



POSITION PAPER

MOTIVATION FOR EXTENSION OF DRIVERS LICENSE RENEWAL PERIOD FROM 5 TO 10 YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Critical Analysis of the Driver's License Renewal Process

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1. Summary Overview

The Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) is a proudly South African non-profit civil action organisation, with offices situated in Gauteng and Western Cape. Our mandate is to challenge the abuse of authority, wasteful and corrupt expenditure of public revenue and irrational policy.

The aim of this report is to critically analyse challenges experienced in the driving license card renewal process in South Africa, and to determine best practise comparisons that may apply to alleviate challenges therein.

We believe that our recommendations will bear significant savings for South Africans as well as Government, in both expenditure, efficacy and reduce time wasted.

South Africa (more specifically the most populous Gauteng Province) has for some time, experienced significant challenges with its driving license card renewal process. The online booking system recently introduced, was supposed to alleviate the manual process of phoning, or visiting a testing centre to book an appointment and provide greater efficiency to the license renewal experience. Instead, it has become a problem and other issues intended to be resolved, have remained.

Today, it remains extremely difficult to book a driver's license renewal on-line and when visiting the testing centres, there are long queues for walk-in appointments. As a result, many motorists have become dissatisfied and frustrated by the challenge to renew their licenses and this often leads to the abandonment of their legal obligations.

This report sheds light on how the current flawed renewal process can be improved and addresses associated issues and difficulties, which existed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and still do so today.

In 2020, SA had a backlog of approximately 320,000 driving license renewals due, with demand growing by 90,000 each month (Bhenghu, 2020). We believe the backlog has not improved over time and in fact, has gotten worse.

While there is an obvious need for efficiency in the administration of the driving license card renewal process, we believe that an immediate solution is one whereby the Department of Transport amends the regulations to stipulate that all driver's licenses are applicable for a period of 10-years.

Our research has shown that many countries have a 10-year driver's license renewal period, and this does not impact negatively on road safety matters. Furthermore, this decision to extend to 10-years was taken in 2013 by the Minister of Transport, Ms Dipuo Peters, but for some reason, the decision was rescinded with no apparent documented reasons for this recission decision. We must believe that before the decision to introduce this extension from 5 to 10 years, the department had applied their minds and done the necessary research at the time.

By extending to a 10-year renewal cycle, there will be an immediate cessation of the numerous problems pertaining to license renewals in South Africa. Furthermore, by doing so, the decision will alleviate the current pressure on the department, to enable it to keep up with other increased administrative demands, whilst also providing time to perfect the on-line driving license card renewal systems and overcome other inefficiencies, corruption, and the new card production system.

2. Introduction

The South African government faces a significant crisis of legitimacy in its inability to address simple public service shortcomings, one of these being the backlog related to the renewal of driving license cards, which is the case in point that is elaborated on within this position paper.

When it comes to driver's license renewals, aside from the time constraints, inefficiencies and the administrative issues that have given rise to the backlog (which existed before the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic), this is also an issue of financial and social context, whereby motorists who fall into the bracket of an already over-taxed environment, should not have to be subjected to unnecessary costs and inefficiencies arising from Government processes.

The solution proposed in this report will be very easy to introduce and the savings to the public (which should be at the forefront of decision-making of this nature by Government), will be significant both in time and money. While there will be very minimal expense to the department when implementing the proposed changes, the DLCA and Natis will need to forego some revenue earned from the process, however the lost revenue should be offset by reduced administration costs. Nonetheless, we believe it should never be the intention of the state to profit from its citizens, and any interventions that make it easier and less costly for citizens and businesses in South Africa should be explored.

In South Africa, dependence on privately owned cars and taxis to meet transport needs has increased significantly over time, due to the deterioration or lack of investment in public transport, and the

retained capital expenditure has not yielded adequate results. According to Expatica (2021), automobiles are the preferred mode of transportation. Lifestyle changes such as increased affluence, extended family dispersion, and increased longevity have further increased automobile dependence.

It is our understanding that approximately 2.8 million driver's license renewal applications have been affected by the backlog over the past two years and that there is probably around half that number who's card has expired, and the renewal thereof has still not taken place to date. We believe that by the 31st of March 2022 (the extended deadline date for renewal), several hundred thousand motorists will still not have their licenses renewed. However, the proposal that OUTA makes should be implemented, regardless of the backlog or the problems / frustrations experienced by the public in renewing the driver's licenses, largely due to the significant benefits to society.

