

Reform of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*

Certification of Light Trailers

The Australian Government is seeking to inform the light trailer industry on the proposed certification requirements for trailers under 4.5 tonnes aggregate trailer mass (ATM). This document has been produced to support this process.

Background

The reforms to the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (MVSA) announced by the Australian Government on 10 February 2016 include changes to simplify importation and certification arrangements for road vehicles, to improve efficiency and remove unnecessary red tape for businesses. Reform details are available from the website of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development: https://infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/mv_standards_act/index.aspx.

For trailers, the Australian Government has committed to the ongoing regulation, using a risk-based approach, of both imported and locally manufactured trailers (including caravans and camper trailers) by:

- Introducing a ‘type approval’ arrangement for light trailers;
- introducing ‘model reports’ as an option for type approval of heavy trailers (at or above 4.5 tonnes ATM); and
- requiring audit access to all stages of design and production for type approved vehicles.

Overview of Certification for Light Trailers (less than 4.5 tonnes ATM)

Currently, light trailers are supplied through self-certification arrangements with national standards or concessional standards defined in Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1 – Building Light Trailers (VSB 1).

Under the proposed reforms, the Australian Government will marginally increase the level of regulatory oversight of these vehicles by requiring each supplier to obtain an approval from the Government before supplying vehicles to the market. An approval would be for a model of trailer and may cover a range of trailer variants supplied by the approval holder. For light trailers, a model is the vehicle category defined in section 4.6 of *Vehicle Standard (Australian Design Rule – Definitions and Vehicle Categories) 2005* available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016C00487>.

The Government will issue a type approval (subject to conditions) based on the supplier’s declaration of compliance. The approval will allow the approval holder to supply an unlimited

number of complying vehicles to the market, and with conditions allowing the Australian Government to conduct auditing of design/production/assembly facilities.

Information pertaining to each individual trailer (including the ISO compliant vehicle identification number (VIN)) will be added to a Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV) by the approval holder. State and Territory registering authorities are expected to require entry on the RAV as a prerequisite for registration. Trailers will also be required to carry a trailer plate (a physical plate) showing approval details.

This approach will result in a small increase in regulatory burden for industry – the time to register and obtain an approval. Building trailers that comply with the national or concessional standards, physical plates and the provision of trailer VINs are already requirements of the current supply process, and therefore pose no additional cost to industry.

Individually imported and very low volume manufacturers

Individual vehicle approval will be available (up to a maximum of 4 vehicles per year) where the approval holder is not able to meet requirements of type approval. This will include individuals importing one-off trailers and very low volume manufacturers/suppliers of trailers to import a limited number of trailers into Australia. Approval holders will be required to obtain an approval from the Minister for each vehicle and declare compliance with the national standards. The Australian Government will add compliant vehicles to the RAV on behalf of the approval holder. The trailer plate will be required to be purchased and attached by the approval holder, as is currently the case.

Details of Approval Process

The Australian Government will be able to issue a type approval for a model based on a declaration of compliance. The approval holder will be required to ensure that all trailers supplied for use in transport are compliant.

For individually approved imported trailers, the approval holder will need to notify the Australian Government on the importation form of any vehicles that do not comply with the national standards at the time of import. These will need to be modified to comply prior to being presented for registration. Domestically manufactured trailers will also need to comply with the standards.

Approach to Compliance and Audit

The Australian Government will continue with an auditing and inspection programme that covers all approval holders. The programme will allocate resources on the basis of risk. The conditions of approval will allow the Australian Government to audit design/production/assembly facilities for type approved vehicles. In addition, the Australian Government will perform inspections of vehicles at places such as caravan shows. The Australian Government will have a range of options for addressing non-compliance, including withdrawing approvals and fines.