



The Secretariat
The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
MVSAreview@infrastructure.gov.au

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Reform of the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Road Vehicle Standards package of legislation.

I am the Executive Officer of Assistive Technology Suppliers Australasia (ATSA). ATSA is the industry organisation representing over 120 business who supply Assistive Technology (AT) to people with disabilities.

Our members are businesses of varying sizes who provide AT solutions for people with disabilities, seniors and their carers to increase independence, choice and make everyday living easier. ATSA works to ensure the market for AT is competitive, efficient, viable and appropriately regulated.

ATSA appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes and would welcome the opportunity to discuss our recommendations and provide you with any further information which you may consider useful in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely

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ATSA submission to Road Vehicle Standards Bill 2017

Reform of the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989

Reliability

A person with a disability does not choose to use a specialised vehicle they require them. These vehicles are an integral to their lives therefore it is imperative that the vehicle is fit for purpose, safe and reliable.

If the vehicle is off the road or its disability features have failed for any reason, the user cannot easily replace the vehicle as the average person could. In most cases, there are limited choices, public transport, a purpose designed taxi, assuming these options are suitable and available when required, or not travel at all.

This situation is exacerbated if there is an extended delay due to waiting for parts or worse, there are no parts available, this would create significant issues for the user of the vehicle. Therefore, as we consider *Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2017, Tools part 4, Specialised and Enthusiast Vehicles Register, Division 6 Section 120, Mobility criteria*, rules on the ability to support the imported vehicle including spare parts availability for all aspects of the vehicle including the disability features is essential.

Safety Risk

ATSA is concerned that good intentions and desire is to allow for greater options of choice to persons with a disability will result in unintended consequences and create safety risks.

We are all different and so are those with disability, this fact has created a highly specialised Australian industry who support, design and customise road vehicles for the disability sector.

The provision of road vehicles for the disability sector is not simplistic. It is the combination of designing a solution to the individual's requirements, then meeting several Australian Standards (AS 2942, AS 3856, AS10542 etc.) with the Road Vehicle Standards. These Standards are combined to provide a complete working unit that meet the needs of the user and provide the level of safety demanded by the Australian society for the user.

The proposed *Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2017, Tools part 4, Specialised and Enthusiast Vehicles Register, Division 6 Section120, Mobility criteria* has not combined the relevant disability Australian Standards, which will place a high safety risk for user of the imported vehicle that does not meet equivalent Australian Standards. The Australian Standards that apply to local vehicle modification have been made mandatory for very sound reasons and ATSA would be very concerned if safety standards are compromised and place vehicle occupants at risk.

Industry impact

ATSA and its members welcome competition as it provides value and choice for all customers, however the proposed legislation without applying the same rules of supply, is not a level playing field and places the Australian industry at a substantial disadvantage.

Not to apply the Australian Standards to imported vehicles creates two standards, one for imported vehicles and one for locally modified vehicles. The local industry is required bear the costs to comply with the relevant Australian Standards for accessible vehicles, whereas the imports do not. This most likely will result in the loss of many highly specialised service providers, which over time will have a negative impact, i.e. as lost skills and expertise from Australia.

Summary of recommendations:

ATSA recommends the follow points be added to the *Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2017, Tools part 4, Specialised and Enthusiast Vehicles Register, Division 6 Section120, Mobility criteria*;

1. The variant of a road vehicle satisfies the mobility criteria if the vehicle can be supported with spare parts, technical support and warranty by the vehicle manufacturer locally including all its disability features for a minimum period of 3 years.
2. The variant of a road vehicle satisfies the mobility criteria if the vehicle meets all the Australian Standards or the international equivalent that apply to Australian vehicles modifications for disability use prior to importation.