The problems and frustrations in driver's license renewals is not confined to Gauteng (although this is where most of these issues lie), but also includes KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

Obtaining and maintaining a valid driving license card is one of the most important needs today. Periodic renewal of a driving license is an important part of the driving licensing procedure. However, renewal requirements and fees vary significantly among different provinces (Ngqakamba, 2020).

All Provincial and Municipal DLTC's' in Gauteng and Nelson Mandela Bay Metro (three DLTC's (at Gqebera, Kariega and Motherwell) are the only entities which uses the Natis online system to book a slot for the renewal of the driving license card. Had the system worked as smoothly as intended, there should be no long queues, along with significant efficiencies at the centres. This is not the case, and it appears that in other provinces where the walk-in and queuing method takes place, do not experience the level of problems and backlogs experiences in Gauteng.

3. Background

Prior to 1990, driving licenses issued was a lifetime document that was contained in one's Identification booklet, with no need for renewal. The data of individuals with licenses were captured at Home Affairs offices. The separate driving license card system was introduced for several reasons, largely due to corruption which had infiltrated the issuing of license by the Home Affairs Offices, as well as the need for improved security standards and information technology developments. This decision at the time gave rise to improved systems and kept in line with international best practice.

Under the current government regulations, South African drivers must renew their driving licence once every five years and motorists are advised to apply four weeks before the expiry date. Those who miss the deadline are legally allowed to drive but will be issued with a fine for failing to produce a valid driving licence card and run the risk of having their vehicle insurance claims denied, or employment and jobs denied due to the lack of a valid driver's license. In this case, it is advised that a person should obtain a temporary driver's licence at an additional cost, whilst waiting for their official licence to be issued.

For the past few years, South Africans have been experiencing challenges with renewing their driving license cards, for several reasons, the most prominent of all being:

- a. Technical challenges relating to dysfunctional equipment within the testing centres.
- b. National Traffic Information System (NaTIS) downtime.
- c. Inefficient online booking system which leaves far too many motorists unable to find slots and make a booking in the new system.
- d. The On-line booking system is often down and when functioning, if one gets through, the system has errors and is often slow.
- e. The On-line booking system excludes many sectors of society who do not operate in the connected world.
- f. Reduced manpower capacity in testing centres giving rise to queuing and transaction waiting times.
- g. Corruption induced by bribery and facilitation fees at testing centres.

Recently the Coronavirus pandemic has aggravated the backlog, due to offices being closed during the lockdown period, however, these problems existed long before the Coronavirus pandemic shut down testing centres in late March 2020. The combined effect of the above factors has resulted in motorists being unable to secure bookings in time to meet deadlines for the renewal of their driving license cards. This in turn gives rise to unnecessary stress as some people are forced to be absent from work, to get to the DLT Centres, without any guarantee that this would yield a successful renewal. Some motorists pay others to queue for them, and in many cases, bribes are solicited and paid to secure a spot or jump the queue.

3.1 Establishing digital solutions

In recent years a decision was taken to develop and pilot an online booking system, the Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport initially introduced a "phone in call centre" to control and

coordinate the booking of appointments for all the Gauteng Driving Licence Testing Centres. The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport initiated the Call Centre as a measure to control and curb rampant corruption that was allegedly being perpetrated by officials who were found to block slots and sell these on, sometimes in collusion with driving schools and others, at the DLTCs.

However, the decision to proceed with a call-centre managed online booking system also became infiltrated by similar corrupt practices, inefficiencies, and general malfeasance.

To mitigate the problems inherent at the Call Centre, the Gauteng Roads and Transport Department and the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RMTC) collaborated to develop and run a “pilot” project, which set out to provide online booking of appointments for the renewal of driving licence cards and professional driving permits, direct to the public. The pilot project was run in the Tshwane Metro Municipality and was run over the period March to August 2018.

