>
Motor Car	18	Motor car (other than motorcycle)
Motorcycle <sup>2</sup>	18	Motorcycle
Tractor Licence	16	Tractor
Endorsements:	19	Must have been licensed to drive for not less than 12 months
Heavy vehicles;		
Articulated motor car;		
Large trailer combination		
Tow truck or Commercial Passenger Vehicle	19	Must hold a licence to drive a motor vehicle (not being a probationary licence issued less than 12 months earlier) and a certificate from the Transport Regulation Board
Motor Driving Instructor's Licence	21	To teach learners for reward
<b>Queensland</b>		
A	17	Motorcar or Utility
B	17	Any motorcycle
C	17	Motor truck (not articulated or trolley bus)
D	17	Omnibus (not articulated or trolley bus, passengers not to be carried until licensee has attained the age of 21 years)
E	17	Articulated vehicle
F	17	Trolley Vehicle
G	17	Traction engine or tractor
H	17	Any special vehicle. Any motorcycle up to and including 250 cc.
Learner's Permit	17	To learn to drive any type of vehicle
Provisional		Initial licence applicants are issued with a provisional licence for twelve months
<b>South Australia</b>		
1	16	Motor car. Motor vehicle under 3000 kg except articulated vehicle, motorcycle or omnibus
2	18	Any motor vehicle except articulated vehicle, motorcycle or omnibus
3	18	Any motor vehicle except motorcycle or omnibus
4A	16	Motorcycle up to and including 250 cc
4	16	Motorcycle
5	18	Omnibus
Tow truck operator	18	Tow truck within 32 km of Adelaide GPO
Driver Instructor	18	To teach learners for reward
<b>Western Australia</b>		
A	17	Motor car less than 8 passengers other than G and H Motor wagon under 4350 kg Tractor under 4572 kg (not prime mover type)
B	18	Motor car more than 8 passengers (except for hire and reward), motor wagon (not articulated), any tractor
C	20	Articulated vehicle
E	17	Automatic motor car
F	21	Omnibus
G	21	Taxi or hire car
H	21	Motor car over 8 passengers except F and G
I	17	Any tractor under 4572 kg
J	18	Any tractor not prime mover
K <sup>3</sup>	17	Motorcycle Motor carrier
L	17	Motorcycle (under 250 cc) Motor carrier (under 250 cc)

<sup>2</sup> Holder of motorcycle licence can only drive motorcycles up to and including 260 cc in first 12 months.

