



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure and Transport

Importing Vehicles into Australia

October 2012



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

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.

Contents

Section 1. Introduction.....	3
Section 2. Importing vehicles to Australia	
8 steps to import a vehicle.....	5
1. Conduct research.....	7
2. Apply for a Vehicle Import Approval.....	7
Section 3. Import options.....	9
Permanent import options	9
Temporary import options	10
Commercial import options	11
This scheme allows for the importation of vehicles for testing to meet certification standards and evaluation of performance in Australian conditions.Pre-1989 Scheme 11	
Pre-1989 Scheme.....	12
1. Personal Imports Scheme	15
2. Returning Australian Vehicles.....	19
3. Small Road Trailer Scheme	20
4. Large Road Trailer Scheme	22
5. Race and Rally Vehicle Scheme	25
6. Letter of Compliance Arrangement.....	26
8. Special Purpose Vehicle Scheme	31
9. Exhibition Vehicle Option.....	33
10. Discretionary Approvals.....	34
11. Carnet.....	35
12. Exhibition Vehicle Scheme (temporary)	36
13. Vehicles in Transit Scheme.....	37
14. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).....	38
15. Full Volume Scheme	39
16. Low Volume Scheme	40
17. Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme	41
18. Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Register	42
19. Test and Evaluation Vehicles.....	43
Section 4. Vehicles that do not need approval	45
Section 5. Processing times.....	45
Section 6. Selling an imported vehicle	46
Section 7. Discretionary approvals	47
Section 8. Legislation.....	48
Section 9. Refusals and your rights of review.....	49
Administrative Appeals Tribunal.....	49
Section 10. Your feedback and making a complaint.....	51

Section 11. Contact Vehicle Imports	52
Section 12. Useful contacts	53
Australian Customs and Border Protection Service Customs Information and Support Centre.....	53
Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)	54
State and Territory Registering Authorities	54
Useful links	55
Appendix A. Glossary of terms.....	56

Section 1. Introduction

Safe vehicles reduce road trauma. Australia's vehicle fleet is among the safest in the world.

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 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 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 quick quiz – *Which import option is best for me?* to help you select which import option may be suitable for your circumstances.

Figure 1.

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
- Download and complete the application form
- Check you have all the necessary information and attachments
- Send off the application and all necessary attachments to the Department of Infrastructure & Transport
- Check 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

1. Conduct research

- Is the vehicle eligible to enter Australia?
- Which import scheme 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 quick quiz – Which import option is best for me?)
- Read all related materials.
- Download and complete the appropriate application form.

- Pay the \$50 application fee to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport
- Check you have all the necessary information and attachments.
- Send off the application and all necessary attachments to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport.
- Check 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 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.

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 focussed on the importation of individual, 'one-off' vehicles. For ease of navigation, the different options have been separated into 'permanent imports' and 'temporary imports', and there are also links to information on 'commercial imports'.

You may apply to the Department to import your vehicle. If your vehicle qualifies under one of these 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. Other offences relate to the use and supply to the market of vehicles not fitted with identification plates.

Permanent import options

1. Pre-1989 Scheme

The Pre-1989 Scheme allows for the importation of road vehicles manufactured before 1 January 1989. The scheme is designed to cater for the importation of older enthusiast, classic or historic vehicles.

2. Personal Imports Scheme

The Personal Imports Scheme 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 month period, with them.

3. Returning Australian Vehicles Arrangement

This option allows road vehicles originally sourced within Australia but subsequently exported to be re-imported.

4. Small Road Trailer Scheme

This scheme allows for the importation of road trailers that have an Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) not more than 4.5 tonnes.

5. Large Road Trailer Scheme

This scheme allows for the importation of road trailers that weigh more than 4.5 tonnes Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM).

6. Race and Rally Vehicle Scheme

The scheme allows for the importation of vehicles intended to be used for road vehicle rallies and closed circuit road vehicle racing

7. Letter of Compliance Arrangement

This arrangement 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

8. Special Purpose Vehicle Scheme

This scheme allows for the importation of special purpose vehicles including city utility vehicles (fire tenders, garbage trucks, street sweepers), mobile cranes, mobile drilling rigs, and mobile plant and equipment.