Subsequently, on 01 September 2018 it was decided to add the functions of learner’s licence test and driving licence test appointments. The project was expanded to include all the Driving Licence Testing Centres in Gauteng. The online booking process was optional, and all Driving Licence Testing Centres accommodated both the online booking system and traditional “walk ins” method. It is important to note that making a booking online was free of charge at the time of introduction. The launch of the system was announced by then Transport Minister Blade Nzimande, and the Gauteng Call Centre for booking purposes closed.

3.2 The efficiency of online intention was missed

The online booking system was supposed to make it easier and faster for drivers to keep their licence cards up to date, reduce corrupt practice opportunities, reduce access barriers and to modernize services available at Testing Centres. Unfortunately, however, the online booking system has not lived up to expectations and has been notorious for inefficiencies, availability downtimes, system errors, slow services, along with the lack of access by many within the community due to lack of access to the technology required, as listed above.

Accordingly, these problems and inefficiencies resulted in opportunists to develop business models to exploit these deficiencies, despite the intentions of the on-line process being focussed on eradicating corruption.

The online booking system used in conjunction with the traditional “walk-in” system coexisted until June 2020. At that time, despite the problems abounded, the decision was taken to only accept bookings made via the online booking system in Gauteng. Following that decision, significant difficulties have arisen to book driver’s license renewals, in some instances becoming rather chaotic, with protest action taking place and the blockade of the Driving Licence Testing Centres. Widespread media coverage showcased the general dissatisfaction expressed by the communities affected and this remains the case to this day.

In March 2021 the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro requested that they be afforded the opportunity to have the online booking system introduced to their area. The outcome has mirrored what has taken place in Gauteng.

Furthermore, on 14 February 2022 the Minister of Transport signed into effect a Government Gazette, which prescribed that the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) would be charging the public a new additional fee of R22.00 for every appointment made in respect of an online application for a renewal of a driving licence card. This fee does not apply when doing so in the DLTC.

OUTA raises a concern that no fee’s should be subjected to online processes and certainly it should cost no more to do transactions online, than it does to transact in the DLTC.

4. OUTA survey and research

OUTA conducted an on-line survey through social media in June 2021. In addition, it compiled a literature review conducted from September to March 2022 and included empirical data (from complaints made by motorists) regarding the driving licence cards renewal process in South Africa. This survey provided motorists (specifically, holders of valid driver’s licenses were targeted in the survey) with an opportunity to voice their experiences with regards to the licence renewal process. The rationale for this method is the principle that government systems should be citizen-centric, which means measurements of their success or failure should be based on how users experience their performance.

The literature review component in Annexure 1, provides secondary sources of data to a) establish the longstanding nature of this problem, and b) provide a credible frame of reference for recommendations that our findings suggest. An important consideration is whether secondary sources that span across the past 5 years, corroborate empirical accounts of the system’s shortcoming in the

near past. If they do, this will strongly suggest that – despite some attempted interventions from the Department of Transport, Natis, and others – these problems have not yet been resolved.

OUTA’s research exposed significant concerns about the license renewal backlogs, as this negatively impacts effective enforcement of laws as well as the levels of voluntary compliance with licensing requirements.

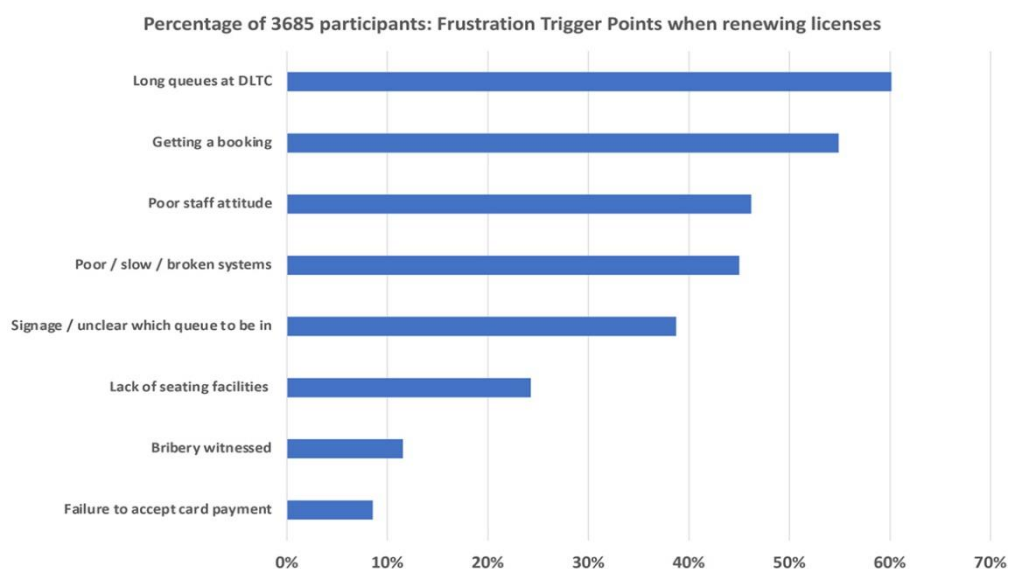
Some of the concerns include significant pressure on driving license testing centres in processing Driver’s License Card renewal (Ngqakamba, 2020). Another concern is that bribery is common amongst the officials who are involved in booking and ‘selling’ slots. Unavailability and insufficient broadband to move the data of the Natis system is also a cause of frustration for motorists (and officials) renewing their licenses (Mpyane, P.2021).

