



COTA **NEW SOUTH WALES**

MEDIA RELEASE

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'S PLATE' PROPOSAL NOTHING MORE THAN AGEISM

“Calls to introduce ‘S plates’ for older drivers represent ageism at its worst,” says COTA NSW CEO Ian Day, in response to calls from QBE, one of Australia’s largest insurers, to see them introduced.

“If older drivers actually represented an increased risk on the roads QBE would lift its premiums for them. We all know that premiums represent the real measure of risk when it comes to insurance. But QBE hasn’t done that,” said Mr Day.

Mr Day pointed out that older drivers in NSW already have to comply with measures to assess their ability to drive safely. Under NSW law, drivers aged 75 and over already face mandatory medical assessment if they want to continue to drive without restrictions.

“It’s difficult to fathom what the real motivations of QBE were when calling for ‘S plates,” said Mr Day. “If they were really concerned about safety, it would make sense for them to call for measures that tackle the known risk factors for fatal crashes, which are speeding, fatigue, alcohol consumption, and distractions like mobile phones.”

“The idea of an ‘S plate’ represents a classic case of discriminatory thinking,” said Mr Day. “An ‘S plate’ is not like a P plate for example, which alerts other drivers to the inexperienced nature of the P plate driver. An ‘S plate’ invites other road users to presume that – on the basis of age alone – an older driver must be somehow lacking. This is simply not supported by the evidence.”

Mr Day also expressed surprise that QBE seemed not to anticipate criticism from older consumers.

“QBE’s calls for an ‘S plate’ are, at best, disrespectful. I’m sure QBE has many older policy-holders who won’t appreciate their show of ageism.”

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CEO, Ian Day, is available for interview: 0417 210 234