



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure and Transport



Importing Vehicles into Australia

May 2013

Note: The information provided in this booklet should be used as guidance material only for importing a vehicle into Australia. Please familiarise yourself with the relevant legislation prior to lodging an application.

DO NOT IMPORT A VEHICLE INTO AUSTRALIA BEFORE OBTAINING A VEHICLE IMPORT APPROVAL

The importation of a road vehicle (that is nonstandard or does not have an identification plate) without a vehicle import approval is prohibited under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*. It is an offence with a maximum penalty of 120 penalty units (refer to the *Crimes Act 1914* Section 4 for current penalty unit values).

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Director – Publishing and Communications
Communications Branch
Department of Infrastructure and Transport
GPO Box 594, Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

Email: publishing@infrastructure.gov.au
Website: www.infrastructure.gov.au

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

Safe vehicles reduce road trauma. Australia's vehicle fleet is among the safest in the world. Vehicles supplied to the Australian market in commercial volumes are certified by their manufacturers as complying with Australian safety and environmental standards and approved to be fitted with identification plates. The Australian Government through legislation has established a limited number of options for the importation of motor vehicles and trailers to Australia that have not been certified against the National Standards (Australian Design Rules).

The importation of vehicles to Australia is prohibited except in very specific circumstances. Most vehicles are imported by large manufacturers that invest substantially in research and development to ensure that every new vehicle meets minimum safety standards that maintain the safest possible environment for all road users and our community. Manufacturers wanting to import vehicles to Australia for supply must first obtain an Identification Plate Approval.

Approved companies known as Registered Automotive Workshops (RAWS) may import a limited range of used vehicles on behalf of individuals. If your vehicle is not currently approved you may be able to find a RAW that will import it for you. Please be aware that vehicles imported by RAWs must undergo a range of modifications and maintenance procedures to ensure that they meet minimum safety and environmental standards. You will be charged for this work and the costs of importation by the RAW.


Individuals can also apply to import vehicles to Australia. The Department administers legislation setting out when an import approval may be issued.

A Vehicle Import Approval is required before a road vehicle is shipped. The vehicle will not be released from the [Australian Customs and Border Protection Service](#) unless it has a Vehicle Import Approval. All costs incurred in this process are the responsibility of the importer.

It is important to note that these requirements relate to road vehicles designed solely or principally for the transportation of people, animals or goods on public roads. For vehicles that are not designed for road use, import approvals are not required, however a positive assessment of this through the Vehicle Import application process will ensure the clearance of your vehicle by the [Australian Customs and Border Protection Service](#).

An application for a Vehicle Import Approval, with all necessary supporting documentation will generally be first assessed by the Department within 15 working days of receipt (including payment of the lodgment fee). This is a service target and in unpredictable peak periods it may not be met. This process will take longer if any further information or clarification is required, if the necessary supporting documentation is not initially provided, or if the original application is incomplete.

Obtaining a Vehicle Import Approval is only one step in the process of importing a vehicle into Australia. Depending on the type of vehicle, the processes may be complex, involve several organisations, and take many weeks.



You can also visit www.infrastructure.gov.au and take the **Eligibility Assessment** to answer the question – *Which import option is best for me?* and to help you select which import option may be suitable for your circumstances.

8 steps to import a vehicle

This is an overview of all steps involved in importing a vehicle into Australia. This process involves a number of government agencies. You should familiarise yourself with the requirements of these agencies prior to importing a vehicle into Australia.

1. Conduct research

- Is the vehicle eligible to enter Australia?
- Which import option can I apply under?
- What costs are involved? (eg shipping, storage, delivery, permit application, taxes, Customs duties, cleaning for quarantine purposes, quarantine inspection costs modification costs, State or Territory registration and insurance requirements; etc)
- What are the timeframes involved for getting the permit and other necessary arrangements?
- What documentation do I need?
- What are the requirements for each government agency?
- Do I need to use a broker?
- Will I need to have modifications done to meet Australian standards?
- What are the risks involved with importing a vehicle?

2. Apply for a Vehicle Import Approval

- Decide which option to apply under
- Read all related materials
- Apply on line or download and complete the application form
- Check you have all the necessary information and attachments
- Submit an application form and all necessary attachments to the Department of Infrastructure & Transport
- Check your email address regularly in case the Department needs to seek further information from you
- *Government agency: Department of Infrastructure & Transport*

3. Receive Vehicle Import Approval

- Receive hard copy of Vehicle Import Approval in the mail
- Approval may contain conditions for vehicle use
- *Department of Infrastructure & Transport*

4. Arrange shipping of vehicle

- Prior to shipping, ensure car is steam cleaned inside and outside to remove any materials that may pose a quarantine risk
- Prior to shipping, ensure any air-conditioning gas is removed if necessary
- Ensure export conditions of country of origin are met
- *Government Agency: Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities*

5. Get Customs clearance

- Lodge an import declaration
- Pay Customs duty
- Pay Goods & Services Tax (GST)
- Pay Luxury Car Tax, if required
- *Government agency: Australian Customs & Border Protection Service*

6. Meet Australian quarantine requirements

- Lodge a Quarantine Entry with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
- Arrange inspection appointment (you or your broker may need to be present)
- *Government agency: Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service*

7. Meet Import Approval Conditions

- Arrange for modification of vehicle if necessary
- Conduct testing and develop evidence of compliance
- Apply for the identification plate approvals or supply to the market approvals if necessary

8. Register the vehicle

- Apply to register the vehicle in the relevant State or Territory

SECTION 2. IMPORTING VEHICLES TO AUSTRALIA

- Is the vehicle eligible to enter Australia?
- Which import option can I apply under?
- What costs are involved? These may include:
 - freight and insurance (for the transport of the goods to Australia);
 - customs duties, GST and, if applicable, Luxury Car Tax;
 - storage and delivery charges;
 - logistic services providers' charges;
 - customs brokers' charges;
 - entry processing charges;
 - steam cleaning for quarantine purposes;
 - other wharf and transport charges;
 - any costs involved in having your road vehicle meet State or Territory registration; and
 - insurance requirements.
- What are the timeframes involved for getting the permit and other necessary arrangements?
- What documentation do I need?
- What are the requirements for each government agency? To import a vehicle into Australia, as well as obtaining a Vehicle Import Approval, importers must:
 - pay Customs and Border Protection duty, Goods and Services Tax (GST) and, if applicable, luxury car tax;
 - obtain Customs clearance at the port of entry;
 - obtain quarantine clearance at the port of entry from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS);
 - meet emissions requirements set by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities; and
 - meet all registration requirements of the State or Territory where the vehicle will be driven.
- Do I need to use a customs broker or agent?
- Will I need to have modifications done to meet Australian standards?
- What are the risks involved with importing a vehicle?

2. Apply for a Vehicle Import Approval

- Decide which import option to apply under (if unsure, visit www.infrastructure.gov.au and take the Eligibility Assessment to answer the question – Which import option is best for me?)
- Read all related materials.
- Apply on line or download and complete the application form and relevant addendum.
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee applies for lodgment. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- Check you have all the necessary information and attachments.
- Submit the application form and all necessary attachments to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport.
- Check your email address regularly in case the Department needs to seek further information from you.
- Professional customs brokers or agents can help you with your application.

SECTION 3. IMPORT OPTIONS

Safe vehicles reduce road trauma. Vehicles supplied to the Australian market in commercial volumes are certified by their manufacturers as complying with Australian safety and environmental standards and approved to be fitted with identification plates. The Australian Government through legislation has established a limited number of options for the importation of motor vehicles and trailers to Australia that have not been certified against the National Standards (Australian Design Rules).

The importation of a vehicle which does not comply with National Standards or is not fitted with an identification plate is prohibited unless a Vehicle Import Approval has been issued. Penalties may apply if you import your road vehicle without a Vehicle Import Approval. The import options detailed on the following pages have been designed to allow importation outside of commercial certification arrangements. The options are generally focused on the importation of individual, 'one-off' vehicles.

You may apply to the Department to import your vehicle. If your vehicle and you qualify under one of the options, you will be issued with a Vehicle Import Approval.

The issuing of a Vehicle Import Approval may be subject to certain conditions. These conditions will be made clear when the Vehicle Import Approval is granted and may be unique to the particular vehicle. Breaching any stated conditions is an offence. Offenders may be prosecuted and fined or have their import approval revoked.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING WHICH IS NOTED ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEB SITE AND ALL APPLICATION FORMS

DO NOT SHIP YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN ISSUED A VEHICLE IMPORT APPROVAL

It is an offence punishable under the *Crimes Act 1914* with a maximum penalty of 120 penalty units (please refer to the *Crimes Act 1914* for confirmation of current penalty amounts). If you ship your vehicle without a Vehicle Import Approval, your vehicle may be held in Customs bond storage and you may incur further costs including storage fees.

Import Options

1. *Vehicles Manufactured Before 1989 Option*

The **Vehicles Manufactured Before 1989 Option** allows for the importation of road vehicles manufactured before 1 January 1989. The option is designed to cater for the importation of older enthusiast, classic or historic vehicles.

2. *Personal Imports Option*

The **Personal Imports Option** allows migrants settling in Australia, and expatriate Australian citizens returning permanently to Australia after a long period overseas, to bring their personal vehicle, owned for the qualifying 12 months period, with them.

3. *Australian Plated Vehicles Option*

The **Australian Plated Vehicles Option** allows road vehicles originally sourced within Australia but subsequently exported to be re-imported.

4. *Small Road Trailers Option*

The **Small Road Trailers Option** allows for the importation of road trailers that have an Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) not more than 4.5 tonnes.

5. *Race and Rally and Support Vehicles Option*

The **Race and Rally and Support Vehicles Option** allows for the importation of vehicles intended to be used for road vehicle rallies and closed circuit vehicle racing and support vehicles.

6. *Letter of Compliance Option*

The **Letter of Compliance Option** allows for the importation of vehicles which complied with the applicable Australian Design Rules (ADRs) at the time the vehicle was originally supplied to the market overseas.

7. *Special Purpose Vehicles Option*

The **Special Purpose Vehicles Option** allows for the importation of special purpose vehicles including city utility vehicles (fire tenders, garbage trucks, and street sweepers), mobile cranes, mobile drilling rigs, and mobile plant and equipment.

8. *Exhibition Vehicles Option*

The **Exhibition Vehicles Option** allows for the importation of motor vehicles intended to be used primarily for exhibition purposes.

