

# Community Road Safety Grants

Older road user safety framework

April 2022

# Creative Commons information

© State of Queensland (Department of Transport and Main Roads) 2015



<http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/>

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the authors.

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of information. However, copyright protects this publication. The State of Queensland has no objection to this material being reproduced, made available online or electronically but only if it's recognised as the owner of the copyright and this material remains unaltered.



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this publication and need a translator, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 13 14 50 and ask them to telephone the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads on 13 74 68.

**Disclaimer:** While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

# Contents

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction – why focus on older road users?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Project Types</b>	<b>4</b>
Project content – education	5
Project content – training	6
<b>Resources</b>	Error! Bookmark not defined.

# Purpose

A senior road user can be a driver, a pedestrian, someone riding a bicycle or using a mobility scooter, or a person using public transport, taxi or rideshare services usually aged 65 and over.

Safer Seniors Projects are designed to improve road safety outcomes for these older road users and are funded through the Community Road Safety Grants (CSRG) scheme. These grants provide funding to organisations to deliver Safer Seniors projects in their local community or a targeted area.

To be eligible, Safer Seniors projects should seek to support the following goals:

- a) Maximise older drivers' ability to continue driving safely for as long as possible; and/or
- b) Support older people as they retire from driving and empower them to explore other transport options to stay mobile and engaged in their community.

Organisations can apply for funding to deliver projects in one or more locations over a 12-month period.

## Introduction – why focus on older road users?

Queensland has an ageing population and the proportion of the population made up of older adults is projected to continue growing in the coming years. **Figure 1** captures some key statistics about older adults and driving.



In 18 years time, people aged 65+ will make up 20% of the population.



In the last 10 years, the number of people aged 75+ with a drivers licence has increased by 63%.



Older drivers are more likely to require hospitalisation if involved in a crash.



Drivers aged 75+ are 3.5 times more likely to be fatally injured in the event of a crash than younger drivers.

**Figure 1. Key statistics about senior road users.**

Older drivers are rarely involved in risky driving behaviour such as speeding, or drink driving, and tend to prefer favourable driving conditions (for example, dry weather, daytime). Although older drivers are among the safest, the consequences of being involved in a crash are much more severe for older individuals. Crashes that in other age groups may result in hospitalisation, can be fatal for older road users. Older drivers also face a range of unique issues that may affect their driving, such as changes in vision, movement and cognitive processing. These changes may be quite gradual which means that they are often harder to notice.

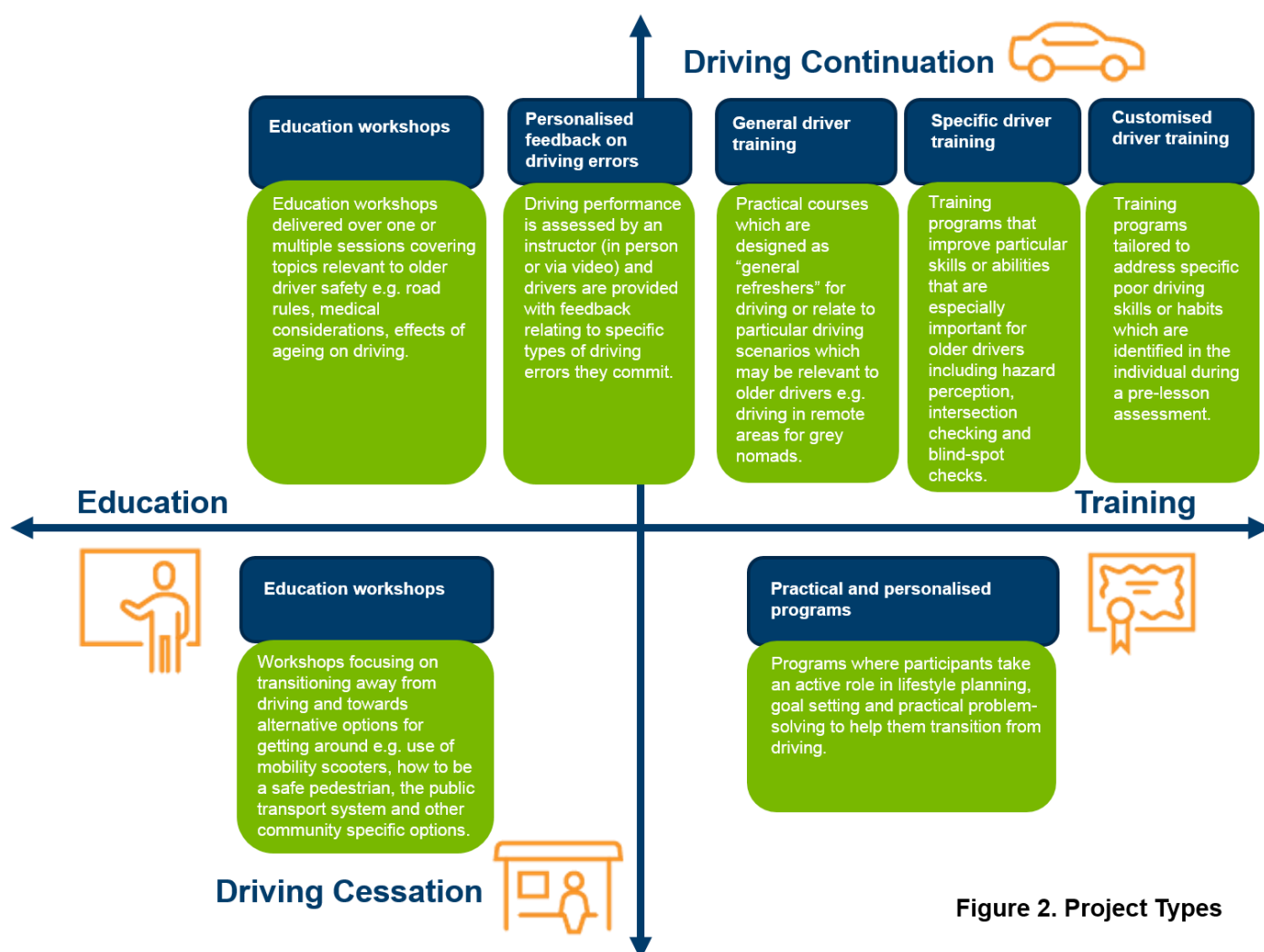
As older adults face the transition away from driving, they may express concerns about loss of independence and lower life satisfaction. This is particularly true for older adults who are unfamiliar with or have limited access to alternative methods of transport, such as those living in regional communities. Unless the transition away from driving is well supported, older adults may experience social isolation, depression and reduced physical wellbeing. Older adult's transport mobility is strongly linked to maintaining good health and wellbeing.

