



**NSW MINISTER FOR ROADS**  
**MICHAEL DALEY MP**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **OLDER DRIVER CHANGES INTRODUCED FROM MONDAY**

Saturday 29 November 2008

Minister for Roads Michael Daley today said changes to the licensing system for older drivers will come into effect on Monday, providing over-85 year olds with safer, more flexible licensing options.

Mr Daley said the reforms make sure over-85 drivers remain mobile for as long as possible, without compromising their safety and that of other road users.

“These are the first major changes to the older driver licensing system since driving testing for motorists over-85 was introduced in the early 1960s,” he said.

“Over 24,000 community groups and individuals have commented on how the licensing system should work, and I’m pleased to say we have reached a fair and safe balance with these changes.

“There are currently around 23,000 over-85 drivers in NSW but this figure is expected to more than double over the next 15 years.

“That’s why we have introduced these state-wide reforms to give older drivers better choices to ensure they remain safe on our roads,” he said.

The changes that come into place from Monday 1 December include:

- Annual medical check-up from the age of 75 to pick up issues like deteriorating eyesight and dementia.
- A new, more relevant driving test for over-85 drivers, which only needs to be taken every two years.
- The introduction of a voluntary driver assessment from home with an accredited driver training organisation or the choice of modified licence options for over-85 drivers.

Mr Daley said the other big change older drivers have welcomed is the introduction of biennial testing, which has been in place since July 1 of this year.

“This means drivers now only have to sit a test every second year at age 85, 87, 89 and so on.

“With an annual medical assessment from 75, any health concerns can be detected quickly and a doctor can determine their ongoing ability to drive,” he said.

The NSW Government announced the reforms on 3 April 2008 after extensive consultation with the community and major stakeholders including the NSW Centre for Road Safety, NSW Police, Council on the Ageing, NRMA Motoring & Services, Australian Medical Association and the Australian Driver Trainers Association.

NRMA Motoring & Services Director Dawn Fraser said the NSW Government should be commended for taking the NRMA and the community's concerns on board and introducing a fairer system for older drivers.

"We are pleased NSW will now have a fairer licensing system for older drivers. The NRMA is committed to working with the NSW Government to monitor the new laws.

"We will also do all we can to keep our 200,000 members over the age of 74 informed about how these laws will affect them," Ms Fraser said.

Mr Daley said an Older Drivers Implementation Panel had been set up at the time the reforms were announced to make sure the new requirements are both practical and effective.

"We all know tests can be unduly stressful, so options like taking a driving assessment from home have been carefully constructed to help older drivers feel more comfortable," he said.

"All assessors have to apply to the RTA for accreditation and will be randomly audited to make sure their testing processes are up to scratch.

"Another option we're keeping open to over-85 drivers is the modified licence, which enables people to drive in their local area where they are familiar with traffic conditions.

"Drivers that don't feel they want to drive much further than the local shops, or perhaps aren't comfortable driving at night, can talk to their local motor registry manager about changing to a more tailored type of licence.

"There are no blanket conditions for these licences, and it is up to the driver whether they take up the modified licence option.

"From Monday, a letter explaining each of the changes is being sent out to more than 200,000 older drivers and General Practitioners across the State.

"The RTA is also launching an advertising campaign from this Sunday to make sure everyone is aware of the changes.

"If you have any further questions about the reforms I encourage you to call the RTA Older Driver Hotline on 1300 663 628, visit the website at [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au) or your local motor registry manager," Mr Daley said.

The NSW Government will continue to monitor the new reforms over the next 12 months.

*Contact: Kate Mellis 0448 730 587*