9. *Non-Road Vehicles Option*

The **Non-Road Vehicles Option** allows for the importation of 'non-transport equipment' and/or 'off-road' vehicles that are principally designed for this purpose and/or a vehicle that is not permitted to be driven on public roads.

10. *Vehicles in Transit Option*

The **Vehicles in Transit Option** allows the importation of vehicles for the purpose of having modifications, repair or other work performed on the vehicle. The vehicle is to be re-exported without being used as transport in Australia.

11. *New Vehicles - (Including Large Trailers) for use on Road Option*

a. Full Volume Option

This option allows the fitting of Identification Plates to new vehicles by vehicle manufacturers and to import compliant vehicles to the Australian market in unlimited numbers.

b. Low Volume Option

This option allows the fitting of Identification Plates to new vehicles by manufacturers and to import vehicles to the Australian market in restricted numbers. Low Volume Identification Plate Approval holders are given exemptions or concessions from some vehicle standard requirements.

c. Large Road Trailer Option

This option allows for the importation of new large road trailers that have Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) rating of more than 4.5 tonnes

d. Used Large Road Trailers

To import a used Large Road Trailer follow the information for a Discretionary Approval.

12. *Test and Evaluation Vehicles Option*

The **Test and Evaluation Option** allows for the importation of road vehicles for testing to meet the national vehicle standards (Australian Design Rules) under a vehicle certification process and/or for evaluation of performance in Australian conditions.

13. *Discretionary Approvals*

The **Discretionary Approvals Option** is for vehicles not covered under other options or applicants unable to meet the Personal Import Option requirements, where they may be granted an approved under the exercising of discretion in exceptional circumstances and usually with conditions on the vehicle import approval.

14. *Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme*

This scheme allows for the importation and supply to the market of used vehicles that are listed on the Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Register. Approved Registered Automotive Workshops (RAWs) import, modify and fit a Used Import Plate to compliant used vehicles in accordance with concessional standards.

15. *Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Register*

Listing on the Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles Register means that road vehicles can be imported into Australia under the Low Volume Vehicles Option and the Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme.

16. *Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)*

This agreement allows for the importation of road vehicles by military personnel temporarily posted to Australia under the terms of an intergovernmental agreement.

Carnet

The 'Carnet de Passage en Duane' is an international agreement which allows the temporary import of a vehicle for up to 12 months by visitors to Australia. The carnet is obtained in the country of residence. This option is managed by Customs and Border Protection Services. A vehicle import approval is not required for Australian Plated Vehicles where the Carnet is current for retuning vehicles.

1. Vehicles Manufactured before 1989 Option

This option is covered by Regulation 17 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

The purpose of the option

This option allows for the approval of the applications to import road vehicles not fitted with identification plates that were manufactured before 1 January 1989.

This option caters for the importation to Australia of older vehicles that would have once been regulated by the State and Territory Governments before 1 January 1989 with the passage of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*. This includes enthusiast, classic or historic motor vehicles that are destined for restoration and hobby use. This option caters for both individual owners and car clubs.

The option permits the importation of vehicles which do not comply with current national vehicle standards (Australian Design Rules), and are therefore outside normal certification arrangements. However, State or Territory Government Registration Authority will generally require that the vehicles comply with the standards that applied at the date the vehicle was originally manufactured.

Without a concession, these vehicles may not otherwise be available to enthusiasts and hobby vehicle owners.

What is the date of manufacture?

The “date of manufacture” is the date the vehicle was first driven or moved from the manufacturer's production line or production facility, after the vehicle's body shell and powertrain assemblies were joined. This is equivalent to the concept of the build date (as developed and used by Australia's automotive industry). To qualify for this option the date of manufacture is to be before 1 January 1989.

If parts of a vehicle with a date of manufacture before 1 January 1989 have been assembled into another vehicle, the date of manufacture is taken to be the date on which this new vehicle was first driven. If this conversion (into a different automotive product, such as a replica car, a drag racing car or a hot rod) happened after 1 January 1989, the vehicle does not qualify under this option.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Vehicles Manufactured Before 1989 Option, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed application form available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number or chassis number.

- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Purchase document for the vehicle in your name (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).

Details which help us to assess the vehicle, including:

- Details of the pre-1989 vehicle—such as the manufacturer's specifications, brochures, diagrams and photographs of the vehicle.
- Registration papers where these are available (registration papers are an accurate source to verify the make, model and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) or chassis number for the vehicle).
- The specification of the vehicle you are importing (especially the installed engine, transmission and overall dimensions).
- A recent photo of the vehicle (in its current condition).
- A detailed list of all modifications undertaken on the vehicle. Please see below for a comprehensive list of modifications for cars, motorbikes and trailers.
- If the vehicle has been modified, supporting documentation to establish the details of the alterations and the date(s) on which this work was completed and this new vehicle was first driven. ***Documents/statements from previous owners are requested to be notarised.***

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for relevant matters as specified in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application. This advice should be signed by an officer of the company.
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

Cars

If the vehicle has been modified, supporting documentation to establish the details of the alterations and the date(s) on which this work was completed and this new vehicle was first driven after modification. *Documents/statements from previous owners are requested to be notarised.*

- Please advise if the car has had any modifications from the manufacturer's specification and if so please list the modifications.
- If there are no modifications, make a signed statement to that effect.
- Please advise the body style of the car (e.g. 2-door convertible).

- Please advise if the body of the car has been customised (e.g. chopped roof, tubbed boot, body kit).
- If it is not customised, make a signed statement to that effect.
- Please advise what engine is in the car (e.g. 289 cu in, 4.7L manufacturer's name V8).
- Please advise what transmission is in the car (e.g. 4-speed manual manufacturer's name).

Motorbikes

Where the motorcycle has been modified, supporting documentation to establish the details of the alterations and the date(s) on which this work was completed and when this new vehicle was first driven after modification. Documents/statements from previous owners are requested to be notarised.

- Please advise if the motorbike has had any modifications and if so please list the modifications.
- If there are no modifications, make a statement to that effect.
- Please advise the frame style (e.g. manufacturer's name and model).
- Please advise if the motorbike has been customised.
- If the frame is not customised make a signed statement to that effect.
- Please advise what engine is in the motorbike (e.g. 1207 cc manufacturer's name and model).
- Please advise what transmission is in the motorbike (e.g. 4-speed manual manufacturer's name and model).

Trailers

Where the trailer has been modified, supporting documentation to establish the details of the alterations and the date(s) on which this work was completed and when this new vehicle was first used on public roads after modification. Documents/statements from previous owners are requested to be notarised.

- Please advise if the trailer has had any modifications and if so please list the modifications.
- If there are no modifications, make a signed statement to that effect.
- Please advise the body style (e.g. caravan).
- Please advise if the body of the trailer is customised.
- If it is not customised, make a signed statement to that effect.
- If the vehicle's date of manufacture is unclear—please provide additional supporting documentation to establish the date of manufacture. For example, you may provide a copy of the vehicle's registration documents or a notarised written statement from the manufacturer.

Applications for more than one vehicle

To avoid multiple lodgment fees, you may apply for more than one vehicle (within the Vehicles Manufactured Before 1989 Option) in one application.

2. Personal Imports Option

This option is covered by Regulation 13 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

The purpose of the option

This option allows migrants settling in Australia, and expatriate Australian citizens returning permanently to Australia after a long period overseas, to bring their personal road vehicle with them, where the vehicle has been owned and used for a period of 12 months or longer.

This option only covers individuals. Companies and/or corporations are not eligible to import a vehicle under this option.

Change of residence

Applicants must have lived in a foreign country (or several foreign countries) throughout a qualifying period of 12 months prior to arriving in Australia. This option is available to applicants who intend to become an Australian permanent resident and remain in Australia indefinitely.

Temporary visitors such as foreign tourists, posted diplomatic personnel and posted military personnel are not eligible.

Criteria

Mandatory criteria apply under this option. These criteria, outlined below, are strictly enforced. If you fail to meet the criteria, you will not be eligible to import a vehicle under the option.

Ownership of the vehicle

Applicants must satisfy each of the following ownership requirements:

- own the vehicle when submitting the application; and
- have acquired ownership of the vehicle while overseas; and
- have owned the vehicle while overseas for a continuous period of at least 12 months. This is the “qualifying period”. The qualifying period applies to the period immediately before you (permanently) arrived in Australia.

Use of the vehicle

The vehicle should have been available to you for use as transport. This means the vehicle has been available to be driven by you, at all times during the 12 months qualifying period. Evidence to establish availability may include that the vehicle is registered (in your name) and garaged (proximate to your residence) throughout the 12 months qualifying period, so that you could, if needed, drive the vehicle. In addition, evidence that you held an appropriate license to drive the vehicle overseas would assist in confirming that the vehicle was available for use.

Citizenship and visa requirements

Applicants must fall into one of the following categories:

- be an Australian citizen; or
- have applied to become an Australian citizen; or
- be an Australian permanent resident (e.g. hold a permanent visa); or
- have applied to become an Australian permanent resident (e.g. applied for a permanent visa); or
- hold a visa that allows you to apply to become an Australian permanent resident (e.g. hold a temporary visa that allows you to apply for a permanent visa); or
- otherwise be entitled to remain in Australia indefinitely (e.g. is a New Zealand citizen).

Date of application

Applications may be made before you arrive in Australia if you have already met the qualifications of this option under which you are applying. Alternatively, applications may be made up to 6 months after you arrive in Australia.

Age of applicants

Applicants must be of an age to hold an Australian license to drive the vehicle.

Limit of 1 vehicle every 5 years

Applicants may only import one vehicle under the Personal Imports Option every 5 years.

How to apply

Applications may be made before you arrive in Australia (although you must still meet the 12 months qualifying period prior to applying). Alternatively, applications may be made up to 6 months after you arrive in Australia.

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Personal Imports Option, you should provide the following to the Department:

- A completed application form available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN);
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- Purchase document for the vehicle in your name.
- A copy of your international or overseas driver's license;
- A copy of the registration documents for the vehicle (for the qualifying period), in your name;
- Applicants importing a vehicle from Japan should also provide:
 - A copy of the Japanese parking approval, in your name, and

- A copy of the Japanese compulsory tax and insurance documents;
- A signed statement of travel prepared by you, listing any international travel you undertook during the qualifying period. In particular, the statement is to set out any absences from your country of residence. If travel was for business reasons, you should supply a letter to that effect from your employer;
- A copy of the identity page of your passport. If you hold dual passports, you should provide a copy of both passport identity pages;
- A copy of your current Australian permanent resident visa if you are not a citizen;
- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for relevant matters as specified in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

Applicants should be able to substantiate their intention to remain in Australia indefinitely by supplying a selection of the following documents, up to a value of 100 points. The documents provided should be as recent as possible for the purposes of supporting your application.

