

OLDER ROAD USERS



Motoring & Services

BACKGROUND

What age is an older road user. 60,70,80 years ?

Age should not be considered the sole indicator of reduced driving ability. Nevertheless, the ageing process can affect a person's hearing, vision, physical mobility and cognitive processes. The effects of ageing impact on individuals at different times and in different ways - older drivers represent a very diverse group.

Age is not the key issue - it is impairment.

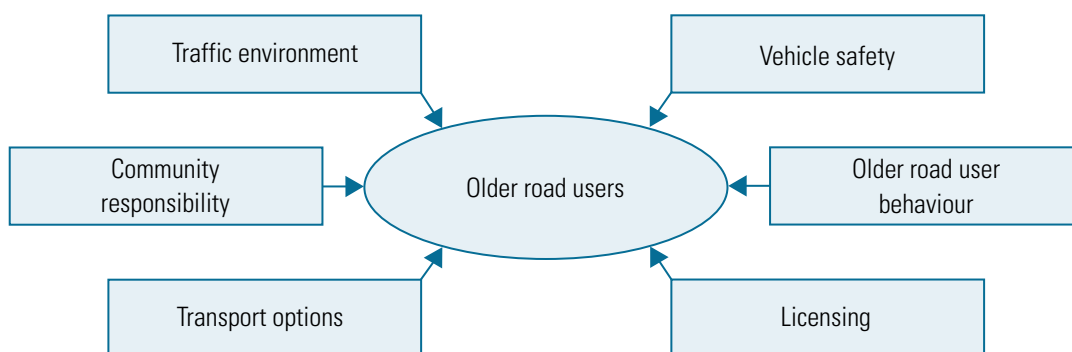
Impairment has no age barrier. Slower reactions, reduced vision and poor decision making can happen at any time of our lives and could have many causes.

NRMA research highlights the sense of pride and accomplishment older drivers have in retaining their licence. The car is vitally important to some older people for mobility and independence. Given that in some areas, few alternative means of transport are available, the loss of a driver's licence can significantly impact on quality of life.

Older drivers must have an annual medical assessment at 80 years & undertake an on-road driving test at 85 years.

ADDRESSING OLDER ROAD USER SAFETY

The issues confronting older road users are complex, requiring a comprehensive strategy so that measures are developed that will foster both short and long-term safety benefits. The key factors impacting on older road users are shown in the diagram below.



NRMA's Research indicates that older people already modify their driving behaviour to compensate for their declining capacities. As a group they are more likely to regulate or modify their driving behaviour if they are made aware of the specific problems associated with ageing.

CRASH INVOLVEMENT (70+ AGE GROUP)

- 8% of the population, yet
- involved in 13% of fatal crashes
- involved in 25 % of pedestrian crashes

THE EFFECTS OF AGEING ON DRIVING

Ageing impacts on individuals at different times and in different ways.

Ageing can result in slower reactions and reflexes, reduced vision, hearing & cognitive processes. All these elements of impairment can affect your ability to drive safely.

As many older road users are frail, they are more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a crash, so great care is required to ensure safe road use.

REDUCING THE RISK

- Older drivers can plan their journeys to minimise the risk of driving at night and at busy times.
- Older pedestrians should avoid walking in poorly lit areas and should only cross the road at traffic lights.
- Drivers concerned about their health should seek medical advice.
- Doctors and family members should help monitor driving capability.
- The Roads and Traffic Authority can issue a restricted licence to older drivers to confine them to driving in certain localities and at certain times of the day and night.

NRMA conducts a road safety awareness program, 'Years Ahead' targeting older road users. Since 1999, NRMA has delivered over 1000 presentations to over 25,000 participants.

For more information contact NRMA on (02) 8222-2164.