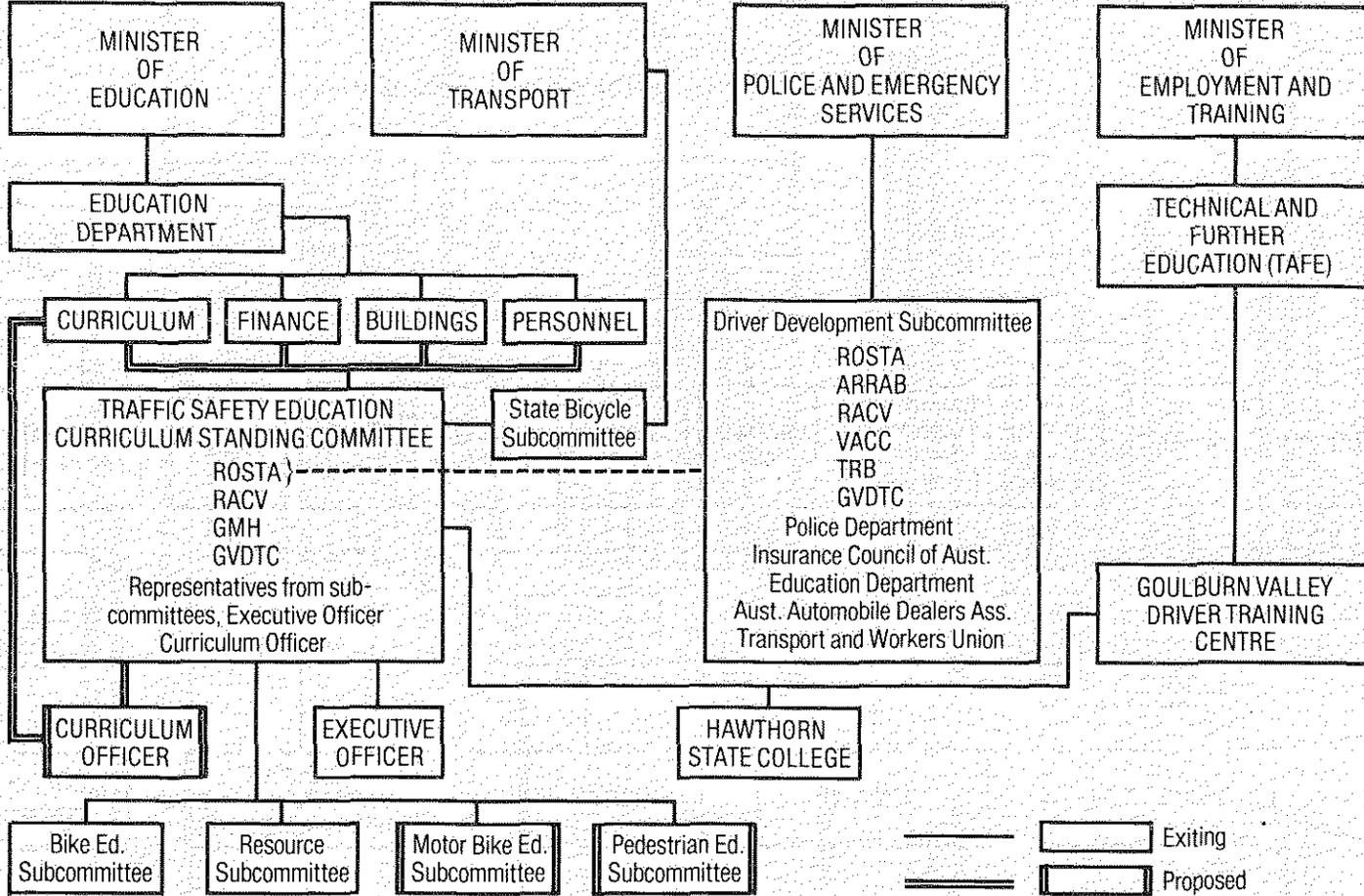
<sup>3</sup> Class K licence can only be obtained if a Class L licence has been held for at least 12 months.

<i>Class</i>	<i>Minimum age</i>	<i>Type</i>
M	17	Moped
N	16	Motorcycle (under 100 cc) with no clutch
Learner's Permit	16 <sup>4</sup>	Moped only
Probationary		To learn to drive a motor car or motorcycle Issued to initial licence applications, requiring a display of 'P' plates for 12 months, limiting speed to 80 km/h
<b>Tasmania</b>		
A	17	Motor car
B	19	Truck over 2 tonnes
C	20	Medium passenger vehicle (9-16 passengers)
Ca	20	Heavy passenger vehicle
D	21	Articulated vehicle
E	21	Combination Passenger vehicle
F	17	Motorcycle
G	17	Miscellaneous
G1	17	Earth-moving equipment
G2	17	Fork lift
Learner's Permit	16	To learn to drive a car or ride a motorcycle
Provisional		Issued to persons making their first application, imposing restrictions such as the display of 'P' plates, 80km/h speed limit and not to drive with any alcohol in the body. Motorcyclists are not permitted to drive a machine greater than 250 cc
<b>Northern Territory</b>		
A	17 <sup>4</sup>	Cars, station wagons and utilities up to 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass
B	18	Public and private hire cars
C	17	Trucks over 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass
D	18	Motor omnibuses (plying for hire or reward)
Learner's Permit	17 <sup>5</sup>	To learn to drive car or ride motor cycle Initial licence applicants, requiring display of 'P' plates and limiting speed to 80 km/h
E1	17 <sup>4</sup>	Motorcycles to 250 cc
E2	18 <sup>6</sup>	Motorcycles to 600 cc
E3	18 <sup>6</sup>	All motorcycles
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>		
1	17	Private cars, lorries up to 2 tonnes, tractors Automatic transmission only
2	17	Private cars, lorries up to 2 tonnes, tractors, including vehicles in Class 1
3	21	Taxis, including vehicles in Class 1 and 2
4	21	Lorries over 2 tonnes, miscellaneous vehicles including vehicles in Class 1 and 2
5	21	Omnibuses, including vehicles in Class 1, 2 and 4
6	21	Semi-trailers, including vehicles in Class 1, 2 and 4
7	17	Any motorcycle
8	17	Motorcycles with an engine capacity of 250 cc or less
9	21	Private hire car, including vehicles in Class 1 and 2
Learner's Permit	16 <sup>4</sup>	To learn to drive a motor car or ride a motorcycle