# Project Types

The two goals of CRSG Safer Seniors projects – to support older drivers to be safe drivers, and to support safe mobility for older road users – mean the following types of projects may be eligible for funding. Projects may focus on:

- education and providing relevant road safety information
- training to improve driving-related skills
- planning and goal-setting to facilitate the transition from driving.

**Figure 2** indicates the different types of projects that may receive funding and their relationship to each other. Safer Seniors projects will fall somewhere along the spectrum between education (where the primary aim is to provide information) and training (where the aim is to develop or enhance skills through hands-on experience). They may focus on supporting continued driving, or if this is not the safest option, support older people transitioning away from driving and towards alternative mobility. The *Project Content* sections of this guide outline topics to include when planning each type of project.



**Figure 2. Project Types**

## Project content – education

While there will be differences between individuals, research indicates that older adults emphasise the importance of instructors and learning experiences that are engaging. They prefer information to be presented in a logical progression and to focus on specific facts and data (as opposed to abstract concepts).

Remember to tailor the length of your sessions to the number of topics you will be covering – it is better to look at a few topics in greater depth, than to briefly touch on a wide variety of topics. Research also shows that reinforcing educational material over time is more effective than presenting a one-off session. For this reason, a project that delivers road safety messages over time will be viewed more favourably than a one-off session. However, even one-off sessions can use strategies that help participants to retain the information e.g. providing take home materials or sending topical newsletters to participants.

It is also important to remember that the type of road safety information relevant to older drivers may differ from general road safety messages. Education projects should aim to make older drivers aware of factors that may influence their driving as they get older, encourage them to accept changes to their abilities and support them to make any adjustments necessary to maximise their safety.

To achieve this, it is recommended that your project include some or all of the following content:

### **General Road Safety Awareness**

Information around:

- Commonly misunderstood road rules (particularly those which may have changed recently)
- The Fatal Five (speed, seatbelts, distraction, fatigue, drink/drug driving)
- Hazards on the road (e.g. aggressive drivers).

### **Safer Cars**

Newer vehicles are better designed to protect occupants in the event of a crash. This is especially important for older adults because the consequences of being involved in a crash can be much more severe for this age group. As people age, changes such as loss of bone density and muscle strength means their ability to withstand physical forces decreases, which has implications for even a minor crash.

Inform participants of safety benefits and related resources which may help them in selecting a car:

- Australasian New Car Assessment Project (ANCAP)
- Used Car Safety Ratings (UCSR)
- SafeCars App.

Be mindful that not all of your participants may be in a position to purchase a new car, so it is especially important to highlight that a safety rating system exists for used cars (UCSR), as well as new ones (ANCAP). If they are considering changing their vehicle, these resources can help them to identify the safest vehicle they can afford.