4.1 Results of the OUTA local survey

Below, results from the online survey wherein 3685 respondents participated are presented graphically with brief interpretations. Some limitations applicable to this research method are acknowledged for the sake of transparency and circumspection to the reader.

The survey targeted a broad range of motorists and was conducted nationwide, in all provinces, to give factual quantitative data of the broader picture of the failures of the driver’s license renewal process. The results of some aspects covered with the survey are listed as the following:

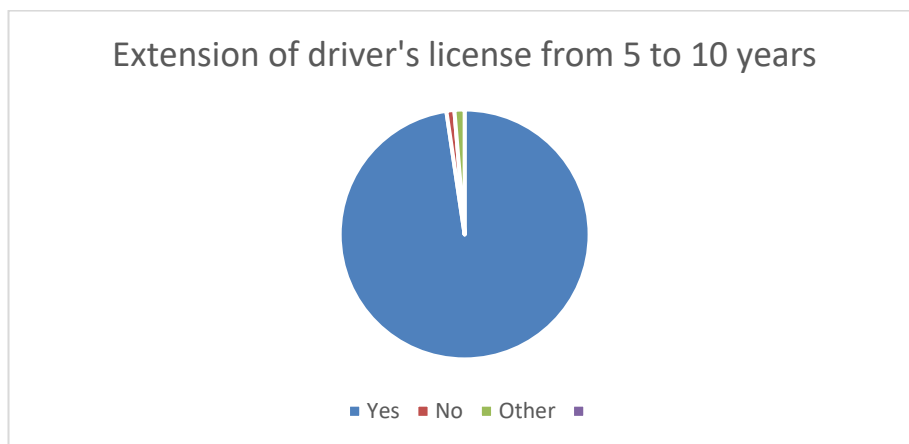
Table 1



Source: OUTA Drivers License Project research

This survey also revealed a plethora of other negative experiences as it gave motorists the opportunity to articulate their experiences. Motorists in Gauteng complained about not being able to successfully book appointments online. Those that are successful in booking appointments must still stand in long queues and the set appointment slots are not observed and used.

The survey results indicated that 65% of motorists are frustrated by the ineffectiveness of the online booking system. The online system makes provisions for online payment as you book a slot, but the results show that even that system is flawed and unworkable.



The survey asked whether motorists would support a call to extend driver's licenses from 5 to 10 years. The survey found that only 3.4% of motorists stated they would not support an extension, while 96,7% of motorists support driver's license validity from 5 to 10 years.

4.2 International examples

When researching the driver's license renewal period in other countries, OUTA found that there is a range of driver's license validity periods, ranging from 3 to 20 years, with the average of 35 countries measured being 8.5 years – See table 2 below.