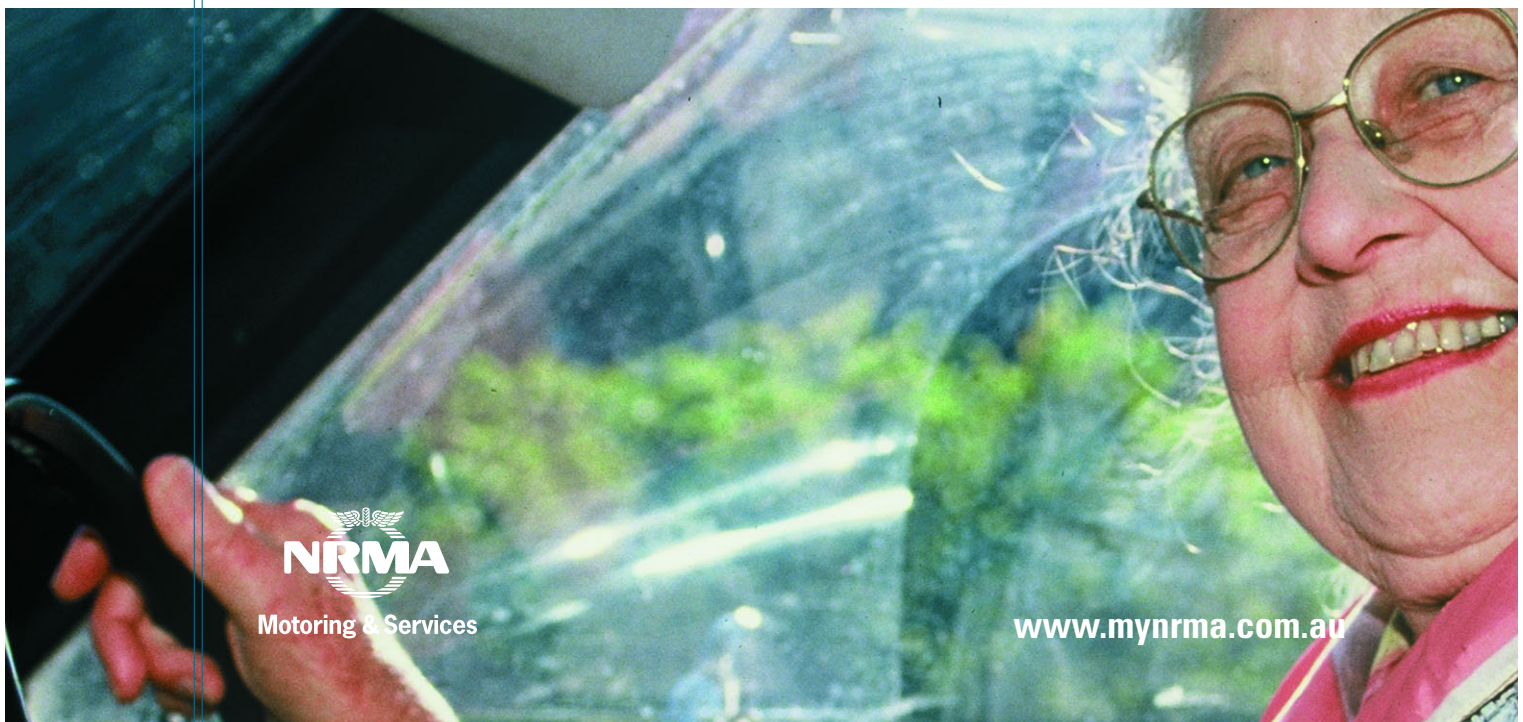
MOTORISED WHEELCHAIRS

Motorised wheelchairs are increasing in popularity as a key mobility aid to older people. Yet ambiguity exists regarding the rights and responsibilities of motorised wheelchair users.

Motorised wheelchair users have the same rights as pedestrians, provided the scooter is less than 110kg and can't travel more than 10km/h. These devices do not have to be licensed or registered.

NRMA has developed a 'Scooter Safe Kit' to help inform road users about motorised wheelchairs.

For further information visit: mynrma.com.au



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