### **Medical Considerations**

Discuss:

- The requirement for a medical certificate for drivers aged 75+ and the process for obtaining it
- Effects of medications on driving (some medications may negatively impact on driving, conversely, not taking prescribed medications may also have a detrimental effect on the ability to drive safely)
- The requirement to report medical conditions that may affect driving and how to do so.

### **How Age Affects Driving**

Discuss how age-related changes in vision, movement and information processing may impact the ability to drive safely. Emphasise that changes may occur gradually, and it is important to regularly reflect on one's driving (including near misses) to notice these changes early on. You may also choose to use a health self-assessment tool with participants.

## Alternative Transport Options

The process of retiring from driving can be a source of anxiety and uncertainty for many older adults. This is further compounded when they do not have reliable information about possible alternative modes of transport and how to access or use them.

Explore alternative transport options and how these can support participants' lifestyles, including:

- Public transport (bus, train, ferry)
- Courtesy and shuttle buses
- Taxi and rideshare services
- Safe walking
- Use of mobility scooters
- Getting lifts from family/friends
- Safe bicycle riding (where relevant).

Make sure you provide localised information about which particular transport options are available in the area where you are running the project and how to access them. Accessing online information (e.g. timetables) can be daunting for older adults so a practical demonstration can be helpful.

Acknowledge participants' concerns and encourage them to start actively planning for the transition.

## Self-Assessment

Consider including a driving related self-assessment questionnaire for participants to increase awareness of their own driving behaviours and capabilities.

## Grey Nomads and Travelling as an Older Driver

Projects may also choose to highlight particular safety issues that affect older adults who spend a lot of time on the road, for example, as part of the growing Grey Nomad community. Consider including information about:

- Journey planning (for example, how to minimise fatigue)
- Road sharing (particularly with heavy vehicles and road trains)
- Differences between driving a light passenger car and a 4WD
- Driving in different conditions and on different road surfaces (e.g. unsealed rural roads)
- Safe towing.

# Project content – training

Training projects should aim to develop or enhance skills which improve road safety among older road users and must involve active participation. Training projects may be conducted behind the wheel (for example, on-road training), in a non-road environment (e.g. driving simulator or training using a computer/videos), or using a combination of both. The following content should be included in training projects.

## Skill Types

Research shows that the majority of accidents which involve older drivers have common elements (for example, failure to give way). Training projects should seek to enhance driving skills relevant to these situations, rather than focusing on specialist or defensive driving skills (*Note: Defensive driving, caravan towing and motorcycle-specific training programs will not be eligible for CRSG funding*). In particular, projects should focus on training in:

- Hazard perception
- Intersection checking
- Blind-spot checks.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is a key element in improving performance. Without specific and timely feedback, participants may not be able to accurately assess their skills and identify particular areas which require improvement. Feedback that is provided at several points throughout the training process is more effective than a one-off debrief at the end of the session.

## **Trainers**

Whether your project involves on-road or off-road training, you should ensure that your project is delivered by trainers with an appropriate level of experience and expertise. Possible trainers may include:

- Driving Instructors
- Occupational Therapists
- Other appropriately trained individuals.

## **Personalisation**

Research shows that training projects which are customised to the individual and target problem areas specific to them, are generally more effective than generic, catch-all projects. Consider how you may identify which skills/driving behaviours require the most work and how you may adapt your project to target these areas, given that they will vary from individual to individual. For example, you may choose to undertake a pre-training assessment with your participants and use it to inform areas you will focus on. Or you may choose to target your project to a particular sub-group within the community, for example, older adults returning to driving after illness or surgery.

## **Assessment**

As part of your project, you may choose to assess your participants before and/or after training. Baseline assessments can help you to identify which areas to focus on when training different individuals. On the other hand, results of post-training assessments will give you a clear picture of how effective your project has been and whether any changes need to be made.

## **On-Road Considerations (including area of operation and vehicles)**

If you intend to conduct on-road training or an on-road assessment, consider where you will deliver it. Ask yourself:

- What are the characteristics of the area (for example, traffic flow, road surface, environment complexity)? Is it suitable for the proposed training type?
- Will the training impede any activities that normally occur in the area?
- Will the training affect the safety of other road users in the area (especially children, older adults and pedestrians or cyclists)?

Also consider what type of vehicle(s) you will use.

- Will they require dual-braking or any other modifications to facilitate the training?

Vehicles must be roadworthy, registered, maintained and comprehensively insured. When selecting a vehicle consider their ANCAP or UCSR safety rating. Also consider whether you may be able to partner with or gain sponsorship from a local car dealership.