Table 2

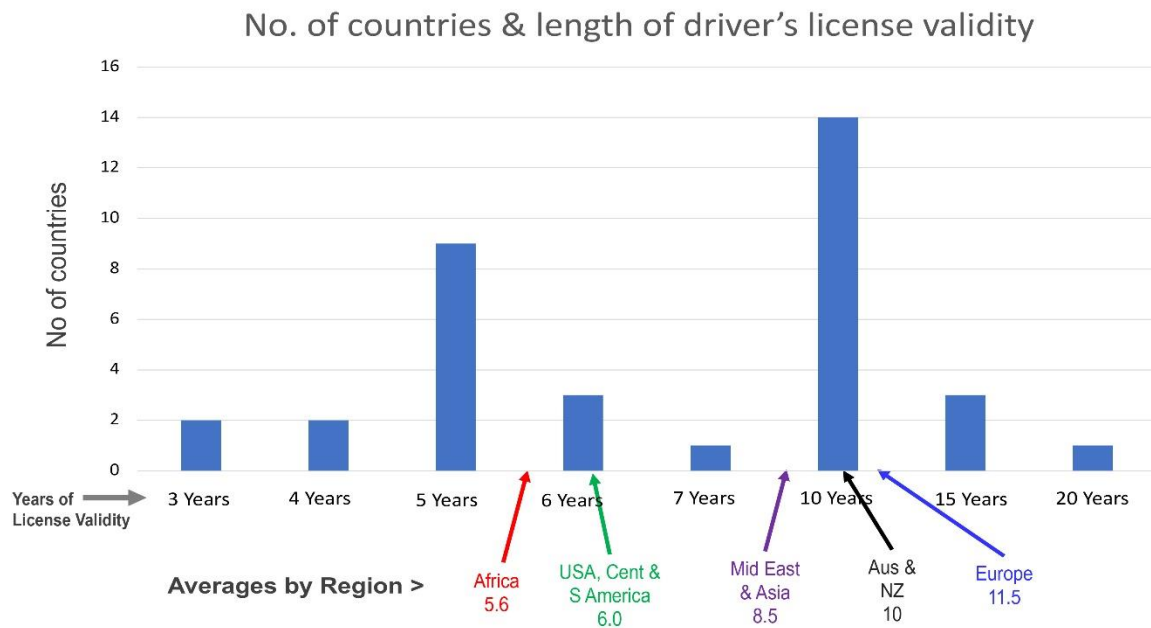


Table 3: International Examples of Driver's License Validity Period

Annexure 1 contains a more detailed table listing all countries measured.

AVERAGE No. OF YEARS DRIVERS LICENSES VALIDITY				
REGIONS MEASURED	AVE YRS	# Countries Included	NOTES:	# Road Fatalities / 100,000 vehicles pa
SOUTH AFRICA	5			113.9
USA	6.0	51 States	Ranging between 4 and 10 years	14.2
EUROPE	11.5	10	Ranging between 10 and 15 years	5.7 (UK)
AFRICA	5.6	10	Ranging between 3 and 10 years	
AUSTRALASIA	10.0	2	Both countries 10 years	7.4
MIDDLE EAST & ASIA	8.5	8	Ranging between 5 and 20 years	
S & CENTRAL AMERICA	6.0	5	Ranging between 3 and 10 years	
AVERAGE	8.5	35	Ranging between 3 and 20 years	No causal link between license renewal period and road fatalities.

In Europe, 10 to 15-year driving license renewal frequencies provide more freedom to drivers whilst reinforcing security, backed up with the electronic data exchange systems (European Commission, 2013).

The USA has a penalty system on the termination of driving licenses that can be applied to the current RSA system to avoid corruption and speed up the renewal process (South African Consulate General, 2018). The penalty system is the biproduct, but it needs to be founded on a workable and Constitutionally sound South African system.

4.3 The 10-Year Renewal period has already been approved in South Africa in 2013.

Adding more weight to this proposal and solution, is that the fact that a Government Gazette, with No.37048 was published (by the Honourable Minister at that time, Dipuo Peters) on 19 November 2013, amending Regulation 108(5)(a) of the National Road Traffic Regulations, extending the period of driver's license cards validity from 5 to 10 years. Unfortunately, on 31 October 2014 a further amendment was published in the Government Gazette No.38142, which again amended the entire Regulation 108 and effectively changed the period back to 5 years. We can find no record of the decision to reverse the decision to move to 10-year renewal period.

Generally, Section 75 of the National Road Traffic Act, no 93 of 1996, empowers the Minister of Transport to, after consultation with the MECs, make regulations not inconsistent with this Act, in respect of any matter contemplated, required, or permitted to be prescribed in terms of this Act. Therefore, OUTA is of the opinion that the Minister can easily affect this extension by publishing same in the Government Gazette.

