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Importing Just One Trailer?

What to resolve before buying or shipping a trailer or caravan to Australia

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An overseas trailer can look like an attractive purchase. The specification suits your needs, the price is competitive and the seller is ready to organise delivery.

Then comes the important question: **what will it take to use that trailer in Australia?**

Whether you are buying a caravan for personal travel, a boat trailer or a trailer for your business, importing just one does not remove the need to resolve approval, identification and registration requirements. Those questions are easier to address while you still have choices about the purchase.

A possible pathway-subject to your circumstances

Concessional RAV Entry, commonly called **CRE**, provides an approval pathway for eligible individual vehicles, including trailers. It may suit a one-off purchase without requiring you to establish your own Vehicle Type Approval (VTA).

For trailers with an aggregate trailer mass (**ATM**) of 4.5 tonnes or less, eligibility includes a check of the applicant's concessional trailer approvals during the 12 months before the application. Buying only one trailer now does not, by itself, establish eligibility. The vehicle and its compliance position also matter. Road Vehicle Standards Rules, section 40.

Confirm the pathway for your proposed trailer before treating the purchase as a straightforward import.

Look beyond the supplier's assurance

Statements such as "Australian compliant" or "we have sold these to Australia before" deserve further examination.

The useful question is whether the available information supports **the particular trailer you intend to buy**. A brochure, an overseas registration document and a supplier's assurance each tell part of the story. They may leave important questions unanswered.

Before committing funds, consider whether the supplier can support the proposed import with reliable specifications, identification details and relevant compliance information. For a used trailer, missing records, previous alterations and limited manufacturer support can make that assessment more difficult.

The purchase price is only one part of the decision. If further evidence or rectification is needed, its cost and lead time belong in your budget.

No VIN? Resolve the position early

A missing Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) does not necessarily end a single-trailer import proposal.

For a single vehicle covered by a CRE application, the Department can generate a VIN using the **6ZZ** identifier where no VIN is present. This differs from the manufacturer WMI and VIN arrangements required for imported vehicles supplied under a VTA. Department VIN guidance.

However, a VIN identifies a vehicle; it does not establish its compliance or guarantee registration.

Where a trailer already has identification, establish what it is and whether it can be used. Resolve uncertainty before purchase, rather than assuming that any number stamped on the chassis will be sufficient.

Make the approval timetable part of the purchase

A seller's production or shipping timetable should not become your approval timetable by default.

The statutory CRE decision period is **30 business days**, with specified periods excluded when further information or inspection is requested. Preparation, resolving missing information and completing other import arrangements also take time. The decision period is not a guaranteed date for having a registered trailer ready to use. Road Vehicle Standards Rules, section 44.

Have the appropriate import approval in place before shipping. The Department's published import sequence places receipt of approval before arranging shipment. Customs clearance, biosecurity and other applicable requirements remain separate considerations. Department import guidance.

Approval is an important milestone, not the whole journey

An approval notice may contain conditions that must be addressed. Entry on the Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV), VIN processing through NEVDIS and state or territory registration also need to be coordinated.

CRE approval does not guarantee that a registration authority will accept the trailer without further requirements. Check the intended registration arrangements as part of the plan. Department CRE guide.

Get a clear view before you commit

You do not need to become an approval specialist to import one trailer. You do need a clear understanding of the proposed pathway, the information available and the work still required.

ROVER Pro can assess your proposed import, review the available specifications and identification, identify material gaps and coordinate the agreed approval work. Where engineering, testing or other specialist assistance is needed, we can help establish the appropriate scope.

Before paying a deposit or booking freight, let us help you understand what you are committing to.

Request a free initial assessment of up to 20 minutes to discuss your proposed trailer and circumstances. We will then propose the scope and fees for any detailed assistance.

Unfamiliar term? Search our Glossary, Abbreviations and Definitions.

General information for proposed imports of trailers and caravans with an ATM of 4.5 tonnes or less. Requirements depend on the vehicle, applicant and intended use. Heavier trailers and other approval pathways require separate consideration.