9. Exhibition Vehicle Option

This option allows for the importation of motor vehicles intended to be used primarily for exhibition purposes.

10. Discretionary Approvals

Special vehicles not covered under other schemes may be approved with discretion in exceptional circumstances, usually with conditions on the approval.

11. Non-Road Vehicles: Off-Road and Non-Transport Equipment Assessment Option

A 'non-road vehicle' (often referred to as 'non-transport equipment' and/or 'off-road vehicles') refers to a vehicle that is not principally designed for this purpose and/or is not permitted to be driven on public roads.

Temporary import options

12. Carnet

This '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.

13. Exhibition Vehicle Option

This scheme allows for the importation of motor vehicles intended to be used primarily for exhibition purposes. It is also possible to import exhibition vehicles permanently.

14. Vehicles in Transit Scheme

This scheme 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.

15. 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.

Commercial import options

16. Full Volume Scheme

This scheme is for manufacturers who import new vehicles to the Australian market in unlimited numbers.

17. Low Volume Scheme

This scheme allows for the fitting of identification plates to new vehicles in restricted numbers. Approval holders are given exemptions or concessions from some standards requirements

18. Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme

This scheme allows for the importation and supply to the market of used vehicles. Approved Registered Automotive Workshops (RAWs) import, modify and plate used vehicles in accordance with concessional standards.”

19. Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Register

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

20. Test and Evaluation Vehicles

This scheme allows for the importation of vehicles for testing to meet certification standards and evaluation of performance in Australian conditions.

Pre-1989 Scheme

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

The purpose of the scheme

The pre-1989 scheme allows for the approval of the applications to import road vehicles not fitted with identification plates that were manufactured before 1 January 1989.

This scheme caters for the importation to Australia of older vehicles. This includes enthusiast, classic or historic motor vehicles that are destined for restoration and hobby use. This scheme caters for both individual owners and car clubs.

The scheme permits the importation of vehicles which do not comply with current Australian vehicle standards, and are therefore outside normal certification arrangements. However state and territory registration requirements 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 scheme 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 the Pre-1989 Scheme.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Pre-1989 Scheme, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed IO2—general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number.
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Picture ID of the importer or of responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have imported in the previous 12 months you will not need to provide your ID again.

- Purchase document (invoice or receipt).
- 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) 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.

CARS

- 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 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.
- If it is not customised, make a statement to that effect.
- Please advise what engine is in the car (e.g. 289 cu in 4.7L Ford Windsor V8).
- Please advise what transmission is in the car (e.g. 4-speed manual).

MOTORBIKES

- 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. Harley Davidson FL 1200 Electra Glide).
- Please advise if the motorbike has been customised.
- If the frame is not customised make a statement to that effect.
- Please advise what engine is in the motorbike (e.g. 1207 cc Harley Davidson V-Twin).
- Please advise what transmission is in the motorbike (e.g. 4-speed manual).

TRAILERS

- Please advise if the trailer 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 body style (e.g. caravan).
- Please advise if the body of the trailer is customised.
- If it is not customised, make a 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 written statement from the manufacturer.

- If the vehicle has been the subject of alterations supporting documentation to establish the details of the alterations and the date(s) on which this work was completed.

Applications for more than one vehicle

To avoid multiple application fees, you may apply for more than one vehicle (within the Pre-1989 Scheme) in one application. You should provide the relevant evidence described above for each vehicle.

1. Personal Imports Scheme

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

The purpose of the scheme

The personal imports scheme 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.

The personal import scheme only covers individuals. Companies and/or corporations are not eligible to import a vehicle under this scheme.

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. Applicants must now 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 the scheme. 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 scheme.

