

ROAD SAFETY ACTION PLAN 2013-2016



OLDER ROAD USERS

Older drivers have been shown to be more cautious and exhibit less illegal and dangerous driving behaviours than other age groups. Older drivers also often self regulate to avoid risky situations and times of day. While older drivers are involved in a smaller number of crashes they are more likely to suffer more serious injuries or take longer to recover, probably because of their frailty.

People aged 70 years and over account for approximately 11% of South Australia's population and 10% of road fatalities and serious injuries. During the last 10 years, 163 people aged 70 years and over were killed and 918 seriously injured while using the South Australian road network. In 2008-2012, 60% of fatalities and serious injuries for people aged 70 years or older were drivers, 17% were passengers and 15% were pedestrians.

The use of safer vehicles could provide benefits for older drivers particularly in providing increased protection when a crash occurs. Improvements to the road environment are also important, for example lower speed limits and controlled phases at traffic signals would prove beneficial for older drivers. Maintaining mobility and preparing to drive less or giving up driving, together with the assessment to drive process are also important issues for older drivers.

One in every eight road deaths in South Australia is a pedestrian and pedestrians aged 70 years or older are over-represented in pedestrian serious casualties. Many elderly people have a greater reliance on walking and are therefore more likely to be exposed to traffic as pedestrians. Improved safety for pedestrians and improved public transport will be important to older drivers to maintain mobility and access to services.

The South Australian Road Safety Action Plan 2013-2016, developed in consultation with the Road Safety Stakeholder Reference Group, has identified the following priority actions to improve older road user safety.

Key actions:

Creating safer communities and neighbourhoods

- > Create safer neighbourhoods and pedestrian friendly streets with lower vehicle travel speeds. Implement the online 'Living Neighbourhoods' resource and develop tools for local government to implement concepts from the 'Streets for People' Compendium. (DPTI, LG, Urban Renewal Authority, Heart Foundation)

Improving the licensing system

- > Work with the Australian Medical Association SA to consider the merits of undertaking a pilot of the Snellgrove Maze Task screening tool to assess fitness to drive. (DPTI, SA Health, AMA)

Better informed communities

- > Develop and deliver workshops dedicated to the purchase and safe use of mobility scooters by expanding the Moving Right Along: Obligations and Opportunities for Older Drivers Program. (DPTI)
- > Deliver programs designed to keep older drivers safer on our roads (eg. Car Fit, Years Ahead and Moving Right Along programs). (RAA, DPTI)



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