

**Media release**  
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## **Abolishing compulsory test the smart move**

Council on the Ageing Tasmania (COTA Tas) welcomed the announcement yesterday that compulsory annual driving tests for drivers over the age of 85 would be abolished.

COTA Tas CEO Maxine Griffiths said that older Tasmanians needed to remain connected with their community and that for many the ability to drive was a major factor in that.

“We are delighted with the announcement and see it as a really positive step,” said Ms Griffiths.

“We have been strongly opposed to the practice of subjecting members of the public to mandatory assessments based on age for some time as it clearly constituted age discrimination,” said Ms Griffiths.

“Staying connected and mobile in later life plays a big part in how people can contribute to society.

“The stress that compulsory tests placed on older Tasmanians was unfair and unwarranted. As long as they are safe to drive there is simply no reason they should be subjected to more rigorous testing than anyone else in the community.

“We acknowledge that abolishing this testing of older drivers may not be well received by the public given the perception that older drivers are involved in more accidents.

“But there is simply no evidence to suggest that older drivers are a greater risk than any other age group on Tasmanian roads.

“In fact the statistics clearly show that fatality rates for drivers aged over 80 are five points less than those aged 17 to 24 years of age.”

COTA Tas is currently working with other transport providers to ensure the State has adequate public transport in regional areas where older Tasmanians choose not to drive themselves.

“The research we undertook sought to understand the barriers that older people feel prevent them using bus and community transport and how they might be overcome,” said Ms Griffiths.

“The recently released Productivity Commission Report *Caring for older Australians* cited the need to ensure that the wider community recognise that older members of the community still have a positive part to play in shaping the nation.

“For some a driver’s licence is actually representative of independence and we need to ensure that older Tasmanians still have that so they are still able to contribute positively to the community.”

**ENDS**

**For more information:**

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