OWNERSHIP OF THE VEHICLE

Applicants must satisfy each of the following ownership requirements. You must:

- own the vehicle when submitting the application; and
- have acquired ownership of the vehicle while overseas; and
- have owned the vehicle while for a continuous period of at least 12 months. This is the “qualifying period”. The qualifying period must have occurred 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 that the vehicle must have been available to be driven by you, at all times during the 12 month qualifying period. Evidence to establish availability would include that the vehicle is registered (in your name) and garaged (proximate to your residence) throughout the 12 month qualifying period, so that you could, if needed, drive the vehicle. In addition, evidence that you must held an appropriate licence 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. You must:

- 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 the scheme 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 licence to drive the vehicle.

Limit of 1 vehicle every 5 years

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

How to apply

Applications may be made before you arrive in Australia (although you must still meet the 12 month 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 Scheme, you should provide the following to the Department:

- A completed IO1—Personal Import Vehicle application form and should include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Purchase document (invoice or receipt) for the vehicle in your name.
- A copy of your international or overseas driver's licence.
- 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 de-registration certificate, in your name
 - A copy of the Japanese parking approval, in your name

- A copy of the Japanese compulsory tax and insurance documents
- A 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 your passport (this includes a copy of every page, including blank pages). If you hold dual passports, you should provide a copy of both passports.

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 licence.

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.
- 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).

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 scheme.

If you believe you meet the scheme requirements above, but are missing certain documents, please provide a covering letter to explain. Your application may be considered with discretion, however only where a clear case has been made.

If your application to import a vehicle is approved under this scheme, you will receive four (4) Vehicle Import Approval documents that are required by other government agencies. You will receive advice along with your approval which will outline what to do with these documents. Please read this advice carefully.

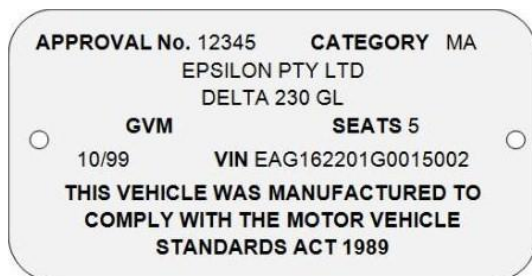
2. Returning Australian Vehicles

This arrangement is established under Section 17A(2)(a) of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*.

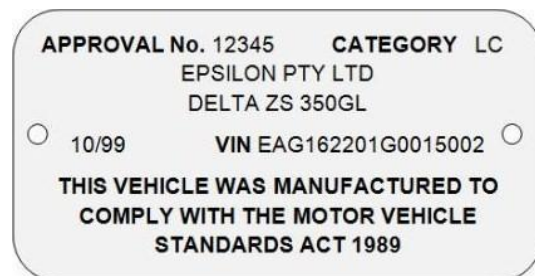
The purpose of the arrangement

The Returning Australian Vehicle arrangement 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 arrangement allows the vehicle to be re-imported. The arrangement 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

The vehicle being re-imported is to be the same as the vehicle that was previously exported. If a vehicle has been converted into a different automotive product (such as a replica car) while overseas, the vehicle no longer qualifies under these arrangements and would have to seek import approval under another option.

How to apply

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

- A completed IO2—general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number.
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Picture ID of the importer or of responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have not imported in the last 12 months you will need to provide your ID again.
- A clear photo of the Australian compliance plate fitted to the vehicle.
- Proof of ownership document (i.e. purchase invoice/receipt, statement, registration documents).

3. Small Road Trailer Scheme

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

What is classed as a small road trailer?

Under this scheme, 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 purpose of the scheme

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](#)). Importantly, this scheme 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.

Importantly, this scheme 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.

Importers should be aware that 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 metres.
- 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 vehicle registration authority about road use requirements where the overall width of the boat exceeds 2.5 metres. It is recommended that you contact the relevant 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 of Infrastructure and Transport:

- A completed small trailer application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Certified picture ID of the importer or of responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have not imported in the last 12 months you will need to provide your ID again.
- Purchase document (invoice or receipt).
- Evidence of the Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) or the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR). 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.

4. Large Road Trailer Scheme

What is classed as a large road trailer?

Under this scheme, a large road trailer weighs more than 4.5 tonnes Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM), and is designed for towing behind a 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 scheme

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 and used 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 metres.
- Re-locating the caravan/5th wheeler's door to the left hand side or to the rear of the vehicle.

