



# IMPORTING CARS, MOTORCYCLES, TRAILERS AND OTHER VEHICLES

The importation of cars, motorcycles, trailers, caravans and other vehicles is controlled under the *Customs Act 1901*. Permission, known as a Vehicle Import Approval (VIA), is required to import a vehicle. VIAs are granted under the *Motor Vehicles Standards Act 1989* by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (Infrastructure).

The term 'vehicle' as used in this fact sheet means cars, motorcycles, trailers, caravans and other vehicles.

To import a vehicle into Australia, importers must have (with some exceptions):

- a VIA regardless of the value of the vehicle, or
- a carnet – a document for the temporary importation of private touring vehicles, where the payment of duty and taxes is guaranteed by an overseas issuing body, or
- an Australian carnet - obtained from the Australian Automobile Association for a vehicle that was previously exported from Australia.

Importers who have a vehicle carnet issued by an overseas organisation that has reciprocal arrangements with the Australian Automobile Association do not need a VIA.

## IMPORTING VEHICLES

There are four important steps to import a vehicle:

1. Apply for a VIA (an application fee applies) from Vehicle Safety Standards Branch of Infrastructure.

Phone: 1800 815 272 (Australia only)

or +61 2 6274 7444

Facsimile: +61 2 6274 6013

Email: [vimports@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:vimports@infrastructure.gov.au).

More information can be obtained from the [Importing Vehicles into Australia](#) page on the [Infrastructure website](#).

2. When you have obtained a VIA, lodge an import declaration with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS). This is done by:
  - engaging the services of a Customs broker to act on your behalf
  - submitting an import declaration electronically through the Integrated Cargo System (digital certificate required), or
  - completing an import declaration form at an ACBPS counter.

A Self-assessed Clearance declaration is required if the customs value of the vehicle is AUD\$1000 or less.

A VIA is required regardless of the value of the vehicle.

3. Pay customs duty, Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Luxury Car Tax (LCT) where applicable. Information on taxes and charges is available on the [Duty rates and taxes](#) webpage.
4. Contact the Biosecurity section of the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture) to arrange a vehicle inspection for clearance after the vehicle has arrived. For more information visit the [Agriculture](#) website.

## OTHER VEHICLES (from Chapter 87 of the Tariff)

Classes of vehicles that generally require VIAs include:

- road tractors for semi-trailers
- buses and passenger coaches
- trucks and lorries
- special purpose vehicles including:
  - ambulances
  - fire fighting vehicles
  - mobile cranes and derricks
  - cement mixers
  - mobile workshops
  - road sweepers
  - garbage collection trucks and lorries

- self-powered vehicles for the disabled.

Classes of vehicles that may be non-transport equipment include:

- fork lifts and other material handling vehicles
- golf carts and vehicles for use on snow
- agricultural tractors
- vehicles designed and built for off-road use (not meaning recreational, sports or four wheel drive vehicles)
- bulldozers, graders, rollers and earth moving vehicles
- tracked vehicles of any kind including tanks.

### **OTHER EQUIPMENT THAT MAY REQUIRE A VIA (outside Chapter 87 of the Tariff)**

Goods such as mobile light towers, mobile compressors, mobile generators and other equipment if mounted on wheels and that can be towed or driven on the road may require VIAs.

### **VEHICLES WITH AIR CONDITIONERS OR A REFRIGERANT SYSTEM**

Road vehicles equipped with an air conditioner or a refrigerant system (known as pre-charged equipment) may be subject to specific requirements established by the Department of the Environment. Further details can be found on the [Ozone Depleting Substance/Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Equipment Licences](#) page on the [Department of the Environment's website](#).

### **VALUATION**

The customs value is usually the transaction value (i.e. what you paid for the vehicle). ACBPS may use other valuation methods to determine the customs value where necessary. Further information on valuation of imported goods can be found in the [Valuation of Imported Goods](#) fact sheet.

### **IMPORTATION CHARGES**

Before deciding to import a vehicle, importers should consider the possible costs involved.

#### **Government charges:**

- customs duty, GST and LCT, if applicable
- entry processing charges.

**Transport, handling and clearance charges** (these are not Government charges):

- freight and insurance for the transport of the goods to Australia
- Customs broker charges
- storage and delivery charges
- logistic services provider charges
- steam cleaning for quarantine purposes
- other wharf and transport charges

- any costs relating to having your motor vehicle meet state or territory registration and insurance requirements.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Tourists and temporary residents**

Vehicles can be imported temporarily for a specified period by:

- tourists and temporary residents by providing a security in lieu of duty and GST at the time the vehicle is imported, or
- by obtaining a Carnet De Passages en Douane (CPD Carnet) issued by an overseas organisation that has a reciprocal arrangement with the Australian Automobile Association.

A CPD Carnet allows for the temporary admission of vehicles into Australia without the payment of duties or taxes and without the requirement for a VIA.

The vehicle must be exported from Australia within the approved time limit. All fittings and accessories imported with the vehicle must also be exported with the same vehicle.

#### **Australian carnets**

Vehicles returning to Australia that previously left Australia on an Australian Carnet do not require a VIA if the vehicle is being imported before the expiry date of the carnet. If the carnet has expired, a VIA will be required.

#### **Returned Australian vehicles**

Vehicles that were exported from Australia and are subsequently imported, require the importer to hold a VIA before ACBPS can authorise the vehicle to be released.

#### **Status of forces agreement (SOFA)**

Visiting military personnel that are members of a 'Visiting Force' that is subject to the provisions of a SOFA, do not need to obtain a VIA for an imported vehicle.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For further information on ACBPS matters:

- visit [www.customs.gov.au](http://www.customs.gov.au)
- email: [information@customs.gov.au](mailto:information@customs.gov.au)
- contact the Customs Information and Support Centre on 1300 363 263.