5. Government's current solutions to the backlog

There are a few solutions that the department have (or plan to) introduced to the current license renewal processes, some already underway and designed to reduce the perpetual backlogs and improve efficiency. Some of these are listed in the Departments Annual report and summarised here:

- Upgrade obsolete Live Enrolments Units (LEUs) and other tools of trade that DLTCs use to deliver services.
- Online interface with optometrists and medical practitioners to upload eye test results on NaTIS.
- Standardize operating hours of DLTCs (08h00-16h00 and opening of business on Saturdays).
- Optimize rollout of online booking platforms to improve customer experience.
- Introduce self-service kiosks in public spaces, managed by the RTMC.
- Operationalization of licensing hubs and walk-in centers.
- SMS solutions to alert motorists with expiring licenses.
- Online payment systems to reduce visits to DLTCs.

The Department of Transport acknowledges the numerous challenges and failures observed and experienced by motorists. In addition, the Department realises these interventions will take some time to roll out.

6. OUTA's recommendations

OUTA believes that notwithstanding the need for these new processes to continue to be introduced, a far more cost-effective solution will be extending the validity of driving license cards from 5 years to 10 years, for all existing licenses and new ones going forward. This not only alleviates the immediate pressures being experienced but halves the number of transactions of this nature forevermore going forward.

Furthermore, OUTA's suggestion doesn't merely come because of the current backlog and problems. Even if everything was running smoothly and there was no backlog in the issuing of renewed driver's licenses, we would still propose this solution for the following reasons:-

- There is a social cost of time and money that citizens and businesses must apply when renewing their drivers' licenses.
- There are no compelling reasons or benefits to society in the renewal of driver's licenses every 5-years, as opposed to ten.
- The state should be obliged to move toward the more efficient option for society, which in this case would be the extension to 10-years.
- OUTA's comparative research with international best practices, has found that many countries in Europe, Australasia and other regions countries, should be considered as the benchmark for the period of validity of driver's licenses (table 4).
- Government has already motivated and passed this decision in 2013, which was rescinded in 2014, with no apparent reasons provided for the rescission.

It should also be noted that although the administrative systems and other factors may be more effective in other countries, it does not mean that South African can adopt a "one size fits all" approach. South Africa is a unique country that faces unique challenges and therefore the driver's license renewal process should be tailored to meet South African's needs. This should be applied no matter the renewal period.

OUTA's proposal is that the South African government merely extends the expiry date of all driver's licenses in current circulation by 5 years, and that all new licenses issued carry a 10-year expiry date. We also suggest there is no need for replacement cards of those that have currently expired, as the enforcement authorities and other interested parties would merely add ten-years to the 'issue date' of the driver's license, to check its validity. We have already come to live with driving and enforcing

the laws with expired card information for over two years now, this extension processes should be no different.

Should there be a specific need for specific individuals to have a replacement card reflecting the ten-year period, for reasons of license validity in other countries, those individuals can apply for a “replacement card” which should reflect the new 10-year period.

In addition, if failing eyesight with age is really an issue, we propose that people beyond the age of 70 will need to renew their license every 5 years.

The move to a ten-year renewal period will not only remove the backlog and give the department time and space to implement more time-consuming improvements to the entire driver’s license challenge, but it will also reduce the renewal demand by half going forward and will help improve the manageability and administration of the process of renewal by under capacitated DLTCs.

Internationally, countries lean towards longer validity periods by a large margin. These are in both developed and third world countries. We believe that South Africa has no reason to not go this route, which would with immediate effect alleviate the frustrations of motorists and administration officials.

7. Conclusion

Although the Covid-19 pandemic may have aggravated the driver’s licence renewal backlog, this is a problem that has been with us long before the pandemic induced shut-down. The real problems that have been overlooked are the numerous process flaws, exacerbated by layers of institutional inefficiency, systemic failures, and corruption. This precipitates in measurable dissatisfaction among road users, and ultimately erodes public trust in the laws designed to protect them.

We believe the many issues that require attention will take time to address and accordingly, the current backlog of license renewals will be a perpetual one.

Extending the validity of driving licenses from five to ten years is both a simple and highly effective intervention and is affordable in terms of both money and time – two rare commodities in South African society.