Primary documents

50 points

You should supply at least one of the primary documents:

- Your employment details, such as a letter from your Australian employer.
- Your resignation from employment in your former country of residence.
- A rental agreement/purchase agreement for your residential property in Australia (i.e. longstanding holiday or second homes do not count).
- The sale of your residential property in your former country of residence.
- The cancellation of your residential rental property in your former country of residence.

Secondary documents

20 points

- The shipment of your household goods to Australia.
- The enrolment of your children in an Australian school.

10 points

- Your new Australian telephone / electricity accounts.

In addition, foreign citizens settling in Australia may substantiate an intention to remain in Australia indefinitely, by providing evidence that they have recently:

25 points

- Applied for an Australian Tax File Number.
- Registered with Medicare.
- Applied for Australian medical insurance.
- Applied to open an Australian bank account.
- Applied for an Australian driver's license.

These lists are a guide. You may also be required to provide further evidence, including:

- A copy of the deregistration certificate, from the previous owner of the vehicle.
- A copy of insurance documents for the vehicle.
- A copy of the Japanese de-registration certificate, in your name;
- Copies of other documents that support your purchase of the vehicle (such as bank statements, receipts from vendors).
- Copies of other documents that show you used the vehicle (such as receipts for any maintenance or repairs made to the vehicle).

NOTE: All documents not in English require a translation certified by a member of an accredited agency such as the National Accreditation Authority of Translators and Interpreters.

You may be required to submit original documentation (not photocopies) to confirm eligibility under the option. If originals are required you will be contacted by the Department.

If you believe you meet the option requirements above, but are missing certain documents, please provide a covering letter to explain your circumstances. Where a clear case has been made, your application may be considered under [Discretionary Approval](#).


The personal import plate and vehicle registration

If you are eligible under the **Personal Imports Option** (and a vehicle import approval has been granted), you may apply for the issue of a Personal Import Plate. There is an additional charge for the supply of the plate (payable to the plate contractor).

Vehicle registration is administered by the registering authority in your State or Territory. Contact details for State or Territory Registering Authorities are provided at the end of this brochure and on the Department's web site under the heading 'Related links'.

The approval papers forwarded to you will contain four parts:

- one copy allows the vehicle to be cleared from its point of entry into Australia (by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service);
- one copy allows you to obtain a Personal Import Plate from the plate contractor;
- one copy is for the State or Territory Registering Authority, and is for the purpose of vehicle registration; and
- one copy is for your own records, and should be kept with the vehicle.



A Personal Import Plate is evidence that the vehicle is an approved vehicle import, allows the vehicle to be registered in the first instance and identifies that the vehicle does not comply with the Australian vehicle standards. Before you may apply for a Personal Import Plate, the vehicle must be modified to the requirements of the relevant State or Territory Government Registration Authority and the original “Endorsement” approval document must be completed. For Australian registration purposes, a vehicle imported under the Personal Imports Option:

- be roadworthy; and
- meet minimum safety standards of the relevant State or Territory Government Registration Authority.

Modifications to bring the vehicle up to minimum safety standards can be deferred until you wish to register the vehicle.

Some State or Territory Government Registration Authorities will inspect your vehicle and sign a statement of compliance. Others will refer you to an authorised signatory for inspection. The statement of compliance on the approval documents must be signed by an authorised person. The original signed statement of compliance must then be sent to the plate contractor (whose address is set out in the approval document).

You should contact your State or Territory Government Registration Authority for further details on how to have your vehicle inspected and registered. Contact details are located on the Department’s website: <http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/> and at the back of this brochure.

3. Australian Plated Vehicles

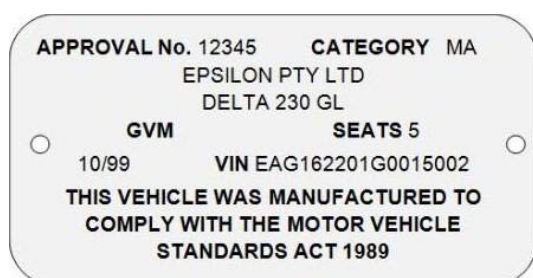
The Australian Plated Vehicles Option is established under Section 17A(2)(a) of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*.

The purpose of this option

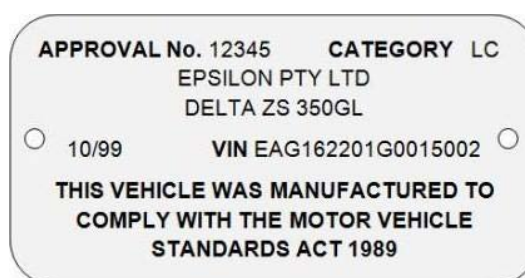
The Australian Plated Vehicles Option covers road vehicles originally sourced within Australia but subsequently exported. For example, the vehicle may have accompanied the owner on an overseas holiday or tour.

The option allows the vehicle to be re-imported. The option only applies to Australian standard (i.e. certified) vehicles.

Applicants are to provide a photo of the vehicle's Identification Plate.



Typical car and truck identification plate



Typical motorcycle identification plate

Note: to qualify under this option you are required to demonstrate that the vehicle being re-imported is the same vehicle that was previously exported.


If a used vehicle has been converted into a different automotive product (such as a replica car or stretch vehicle) while overseas, the vehicle may generally no longer qualify under this option. Therefore, you will have to seek an import approval under another option such as Discretionary Approval and using an application form under this option.

Where a new vehicle that has been fitted with an Australian Identification Plate has been purchased overseas (i.e. the vehicle has not been supplied to the Australian market) and has been fitted with equipment and/or modified after purchase, the vehicle will no longer qualify under this option. Therefore you will have to seek an import approval under another option such as Test and Evaluation Option.

How to apply

To apply under this arrangement, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed application form available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number.

- 
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
 - A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
 - A clear photo of the Australian compliance plate fitted to the vehicle.
 - Proof of ownership document (i.e. purchase invoice/receipt, statement, registration documents).

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for relevant matters as specified in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application. This advice should be signed by an officer of the company.
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.
- If the vehicle has been modified after first registration in Australia – a statement from the person who carried out the modification certifying the modifications to the vehicle fully comply with the requirements of the Australian Design Rules and/or a statement from the State or Territory Government Registration Authority approving the modifications.

4. Small Road Trailers Option

The **Small Road Trailers Option** is covered by Regulation 21 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

What is classed as a small road trailer?

Under this option, road trailers with an Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) not exceeding 4.5 tonnes may be eligible for importation. ATM means the total mass of the laden trailer when carrying the maximum load recommended by the manufacturer. This includes the load through the axles and the load applied to the tow vehicle. ATM is not a value that can be measured, it is a value determined by the manufacturer when the vehicle is designed. The ATM is not the same as the Gross Vehicle Mass (the total design mass of the vehicle including the payload as carried through by axles to the wheels) of the vehicle.

The purpose of the option

Vehicle safety, including trailer design features, reduces road trauma. Every small road trailer new to Australia is required to meet minimum standards that maintain this high level of safety.

What standard is required for small road trailers?

New and used small road trailers may be approved for importation to Australia if the Minister is satisfied that the trailer is capable of being modified to comply with the requirements of the National Code of Practice for Building Small Trailers ([Vehicle Standards Bulletin Number 1](#)). Small Road Trailers imported under this option are inspected by the State and Territory Government Registration Authorities for compliance with Vehicle Standards Bulletin Number 1 prior to registration.

Importantly, this option only applies to trailers which currently have an ATM **not exceeding 4.5 tonnes** and which also had an ATM not exceeding 4.5 tonnes when they were originally manufactured.

New trailers having an ATM greater than 4.5 tonnes that are being imported to be modified to an ATM of not more than 4.5 tonnes can only be imported under the Vehicle Certification Process of the Test and Evaluation Option.

Importers should be aware that Small Road Trailers manufactured for other markets may need significant modifications to comply. These can be costly and may include:

- replacing or testing of braking systems;
- replacing the trailer couplings such as ball couplings or fifth wheels;
- strengthening the trailer's structure in particular, where the coupling is mounted;
- replacing the electrical wiring or connectors;
- replacing LPG installations;

- relocating and/or replacing the license plate holder and the stop/tail/direction indicator lighting;
- adjusting the axle group positions to reduce rear overhang;
- replacing the suspension system;
- replacing the safety chains;
- removing awnings and other protruding components to reduce the overall width of the trailer to within 2.5 meters;
- relocating the caravan doors to the left hand side or to the rear of the vehicle.

Importers of trailers with boats are advised to seek advice from the State or Territory Government Registration Authority about road use requirements where the overall width of the boat exceeds 2.5 meters. It is recommended that you contact the relevant State or Territory Government Registration Authority prior to importation.


How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval for a small road trailer, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed application form available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Purchase document that identifies the vehicle in the applicants name (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- You will need to advise the clauses in VSB1 that your trailer does not currently comply with and that will need modifications.
- What type and class of trailer it is, the length, width, and height in meters,
- Evidence of the Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM), the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR), and TARE. This can be provided in the form of a photo of the manufacturer's plate, a letter/brochure from the manufacturer which details the ATM or GVWR, or the US Certificate of Origin.
- If the trailer has been or is to be modified – a signed statement from the person who carried out or will carry out the modification certifying that the modifications to the trailer, does or will, fully comply with the requirements of the Guide to Building a Small Trailer (VSB 1).
- You will need to provide evidence of the trailer coupling complying with the Australian Standards.

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for relevant matters as specified in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;

- 
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application. This advice should be signed by an officer of the company.
 - If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

5. Race and Rally and Support Vehicles Option

This option is covered by Regulation 18 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

The purpose of the option

This option allows vehicles for race/rally and support vehicles use to be imported into Australia. Import applications for race / rally or support vehicles use will only be considered where the vehicle will be used in serious competition, generally at a professional level.

Where a particular vehicle model is readily available in the Australian market, a Vehicle Import Approval will not be granted unless there are compelling reasons to justify why it is necessary.

