

24 January 2024

Dr Warren Mundy
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
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CANBERRA
ACT 2601

Submitted via online portal on www.infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Dr Mundy,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Australian Design Rules (ADR) Harmonisation Review 2024-25.

Mitsubishi Motors Australia Limited (MMAL), a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, employs over 200 staff across our Adelaide Head Office and regional offices in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia. Additionally, we have the second-largest dealer network in Australia, comprising 199 dealerships that collectively employ 4,688 people.

We commend the Australian Government for commencing a review of ADRs with the intent of harmonising these with global best practice standards.

In 2024, 88.6 million new vehicles were sold across the globe, with Australia representing just over 1 million or 1% of global new vehicle sales. As a small, right hand drive market, we are considered niche by global standards. Designing and manufacturing vehicles in small quantities, to a unique Australian standard, creates complexity for automotive manufacturers. For the Australian market, it limits the number of models made available and results in increased costs for Australian consumers.

It is also our firm belief that the largest barrier preventing the introduction of new, fuel-efficient, vehicles in Australia relates to the lengthy Australian Type Approval process. Currently, depending on the model, the process for obtaining approval, production and shipping for the Australian market can take between 18 to 24 months.

As part of this submission, we have provided recommendations that will reduce the complexities associated with ADRs and provide greater product opportunities for the Australian market as follows:

Apply all UN Regulations that have been adopted into ADRs:

Almost all ADRs have been harmonised with UN regulations which greatly assists and streamlines our Australian type approval process. It allows us, for the majority of ADRs, to obtain UN R approvals from recognised approving authorities and

utilise those approvals to facilitate Australian type approval. However, there are several ADRs that, although harmonised with a UN R regulation, have not been applied by Australia as a contracting party under WP.29.

An example is ADR 3/04, Seats and Seat Anchorages. This ADR has annexed UN R17 incorporating the 08 series of amendments, and will accept a UN R17/08 approval under the alternative standard provisions. However, UN R17/08 has been superseded by the 09 and 10 series.

Usually, following a transitional period, approving authorities can only issue approvals to the latest series of a UN Regulation. According to the Harmonisation ADR, if Australia has applied the UN Regulation, approvals to the later series will be accepted. However, if Australia has not applied the UN Regulation then only approvals to the version nominated in the ADR will be accepted.

This becomes problematic once approving authorities can no longer issue approvals to earlier versions. Where this is the case, applicants will be required to either:

1. provide test evidence to the earlier version of the regulation, or
2. submit a declaration or justification explaining that the approval to the later series is valid on the basis that the amendments resulted in the same or stricter requirements.

This must be assessed each time an application is made. If the Australian Government could proceed to apply all UN Regulations that have been annexed into an ADR, however not yet applied, this would avoid this additional step and further streamline the type approval process.

Acceptance of type approvals from other advanced markets:

Further efficiencies and product opportunities would be supported if equivalent standards and/or type approvals obtained in other advanced markets such as Japan, the EU, UK and other jurisdictions were accepted.

A pathway whereby Australia recognised the type approval of a vehicle approved in other advanced markets, without having to repeat a type approval process in Australia, would be advantageous.

Harmonise all remaining unique ADR requirements:

Australia continues to have a number of unique, non-harmonised ADRs. We therefore recommend reviewing and harmonising the following ADRs to streamline the type approval process and align with international standards:

- ADR 34/03 (Child Restraint Anchorages) to harmonise with equivalent UN regulations while reconsidering Australia's unique centre top tether requirements

- ADR 42/05 (General Safety Requirements) and ADR 43/04 (Vehicle Configuration & Dimensions) to simplify compliance through OEM declarations or expanded RVD documents
- ADR 61/03 (Vehicle Marking) to remove the unique Australian VIN label requirement
- ADRs 69/00 and 73/00 (Frontal Crash Occupant Protection) to align with European frontal collision regulations
- ADR 81/02 (Fuel Consumption Labelling) to replace disposable windscreen labels with an online data provision system via the Green Vehicle Guide.

ADR 34/03 Child Restraint Anchorages and Child Restraint Anchor fittings

We recommend this ADR should be harmonised with equivalent UN R regulations relating to child restraints. Australia's mandatory requirement for a centre top tether anchorage in the second row of passenger vehicles is unique. Equivalent UN R regulations do not mandate that a top tether anchor be present in this position.

ADR 42/05 General Safety Requirements and ADR 43/04 Vehicle Configuration & Dimensions

Both of these ADRs outline several generic requirements or dimensional requirements, including items such as the vehicle needing to be right-hand drive. These could be covered via an OEM declaration during the type approval process, or they could form part of an expanded Road Vehicle Descriptor (RVD) document that will validate whether the vehicle has the required characteristics.

ADR 61/03 Vehicle Marking

We recommend adopting a similar approach to ADR 61/03, OEM declaration during the type approval process or expanded RVD. Furthermore, we also recommend removing the requirement for an Australian-unique VIN label removed. There is little justification to require such a marking in addition to other internationally recognised VIN markings already present on vehicles.

ADR 69/00 and 73/00 Frontal Crash Occupant Protection

These ADRs contain unique requirements and should be updated or replaced with harmonised European frontal collision regulations. We note and welcome that ADR development processes have already commenced to achieve this. It provides industry with the opportunity to negotiate adequate lead times to transition which recognise vehicle development schedules and time to obtain type approvals.

ADR 81/02 Fuel Consumption Labelling for Light Vehicles (and draft ADR 81/03 that is under development to support NVES)

The merits of continuing to require a unique (and temporary) fuel consumption label to the windscreen should be reconsidered. A more progressive approach to providing consumer information on emissions and fuel consumption should be

considered. The requirement of a disposable label to be affixed to all vehicles, is harmful to the environment as it contributes to waste. The Australian Government administers the Green Vehicle Guide (GVG) that provides an on-line portal where consumers can obtain comparative fuel consumption and emissions information. Requesting automotive manufacturers submit information to the GVG, in lieu of requiring unique fuel consumption label fitment to vehicles, could be a solution.

Thank you for considering our recommendations for the Australian Design Rules (ADR) Harmonisation Review 2024-25.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please contact either:

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Sincerely yours,

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Rob Nazzari
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