<sup>4</sup> 16 years if successful Driver Education Scheme Student—disabled drivers any age at discretion of Registrar.

<sup>5</sup> 16 years if student in Driver Education Scheme.

<sup>6</sup> E1 licence must be held for 12 months before E2 or E3 licence can be obtained.



APPENDIX 4  
Organisation chart for traffic safety education.



## **A Comparison of On-Road and Off-Road Driver Training (Goulburn Valley Driver Training Report)**

*Stage One: Short-term effects*, by P. M. Strang, K. B. Deutsch, R. S. James, and S. M. Manders.

The study was undertaken by the Road Safety and Traffic Authority of Victoria (RoSTA), but the views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent that of RoSTA. The study was funded in part by the Commonwealth Government under the Transport (Planning and Research) Act.

### *Abstract*

The first stage of this study was designed to investigate the short-term effects of different training courses on young, male learner drivers. The primary aim was to determine whether there are any specific advantages in using an off-road training area.

Almost 800 subjects, randomly allocated to one of four experimental groups, were involved in this study during 1978 and 1979.

Two of these groups participated in a four-day live-in course at an off-road training centre and received approximately 5 hours 'behind the wheel' training. The subjects in one group had all their instruction 'off-road' while the other group received approximately 2 hours training on public roads. Both groups also had 6½ hours in-car observation time and 11½ hours class-room instruction.

The third group received the same amount of 'behind-the-wheel' training, in the form of seven lessons from a commercial driving school on public roads, but only 2 hours of theoretical instruction. The fourth group acted as a control and were given no formal training.

Tests of driving skill, attitude and knowledge, as well as screening tests to determine whether there were prior differences in driving experience, were administered.

The results of the study found no clear differences in driving skill between the three trained groups. There were however, statistically significant improvements in attitude and knowledge test scores for the two groups trained at the off-road centre, compared with the control group. The group trained by the commercial driving school also showed improvements in knowledge test scores compared with the control subjects but only showed weak evidence of increased attitude test scores.

The improvements in both knowledge and attitude test scores were greater for the groups trained at the off-road centre than for the group receiving commercial training. It is not clear whether these improvements were due to the off-road training, the greater amount of time devoted to theoretical instruction or to other characteristics of the four-day residential course. Further research is needed to discriminate between these possible influences.

There is also as yet, no known relationship between these knowledge and attitude test scores and subsequent accident or traffic law conviction records.

In the second stage of the study the driving record of each subject is being monitored to determine whether these post-training differences are reflected in conviction and accident experience. These results will be the subject of a separate report.

## Core syllabus for drivers licence examination

(This appendix is reproduced from the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report'.)

### (A)—THEORY TEST

#### *Section 1—State Road Law*

- 1.1 *Comprehend* the requirements relating to priorities at intersections.
- 1.2 *Know* the speed limits on the open road, and in built up areas.
- 1.3 *Know* the restrictions applying to learner and probationary drivers.
- 1.4 *Know* restrictions applying to U turns, parking, towing.
- 1.5 *Know* the requirements relating to the reporting of accidents.