What criteria are required for race and rally and support vehicles?

Any vehicle may be eligible for a race / rally or support vehicle import approval. Applicants should provide evidence demonstrating that the vehicle will be used for racing or rallying. This may include the entry of the vehicle into a particular event or sponsorship for a race series or evidence that the vehicle has been modified to be suitable only for racing.


How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval for a race or rally or support vehicle, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed application form available from the Departments web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN) or chassis number.
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Purchase document for the vehicle in your name (a purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- Copy of appropriate race rally license or equivalent documentation.
- A statement that the vehicle will only be used in rallying or closed circuit racing.

Evidence of participation in rally or closed circuit racing, including:

- Details of events in which the applicant has driven a race or rally car;
- Details of specific events in which the applicant proposes to compete in the car for which the import application is submitted; and
- Details of the race/rally club or organisation of which the applicant is a member and the length of membership.



Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for relevant matters as specified in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application. This advice should be signed by an officer of the company.
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

6. Letter of Compliance Option

This option is covered by Regulation 12 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

What is a Letter of Compliance?

A *Letter of Compliance* is a statement issued by a holder of an Identification Plate Approval (IPA). The letter will need to state that a vehicle complied with Australian Design Rules (ADRs) (other than the requirement to fit an identification plate) at the time the vehicle was first delivered for use in transport.

It is important to note that not all IPA holders will issue a Letter of Compliance.

Who can issue a Letter of Compliance?

Only an “authorised person” who represents the holder of the IPA for the particular vehicle model can issue the Letter of Compliance. The details of the IPA holders and the persons permitted to issue a Letter of Compliance are available via the Department’s Road Vehicle Certification System (RVCS) see the [RVCS Certification Unit Search \(http://rvcs-prodweb.dot.gov.au/pls/www/pubrvcs.Notify_Search\)](http://rvcs-prodweb.dot.gov.au/pls/www/pubrvcs.Notify_Search) - please follow the search instructions using the vehicle’s make and model details. From the details on the RVCS Certification Unit Search you can contact the Australian Company that represents the identified IPA holder. For further information about the requirements of a Letter of Compliance please contact New Vehicle Certification on 02 6274 7766 or by email on rvcs@infrastructure.gov.au.

What is required for a vehicle to be considered under the Letter of Compliance Option?

- The vehicle was manufactured by a manufacturer holding a valid IPA under section 10A(1) or 10A(2) of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* at the time the particular vehicle was manufactured, and that approval covered vehicles of the type specified in the application.
- The applicant is of an age to hold a license for vehicles of the type.
- Importers can import only one vehicle per year under these arrangements.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval for a vehicle using a Letter of Compliance, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed application form available from the Department’s web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver’s license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Proof of ownership document (purchase invoice/receipt, statement, registration documents).

- 
- Original Letter of Compliance.

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for relevant matters as specified in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application. This advice should be signed by an officer of the company.
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

7. Special Purpose Vehicles Option

This option is covered by Regulation 11 and 20 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

The purpose of the option

This option allows the concessional importation of Special Purpose Vehicles. The vehicles are generally imported outside of normal certification arrangements.

What is a special purpose vehicle?

Special Purpose Vehicles include various types of non-mainstream motor vehicles. The vehicles are designed to perform a function other than the general transport of people, animals or goods. They are generally heavy vehicles (trucks and trailers) that are designed as city utility vehicles (fire tenders, garbage trucks, and street sweepers), mobile cranes, mobile drilling rigs or mobile plant.

Therefore, a Special Purpose Vehicle should be designed and constructed as a single unit—'from the ground up'—to perform the special purpose.

A road vehicle that is a mainstream (truck or other) chassis—with equipment simply placed or bolted on the chassis or tray—is not considered a special purpose vehicle. These types of mainstream vehicles are subject to normal certification arrangements, i.e. they should meet the relevant Australian Design Rules (ADRs) to comply under other relevant vehicle import options. Unless the vehicle has been extensively modified and permanently adapted to the special purpose, such that it cannot be restored as a mainstream vehicle.

Assessment of Special Purpose Vehicle Option

The assessment of applications for special purpose vehicles is generally based on a discretionary assessment. Reliant factors that the Administrator may consider in exercising discretion include:

- the policy objectives of the Motor Vehicle standards Act 1989 and the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989;
- possible fairness or justice to the applicant;
- possible financial hardship to the applicant;
- the uniqueness of the vehicle;
- whether any unexpected events have arisen for the applicant; and
- other exceptional or unusual circumstances arising in the applicant's case:

Cranes

All special purpose-built cranes should gain import approval. However, if your crane is mounted on a conventional truck chassis, it is not classed as a special purpose-built crane.

If the crane is permitted to be used on public roads, you are required to submit with the import application and a letter from the relevant State or Territory Government Registration Authority stating they will allow the vehicle to be used on public roads.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Special Purpose Vehicle Option, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed [application form](#) available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Purchase document for the vehicle in your name (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- Details of the special purpose vehicle—such as the manufacturer's specifications, brochures, diagrams and photographs of the vehicle.
- A written statement from the relevant State or Territory Government Registration Authority permitting road use of the vehicle. For example, registration may be via a special or temporary permit.
- Advice from the relevant State or Territory Government Registration Authority is requested as part of the assessment process. For the purposes of the option, the Department needs to confirm that the vehicle qualifies for use on public roads. Due to their special characteristics (such as being oversize, overweight, left-hand drive or dual-control), these types of vehicles may not qualify for normal road registration. Special conditions may apply. The advice from the registering authority should specify the vehicle—by year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN)—and should confirm that the vehicle is permitted for road use.

Obtaining this advice ensures that a vehicle, once imported, is able to be used on public roads. It prevents the situation of an applicant importing a vehicle and then finding that the vehicle is unable to perform its intended purpose.

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for relevant matters as specified in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application. This advice should be signed by an officer of the company.
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

8. Exhibition Vehicles Option

This option is covered by Regulation 18(1)(e) of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

The purpose of the option

The **Exhibition Vehicles Option** allows for the importation of motor vehicles intended to be used primarily for exhibition purposes.

What is an exhibition vehicle?

The vehicle should not be of a type generally available in Australia (*Regulation (1) (e)*).

An exhibition includes any show or display for people to see. The exhibition is to be on public display (i.e. open to members of the general public).

Typical exhibition venues would be permanent (such as a motor museum) or temporary (such as a motor show).


How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Exhibition Vehicles Option, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed [application form](#) available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Purchase document for the vehicle in your name (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- A document or letter from the museum /display operator agreeing to the display of the vehicle.

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for matters in relation to the import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application.

- 
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

9. Non-Road Vehicles Option

The purpose of the option

The purpose of applying under the Non-Road Vehicles option —Guidance Material

The *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* and the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989 provide arrangements for the importation and supply to the market of road vehicles.

A road vehicle is:

- A road Motor Vehicle – A vehicle is designed solely or principally for the transportation of people, animals or goods on public roads or a vehicle permitted to be used on public roads.
- A road trailer – A vehicle without motive power designed for attachment to a road motor vehicle or a piece of machinery or equipment that is equipped with wheels and designed to be towed behind a road motor vehicle.
- A partly completed road motor vehicle
- Not a vehicle listed in the Determination 2003 (under Section 5b of the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989) <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2006B01409>.

Vehicles not designed for transport or permitted to be used on public roads are not road vehicles and are not prohibited from importation.


Examples of off-road vehicles include:

- Pocket bikes
- Motorised Scooters/Power-assisted pedal cycles
- Mobility wheelchairs that meet the definition set in the Motor Vehicles Standards Road vehicles Determination 2005
- Off-road motorbikes (including ATVs)
- Off-road self-balancing personal transportation devices (including Segways)
- Race cars such as formula 1 cars or purpose built drag cars
- Monster trucks

The Department acknowledges that the importation of off-road vehicles is not prohibited by the legislation and as such, a Vehicle Import Approval is not required.

However, while a Vehicle Import Approval may not be required by law in relation to off-road vehicles, as a matter of course the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs) will generally require an importer of such a vehicle to obtain advice from the Department that it is not categorised as a 'road vehicle' under the legislation. Having this approval in advance will give you the ability to clear your vehicle through Customs. This form of documentation is similar to an import approval and issued by the Department which allows for Customs to release your off-road vehicle.

In order to avoid your vehicle accruing storage costs while an assessment is undertaken by the Department, you should apply through the Vehicle Import Approval process prior to shipping your



vehicle. This process is the most efficient mechanism for assessing your vehicle and providing the necessary paperwork needed to acquire the release of your vehicle from Customs.

It is important to realise that if a vehicle was designed for on-road use (including use on a footpath) it cannot be assessed as being off-road even if you do not intend to use it as such. For a vehicle to be assessed as an off-road vehicle, it must be designed principally for that purpose. Manufacturer's specifications (in the form of a document or brochure) will generally outline this. If the specifications do not state that the vehicle was designed principally for off-road use, we cannot assess it as being an off-road vehicle.

Please note: that any vehicles imported as a non-road vehicle or piece of non-transport equipment can never be road-registered in Australia.

What criteria are required for off-road and non-transport equipment?

The process for applying to import a non-road vehicle is similar to importing an on-road vehicle. In order for the Department to deem your vehicle an 'off-road' vehicle or piece of 'non-transport equipment', the following information from the National Standards is taken into consideration:

POCKET BIKES

To gain an off-road assessment, the seat height of a pocket bike is to be no more than 600mm from the ground to the saddle.

A manufacturer's brochure including design features should be attached to the application form.

MOTORISED SCOOTERS and POWER-ASSISTED PEDAL CYCLES

To gain an off-road assessment, motorised scooters and power-assisted pedal cycles must have a maximum power output of 200 watts or less. These vehicles are categorised as AB vehicles under the National Standards (Australian Design Rules) and therefore do not need to comply with such standards.

A manufacturer's brochure including evidence of the power output should be attached to the application form.

Please note: that where a motorised scooter or power-assisted pedal cycle exceeds 200 watts, it may be considered an LA (Moped) or LC (Motorcycle) category vehicle under the Australian Design Rules and must comply with the requirements of other import options. These vehicles cannot be imported as "off-road" vehicles.

