



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts



➤ Guide to SPVs – Concessional RAV entry approvals

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Updated May 2024 – For draft applications, clarified the department’s position on EU Stage IV engines under exhaust emissions, Australian Design Rule (ADR) 80/03 and 80/04, and how to subscribe to new or amended ADR notifications.

Updated March 2025 – Added information about letters of in-principle support, further information on when to select ‘ADR Exemption’ in an application, and updated the ROVER screen shot.

What is a special purpose vehicle?

Section 38 of the [Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2019](#) (the Rules) defines a special purpose vehicle (SPV) as a road vehicle that:

- is designed to operate for a special purpose
- does not comply with applicable national road vehicle standards, and
- could not operate for its intended purpose if it did comply with those standards.

A SPV still needs to comply with the applicable national road vehicle standards to an extent that makes it suitable for use on a public road in Australia. According to subsection 38(2) of the Rules, suitable for use means when the vehicle is used on a public road in Australia it:

- would not pose an unacceptable risk to public safety, and
- would be appropriate for such use.

Evidence requirements for SPVs

SPVs, including certain mobile cranes, must demonstrate that they are suitable to be used on a public road. This includes showing compliance with the applicable national road vehicle standards – known as Australian Design Rules (ADRs) – unless the vehicle cannot comply with those standards and perform its special purpose function.

Acknowledging that this is a significant change for industry, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the department) has exercised its discretionary power to provide a graduated pathway for SPVs to achieve full compliance.

Between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023, SPVs were granted concessional RAV entry approval, even if they could not demonstrate compliance with applicable ADRs, as long as they met all other entry criteria.

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, SPVs (excluding trailers) must demonstrate compliance with ADRs applicable to brakes, lights and mirrors. SPV trailers must demonstrate compliance with ADRs applicable to brakes, lights and mechanical connections. If SPVs cannot comply, supporting information must be provided outlining why they cannot comply and perform their special purpose. SPVs may be granted [concessional RAV entry approval](#), even if they cannot demonstrate compliance with other applicable ADRs, as long as they meet all other entry criteria.

From 1 July 2024, SPVs must meet eligibility criteria set out in the Rules, including demonstrated compliance with all applicable ADRs unless they can demonstrate that complying with an ADR means the vehicle would not be able to operate for the purpose for which it was designed.

Why do I need an approval?

In Australia, all road vehicles must be entered on the [Register of Approved Vehicles](#) (RAV) before being provided to a person for use in transport for the first time. Also, if the vehicle is being imported, a concessional RAV entry approval is taken to be an import approval.

Meeting the above eligibility criteria for a SPV allows a vehicle to be added to the RAV under the concessional RAV entry pathway. Alternatively, you can obtain a [vehicle type approval](#) for each **type** of vehicle and enter those vehicles on the RAV in accordance with the approval. A vehicle type approval holder is permitted (or can authorise another person in writing) to import a vehicle that the vehicle type approval applies to while the approval is in force.

Which national road vehicle standards apply?

The national road vehicle standards, or ADRs, are made under the *Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018*.

Each ADR includes an applicability section that identifies whether the ADR is applicable. ADRs identify the vehicle categories that are required to comply with the ADR and from what date.

Note: Most lighting ADRs refer to ADRs 13, 19 or 67.

When determining the ADRs that apply to a SPV, it will not be considered a new model. Instead, the ADR will become applicable on the 'all' vehicle date. This generally allows a longer timeframe to comply with new ADRs.

Where there is a later version of the ADR, the same section should be checked to see if the later ADR is applicable.

Which ADRs apply from 1 July 2024?

The SPV graduated pathway ended on 30 June 2024. After that date, SPVs need to meet eligibility criteria set out in the Rules, including demonstrated compliance with all applicable ADRs unless they can show that complying with an ADR means the vehicle would be unable to operate for the purpose for which it was designed.

It will be up to the concessional RAV entry approval applicant to identify which sections of ADRs the vehicle cannot comply with and explain why it is unable to perform its intended purpose.

How do I apply for a concessional RAV entry approval?

To apply for a concessional RAV entry approval you first need to [create an account](#) in [ROVER](#), have your identity checked, and register an [authority to act](#) on behalf of an individual or company.

When starting a concessional RAV entry approval application, you, the applicant (or agent), will be prompted for information.

Depending on the type of vehicle, certain ADRs will be presented and you must note the degree to which the vehicle complies with the ADRs.

If you are applying for multiple identical special purpose vehicles in one application, you can add a different build date for each vehicle of the same model.

Please note that draft applications older than 12-months that have never been submitted will be automatically deleted regularly.

Selecting extent of compliance with ADRs

When completing the application, you must select the extent of compliance for all the ADRs applicable to the SPV. The options are:

- **Compliant** – Complies with the requirements of the ADR.
- **Compliance to be confirmed after importation** – Unsure if the vehicle complies or not, and will test or measure the vehicle after importation.
- **Not compliant** – The vehicle does not comply with the ADR and could not perform the special purpose if the vehicle did comply.

- **Not applicable** – The vehicle is not a new model for the purpose of the ADR applicability and the relevant applicability date is still in the future.
- **ADR exemption** – There are conditions or exceptions in the ADRs that allows for an exemption. These exemptions typically arise in the following cases:

- Specific exemption conditions: Where the ADR allows an exemption under specific circumstances.
- Optionally fitted features: Where the ADR applies only when certain features are installed on the vehicle.

Additionally, an ADR is exempt if the vehicle complies with a later version of the relevant ADR. Following are some examples:

- ADR 62: Exempt if the vehicle does not have a tow bar.
- ADR 52: Exempt if the vehicle does not have rear fog lamps.
- ADR 97: Exempt for vehicles with 4 or more axles.