#### *Section 2—Driving Behaviour*

- 2.1 *Know* safe following distances for all speeds and weather conditions.
- 2.2 *Comprehend* the basic principles of Defensive Driving.
- 2.3 *Know* stopping distance required for all speeds and weather conditions.

#### *Section 3—Driver Variables*

- 3.1 *Comprehend* the effects of alcohol on driving behaviour and on accident risk.
- 3.2 *Know* the legal BAC limits and the variables relevant to the number of drinks which may be consumed in different time periods which would cause one to exceed the limit.
- 3.3 *Know* what other drugs are likely to affect driving behaviour, alone and in combination with alcohol.
- 3.4 *Comprehend* the effects of fatigue on driving behaviour.

#### *Section 4—Vehicle Variables*

- 4.1 *Know* the requirements for seat belt usage.
- 4.2 *Comprehend* the need for regular maintenance, particularly with respect to tyres, brakes and lights.

#### *Section 5—Environmental Variables*

- 5.1 *Know* the meaning of warning and regulatory signs.
- 5.2 *Comprehend* the effect of weather on driving conditions.
- 5.3 *Comprehend* the special problems in night driving.
- 5.4 *Comprehend* the effect of different road surfaces on driving conditions.

#### *Definitions*

*Know*—to be able to reproduce the information.

*Comprehend*—to understand to the extent that generalisation to similar situations is possible.

### (B)—PRACTICAL DRIVING TEST

Applicants should be able to satisfy the testing officer of their ability to carry out the following tasks, in a vehicle of the type covered by the licence.

- start the engine of the vehicle;
- move away straight ahead or at an angle, and operate the controls, e.g., accelerator, clutch, gear changes;
- overtake, meet or cross the path of other vehicles and take the appropriate course;
- turn right-hand and left-hand corners correctly;
- stop the vehicle in an emergency or normally and in the latter case bring the vehicle to rest at an appropriate part of the road;
- stop and start the vehicle—
  - (i) whilst ascending a hill;
  - (ii) whilst descending a hill;

- for vehicles other than those, including motorcycles, which do not have a reverse gear—
  - (i) drive the vehicle backwards and, whilst doing so, enter a limited opening either to the right or to the left;
  - (ii) cause the vehicle to face in the opposite direction by the use of forward and reverse gears;
- give in a clear and unmistakable manner, appropriate signals at proper times to indicate intention to turn;
- act promptly on all signals given by police officers controlling traffic and on signals given by other road users;
- conform to the requirements indicated by traffic lights, signs and markings etc.;
- park the vehicle in a confined space.

## APPENDIX 8

### Driver Casualties for Australia by Age—1976

<i>Age range</i>	<i>Rate per million kilometres driven</i>
17—20	1.45
21—29	0.54
30—39	0.35
40—49	0.31
50—59	0.30
60	0.48

*Source:*—Road Traffic Accident and Casualty Rates, Australia and Selected States, 1971 and 1976, A.J. Carter, Office of Road Safety Working Document 20, October 1980.

## APPENDIX 9

### Increase of visual defects with age

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Percentage with visual handicap</i>
Under 20	23
20-30	39
31-40	48
41-50	71
51-60	82
Over 60	95

*Source:* U.S. National Centre for Health Statistics. Vital and Health Statistic Series 10, No. 53, U.S. Public Health Services 1969.

### Percentage of people not capable of attaining a 6/12 and 6/15 visual acuity

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Percentage (%) failing 6/12 acuity</i>	<i>Percentage (%) failing 6/15 acuity</i>
18-24	0.7	0.3
25-34	1.5	1.2
35-44	1.6	0.7
45-54	4.3	2.8
55-64	7.9	5.3
65-74	16.3	10.1
75-79	28.4	19.1

*Source:* Cole, B. L. 'Visual standards for drivers of motor vehicles', *Australian Journal of Ophthalmology*, 1972, 55, pp.135-42.