NEW TRAILERS

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

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.

If you have not already done so, you should first register the Licensee, the Production Facility and Design Facility in RVCS before making a vehicle import application. The Registration forms can be downloaded from the RVCS website above.

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

If you do not already have an IPA, the trailer may be issued an 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 is to be exported or destroyed.

For the purpose of the IPA, the importer is considered 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 trailer.

USED TRAILERS

Used trailers must have a section 16(2) approval issued by the Administrator of Vehicle Standards.

An import approval may be issued on the condition that the trailer will not be used on public roads until it has been modified to comply with the applicable ADRs that apply at the date the trailer is first supplied to the market or first used in transport in Australia and you have obtained an approval under section 16(2) of the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989.

The procedures for applying for a section 16(2) approval is the same as for obtaining an identification plate approval for new trailers except that the application is limited to one used imported trailer per application.

If for any reason the trailer is unable to meet the ADRs and/or obtain a section 16(2) approval then it should be exported or destroyed.

How to apply

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval for a large road trailer, you should provide to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport:

- A completed IO2—general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Certified picture ID of the importer or of responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have not imported in the last 12 months you will need to provide your ID.
- Purchase document (invoice or receipt).

- 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 is originally manufactured in the United States of America—Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) is equivalent to 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 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 Registering Authority that they will allow the trailer to be used on public roads.

5. Race and Rally Vehicle Scheme

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

The purpose of the scheme

This scheme allows vehicles for race or rally use to be imported into Australia. Import applications for race or rally 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 vehicles?

Any vehicle may be eligible for a race or rally import approval. Applicants must 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 car, you should provide to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport:

- A completed IO2—general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Certified picture ID of the importer or responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have not imported in the last 12 months you will need to provide your ID.
- Purchase document (invoice or receipt).
- Copy of appropriate race rally licence or equivalent documentation.
- A statement that the vehicle will only be used in rallying or closed circuit racing.
- Evidence of participation in rallying 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.
- If the vehicle is a model available in the Australian vehicle market, justification for the need to import the vehicle. The cost of the vehicle in the domestic market will not be considered an acceptable justification.
- Evidence of vehicle's homologation (approval) with FIA.

6. Letter of Compliance Arrangement

This scheme 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 “authorized 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 [RVCS Certification Unit Search](#). Please follow the search instructions using the vehicle’s make and model details.

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

- 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 licence 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 of Infrastructure and Transport:

- A completed IO2—general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Certified picture ID of the importer or of responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have not imported in the last 12 months you will need to provide your ID.
- Proof of ownership document (i.e. purchase invoice/receipt, statement, registration documents).
- Original Letter of Compliance.

7. Non-Road Vehicles – Off-Road and Non-Transport Equipment Assessment Option

The purpose of applying under the Off-Road and Non-Transport Equipment Assessment 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 a Determination under Section 5b of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*.

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
- 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 is a 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 may 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 of 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 an off-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 an off-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.

POWER-ASSISTED PEDAL CYCLES

- To gain an off-road assessment, 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 power-assisted pedal cycle exceeds 200 watts, it is considered a LA (Moped) under the National Standards or a LC (Motorcycle) and must comply with the requirements of other import options or schemes. These vehicles cannot be imported as "off-road" vehicles.

In June 2012, the Australian Government has 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 or schemes. For further information please refer to the ADRs definitions and vehicle categories 4.2.2 by following: www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2012C00326

MOBILITY WHEELCHAIRS

- To gain an off-road assessment, mobility wheelchairs or scooters 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.
 - Have more than two wheels.

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

OFF-ROAD MOTORBIKES

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

- Direction indicators lamps are not fitted at time of importation nor at any time later.
- The registration plate holder is not fitted at time of importation nor 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".

OFF-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 an off-road vehicle or piece of non-transport equipment, you should provide to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport:

- A completed IO2—general application form. This must include the make, model, year and vehicle identification number (VIN) of your vehicle – please make sure you tick the box at Part 10 relating to “off-road” vehicles.
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form.*
- Certified picture ID of the importer or of the responsible officer if a company is applying. (Please note that if you have not imported in the last 12 months you will need to provide your ID again.)
- Purchase document for the vehicle (invoice or receipt).
- 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) along with photographic evidence.

