

Submission 35: RVS Legislation Consultation



Rentals for travellers' adventures
in New Zealand and Australia

Submission to the Road Vehicle Standards Bill 2018

Spaceships Australia Ltd (Spaceships) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Australian Government's proposed Road Vehicle Standards Bill 2018 and associated proposed legislation, in particular the Road Vehicle Standards Rules Section 122 that restricts the importation of vehicles unless they are manufactured as a Camper.

About Spaceships

Spaceships are custom designed, award winning Toyota Estima people movers converted into a campervan, we call the Swiss army knife of campers. Born in New Zealand in 2004 and operating in Australia since 2007 Spaceships campervan hire reshaped the market to provide a new and smarter way to travel. We currently have 225 converted campervans on the roads in Australia. Our market has grown each year and our forecasts show it will continue to grow at this rate. Since we started operation in Australia we have sent over 25000 bookings out travelling around Australia, with an average stay of around 18 days in our vehicles. Spaceships operate in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Europe and in every market we are able to import and convert to campervans the vehicles we need to sustain and grow our business.

Spaceships position

The purpose of this submission is to demonstrate that:

Submission 35: RVS Legislation Consultation

- The existing definition of campervan is too restrictive and will halt our ability to import vehicles into Australia to convert into campervans. All of the vehicles we import and use in our fleet are converted into campervans. The conversion involves significant time, money and resource. While in our possession the vehicles are never converted back to a normal vehicle at any time.
- The inability to import and lack of suitable affordable Australian domestic vehicles will either lead to an aging fleet of existing vehicles transporting tourists around Australia or more expensive local vehicles reducing the numbers of vehicles transporting the tourists around. With no suitable replacement vehicles we will be forced to keep our existing vehicles on the road. Over time these vehicles will become less desirable as the mileage increases. We will not be able to replace these vehicles with Australian new vehicles as the cost of a new vehicle does not work in our business model which targets the budget conscious traveller.
- The impact on the Australian tourism industry will be significant, especially in the regional areas where a number of our backpacker clients take our converted campervans due to their versatility. Tourism is a major contributor to the Australian economy. A number of these tourists are backpackers who come to Australia to travel and see the country. Ultimately if we cannot continue to replace and update our fleet of vehicles our business will be forced to shrink removing the ability for our customers to travel around Australia in an affordable converted campervan that is able to economically travel the country.
- There are options available to redraft the rules so that the focus is on continuing to allow vehicles that are true campervans to be imported into Australia while excluding other vehicles. The rules can be set with high minimum requirements to be a campervan, such that it is prohibitive to convert the vehicle back and with the requirement that it remain a campervan for the entire time it is on the road in Australia. There are a number of stages in the process where a vehicle can be inspected to ensure that it is and remains a proper converted campervan.

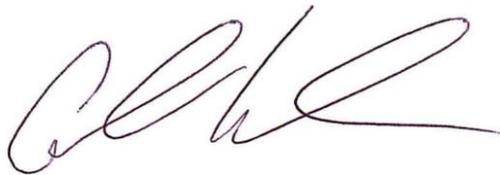
Recommendation

Submission 35: RVS Legislation Consultation

For the reasons outlined above we consider that the Australian government should ensure that the Road Vehicle Standards Bill 2018 and its associated legislation and rules continue to allow the importation of vehicles that can be converted to campervans. The definition of campervan in Section 122 should be changed to allow a vehicle to be imported into Australia and converted to a campervan provided the conversion meets a

minimum threshold to be a proper campervan and remains so while it is being driven on Australian roads.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Hooker', with a stylized, cursive script.

Grant Hooker
General Manager
Spaceships Australia
PH 02 8356 2900
Email grant@spaceshipsrentals.com.au