In June 2012, the Australian Government changed the rules for the importation of power-assisted pedal cycles. Power-assisted pedal cycles that comply with EN 15194 are exempt from the Australia Design Rules (ADRs) if the maximum power output is no greater than 250 watts. If the power-assisted pedal cycle does not comply with EN 15194 and its maximum power output is greater than 200 watts, it will not be exempt from the ADRs and will need to comply with the requirements of

other import options. For further information please refer to the ADRs definitions and vehicle categories 4.2.2 by following: www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2012C00326.

MOTORISED WHEELCHAIRS

What is a Motorised Wheelchair?

It is a vehicle (Mobility Scooter, Gopher etc.) that meet the requirements of the Determination 2003 (under Section 5b of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*) <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2006B01409>.

To gain a non-road assessment for motorised wheelchairs, they should:

- be self-propelled;
- only be able to accommodate a single person;
- not be capable of reaching speeds of more than 10km/h on level ground; and
- have more than two wheels.

A manufacturer's brochure including evidence of the above should be attached to the application form.

A vehicle with the features listed below would be identified as a road vehicle and would not be considered as meeting the above definition under the Determination 2003:

- has a vehicle speed of more than 10 km/h at time of importation or at any time later;
- lighting is fitted at time of importation or at any time later;
- direction indicators lamps are fitted at time of importation or at any time later;
- side mounted rear view mirrors are fitted at time of importation or at any time later; and/or
- a registration plate holder is fitted at time of importation or at any time later.

NON-ROAD MOTORCYCLE

A non-road motorcycle does not generally have the features of an on-road motorcycle, such as lights, directional indicators, side mirrors and provision for a number plate. If the motorcycle is predominately an off-road vehicle, it can be imported under this category, but the importer will need to provide photographic evidence and manufacturer's specifications with their application demonstrating that:

- Direction indicators lamps are not fitted at time of importation or at any time later.
- The registration plate holder is not fitted at time of importation or at any time later.
- Tyres suitable for off-road use only are fitted at the time of import and at all times later.
- A durable self-adhesive label is affixed in a conspicuous position immediately after taking delivery of the vehicle in Australia. The label should include the words "this motorcycle is not certified to comply with the Australian Design Rules and may not be registered for normal on-road use".

NON-ROAD SELF BALANCING PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION DEVICES

To gain an off-road assessment for your vehicle, you will need to provide manufacturer's specifications which detail that the vehicle was made strictly for off-road purposes. Please note that self-balancing personal transportation devices designed for use on footpaths or roadways cannot be assessed as an off-road vehicle.

A manufacturer's brochure including evidence of the above should be attached to the application form.

How to apply

To apply for an assessment of your vehicle as a non-road vehicle or piece of non-transport equipment, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed [application form](#) available from the Department's web site. This must include the make, model, year and vehicle identification number (VIN) of your vehicle.
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments). See footnote *
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Purchase document for the vehicle in your name (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- Evidence that the equipment meets the specific category requirements listed above, as applicable. This is generally provided in the manufacturer's specifications (often in a brochure format) a photograph of the vehicle in its current state.

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for matters specified in relation to this import application and that includes a description of the vehicle(s);
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application.
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

Please Note: whilst the function of providing a non-road assessment of your vehicle is not expressly set out in the legislation, the Department of Infrastructure and Transport provides this discretionary function to assist importers in getting their vehicle released from Customs. As such, it is valid to charge a reasonable fee for this provision. This non-refundable fee is to the sum of \$50.

10. Vehicles in Transit Option

This option is covered by Section 20(1)(a) of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*.

The purpose of the option

This option allows the importation of a non-standard road vehicle that does not have an Identification Plate and where the vehicle is to be exported from Australia (with or without further work being done on it) without having been used in transport in Australia.

For example, this option caters for vehicles that have been brought to Australian secondary manufacture facilities.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the ***Vehicles in Transit Option***, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed [application form](#) available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN) or chassis number.
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Document of vehicle ownership, or if you are conducting work on behalf of the owner, their letter of authorisation.
- A statement of what work is intended to be carried out on the vehicle, including the duration the vehicle will be in Australia for.

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for matters specified in relation to the import application and that includes a description of the vehicle;
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the nominated representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for the import application.

11. New Vehicles (Including Large Trailers) (Administered by Certification) for use on Road Option

New Vehicles Full Volume

A full volume manufacturer is one that holds approval to place Identification Plate Approval (IPA) on new vehicles supplied to the Australian market in unlimited numbers.

A Vehicle Certification Process is required to be followed where tests are done on a representative vehicle or batch of vehicles. The results of these tests are submitted to the Department and used to demonstrate that all vehicles of that type meet the national vehicle standards (Australian Design Rules (ADRs)). As some of the tests require that a vehicle be crashed, it is only cost effective to obtain approval to fit Identification Plates to vehicle models that have sizeable markets.

The certification procedures for applying for IPA can be downloaded from the [Road Vehicle Certification System \(RVCS\)](http://rvcs.infrastructure.gov.au/) website: <http://rvcs.infrastructure.gov.au/>. Select the Administrator's Circulars heading and follow the document headings.

If you have not already done so, you should first register the licensee, the production facility and design facility at the RVCS website before making a vehicle import application. The registration forms can be downloaded from the RVCS website and select the Forms Download heading.

Once you are granted your Licensee Identification (ID) number (five-digit number prefixed with the letter 'L') you should fill in the Licensee ID box on the vehicle import application form.

If you do not already have an IPA, the vehicle may be issued a Vehicle Import Approval for a Test and Evaluation vehicle. This import approval is issued on the condition that the vehicle will be modified and tested to demonstrate compliance with the applicable Australian Design Rules (ADRs). If for any reason the vehicle is unable to meet the ADRs then it should be exported or destroyed.

For the purpose of the IPA, the importer is considered to be the manufacturer and should have a quality management system in place to ensure that each vehicle fitted with an identification plate is of the same specification as that of the vehicle approved in the IPA.

Once you have gained an IPA you can apply to import unlimited numbers of the vehicles covered by the IPA. You cannot use this IPA to import a different make or model of vehicle.

For further information about the Vehicle Certification Process and the RVCS please contact New Vehicle Certification on 02 6274 7766 or by email on rvcs@infrastructure.gov.au.

New Vehicles Low Volume

The **New Vehicles Low Volume Option** allows for the supply to the market of up to 25 or 100 vehicles per year (numbers may vary depending on the vehicle category). The option provides a major concession in that it allows alternative forms of evidence to be submitted against some of the (Australian Design Rules (ADRs)). This applies primarily to ADRs where destructive or expensive testing is required.

A Vehicle Certification Process is required to be followed where tests are done on a representative vehicle or batch of vehicles. The results of these tests are submitted to the Department and used to demonstrate that all vehicles of that type meet the ADRs. As some of the tests may require that a vehicle be crashed, it is only cost effective to obtain approval to fit Identification Plates to vehicle models that have sizeable markets.

The certification procedures for applying for IPA can be downloaded from the [Road Vehicle Certification System \(RVCS\)](http://rvcs.infrastructure.gov.au/) website: <http://rvcs.infrastructure.gov.au/>. Select the Administrator's Circulars heading and follow the document headings.

If you have not already done so, you should first register the licensee, the production facility and design facility at the RVCS website before making a vehicle import application. The registration forms can be downloaded from the RVCS website and select the Forms Download heading.

Once you are granted your Licensee Identification (ID) number (five-digit number prefixed with the letter 'L') you should fill in the Licensee ID box on the vehicle import application form.

If you do not already have an IPA, the vehicle may be issued a Vehicle Import Approval for a Test and Evaluation vehicle. This import approval is issued on the condition that the vehicle will be modified and tested to demonstrate compliance with the applicable ADRs. If for any reason the vehicle is unable to meet the ADRs then it should be exported or destroyed.

For the purpose of the IPA, the importer is considered to be the manufacturer and should have a quality management system in place to ensure that each vehicle fitted with an identification plate is of the same specification as that of the vehicle approved in the IPA.

Once you have gained an IPA you can apply to import limited numbers of up to 25 or 100 vehicles covered by the IPA. You cannot use this IPA to import a different make or model of vehicle.

The Low Volume Option for new vehicles is limited to vehicle make and models that are on the Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles (SEVS) Register. The eligibility requirements for entry on the SEVS Register are set out in Regulation 24 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989 (www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2005C00370).

For more information on the vehicles on the SEVS Register visit <http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/motor/sevs/index.aspx> or contact Vehicle Safety Standards (SEVS unit) on 02 6274 6113 or by email on RAWS.info@infrastructure.gov.au.

For further information about the Vehicle Certification Process and the RVCS please contact New Vehicle Certification on 02 6274 7766 or by email on rvcs@infrastructure.gov.au.

Large Road Trailers

To apply to import a **new Large Road Trailer** follow the information below.

To apply to import a **used Large Trailer** follow the information for a Discretionary Approval and using the application form for as for a new Large Road Trailer.

What is classed as a large road trailer?

A trailer which has an Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) more than 4.5 tonnes, and is designed for towing behind a road motor vehicle. This includes caravans and oversized trailers used for moving heavy machinery or loads. All large road trailers should have received import approval before they can enter Australia.

The purpose of the option

Vehicle safety, including trailer design features, reduces road trauma. Every large road trailer new to Australia is required to meet minimum standards that maintain this high level of safety.


What standard is required for large road trailers?

New road trailers that exceed 4.5 tonnes Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) may be approved for importation to Australia subject to the trailer being modified to comply with the Australian Design Rules (ADRs) applicable at the date they are first supplied to the market or first used in transport in Australia.

These modifications can be costly and may include:

- Replacing or testing of braking systems.
- Replacing the trailer couplings such as ball couplings or fifth wheels.
- Strengthening the trailer's structure in particular, where the coupling is mounted.
- Replacing the electrical wiring or connectors.
- Replacing the LPG installations.
- Replacing the lights.
- Adjusting the axle group positions to reduce rear overhang.
- Replacing the suspension system.
- Replacing the safety chains.
- Removing the awnings and other protruding components to reduce the overall width of the trailer to within 2.5 meters.
- Re-locating the caravan/5th wheeler's door to the left hand side or to the rear of the vehicle.

New large road trailers should have an Identification Plate fitted in accordance with an approval issued by the Department.



A Vehicle Certification Process is required to be followed where tests are done on a representative trailer or batch of trailers. The results of these tests are submitted to the Department and used to demonstrate that all trailers of that type meet the national vehicle standards (Australian Design Rules (ADRs)).

