

NEWS RELEASE

Issued 21/3/2013

COTA says older driver medical assessments are ageist

Leading advocacy group Council On The Ageing Tasmania (COTA) has supported claims made in local media that the compulsory medical assessment currently undertaken by Tasmanian drivers aged 75 years and over is ageist.

COTA Chief Executive Officer Sue Leitch says that COTA in 2010 was involved in a review of the licensing system for older drivers and expressed then, its opposition to compulsory medical testing for senior drivers aged 75 and older on the grounds that it was simply age-based and not based on evidence.

Mrs Leitch said COTA welcomed the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources' (DIER) abolition in 2011 of mandatory on-road driving assessments for drivers aged 85 years and older.

She said COTA continued to lobby for the abolishment of compulsory medical assessments for drivers aged 75 years and older and that COTA is aware that DIER is working towards ceasing this current ageist practice in 2014.

Mrs Leitch said COTA is not necessarily opposed to the medical assessments per se.

"The medical assessment is currently used by doctors to assess if people of all ages with medical conditions are medically fit to drive.

"We have no issue with that – our concern is that older drivers are being unfairly and un-necessarily targeted regardless of whether they have an ongoing medical condition."

ends

More information or interview: Mrs Sue Leitch, Chief Executive Officer 0448 281897