* Whilst the function of providing an off-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 fee is to the sum of \$50.

8. Special Purpose Vehicle Scheme

This scheme is covered by Regulation 20 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989.

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 or goods. They are typically heavy vehicles. Examples include city utility vehicles (fire tenders, garbage trucks, street sweepers), mobile cranes, mobile drilling rigs and mobile plant.

In particular, a special purpose vehicle should be constructed as a single unit—‘from the ground up’—to perform the special purpose.

A 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 National Standards (Australian Design Rules).

A modified vehicle should be permanently adapted to the special purpose, so that it cannot be restored as a mainstream vehicle.

Cranes

All special purpose-built cranes should gain import approval. 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 a letter from an Australian state or territory registering authority stating they will allow the vehicle to be used on public roads.

The purpose of the scheme

The Special Purpose Vehicle Scheme allows the concessional importation of these types of vehicles. The vehicles are imported outside of normal certification arrangements.

Special purpose vehicles are used on public roads. The vehicles are also nonstandard, in the sense that it is not feasible for the vehicles to meet Australian safety and emission standards. In many cases, the standards were never envisaged to apply to these types of vehicles.

How to apply

- To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Special Purpose Vehicle Scheme, you should provide to the Department:
- A completed IO2—general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).

- Certified picture ID of the importer or of responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have not imported in the last 12 months you will need to provide your ID.
- Purchase document (invoice or receipt).
- 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 registering 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 registering authority is requested as part of the assessment process. For the purposes of the scheme, 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.

Conditions of the Vehicle Import Approval

If your vehicle qualifies under the special purpose vehicle scheme, you will be issued with a Vehicle Import Approval. The approval authorises the importation of the vehicle. In particular, the approval authorises the delivery of the vehicle from Customs control at the Australian port of entry.

The Vehicle Import Approval is issued subject to a condition. The approval requires the applicant to advise the Department in writing within two (2) business days of the vehicle being exported or destroyed.

9. Exhibition Vehicle Option

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

The purpose of the option

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

The vehicle must not be of a type generally available in Australia.

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 Vehicle Option, you should provide to the Department:

- A completed IO2 – general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- Picture ID of the importer or of responsible officer, if a company is applying. If you have not imported in the last 12 months, you will need to provide your ID.
- Purchase document (invoice or receipt).
- Details of how and where the vehicle will be placed into exhibition.
- Details on how long the vehicle intends to be in the country, for example, if it is for a temporary exhibition (such as a motor show) or a permanent exhibition.

10. Discretionary Approvals

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; and
- the vehicle does not qualify under one of the defined importation schemes (the defined schemes). The defined schemes are established by various provisions of the Act and the Regulations. Each scheme covers a specific class of vehicle or applicant. These schemes 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.

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

11. Carnet

A Carnet de Passage en Douane is an international agreement which allows the temporary importation of a vehicle for up to 12 months by visitors to Australia. The Carnet de Passage en Douane 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 must 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 must be exported from Australia prior to or on the expiry date of the carnet.
- The vehicle that is covered by a carnet must 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 for information on the issuing of a carnet.

12. Exhibition Vehicle Scheme (temporary)

The Exhibition Vehicle Scheme allows for the importation of motor vehicles intended to be used (exclusively) for exhibition purposes on either a temporary or permanent basis. For details of the scheme, see above page 30.

13. Vehicles in Transit Scheme

The purpose of the scheme

This scheme allows the importation of vehicles for the purpose of having modification, repair or other work performed on the vehicle. The vehicle is to be re-exported without being used in transport in Australia.

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

How to apply

To apply under the Vehicles in Transit Scheme, please download the IO2—general application form and submit the completed form (along with supporting documentation including explanation of period the vehicle will remain in Australia and the intended vehicle movements while in Australia) to the Department.

14. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

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

The purpose of the scheme

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 to import a vehicle under SOFA, you should supply the following to the Department:

- A completed IO2 – general application form. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN).
- A \$50 application fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (credit card, cheque or money order are accepted).
- 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.

15. Full Volume Scheme

A full volume manufacturer is one that holds approval to place identification plates on new vehicles supplied to the Australian market in unlimited numbers.

Compliance tests are done on a representative vehicle or batch of vehicles. The results of these tests are used to demonstrate that all vehicles of that type meet the Australian Design Rules. As some of the tests require that a vehicle be crashed, it is only cost effective to obtain approval to fit plates to vehicle models that have sizeable markets.

The certification procedures for applying for Identification Plate Approval (IPA) can be downloaded from the Road Vehicle Certification System (RVCS) website at <http://rvcs.infrastructure.gov.au/>.

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.

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.

16. Low Volume Scheme

The Low Volume Scheme for new vehicles 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 scheme provides a major concession in that it allows alternative forms of evidence to be submitted against some of the Australian Design Rules. This applies primarily to Australian Design Rules where destructive or expensive testing is required.

The Low Volume Scheme for new vehicles is limited to vehicle make/models that are on the Register of Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles (the Register). The eligibility requirements for entry on the 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 Register of Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles visit [http://rvcs-prodweb.dot.gov.au/](http://rvcs-prodweb.dot.gov.au) or contact Vehicle Safety Standards on 02 6274 7766.

17. Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme

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

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.

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>

18. Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Register

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 Scheme 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.

More information

For more information, visit the Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Scheme website (www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/motor/sevs/index.aspx.)

19. Test and Evaluation Vehicles

This scheme 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 of 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 under the scheme, please download the IO2—general application form and submit the completed form (with supporting documentation) to the Department. You should include in the application:

- Company representative, recorded delegate or a signatory of the Licensee.
- Vehicle identification number/s (VIN).

- 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 Compliance 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 Compliance Plate Approval for other models of vehicles, then there is no requirement to provide the certification plan information.

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 the road. Such vehicles may include such vehicles as 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.

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 (Customs) 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 schemes (including Full Volume Scheme, Low Volume Vehicles Scheme, 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 scheme, the pre 1989 scheme, the letter of compliance scheme, the small trailer scheme 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 Registration Authority in your State or Territory 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. Discretionary approvals

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; and
- the vehicle does not qualify under one of the defined importation schemes (the defined schemes). The defined schemes are established by various provisions of the Act and the Regulations. Each scheme covers a specific class of vehicle or applicant. These schemes 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.

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

Section 8. 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 Motor Vehicle 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.

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 9. Refusals and your rights of review

If an application is lodged which does not meet all the requirements of a particular scheme, 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 departmental review of 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 10. 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 11. Contact Vehicle Imports

If calling within Australia:

Tel: 1800 815 272

Fax: 02 6274 6013

If calling outside Australia:

Tel: +61 2 6274 7444

Fax: +61 2 6274 6013

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 Call Centre.

Contact hours for the call centre:

Mon-Thurs: 9am – 5pm AEST

Fri: 8.30am – 4.00pm AEST

Please note that the call centre staff 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

Australia

Street address:

111 Alinga Street

CANBERRA CITY ACT 2600

Email: vimports@infrastructure.gov.au

Please note: if your email 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.

Section 12. 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
Email: may be sent via the website
Website: www.daff.gov.au/aqis

If calling within Australia

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

State and Territory Registering 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@saugov.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)
or +61 8 9427 6404
Email: via website
Website: www.transport.wa.gov.au

Victoria

VicRoads
60 Denmark Street
KEW VIC 3101
Tel. 13 11 71 (within Australia)
or +61 3 9854 2666
Email: via website
Website: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

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 A. 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 schemes.
Import scheme	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 licence, 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 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.

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.

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.

If the VIN matches, Vehicle Imports will contact NEVDIS on your behalf to ascertain why the VIN has not been uploaded.

In rare cases where there is a backlog of VINs to upload, the upload will generally be given priority.

2. 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.

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.

3. 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.

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>