The certification procedures for applying for Identification Plate Approval (IPA) for trailers are published in Administrator's Circular 0-3-6 which can be downloaded from the Road Vehicle Certification System (RVCS) website: <http://rvcs.infrastructure.gov.au/>. Select the Administrator's Circulars heading and follow the document headings.

If you have not already done so, you should first register the licensee, the production facility and design facility at the RVCS website before making a vehicle import application. The registration forms can be downloaded from the RVCS website and select the Forms Download heading.

Once you are granted your Licensee Identification (ID) number (five-digit number prefixed with the letter 'L') you should fill in the Licensee ID box on the vehicle import application form.

If you do not already have an IPA, the trailer may be issued a Vehicle Import Approval for a Test and Evaluation vehicle. This import approval is issued on the condition that the trailer will be modified and tested to demonstrate compliance with the applicable ADRs. If for any reason the trailer is unable to meet the ADRs then it should be exported or destroyed.

For the purpose of the IPA, the importer is considered to be the manufacturer and should have a quality management system in place to ensure that each trailer fitted with an Identification Plate is of the same specification as that of the trailer approved in the IPA.

Once you have gained an IPA you can apply to import unlimited numbers of the trailers covered by the IPA. You cannot use this IPA to import a different make or model of vehicle.

For further information about the Vehicle Certification Process and the RVCS please contact New Vehicle Certification on 02 6274 7766 or by email on rvcs@infrastructure.gov.au .

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under any of these options, you should provide to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport:

- A completed [application form](#) available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.

- Provide your Licensee number as registered with the Department
- Purchase document (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- A copy of the original manufacturer's specifications or the US Certificate of Origin stating the trailer's ATM at the time of manufacture. If the trailer was originally manufactured in the United States of America, the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) is equivalent to the ATM.
- If the application is for a test trailer, supply your Licensee ID, Production Facility ID, and Design Facility ID.
- A signed declaration that the trailer will be modified to comply with the ADRs that apply at the date the trailer is first supplied to the Australian market or first used in transport in Australia.
- If the trailer is over dimensioned (e.g., its overall width exceeds 2500mm etc.) a letter from an Australian State or Territory Government Registration Authority that they will allow the trailer to be used on public roads.

Evidence required additional to above:

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for all matter in relation to this import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- if you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application;
- if you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number;
- If the vehicle has been or is to be modified – a statement from the person who carried out (will carry out) the modification certifying the modifications to the vehicle fully comply with the requirements of the Australian Design Rules.

12. Test and Evaluation Vehicles

This option is covered by Regulation 18 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

What are test and evaluation vehicles?

Test and evaluation vehicles are new vehicles imported for the purposes of testing and evaluating them against Australian Design Rule (ADR) requirements.

If they meet the requirements, identification plates can be placed on new vehicles of that type by the applicant.

The applicant must be able to demonstrate capacity to exercise control over the process known as conformity of production, which usually involves control over the vehicle design and manufacturing processes, including control over the vehicle design change processes.

For this reason it is normally only the vehicle manufacturer that is in a position to meet all the requirements for an approval to be granted under the test and evaluation option.

The conformity of production process means that the approval holder must have a quality management system in place that provides assurance that every vehicle to which an identification plate is placed is the same as the vehicle that was tested and shown to meet the Australian Design Rule (ADR) requirements. Officers from the Department regularly conduct audits on approval holders to ensure these processes are working satisfactorily.

There are some situations where a party other than the vehicle manufacturer may hold an approval but in those cases there is usually a very strong relationship between the approval holder and the manufacturer that is sufficient to satisfy the conformity of production requirements.

In order to process your application to import the vehicle(s) for test and evaluation, it is necessary for you to demonstrate that you understand the processes involved in gaining approval to place identification plates on new vehicles, and that you have systems in place to meet the requirements.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under this option, you should provide the Department of Infrastructure and Transport:

- A completed application form available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN). Submitted by the Company representative, recorded delegate or a signatory of the Licensee.
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).

- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- Purchase document (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- If more than one test and evaluation vehicle is to be imported, such as when a number of different model vehicles are involved, then this should be noted in a covering letter.
- Provide your Licensee number as registered in RVCS.
- Provide your Design Facility number as registered in RVCS.
- Provide your Production Facility number as registered in RVCS.
- If the Licensee is NOT the actual manufacturer of the vehicle (as per the Production and Design Facilities) then they should also attach a brief Certification Plan overview with the application, which should briefly advise the proposed methodology to obtain Identification Plate Approval and specifically how they expect to ensure Design Control and Conformity of Production with the Design Facility and the Production Facility. The Certification Plan must provide full details of the test program setting out which ADRs are applicable for the vehicle, and providing details of registered test facilities for conducting those tests. The test program will clarify the number of vehicles that are required to demonstrate compliance.
- Approvals issued would be for a specified time for conducting the test program. At the conclusion of the test program, the vehicle would need to be exported, or if made to comply with the ADRs and fitted with an identification plate, the vehicle can be supplied to the market, provided it has not been used on public roads.
- Provide photographs, specifications and a world manufacture identifier WMI certificate for the vehicle's make and model.
- If the Licensee is established, and already holds an Identification Plate Approval for other models of vehicles, then there is no requirement to provide the certification plan information.

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for all matter in relation to this import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application.
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

Note: To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Test and Evaluation Option, you should allow an additional 28 days for your application to be assessed.

13. Discretionary Approvals

This option is covered by Regulation 11 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989 and Section 19 of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (Act).

The purpose of the option

The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (or delegate) may decide to approve an application for the import of a vehicle notwithstanding that:

- The vehicle is not certified as meeting Australian safety or emission standards;
- The vehicle does not qualify under one of the defined importation options (the defined options). The defined options are established by various provisions of the Act and the Regulations. Each option covers a specific class of vehicle or applicant. These options exist to cover circumstances where vehicle certification is not a viable or practical option;
- In deciding whether to exercise a general discretion, the Minister (or delegate) may make a decision based on reasons submitted by the applicant as well as other relevant reasons.

You may raise with the Department reasons why you consider your application should be approved and why a general discretion should be exercised to allow the importation of your vehicle. Each application is considered on its merits having regard to the policy and objects of the legislation, any relevant matters raised by the applicant and any other relevant matter.

How to apply

To apply for the exercise of the general discretion, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed [application form](#) identifying the option that best suits the circumstances for the importation of your vehicle (see vehicle import options);
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- All documents that you can provide that are listed under the import option you have selected;
- Your letter requesting the consideration of Discretion that explain the circumstances that you wish to be taken into consideration;
- Documents evidencing your interest in the vehicle (such as purchase or other documents identifying the vehicle and outlining the interest you hold in the vehicle).

Evidence required (additional to above):

- If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is

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- and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for all matter in relation to this import application, include a description of the vehicle;
- If you are applying as a company please attach advice on company letterhead that the company representative is authorised to act on behalf of the company for this import application
 - If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number;
 - If the vehicle has been or is to be modified – a statement from the person who carried out (will carry out) the modification certifying the modifications to the vehicle fully comply with the requirements of the Australian Design Rules.

For more information: please contact the Department's Vehicle Imports Services Team on 1 800 815-272.

14. Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme

This scheme is covered by Regulations 15 and 16 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

The purpose of the scheme

The Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme (RAWS) allows for the importation and supply of used specialist or enthusiast vehicles to the market in Australia. Under this scheme only a Registered Automotive Workshop can import a used vehicle into Australia.

What is a Registered Automotive Workshop

A Registered Automotive Workshop is a business that has been approved to import and plate up to 100 used vehicles (per vehicle category), per year. A full list of Registered Automotive Workshops is available at the RAWS website (<http://raws.infrastructure.gov.au>).

The vehicles imported are to be on the Register of Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles (with the exception of unrestricted used motorcycles).

RAWS arrangements do not apply for vehicles manufactured before 1 January 1989.

For more information visit <http://raws.infrastructure.gov.au>

15. Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Register

The Specialist and Enthusiasts Vehicle Register is covered by Regulation 20 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

What is the Register of Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles?

The [Register of Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles](#) is a register of vehicle make/models that have been assessed as meeting the criteria in the Regulations for classification as specialist and enthusiast vehicles. These are make/models that are not available from the mainstream manufacturers and cater for consumers with specialist and enthusiast interests.

The requirements, set out in Regulation 24 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989, apply to both new and used motor vehicles but do not apply to trailers (T Group), full volume new vehicles of all categories or full volume used two-wheeled and three-wheeled vehicles (L Group).

Why are vehicles placed on the Register?

Once on the Register, vehicles can be imported under the [Low Volume Option](#) and the [Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme](#).

How do vehicles get on the Register?

An application for inclusion of a vehicle on the Register under the Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Scheme (SEVS) can be made to the Department. If successful, the vehicle model will be added to the Register.

The Department may also make a decision without an application having been made.

The criteria and application form for the Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Scheme and a list of all the vehicle models already assessed under the Scheme are available on the Register.

How to apply

To apply to have a vehicle added to the Register, complete the Register of Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles Application Form found on the [Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Scheme](#) website.

16. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

This agreement is covered by Regulation 21A of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

The purpose of the option

The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) allows for the importation of road vehicles under the terms of an intergovernmental agreement. Status of Forces Agreement handles the temporary posting of military personnel.

Vehicles are typically imported for the duration of the tour of duty.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the SOFA option, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed [application form](#) available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgment fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (Visa or Mastercard only) for on line payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- A copy of the driver's license or the identity page of the passport to confirm that the applicant or company representative is a genuine person.
- A letter from the appropriate Transport Officer outlining the duration of your posting to Australia, as well as the estimated date of arrival and departure of your vehicle.
- Evidence required (additional to above):
 - If using an agent – a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) setting out responsibilities of the agent, stating who the agent is and that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for all matter in relation to this import application, include a description of the vehicle;
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 - If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

17. Carnet

A 'Carnet de Passage en Douane' (Carnet) is an international agreement which allows the temporary importation of a vehicle for up to 12 months by visitors to Australia. The Carnet is obtained in the country of residence.

If you are visiting Australia on a vacation, you may temporarily import your vehicle to Australia by presenting a valid Carnet to Australian Customs at the port where the vehicle arrives in Australia.

A Carnet is similar to a personal passport and contains all the relevant information about the vehicle—make, model, colour, engine capacity, seating capacity, registration number, owner and value. Carnets can be obtained for motor vehicles, motorcycles, campervans, four wheel drive vehicles, caravans and trailers.

