



**National Council of  
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Land Transport Safety Authority on the  
Driver licensing proposals: Overseas drivers**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 41 nationally organised societies. It has 33 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies as well as individual members.

NCWNZ has a long history of concern about standards of driving and the legislation and regulations that cover these. Past submissions have included comments on licensing of overseas drivers, and the need for careful monitoring of the change from an overseas licence to a New Zealand licence.

The holding of a New Zealand driver licence must be seen as a responsibility not a right given lightly.

This submission is based on the comments of the Public Issues Standing Committee, three branches and two organisations.

**Proposal 1: To require that an overseas driver licence is stamped or hole-punched when it is converted to a New Zealand driver licence.**

Members unanimously supported this proposal. Obviously there must be some means of showing, at the roadside particularly, that an overseas driver licence has been superseded by a New Zealand licence. The method of marking the overseas driver licence must be simple and clear. If this marking invalidates the overseas driver licence the applicant should be informed at the beginning of the conversion process. The proposal is certainly justified for safety reasons.

**Proposal 2: To require an overseas driver with an overseas driver licence that is not written in English to carry an accurate English translation of it, or an International Driving Permit while driving.**

NCWNZ members would favour the use of the International Driving Permit. One member commented that accurate translation for an overseas driver licence does not show whether original licence is fraudulent or genuine.

**Proposal 3: To restrict the recognition of overseas driver licences, as valid for driving in New Zealand, to overseas drivers aged 18 years and over.**

NCWNZ strongly endorses this proposal as a safety measure. Not many countries allow persons under 18 to hold driver licences. The need to go through the graduated licensing process here for anyone under 18 is another safety measure, and overseas drivers under 18 can still drive under the graduated system.





**Proposal 4: To clarify that a current overseas driver licence is valid for use in New Zealand for multiple periods of less than 12 months.**

NCWNZ supports this proposal as it ensures New Zealand legislation is consistent with the *United Nations Convention of Road Traffic 1949* and allows overseas drivers to make repeated short trips to New Zealand.

**Proposal 5: To specify those countries whose driver licence holders are exempt from the practical driving test in the overseas driver licence conversion process in a schedule to the "Land Transport (Driver Licensing) Rule 1999".**

NCWNZ agrees that only persons from those countries where the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) is confident that driver licensing and testing systems are comparable to New Zealand, should be exempt from the practical driving test. NCWNZ suggests that only those countries that drive on the left should be on the *exempt* list. The changes to the list of countries whose driver licence holders are exempt from the practical test in the conversion process, are necessary.

**Proposal 6: To tighten the primary identification requirements for driver licensing applicants who are not New Zealand citizens.**

NCWNZ is surprised that a travel document such as a passport, certificate of identity or refugee travel document are not already necessary identification documents. Overseas driver licences, overseas birth certificates and expired certificate of identity or refugee travel documents must be removed as primary identification documents. It is important to help maintain the integrity of a New Zealand driver licence by strengthening the identification process.

**Proposal 7: To remove the ability of driver licence applicants from countries exempt from the practical driving test to use a certified copy of their overseas driver licence to convert to a New Zealand driver licence.**

Presenting a certified copy of an overseas driver licence, instead of the original, risks a New Zealand driver licence being issued to a person who may never have obtained a driver licence legitimately. For the few overseas drivers who have genuinely lost, or had their driver licence stolen, discretion is allowed. Any costs incurred in checking out such cases must be carried by the applicant.

New Zealand must not be seen as a country where fraudulent papers can be obtained easily, therefore this proposal receives our full support.

**Proposal 8: To allow overseas drivers from both exempt and non-exempt countries to present an overseas driver licence that has been expired for less than 12 months for conversion to a New Zealand driver licence. Where an overseas driver licences have been expired for more than 12 months, then the overseas drivers from both exempt and non-exempt countries are to go through the graduated driver licensing system.**

Licences from some countries are recognised in New Zealand as being of a standard that makes it necessary for a driver only to sit a theory test in order to change to a New Zealand driver licence. Drivers from other countries must sit a practical test as well as the theory test in order to have licences converted. These countries are known as *exempt* or *non-exempt* countries.

NCWNZ supports this proposal as it allows drivers from both *exempt* and *non-exempt* countries twelve months the same grace period after their licence has expired, in which to convert to a New Zealand licence.

NCWNZ supports this proposal as it gives equality, but suggests a shorter period of grace, perhaps six months, would be better.



**Conclusion**

NCWNZ supports all the proposals as concepts that are long overdue. Members are adamant that safety of the public is paramount. Individual rights are important and should be cherished and fought for, but they do not negate public good.

With the large number of unqualified and disqualified drivers causing accidents, NCWNZ supports any moves to improve the situation. What is needed now is enforcement of the rules.

NCWNZ thanks you for the opportunity to comment and looks forward to seeing the proposals implemented.

Beryl Anderson  
National President

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