**Sample form of statement by occupational therapist before disabled driver can obtain licence, Manitoba, Canada.**

Date:.....

NAME:.....  
Last First Middle Initial

ADDRESS:  
TELEPHONE NO:

**DRIVING INFORMATION**

Valid License..... License Number.....  
yes no expired

Class of License..... Approximate Annual Mileage.....

Number of Years Driving..... Type of Vehicle Available.....

Taken a Driving Course..... Defensive Driving Course.....  
yes no

COMMENTS: .....

RECOMMENDATIONS:.....

**RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT FOR DRIVING**

**TYPE OF VEHICLE**

2 Door Car ..... 4 Door Car ..... Van ..... Truck .....

**ENTRY/EXIT**

*Car:*

Transfer self .....  
Transfer with equipment .....  
Able to load wheelchair .....  
Equipment needed .....  
Self .....  
Built-up seat .....

*Van:*

Wheelchair lift .....  
Transfer into seat .....  
Swivel seat .....  
Overhead bar .....  
Power seat on track .....  
Drive from wheelchair .....  
Electric tie-down .....  
Manual tie-down .....  
Channels .....  
Bubble top .....

COMMENTS:  
.....

**BRAKE:**

Standard ..... Power ..... Sensitized .....

Operated by the Left ..... Right ..... foot

Built up ..... Other .....

Hand control ..... Operated by the Left ..... Right ..... hand

**ACCELERATOR:**

STANDARD, no modifications .....

Left foot accelerator .....

Built up .....

Hand control ..... operated by the Left ..... Right ..... hand

**HAND CONTROL:**

Push-pull ..... Gresham ..... B/C Control .....  
Other .....

Positioning of Controls .....

Comments: .....

**STEERING:**

Operated by Left ..... Right ..... Hand  
Standard ..... Power ..... Sensitized ..... Foot operated .....  
Small Wheel ..... Tilt Wheel.....  
Other.....

**SPINNER NOB:**

E-Z Steer ..... Standard Knob ..... Extended Knob .....  
Vertical U ..... Horizontal Quad Knob ..... Tri-pin .....  
Eye Bolt ..... Wrist Support ..... Other .....

**TRANSMISSION:**

Standard ..... Automatic .....  
Hand operated Clutch .....  
Other .....

**SEAT BELTS:**

Shoulder strap ..... Lap belt .....  
Trunk harness .....

**AUXILIARY CONTROLS:**

*Dimmer:* Standard ..... On Hand Control ..... On Dashboard .....  
*Horn:* Standard ..... On Hand Control ..... Other .....  
*Turn Signals:* Standard ..... Extension ..... Knee Operated .....  
*Gear Shift:* Standard ..... Adapted .....  
*Key:* Standard ..... Built-up ..... Ring .....  
*Wipers:* Standard ..... Other .....  
*Lights:* Standard ..... Other .....  
*Parking Brake:* Standard ..... Extension ..... Foot operated .....

**MIRRORS:**

Standard ..... Wide Angle ..... Right Side .....

**OTHER MODIFICATIONS:**

.....  
Therapist: .....

APPENDIX 11

**United Nations Convention on Road Traffic, 1968—Licence Classifications**

(This appendix is reproduced from the ACRUPTC 'Guidelines Report'.)

**CATEGORIES OF VEHICLES FOR WHICH THE PERMIT IS VALID**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Motor cycles  | A |
| Motor vehicles, other than those in category A, having a permissible maximum weight not exceeding 3,500 kg (7,700 lb) and not more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat.                     | B |
| Motor vehicles used for the carriage of goods and whose permissible maximum weight exceeds 3,500 kg (7,700 lb).   | C |
| Motor vehicles used for the carriage of passengers and having more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat.   | D |
| Combinations of vehicles of which the drawing vehicle is in a category or categories for which the driver is licensed (B and/or C and/or D), but which are not themselves in that category or categories. | E |

APPENDIX 12

**New South Wales disabled person's parking authority  
(facsimile)**

No. ....