Your vehicle's Carnet should be obtained from the motoring organisation in your country of residence before you leave home (for USA residents, Carnets are available from the Canadian Automobile Association in Ottawa).

Conditions of Use

- A Carnet is valid for 12 months from the date of issue.
- Vehicles imported under a Carnet may not be lent, sold, mortgaged, hired, exchanged, given away or otherwise disposed of in Australia.
- The vehicle should be exported from Australia prior to or on the expiry date of the Carnet.
- The vehicle that is covered by a Carnet should not remain in Australia when the owner is not in Australia.

Vehicles imported without a Carnet will not be permitted to clear Australian Customs until a Vehicle Import Approval is issued.

Note: the Department does not issue Carnets and is unable to assist with any questions on Carnets. Please contact your motoring organisation in your country of residence for information on the issuing of a Carnet.

SECTION 4. VEHICLES THAT DO NOT NEED APPROVAL

Some vehicles do not require a Vehicle Import Approval. These are usually vehicles that are not designed to be used on-road. Such vehicles may include railway or tramway rolling-stock, tracked vehicles, bulldozers, graders, excavators, loaders, dumpers, agricultural tractors or trailers, pedestrian-controlled tractors, forklifts, children's toys and fairground amusements that are not road vehicles.

Please contact the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service for more information on clearing your vehicle through Customs.

Please note: that the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service will generally require an importer of *any* vehicle to obtain advice from the Department that it is not categorised as a 'road vehicle' under the legislation. Please refer to our Non-Road Vehicles – Off-Road and Non-Transport Equipment Assessment Option (page for further information).

SECTION 5. PROCESSING TIMES

Your application for a Vehicle Import Approval and all supporting documentation will generally be first assessed by the Department within 15 working days of receipt. Note that this is a service target and in peak periods it may not be met.

If the information provided is acceptable, you will be issued with an approval to import the vehicle described in the Vehicle Import Approval. Where you do not comply, you will be provided with a Provisional Assessment which will set out any additional options available under the Motor Vehicle Standards Act, including additional information required.

If any further information or clarification is required from your original application, or if the necessary supporting documentation is not initially provided or if the original application is incomplete, this process may take longer.

Applicants should allow at least five working days for any additional information to be reviewed as part of an application.

You will then be notified by mail if the application has been approved or rejected.

If your application includes a vehicle for Test and Evaluation or other commercial certification options (including Full Volume Option, Low Volume Vehicles Option, Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme or Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Register), you should allow an additional 28 days for the application to be assessed.

SECTION 6. SELLING AN IMPORTED VEHICLE

This refers to Part 4 of *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*.

Used Imported Vehicles may only be supplied to the market if:

- They have been imported under the personal imports option, the Vehicles Manufactured before 1989 Option, the letter of compliance option, the small trailer option or under a discretionary import approval issued under Regulation 11, and any conditions attached to the import approval (such as the vehicle is modified to comply with State and Territory registration requirements) have been complied with.
- New small trailers may be supplied to the market if they comply with the requirements of the guide to building small trailers.

All other vehicles require either the fitting of an identification plate approved under Section 10A of the MVSA, a Used Import Plate approved under section 13(d) of the MVSA, or separate approval to supply the vehicle to the market.

You should also check with the State or Territory Government Registration Authority for any requirements they may have in relation to the sale of an imported vehicle.

It is an offence to supply to the market (i.e. to sell for use on a public road) a vehicle that does not meet these requirements.


Offenders may be prosecuted and fined in accordance with Part 4 of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*.

SECTION 7. LEGISLATION

The *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (the Act) and Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989 (the Regulations) make it an offence to import, sell or present new or used imported vehicles to the Australian market for the first time unless they meet the National Standards, except in circumstances where an exemption has been granted by the Administrator of Vehicle Standards (the Administrator).

The Australian Design Rules (ADRs) for motor vehicles and trailers are the National Standards and a standard vehicle is one that complies with all of the applicable ADRs. An identification plate fitted with the approval of the Administrator indicates that a vehicle is a standard vehicle.

Vehicles for use on Australian roads need to be registered by a State or Territory Government Registration Authority. Generally a vehicle needs to be fitted with an identification plate before it can be registered. Some vehicles, such as those built before 1 January 1989, those imported by temporary visitors and those for use as mining equipment do not require a plate.



In addition to identification plates there are other plates approved to be fitted to certain non-standard vehicles. These include used import plates. While the shape and style of plates varies from manufacturer to manufacturer, all can be recognised because they bear the words "This vehicle was manufactured to comply with the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*". On passenger cars, the plate is usually on the firewall. Some modern plates are adhesive labels.

Plates may only be fitted with the approval of the Administrator, Vehicle Standards.

Vehicles that are already fitted with an Australian identification plate may still require an Import Approval.

Legislation

Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989 (www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A03813)

Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989 (www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F1996B02086)

The Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989 were amended in November 2009. The amending regulations are the Motor Vehicle Standards Amendment Regulations 2009 (No. 1), and are available at www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005L01125. This link also includes a link to the Explanatory Statement.

SECTION 8. REFUSALS AND YOUR RIGHTS OF REVIEW

If an application is lodged which does not meet all the requirements of a particular option, a 'provisional assessment' will be undertaken. This may provide an indication of additional documentation needed to meet the requirements of any of the relevant import options.

Once applicants provide additional or new evidence not assessed with the original application, a final assessment is undertaken on whether or not a Vehicle Import Approval can be issued. At this stage you will be notified if your application has been refused or approved.

Please note, some vehicles cannot be imported into Australia and will not be issued with a Vehicle Import Approval.

If you are not satisfied with the assessment of your vehicle import application, you can seek a further review of the decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Administrative Appeals Tribunal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a decision concerning a vehicle import application, you can seek a review of the decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The Tribunal is independent of the Department. The Tribunal provides merits review across a wide range of administrative decisions made by Australian Government Ministers, departments, agencies, authorities and other tribunals.

Merits review involves reconsidering the facts, law and policy relating to the decision. The Tribunal considers the material before it and decides what is the correct—or, in a discretionary area, the preferable—decision. It may affirm, vary or set aside the original decision.

You can appeal a decision by lodging an Application for Review of Decision Form with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

Under section 28 of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*, you may, by notice in writing, request that the Department provide you with a formal statement of reasons for the decision. The Department must provide the statement of reasons within 28 days of receiving the request.

If you apply to the AAT for a review of a decision you may have to pay an application fee.

For further information:

Visit the AAT website (www.aat.gov.au)

Write to:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal
Registrar
GPO Box 9955
(any Australian Capital City)

Telephone:

1 300 366 700 (inside Australia)

+61 2 6243 4611 (outside Australia)

Please also note: that there is a time limit on lodging applications with the Tribunal. This is usually 28 days from the date of receiving the decision you want reviewed.

SECTION 9. YOUR FEEDBACK AND MAKING A COMPLAINT

We value and appreciate your feedback on the quality, timeliness and responsiveness of our services. We would be pleased to know if:

- you are happy with our service;
- you feel we are not meeting our service targets to you; and/or
- you have ideas on how we can improve our service to you.

If you have a complaint, or you are unhappy with how we have handled your complaint, please let us know so that we can improve our service. You should contact the Section Head, Vehicle Imports on 1800 815 272.

If the complaint has not been resolved contact the Governance, Planning and Reporting Section:

Telephone: 1800 075 001

Write to:

Section Head Governance
Planning and Reporting
Department of Infrastructure and Transport
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: clientservice@infrastructure.gov.au

For more information, please see the Department's service charter.

If you are dissatisfied with how we have handled your complaint you may wish to contact:

Commonwealth Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Telephone:

(02) 6276 0111

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

SECTION 10. CONTACT VEHICLE IMPORTS

Please Note: You cannot hand deliver your application or any associated correspondence in person. Neither your application nor any correspondence can be left at the security desk. All communications with the Vehicle Import's area is to be delivered via the on line application system, email, fax or post. Please see the contact us section for details. This ensures that no application is misplaced.

If calling within Australia telephone:

1800 815 272

If calling outside Australia telephone:

+61 2 6274 7444

International callers, please note: certain countries may not be able to utilise the automated message system in order to talk to an operator. If you find that the automated system is not responding to your options, please hang up and call the Department's switchboard on +61 2 6274 7000 and ask to be patched through to the Vehicle Imports Services Team.

Contact hours for the Vehicle Imports Services Team:

Mon-Thurs: 9am – 5pm AEST

Fri: 8.30am – 4.00pm AEST

Please note: the Vehicle Imports Services Team cannot advise whether your circumstances will allow for an application to be approved or refused.

Postal address:

Department of Infrastructure and Transport

Vehicle Safety Standards Branch

GPO Box 594

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: vimports@infrastructure.gov.au

Please note: if your email correspondence has been received by the Vehicle Imports inbox you will receive an immediate automated email receipt. If you do not receive this, your email has not been received. Please double check the email address as well as the size of your attachments. The email plus attachments should not exceed 8MB.

Please note: if your online application is submitted successfully a page will be returned on your computer listing all attachments submitted and your client reference number (CRN). It is important that you save these documents and your CRN for future reference.