We believe this decision will expose an attitude of the State walking together, hand in hand with society, to find solutions in overcoming the challenges we face as a nation.

Following the extension to 10-years, we propose the minister engages with various role-players and major stakeholders to address the existing driver's license booking systems (whether on-line or in-centre), as these matters will continue to persist with the new license applications and renewal of driver's licenses when these kick in again some three years down the line (as there will be some driver's licenses that have expired two years ago and not yet renewed).

OUTA therefore strongly recommends this extension - which can easily be affected by the Minister by publishing new Regulations in the Government Gazette - and contends that it will immediately eliminate the current and future backlogs, whilst also saving both society and the Government in wasted time, money, and related stresses experienced because of the current dire driver's license renewal situation.

Annexure 1:

SUMMARY TABLE OF DRIVERS LICENSE RENEWAL PERIOD									
Number of years to renew:	3	4	5	6	7	10	15	20	TOTAL
No of Countries Applicable:	2	2	9	3	1	14	3	1	35
AVERAGE	8.5	years							
LIST OF COUNTRIES MEASURED AND THEIR DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWAL PERIODS									
REGION	COUNTRY NAME	No Years Lic Applies	Notes						
USA (51 States Average:		6	Range between 4 and 10 years						
EUROPE Average		11.5	10 Countries measured						
	United Kingdom	10							
	European Union	10							
	Spain	10							
	France	15							
	Netherlands	10							
	Portugal	10							
	Italy	10							
	Belgium	10							
	Germany	15							
	Greece	15							
AFRICA Average:		5.6	10 Countries measured						
	Botswana	5							
	Namibia	5							
	Zimbabwe	5							
	Mozambique	10							
	Ethiopia	4							
	Nigeria	5							
	DRC	5							
	Kenya	3							
	Rwanda	10							
	Morokko	4							
AUSTRALASIA. Average:		10	2 Countries measured						
	Australia	10							
	New Zealand	10							
MID EAST & ASIA: Average		8.5	8 Countries measured						
	UAE	10							
	India	20							
	China	6							
	Russia	10							
	Thailand	5							
	South Korea	7							
	Japan	5							
	Malasia	5							
SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA: Average		6	5 Countries measured						
	Argentina	5							
	Brazil	10							
	Chile	6							
	Costa Rica	6							
	Mexico	3							

Annexure 2:

The following section provides Literature Review, highlighting many of the problems depicted in this report.

Article 1: Motorists complained about not being able to successfully book appointments online. Those that are successful in booking appointments still must stand in long queues when they get to the licensing stations because the booking system is flawed and slow. They are not attended to at their appointment time.

Customers who have been trying to renew their driving licenses express frustration with the online booking system, where it is exceedingly difficult to get a simple slot for license renewals. The Gauteng provincial government has made changes to the booking process to address the backlog, with all drivers testing licensing centers (DLTCs) in the province now dedicating 70% of booking slots and capacity to driving license renewals to address the issue.

In the same publication, Minister Fikile Mbalula stated that the backlog was not only because of Covid-19 complications, but due to corrupt back-office staff at driving license testing centers and driver's license renewal centers. South Africa had a backlog of 320,000 driving licenses, with demand growing by 90,000 each month (Motor News Reporter, 2020)

Article 2: Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula and the Road Traffic Management Corporation have announced their plans to implement new driving license cards in 2023 and other problem-solving interventions. Minister Mbalula announced at a press conference on Thursday (3 February) that new driving license cards with advanced security features would be available from October 2023. These new cards will also serve as a form of identification. In August last year, the renewal period was extended once again when Mbalula announced driving licenses that expired between 26 March 2020 and 31 August 2021 would be valid until 31 March 2022. According to the Minister, the total backlog of licenses that will have expired by 31 March stands at 2.1m nationally. Mbalula claims there is a current backlog of 600 000 cards that the government must still print and says this deadline will be reached by the end of April. In November last year, the machine printing driving licence cards broke down and was sent for repairs in Germany. It resumed operations on 22 January and is now printing 400 000 cards a month to clear the backlog.