(CREST)

NEW SOUTH WALES  
DISABLED PERSON'S  
PARKING AUTHORITY

Issued to:

Signature:

Vehicle No:

Issued subject to compliance with conditions on back.

D.R. Coleman,  
Commissioner  
for Motor Transport.

CONDITIONS OF USE

THIS AUTHORITY—

1. is valid only if the vehicle concerned is being used by the person to whom it is issued;
2. enables the vehicle to be left standing in excess of a parking time limit only where the sign-posted time EXCEEDS 30 minutes;
3. has NO effect where any other restriction applies—for example, where parking is prohibited or where there is a time limit of 30 minutes or less;
4. applies also at a parking meter but only if the time limit there exceeds 30 minutes—no meter charge is payable in this event;
5. must be displayed inside the vehicle as near as practicable to the registration label and facing to the front or to the left side of the vehicle—but only whilst the vehicle is standing in conformity with these conditions;
6. must be signed on the front by the person to whom it is issued;
7. must be returned to the Department of Motor Transport immediately its use is no longer required by the person to whom it is issued;
8. MAY BE REVOKED FOR ANY BREACH OF THESE CONDITIONS.

## Categories of aids available under the Program of Aids for Disabled People

- Home modification
  - Access ramps;
  - door widening;
  - modification of toilets, baths and laundries;
  - provision or modification of shower recesses, wash basins, cabinets, shelving, benches, taps, handles, power outlets and light fittings; and
  - provision of internal and external hand-rails or grips.
- Wheel chairs
  - Manual and motorised.
- Orthoses
  - Braces, splints, calipers, surgical corsets and surgical shoes.
- Domiciliary oxygen.
- Surgical wigs.
- Artificial breast forms.
- Electrolarynxes.
- Aids for incontinence
  - Urinals, catheters, tubing, connections, drainage bags and bottles, waterproof mattress covers.
- Walking aids
  - Walking frames, walking sticks and crutches.
- Personal aids
  - The following items may be custom built or specially modified:  
Crockery, cutlery, cooking utensils;  
toilet articles; tables, chairs, stools; portable steps/ramps and commode and shower chairs.

## Conduct of the Inquiry

On 3 December 1980, the Committee was appointed to inquire into and report on the main causes of the present high level of the road toll in Australia; the most effective means of achieving greater road safety, the economic cost of road safety to the community, as well as aspects of the problem to which those concerned with road safety could most advantageously direct their efforts.

Within these terms of reference, the Committee is conducting a series of inquiries into road user behaviour. The first, the influence of alcohol and drugs on road safety, was completed in May 1980. On 5 March 1981, the Committee resolved to inquire into and report on the education, training and licensing of drivers, including the special needs of disabled drivers as the second inquiry in this series.

The Committee placed advertisements in major metropolitan newspapers on 21 March 1981 inviting interested individuals and organisations to make submissions to the Committee. In addition, many regulatory authorities, research bodies, hospitals, teaching organisations, and other associations with a direct interest in the subject matter of the inquiry were approached directly and invited to make submissions.

One hundred and eight submissions were received, and 136 witnesses appeared before the Committee. A list of witnesses and submissions is given at Appendix 1. Commencing on 22 June 1981, 13 public hearings and one *in camera* hearing were held in which over 2700 pages of evidence and 41 exhibits were taken. A list of exhibits is given at Appendix 2. Evidence taken at public hearings is available for inspection at the Committee Office of the House of Representatives and the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

The Committee carried out inspections at the Goulburn Valley Driver Training Complex at Shepparton, Victoria; the Army School of Transport at Puckapunyal, Victoria, and the Commonwealth Department of Social Security's Queen Elizabeth II Rehabilitation Centre at Camperdown, New South Wales.

The Committee also held a private Seminar in Melbourne at which all State and Territory licensing authorities were represented. The frank exchange of views that took place at this Seminar greatly assisted the Committee in reaching its conclusions and recommendations.