SECTION 11. USEFUL CONTACTS

Australian Customs and Border Protection Service Customs Information and Support Centre

If calling outside Australia

Tel. +61 2 9313 3010

Fax. +61 2 8339 6714

Postal Address:

Locked Bag 3000

Sydney International Airport

NSW 2020

Email: information@customs.gov.au

Website: www.customs.gov.au

Australian Capital Territory

National and Regional Head Office

5 Constitution Ave

CANBERRA CITY ACT 2600

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 2 6275 6666

Fax. +61 2 6275 5930

Northern Territory

Regional Head Office

GPO Box 210

DARWIN NT 0801

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 8 8946 999

Fax. +61 8 8946 9820

South Australia

Regional Head Office

PO Box 50

PORT ADELAIDE SA 5015

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 8 8447 9211

Fax. +61 8 8447 9208

Victoria

Regional Head Office

GPO Box 2809

MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 3 9244 8000

Fax. +61 3 9244 8200

If calling within Australia

Tel. 1300 363 263

Fax. 02 8339 6714

Street Address:

10 Cooks River Drive

Sydney International Airport

SYDNEY NSW 2020

New South Wales

Collector of Customs

GPO Box 8

SYDNEY NSW 2001

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 2 8339 6000

Fax. +61 2 9213 4000

Queensland

Regional Head Office

GPO Box 1464

BRISBANE QLD 4001

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 7 3835 3255

Fax. +61 7 3835 3493

Tasmania

Regional Head Office

GPO Box 148B

HOBART TAS 7001

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 3 6230 1232

Fax. +61 3 6230 1262

Western Australia

Regional Head Office

PO Box 396

FREMANTLE WA 6959

Tel. 1300 558 287 (within Australia)

or +61 8 9430 1444

Fax. +61 8 9430 1391

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)

If calling outside Australia

Tel. +61 2 6272 3933
Fax. +61 2 6274 6013
Postal Address:
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

If calling within Australia

Tel. 1800 020 504
Fax. 02 6274 6013
Street Address:
18 Marcus Clarke Street
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2600

Email: may be sent via the website
Website: www.daff.gov.au/aqis

State and Territory Government Registration Authorities

Australian Capital Territory

Road Transport Authority
PO Box 582
DICKSON ACT 2602
Tel. 13 22 81 (within Australia)
or +61 2 6207 7000
Email: roaduserservices@act.gov.au
Website: www.rego.act.gov.au

New South Wales

Transport, Roads and Maritime Services
PO Box K 198
HAYMARKET NSW 1240
Tel. 13 22 13 (within Australia)
or +61 2 4920 4000
Email: via website
Website: www.rta.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory

Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 2520
DARWIN NT 0801
Tel. 1300 654 628 (within Australia)
or +61 8 8999 5511
Email: via website
Website: www.dlp.nt.gov.au

Queensland

Department of Transport and Main Roads
GPO Box 1549
BRISBANE QLD 4001
Tel. 13 23 80 (within Australia)
or +61 7 3253 4500
Email: fastinfo@transport.qld.gov.au
Website: www.transport.qld.gov.au

South Australia

Department for Transport, Energy And
Infrastructure
PO Box 1
WALKERVILLE SA 5081
Tel. 1300 882 248 (within Australia)
or +61 8 8343 2222
Email: via website, or
dtei.enquiries@sau.gov.sa.gov.au
Website: www.transport.sa.gov.au

Tasmania

Department of Infrastructure, Energy &
Resources
GPO Box 936
HOBART TAS 7001
Tel. 1300 851 225 (within Australia)
Email: transport@dier.tas.gov.au
Website: www.dier.tas.gov.au

Western Australia

Department of Transport
GPO Box R1290
PERTH WA 6844
Tel. 13 11 56 (within Australia)

Victoria

VicRoads
60 Denmark Street
KEW VIC 3101
Tel. 13 11 71 (within Australia)



or +61 8 9427 6404
Email: via website
Website: www.transport.wa.gov.au

or +61 3 9854 2666
Email: via website
Website: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Appendix A. Useful links

Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (www.customs.gov.au)

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (www.daff.gov.au/aqis)

Department of Environment Water, Heritage and the Arts (www.environment.gov.au)

Department of Infrastructure and Transport's *Client Service Charter*
(www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/about/charter.aspx)

Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme (<http://raws.infrastructure.gov.au>)

Road Vehicle Certification Scheme (<http://rvcs-prodweb.dot.gov.au>)

State and Road Registration Authorities (see
www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle_regulation/bulletin/importing_vehicles/general/Contacts.aspx)

Appendix B. Glossary of terms

Administrator	The Administrator of Vehicle Standards determines whether vehicles qualify for an Australian Vehicle Import Approval.
Australian Design Rules (ADRs)	National standards for vehicle safety, anti-theft and emissions. The ADRs are generally performance based and cover issues such as occupant protection, structures, lighting, noise, engine exhaust emissions, braking and a range of miscellaneous items.
Carnet	A <i>Carnet de Passage en Douane</i> is an international agreement which allows the temporary importation of a vehicle for up to 12 months by visitors to Australia. It is obtained in the country of residence.
Certified vehicle	A certified vehicle is one which is deemed to comply with Australian safety and environmental standards.
Compliance plate	See <i>identification plate</i> .
Conditional approval	Vehicle Import Approval granted with special conditions imposed.
Date of manufacture	The date the vehicle was first driven or moved from the manufacturer's production line or production facility, after the vehicle's shell and powertrain assemblies were joined.
Identification plate	An identification plate is fitted to the vehicle by the manufacturer to confirm that the vehicle complies with Australian safety and environmental standards.
Import option	Approval avenues under which vehicles can be issued with a Vehicle Import Approval, most of which are defined import options. A specified approval path with defined criteria under the legislation
Letter of compliance	A statement that the vehicle complied with the applicable Australian Design Rules at the time of the vehicle's original build date.
Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations	A set of regulations that cover safety and emission standards for Australian motor vehicles, including approval, surveillance and enforcement powers.
Off-road vehicles	A vehicle originally manufactured to be used off-road only. It was not designed solely or principally for the transport on public roads of people, animals or goods and / or is not permitted to be used on public roads.
Picture ID	Any official form of personal identification which includes a photograph (e.g. driver's license, passport).
Special purpose vehicle	A vehicle designed to perform a function other than the general transport of people or goods.

Vehicle identification number (VIN)	A unique serial number used by the automotive industry to identify individual motor vehicles. VINs can be found on plates riveted to the chassis or frame, stamped into the chassis or firewall and / or etched on the bottom corner of the front windscreen, and also on the vehicle's compliance plate (for more information, please see below).
Vehicle import application	An application form available from the Department's web site for a Vehicle Import Approval, together with any required supporting documents.
Vehicle Import Approval	A legal document issued by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport that allows vehicles to be imported into Australia.

Appendix C. Vehicle Identification Numbers

A **Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)** is a unique serial number used by the automotive industry to identify individual vehicles.

VIN characteristics:

- VINs conform to two international standards:
 - International Standards Organisation (currently ISO 3779 2009); and
 - US Standard FMVSS 115;
- Every character in every position has a meaning relating to the make, model, year of manufacture and vehicle details;
- A VIN is always 17 characters long;
- A VIN can only be made up of the following characters: 0-9, A-Z (uppercase) excluding letters I, O and Q: This prevents confusion with visually similar numerals;
- The first three characters make up the World Manufacturer Identifier (WMI). Every high volume manufacturer in the world is assigned its own WMI;
- If the third character of the WMI is a 9, then this indicates a low volume manufacturer with positions 12-14 in the VIN indicating the low volume ID.
- VINs can be decoded to identify this information so that the vehicle can be registered.

NEVDIS

The National Exchange of Vehicle and Driver Information System (NEVDIS) is responsible for maintaining a database that registers every vehicle's VIN across the country. A key task of NEVDIS is to decode and upload new VINs as vehicles are manufactured or imported into Australia so that the vehicle can be registered with the relevant State or Territory Government Registration Authority.

When you import a vehicle, the VIN that is recorded on your Vehicle Import Approval is sent to the NEVDIS Administration Unit (NAU) so that they can validate, decode and upload it for registration purposes.

It should be noted that NEVDIS only records VINs for vehicles built on or after 1 January 1989.

Importing vehicles without a 17 character VIN

If you are importing a vehicle that you intend to register for on-road use that was manufactured after 1 January 1989, it will need a 17 character VIN so that the vehicle can be registered.

Unfortunately, some imported vehicles are without a 17 character VIN. The most common example of this relates to Japanese vehicles which use the chassis number as the identifying serial number. The chassis number is always fewer than 17 characters. Another example includes Chinese trailer manufacturers who cannot provide a VIN due to local jurisdictional issues.

In such cases a 'surrogate' VIN will need to be created and issued for that particular vehicle so that it can be registered. This involves expanding the characters in the chassis number and adding a special WMI to the beginning.

If you are importing fewer than 500 vehicles or trailers per year (including the average person importing their personal vehicle on a one-off basis) that were manufactured on or after 1 January 1989 and your vehicle/s and/or trailer/s do not have a 17 character VIN, the Department of Infrastructure and Transport (the Department) will issue a VIN or VINs using the Department's specific WMI, '6U9'. NEVDIS will recognise that these are Commonwealth-issued VINs and will load them onto the database for registration purposes.

If you are importing over 500 vehicles or trailers per year you will need to arrange for your own WMI to be issued through SAI Global (info.asiapac@saiglobal.com).

Once a WMI has been issued, the NAU can assist in setting up a VIN decoding structure.

Frequently Asked Questions

I have taken my vehicle to be registered but the registering authority has declared that the VIN has not been loaded onto the system:


Each week, an automated email is sent by the Department to the NAU which lists every VIN that has been issued with a Vehicle Import Approval over the last 7 days. The NAU then validates and (if valid) decodes these VINs in order to upload them onto the national database.

If you go to register your vehicle and the registering authority states that the VIN has not been uploaded, there are three possible scenarios that may have occurred:

1. The VIN has not yet been loaded onto the database by NEVDIS.
2. The VIN listed on your application does not match the VIN on your vehicle. This could be an administrative error on behalf of the Department or a personal error on your application form.
3. The VIN was not structured correctly by the manufacturer in the first instance and cannot be decoded or uploaded.

What do I do next?

1. In the first instance, contact Vehicle Imports via email or by phone to identify the issue. Vehicle Imports will ask that you double check that the VIN listed on your vehicle import approval matches the VIN on your vehicle.
2. If the VIN matches, Vehicle Imports will contact NEVDIS on your behalf to ascertain why the VIN has not been uploaded.
3. In rare cases where there is a backlog of VINs to upload, the upload will generally be given priority.
4. If you double check the VIN on your Vehicle Import Approval and realise an error, you will need to send back the original Vehicle Import Approval document to the Department, highlight the error and request that the approval be amended.

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5. This process can take up to 5 business days to rectify. Should you wish to shorten this process, you may wish to include an express post envelope with your document so that the Department can use the express post system to mail the amended document back to you.
 6. If the NAU states that the VIN cannot be decoded and you have double checked that the VIN on the vehicle matches the VIN on your approval, it generally means that the VIN was not structured correctly by the manufacturer. In this instance you will need to contact the NAU in order to identify the exact issue.
 7. The NAU will often advise you to contact the manufacturer to clarify that the VIN was issued correctly in accordance with the proper structure.

NEVDIS/NAU Contact Details

Email: nevdis@rms.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 8588 5199

Address: NEVDIS Administration Unit
Locked Bag 928
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Website: <http://www.austroads.com.au/vehicle-registration/nevdis>