

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING MODIFICATIONS TO VEHICLES AND CODE 404

In light of interstate regulation changes, the Council of Motoring Clubs recently asked for feedback from member clubs about modifications to vehicles. A small proportion of membership responded in writing, though several phone calls and discussions had also taken place between club members and CMC Committee members.

Following this the CMC Committee and the CMC Technical Committee held a special meeting at the end of November to discuss this in detail.

There have been some misconceptions which need to be addressed.

1. It would appear that many people believe that the Code 404 Concession is controlled by the CMC. This is not correct; it is entirely administered by the Department of Transport. The CMC created the Code 404 Handbook, in consultation with the DoT so club members could understand and meet the DoT regulations. This was under review for some five years and the updated Handbook was given to the CMC member clubs in December 2016. Please note: The CMC does not have the ability to make changes to the legal requirements of Code 404.
2. There is a misconception that no modifications are allowed on Concessionally licensed vehicles.
 - a. The Code 404 Handbook makes it clear that certain modifications are allowed [Sections 9 & 11, copied below].
 - b. In certain circumstances application can be made to the Technical Committee for allowing modifications beyond the scope of those noted in the Handbook.
 - c. There seems to be little understanding that a vehicle can be modified to include options and accessories that were offered in period. [Section 12, copied below]
3. There appears to be insufficient recognition that many modifications beyond the limits shown in the Handbook would require Engineering Permits even on a fully registered vehicle.

Several comments have been made stating that if a modification was done to a vehicle in period, then it should be allowed today. This is flawed logic, as the modification may well have been illegal in its day, remembering that while Engineering Permits may be granted by the DoT, not all modifications are acceptable or legal on a vehicle registered in any way.

The DoT has made it clear to the CMC that it is not interested in the idea of changing the way Code 404 is designed to operate.

Further, the CMCs Constitution spells out its purpose is primarily supporting restoration and preservation of vehicles through its member clubs. This must not be misinterpreted to mean modifying to preserve.

That said, there are some clubs questioning how owners of modified older vehicles in minimal use could benefit from a system such as Code 404. There has been much discussion about how this could be done outside of the restrictions of Code 404. In fact the CMC has been advised of other groups which have been making approaches to Government and the DoT, with some positive early indications.

The CMC has resolved to support new initiatives to government for modified older vehicles, outside of Code 404. The view of the CMC committees is that while support would be given however best possible, it is not the remit of the CMC to have such an initiative under the banner

of the CMC. The CMC Technical Committee has agreed to a request for a meeting with one such group, which is expected to take place shortly.

Perhaps this will eventuate in a new category being created.

The CMC will advise member clubs of progress and how it might positively affect club members.

A dot-point summary of the above information appears below.

Regards,

Geoff Moor

President

Council of Motoring Clubs (Inc)

From the Code 404 Concessional Licensing Handbook:

9. VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

Modifications of vehicles licensed with a 404 concession code are not permitted. A key objective of the concessional licensing scheme is the preservation of historic and unique vehicles in original condition. All vehicles on concessional licence must conform to the manufacturer's original specifications. The only exceptions to this rule are:

- Vehicles may be fitted with LPG.
- Vehicles may be fitted with alternative period wheels i.e. wheels that were used in the same era as the vehicles age.
- Options that were available for the vehicle when new are also permitted, provided all related components to the manufacturers original specification are also fitted. (For example; 6cyl to 8cyl engine option is acceptable)
- The fitting of some safety items, such as brake lights and flasher indicators, is permitted and encouraged.
- Radial ply tyres may be fitted but only to rims of original diameter and width or no more than 25mm over-width.
- Conversion of the electrical system from 6v to 12v is permitted.
- Converting from LHD to RHD will not deem the vehicle to be modified providing the conversion complies with the National Code of Practice for Light Vehicle Modifications (VSB14).
- Some exceptions may be permitted in specific circumstances and must be presented, in writing, detailing ALL aspects of the required exemption, to the Council of Motoring Clubs Technical Committee (CMCTC). Applications must be supported by the owner's club executive prior to being submitted to the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee will accept, amend or reject the request. Generally, the only modifications to be approved are those required to keep a vehicle roadworthy if original parts cannot be sourced. Any such modification must remain within the spirit of the historic vehicle movement. Note: There is no general list of acceptable exceptions. All approved exceptions are on a vehicle by vehicle basis. Modifications involving performance enhancement to engines, upgrading brake and suspension systems and altering vehicle interiors for competition events such as rallies and circuit racing will not be approved.

11. ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Vehicles may be converted to run on fuels such as LP gas and 'biodiesel'. In the case of an LPG conversion, the vehicle is still required to be certified as compliant by a licensed LPG installer. A compliance plate must be fitted and the vehicle submitted for inspection to an approved inspection station (Transport center or other AIS) so that fuel type can be reassessed. An LPG tank is required to have a test date stamped into the manufacturer's plate. Tanks must be replaced or retested by an approved organisation every 10 years.

12. VEHICLE OPTIONS AND ACCESSORIES

Accessories are not modifications. Accessories include items such as period 'mag' wheels, luggage racks or other items of a size and style that were available for that vehicle at date of manufacture. Options that were available for the vehicle when new are also permitted providing all related items are fitted. For example, if disc brakes were an option, you must fit all related components to the manufacturer's original specification. Documentary evidence that the option was available at the time may be required.

Dot Point Summary

- The DoT controls Code 404 Concession, not the CMC.
- The CMC is not able to make changes to Code 404.
- Certain modifications are already allowed under Code 404, listed in the Handbook.
- Period options and accessories can be acceptable under Code 404.
- Applications can be made to the Technical Committee for modifications beyond those outlined in the Handbook.
- Modifications made in period are not necessarily acceptable, dependent upon their legality.
- The CMC has resolved to support new initiatives to government for modified older vehicles, outside of Code 404, however it is not the remit of the CMC to have such an initiative under the banner of the CMC.