



Monday 12 October, 2020

The Members of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee  
Level 20, 1 Spring Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000

To the Members of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee,

While giving evidence to the Inquiry into the Road Toll Increase, questions were posed to Stan and I that need further comments on behalf of the ADTAV.

The following is a summary of the ADTAV's perspective of the VicRoads GLS - Graduated licensing system and the Driver Trainers' Industry

**1. VicRoads staff assist people with intellectual disabilities to pass the learner permit.**

Unskilled and untrained in assessing, combined with a no discrimination policy, false hope is given out on a regular basis. If driving is such a complex task, then why do we have such low standards at the start of the driving process?

**2. There is prolific falsifying of the log book.** The standard of checking was lowered several years ago. When the GLS (Graduated Licensing System) began the standard required to present a perfect log book filled in over a 2 year period was extremely high and difficult to meet. A phase of reasonable, fair and valid checking began. Falsifying the log book escalated when yet again the standard of checking was reduced. Standards across Victoria are vastly different from person to person and Service centre to Service centre. Log book training begins after the Licence Testing Officer (LTO) has completed a course upon return to the Service centre. The current system is farcical. It appears at many centres the only requirement is to take out the Declaration page and all is accepted. Why is a legal document treated with such disrespect?

**3. The introduction of the myLearners app is a gold ticket to cheating.** The app is designed to record movement. There are competitions across the state to see who can log the most number of hours without actual driving themselves. eg. The app is turned on when the bus driver begins the journey to and from school or a driver with a bus load of football or netball players or Mum/Dad/friends are driving. Many parents do not show interest or care about the repercussions of depriving their valuable son/daughter of practical experience. In fact any form of travel will record time on the app and the app still has ongoing technical issues.

**4. All Road Safety experts acknowledge that mobile phones are a distraction.** The ADTAV does not endorse the use of a mobile phone being used during an assessment to check the speed of a vehicle when on a solo test. Marking a score sheet, monitoring traffic, monitoring the applicant's driving behaviour and watching a phone is not a fair and valid assessment.

5. **The quality of training of the LTO's is reflected in the quality of the assessment.** We suggest that the statistics for pass/fail rates be assessed in more detail. Look at the pass rate in the various locations across Victoria and this will be reflected in the individual LTO's pass rate. NB: Portland has had the highest pass rate for years and it is well known across Victoria that failing is rare. Portland is seen as the go to place to obtain a licence. Statistics need to be more in depth. On many occasions a Learner has had minimal to no training but as the Professional Driver Trainer's vehicle is used, the stats are linked to them.

6. The LTO's are only as **competent as their own driving skills allow**. The course has been described as a Tick and Flick method. LTO's are NOT put through a practical driving course and many cannot drive a manual vehicle but it is deemed acceptable to assess manual drivers. The ADTAV does not agree with this practice. The Driver Trainer must complete approximately 400 hours of theory and practical driving in order to obtain accreditation. Licence Testing Officers should be assessed on their own competency to drive a vehicle both manual and automatic before taking part in the VicRoads LTO training course.

7. **Internationals** - The ADTAV has been contacted by VicWISE. This is an organisation that deals with students from overseas. Their concerns along with ours are that overseas licence holders can drive on Victorian roads without having an introduction to, let alone an understanding of Victorian road rules. Both VicWISE and ADTAV are very concerned at the high level of employment in the Uber and delivery vehicle industries whereby these drivers exhibit poor and unsafe driving skills.

8. **Over 21's** proceed straight to a Green probationary licence and do not have to complete **any minimum** hours due to their age. Many people wait until they are 21 so they can go straight to green P's with no requirement to complete a log book. Anecdotally, Driver Trainers are aware that most Learners over 21 have limited to zero night driving experience, practice only the parks for the test, a limited to zero highway and/or freeway driving experience and present for an assessment with very limited skills in a wide variety of traffic, parking and weather conditions. Vehicle craft is extremely low. Holding the learner permit for the minimum required time frame does not equate to valuable experience on the road. As the VicRoads criteria licence assessment is limited, it is too easy to pass. These drivers are at a high risk with minimal skills. Male maturity is not until late twenties. Cause for concern.

#### 9. **General observations**

9.1 Can pass a test because it is too easy/ criteria permits breaking the law which reinforces bad driving habits.

9.2 Unfortunately there are incompetent Driver Trainers who satisfy their clients' needs to be trained on test routes.

9.3 Incompetent test route only driver trainers who train to look good, to have a high pass rate, but are unskilled in safe driving practices as they themselves do not recognise their contribution to the increase in the road toll.

9.4 Access to social media has made it easier for the learner to get "advice" on how to pass their driving assessment and one piece of advice is that going solo is more successful because a Driver Trainer is not present to observe the Testing Officer doing their job properly.

**In conclusion**, the TAC released as part of their campaign in 2015 an ad featuring a father attached to his son by puppet strings. The ADTAV witnesses this behaviour on a daily basis. Role-modelling by parents who are out of date does not produce safe drivers.

As it stands at the moment, the hardship and special circumstances being offered during lock down this year because of the Coronavirus, Covid-19 has been abused. Large numbers of applicants have been accepted with minimal checks and balances. Combined with poor standards of LTO's and large numbers doing their training online, the numbers of Victorian lives lost **WILL** increase.

It is the quality of the Driver's brain behind the wheel that will improve standards on the road and taking the easy way to get a licence is being rewarded on a daily basis. Our young and over 21s have not been taught the value and privilege of driving a vehicle.

While we have a system that allows parents and unskilled LTO's and under skilled Driver Trainers to continue as they do currently, the lives lost numbers will increase. We have a recipe for disaster brewing with increasing issues with drugs, alcohol, mobile phones, inexperience, medical issues and an aging society which has no checks and balances on drivers once they obtain a licence.

In our submission and in this letter we have omitted our concerns regarding the NDIS, Mental and Physical health, TAC and more. These can be discussed at a later date.

The ADTAV thanks you for the opportunity to communicate with the Members of the Economy and Infrastructure committee. We look forward to discussing this letter with you.

Yours Sincerely,



Rhonda Armour  
ADTAV Secretary