Please note that in your application you will need to include a satisfactory reason justifying why you believe an ADR is exempt.

The following ROVER screen shot shows some of the applicable ADRs for SPVs and examples of selection options for the extent of compliance for each ADR.

The screenshot displays two sections of the ROVER system interface. The first section is for 'ADR 43/04 - Vehicle Configuration and Dimensions'. It features a navigation bar with five options: 'Compliant', 'Compliance to be confirmed after importation', 'Not compliant' (which is selected and highlighted in blue), 'Not applicable', and 'ADR Exemption'. Below this, a light blue box contains the text: 'A special purpose vehicle may not comply with a standard if compliance would mean it could not operate for the purpose for which it was designed. Please provide information about why the vehicle is not compliant with this standard.' A text input field contains the text: 'Vehicle is overwidth and exceeds rear overhang requirement, refer to in-principle support letter. Complies with other sections of the ADR.' To the right of the input field is a 'Documents' label and a blue button with a plus icon and the text 'Manage documents'. The second section is for 'ADR 44/02 - Specific Purpose Vehicle Requirements'. It has a similar navigation bar with 'Compliant', 'Compliance to be confirmed after importation', 'Not compliant', 'Not applicable', and 'ADR Exemption' (which is selected and highlighted in blue). Below this, a light blue box contains the text: 'Please provide information about why the vehicle is exempt from the standard.' A text input field contains the text: 'A crane is not one of the vehicles identified in the scope of ADR 44/02.' To the right of the input field is a 'Documents' label and a blue button with a plus icon and the text 'Manage documents'.

What does compliance with an ADR mean?

Each ADR includes a section outlining the technical requirements a vehicle must meet to comply with the ADR. The technical requirements applied by an ADR might be specific to Australia or they could adopt an international standard, such as a UN Regulation.

For example, Section 5 of [ADR 14/02—Rear Vision Mirrors](#) requires certain vehicle categories to comply with the requirements in Appendix A (UN Regulation 46), other vehicle categories to comply with the requirements in Appendix B (UN Regulation 81) and any vehicle category to comply with the requirements in Appendix C (Australian requirements). Compliance with one of these sections is sufficient to comply with the ADR.

Each clause of Appendix C of ADR 14/02 identifies certain requirement that need to be met depending on the vehicle category. Each of the applicable clauses need to be considered and confirmed that the vehicle meets the identified requirements.

Information needed to show compliance with ADRs

Section 38 of the Rules allows the department to collect evidence to be satisfied the vehicle complies with the applicable national road vehicle standards. However, the Rules do not prescribe what that evidence may be.

The department needs to be satisfied that the information available demonstrates compliance with applicable ADRs. Compliance against some ADRs are best demonstrated using simple measurements and statements against applicable clauses of the ADR. For example, the measurement for the area of mirrors and projections of the mirrors from the edge of the vehicle or confirming the width of the vehicle and the height of the lights.

Testing performed to confirm compliance with an ADR should be performed by an [approved testing facility](#). Testing facility approvals and capabilities can be found on [ROVER](#) (unless that approval holder has requested their details not be published).

Where components are marked to identify compliance with a UN standard, commonly recognised by a 'E' in a circle with a number to identify the country where the approval was issued, this marking can be used to demonstrate compliance with the UN standard. Most ADRs are harmonised with UN standards.

Concessional RAV entry applications use the same compliance information forms as vehicle type approval applications. If using an 'E' mark, the forms ask for information such as confirmation you have access to an ECE approval. This is expected for a vehicle type approval applicant, however a concessional RAV entry applicant is not expected to have access to the ECE approval where the 'E' mark is shown on the vehicle or component.

Comparison with an international standard to show compliance

If a vehicle is covered by an approval from another country or there is information that the vehicle complies with an international standard, this information can be used where the international standard is equivalent to the ADR, or the ECE where the ECE is an alternative standard to the ADR.

For example, where a vehicle is covered by an EU vehicle type approval, the type approval 'certificate of conformity' outlines the standards met to obtain that approval. These standards may be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the ADR.

Where the international standards are not identified as equivalent, an applicant could compare the technical requirements of the international standard against the ADR to confirm that the vehicle meets the international standard and complies with the ADR.

Additionally, an ADR is exempt if the vehicle complies with a later version of the relevant ADR.

Letter of in-principle support

A letter of in-principle support assures the decision maker that the vehicle is suitable for use on public roads, and the registration authority will register a vehicle that has been granted an approval by the department, despite the fact that it does not fully comply with one or more applicable ADRs.

When submitting an application for your SPV, we require you to provide [a letter of in-principle support](#) from the relevant in-service regulator in your application. For heavy vehicles, this is the NHVR (or the Northern Territory or Western Australia as applicable). The letter should identify each part of an ADR for which the vehicle is not fully compliant.

Exhaust Emissions – ADR 80/03 or 80/04

The department is aware that the engine cycles that some special purpose vehicles are subject to may not be compatible with diesel particulate filters and compliance with Emission Control for Heavy Vehicles - [ADR 80/03](#) and [80/04](#).

In relation to these ADRs, the department will accept vehicles that comply with EU Stage V or US Tier 4 Final emission requirements as suitable for use on a public road in Australia, provided the application includes a letter of in-principle support as detailed above.

Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2026, the department will accept EU Stage IV engines where a vehicle is less than 10 years old and the applicant can demonstrate the inability to source a similar vehicle for the specialist task.

Further information

For further information, please visit the [department's website](#) or submit an [online enquiry](#).

Details of amended or new ADRs that may impact your vehicle type will be released well before their applicability time. You can [subscribe](#) to receive new or amended ADR notifications.