Article 3: Online driver license system to be rolled out across South Africa as reported on 18 November 2021. Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula says the online booking system for drivers licenses that was initially introduced in Gauteng has provided a basis for it to be rolled out nationally to deal with the license renewal backlog.[...]Other interventions that the province introduced include, amongst others, renewal facilities at selected Gautrain stations and more Driver License and Traffic Centres (DTLC) with extended operating days and hours from 07h00 to 21h00 at some, with the introduction of biometric systems to accelerate efficiency in service delivery. As stated by Mbalula (2021) "In the next few weeks, watch the space, we will be launching that renewed, revamped online approach".

Article 4: How government can fix the driving license mess right now, an opinion article by South African Institute of Driving Instructors (SAIDI) on 1 November 2021. According to the article, SAIDI recommends the following immediate solution to fix the South African driving license calamity:

1. Under no circumstance promulgate an additional extension on renewals.
2. The Minister of Transport must immediately publish a Government Gazette that declares:
 - a. the validity of a driving license card shall be for a period of 10 years. The Minister of Transport has this authority.
 - b. The validity of any driving license card with a five-year validity, with an expiry date on or after 26 March 2020, be automatically extended for a further period of five years.
 - c. A driving license card, as mentioned in 'b' above, may be exchanged, if the holder so wishes, for a driving license card valid for a 10-year-period from the date of issue thereof once the relevant fee has been paid.

Article 5: The RTMC issued a statement on the 05 October 2021 (Mahope, 2021) on the aggressive drive to deal with the backlog. The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport has managed to assist over 20 000 people with the renewal of their driver's licenses, after a backlog crisis.

Article 6: Minister of Transport extended the deadline: Motorists who had licence expired from 26 March to 31 December 2020 has until March 2022 to renew.

- The Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) called on Mbalula to extend the deadline for renewing driving licences that expired between 26 March and 31 December 2020.
- The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) recently acknowledged that there is a significant backlog when it comes to the renewal of driving licences.
- The Minister noted a lack of capacity at Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs), corruption, the slow speed and unavailability of the National Traffic Information System (NaTIS), faulty live capture units (for fingerprints and ID verification), and faulty eye testing machines as the main challenges facing the centres in the provision of adequate services (Wheels24, 2021).

Article 7: Minister of Transport extended the grace period to renew expired driving licences until August 31, 2021. He further explained that (Wheels24, 2021):

- All learners' licences, driving licence cards, temporary driving licences and professional driving permits that expired from 26 March up to 31 Aug 2020 are extended to 31 January 2021.
- All motor vehicle licence discs, temporary permits, and roadworthy certificates that expired during the period that commenced from 26 March 2020 up to and including 31 May 2020 are deemed to be valid and their validity period is extended for a further grace period ending on 31 August 2020.
- Motor trade number licences that expired during the period that commenced from 26 March 2020 up to and including 31 May 2020 are deemed to be valid and are extended for a further grace period ending on 30 November 2020 (Writer, 2020).

Article 8: *Validity periods: On December 3 the Minister of Transport gazetted an amendment to the lockdown regulations stating that all learner's licences, driving licence cards, temporary driving licences and professional driving permits that expire between March 26 and December 31, 2020, are deemed to be valid, and their validity periods have been extended until August 31, 2021 (Van der,2020). This grace period was implemented after a continued backlog of licence renewals and this was due to people struggling to renew their expired licences, either in walk-in bookings in other provinces or on Gauteng's online booking system. The extension will not apply to licences that expire from January 1, 2021, and vehicle licences.*

Article 9: *In October of 2020, the press release stated that "Government is planning 'provisional' driving licence for South Africa" (Writer, 2020), this is done in an already expensive process for most South Africans. The department indicated in a presentation on the National Road Traffic Amendment Bill to Parliament that current regulations will be amended to include three types of driving licences in the country: 1) learner's licence;2) provisional license, and 3) driving licence. Howard Dembovsky, chairperson of the Justice Project South Africa said that an explanation of provisional licences was proposed as far back as 2014 as part of proposed changes to the National Road Traffic Act. "Persons who pass their theory test will not be issued a full driving licence initially, they will be issued a provisional driving licence and subjected to restrictions in their driving practices, for a period of time, until they earn a full driving licence." In October of 2020 the bill was still in the draft proposal stage and subject to a full public participation process and governmental scrutiny.*

Annexure 3:

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