

Assessing Fitness to Drive – Advisory Group Terms of Reference

Introduction

The National Transport Commission (NTC) is undertaking a review of the medical standards relating to drivers of commercial and private vehicles. The standards for driver licensing are contained in Assessing Fitness to Drive – Commercial and Private Vehicle Drivers (2016) (AFTD) guidelines. The document's primary purpose is to increase road safety in Australia by assisting health professionals to;

- Assess the fitness of their patients to drive;
- Promote responsible behaviour of their patients with respect to their health and driving;
- Conduct medical examinations for licensing of drivers as required by licensing authorities; and
- Provide information to inform conditional license decisions.

The document also aims to provide guidance to licensing authorities in making licensing decisions.

Review Scope

Regular reviews ensure that the medical standards contained in AFTD guidelines are up to date, reflect current medical best practice and meet the needs of users. The current review will consider:

- Advances in medical knowledge and standard practice;
- New issues affecting medical standards for drivers;
- Changes to the driving environment;
- Stakeholder feedback on the operation of the current guidelines; and
- Findings of recent enquiries (e.g. coronial enquiries).

Role of Advisory Group

The NTC will convene an AFTD Advisory Group (AFTD-AG) of key stakeholders to provide expert advice for delivery of this project. The AFTD-AG will provide a broad perspective when considering the merits of proposed changes to the document and issues arising during this current review. The AFTD-AG will not make decisions or determinations on policy issues, but advise the NTC on review priorities, policy implications and proposed amendments.

Advisory Group members will;

- Participate in discussions with the NTC on relevant topics (via email, or phone/video conference);
- Provide advice on any issues raised during discussions, when required, and actively assist in resolving issues in relation to AFTD;
- Offer strategies to address issues raised and advise the NTC on related technical, legal and policy considerations;
- Provide comments on changes proposed by other stakeholders and discuss within their own organisations the issues raised presenting a representative view and
- Liaise with associated stakeholder contacts (where appropriate) to provide a broad view/feedback to the NTC.

Organisational representatives are expected to:

- Faithfully, authoritatively and accurately represent the relevant member's view; and
- In the case of jurisdictional members, consult to the extent needed within their member agency, and with other agencies when required, to provide a single jurisdictional perspective.

Membership and Administration of the Advisory Group

Participation in the AFTD-AG is by invitation from the NTC and members will be invited based on their specific relevant expertise. The AFTD-AG will comprise of medical/health professionals, licensing authorities, regulators, and road industry representatives. From time to time, observers may be invited to attend meetings by the Chair to advance the project.

Members of the AFTD-AG should secure prior agreement with the Chair if planning to use a proxy or substitute representation for AFTD-AG meetings.

We anticipate three Advisory Group meetings will be required over the 18-month term of the project. Additional meetings may be scheduled as warranted. All meetings will be conducted through a video-conferencing platform (such as Microsoft Teams).

All administrative matters relating to meetings are the responsibility of the NTC. Meeting agendas are determined by the Chair and will generally be circulated to members at least five business days prior to the meeting. The NTC will provide a timely record of meeting to members.

Working groups

If required by the project, the NTC may set up time bound working groups from within the AFTD-AG, or possibly including external parties, to deal with specific medical issues. This will be determined by the Chair in consultation with the advisory group.

AFTD-AG members participating in a working group will do so at their own expense. The NTC may, at its discretion, offer administrative or other support to working groups.

AFTD-AG members are encouraged to collaborate informally to negotiate, develop and refine amendment proposals for review by the AFTD-AG and the NTC.

Confidentiality

Documents provided by members of the AFTD-AG to the NTC may be distributed to persons outside the AFTD-AG for the purposes of this project, unless clearly marked "*confidential – not for further distribution*". The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) applies to documents held by the NTC.

Appendix 1

AFTD review approach and procedure

Defining issues for consideration

The parameters for issue consideration are established through the project scope and the principles of assessing fitness to drive which cover;

- The driving task;
- The potential impact (and interaction) of medical conditions; and
- The driver's functional ability in relation to driving.

Resolutions to these issues must be minor, technical and/or uncontroversial:

Minor	Technical	Uncontroversial
Amendments not involving a change of policy but may clarify the intent	Amendments include updating the medical details, the correction of minor errors, updating language, adding notes, omitting redundant criteria and other minor changes to update or improve the form of criteria	Amendments that have broad acceptance by stakeholders. Where there are amendments that will be considered controversial, the NTC may conclude that the best option is for no change.

The NTC determines whether issues fit the parameters of the project scope and, if so, the prioritisation and timing of progressing them.

Issues that are out of scope

An issue raised that, in the NTC's view, does not meet the criteria for review may be:

- Progressed as a NTC project proposal in its own right
- Progressed as part of an existing NTC project, if within the scope of that existing project
- Referred to the appropriate body if it is outside of the NTC's mandate or capacity to lead, or
- Dismissed.

Developing the update

The NTC will consult with the AFTD-AG on the preferred amendments, or other resolution for issues it believes are candidates for an amendment. The NTC will seek formal AFTD-AG member views on a proposed response before proceeding to developing drafting instructions.

Drafting amendments

Once resolutions are settled, the NTC will consult AFTD-AG members on the revised AFTD guideline. Fundamentally, the NTC will seek AFTD-AG agreement that the proposed revisions are an accurate reflection of the recommendations, rather than continue or recommence debate of the issues.

Formal decisions

Formal decisions are provided by ITSOC and ITMM. While broad stakeholder consensus on policy and drafting is highly desirable, AFTD-AG members do not have voting or veto capacity. The NTC will generally submit proposed amendments to ITSOC and ITMM that it believes are likely to be endorsed or agreed.

Publishing new editions of AFTD guidelines

Subject to the ITMM approval, a new edition of the AFTD guidelines will be published online (and in hard copy if appropriate) in accordance with the associated Austroroads project.