

Personal Imports Option

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http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/imports/import_options/pis.aspx

This option is covered by Regulation 13 of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Regulations 1989*.

The purpose of the option

The personal imports option allows migrants settling in Australia, and expatriate Australian citizens returning permanently to Australia after a long period overseas, to bring their personal road vehicle with them, where the vehicle has been owned and used for a period of 12 months or longer.

The personal import option only covers individuals. Companies and/or corporations are not eligible to import a vehicle under this option.

Change of residence

Applicants must have lived in a foreign country (or several foreign countries) throughout a qualifying period of 12 months prior to arriving in Australia. Applicants must now intend to become an Australian permanent resident and remain in Australia indefinitely.

Temporary visitors such as foreign tourists, posted diplomatic personnel and posted military personnel are not eligible.

Criteria

Mandatory criteria apply under the option. These criteria, outlined below, are strictly enforced. If you fail to meet the criteria, you will not be eligible to import a vehicle under the option.

Ownership of the vehicle

Applicants must satisfy each of the following ownership requirements. You must:

- own the vehicle when submitting the application; and
- have acquired ownership of the vehicle while overseas; and
- have owned the vehicle while overseas for a continuous period of at least 12 months. This is the “qualifying period”. The qualifying period must have occurred immediately before you (permanently) arrived in Australia.

Use of the vehicle

The vehicle should have been available to you for use as transport. This means that the vehicle must have been available to be driven by you, at all times during the 12 month qualifying period. Evidence to establish availability would include that the vehicle is registered (in your name) and garaged (proximate to your residence) throughout the 12 month qualifying period, so that you could, if

needed, drive the vehicle. In addition, evidence that you must have held an appropriate licence to drive the vehicle overseas would assist in confirming that the vehicle was available for use.

Citizenship and visa requirements

Applicants must fall into one of the following categories. You must:

- be an Australian citizen; or
- have applied to become an Australian citizen; or
- be an Australian permanent resident (e.g. hold a permanent visa); or
- have applied to become an Australian permanent resident (e.g. applied for a permanent visa); or
- hold a visa that allows you to apply to become an Australian permanent resident (e.g. hold a temporary visa that allows you to apply for a permanent visa); or
- otherwise be entitled to remain in Australia indefinitely (e.g. is a New Zealand citizen).

Date of application

Applications may be made before you arrive in Australia if you have already met the qualifications of the option under which you are applying. Alternatively, applications may be made up to 6 months after you arrive in Australia.

Age of applicants

Applicants must be of an age to hold an Australian license to drive the vehicle.

Limit of 1 vehicle every 5 years

Applicants may only import one vehicle under the Personal Imports Option every 5 years.

How to apply

Applications may be made before you arrive in Australia (although you must still meet the 12 month qualifying period prior to applying). Alternatively, applications may be made up to 6 months after you arrive in Australia.

To apply for a Vehicle Import Approval under the Personal Imports Option, you should provide the following to the Department:

- A completed [application form](#) available from the Department's web site. Ensure you include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN);
- A \$50 non-refundable lodgement fee. Payment options are set out in the application form (Credit card (visa or mastercard only) for online payments. Cheque or money order in Australian dollars from an Australian financial institution are accepted for manual payments).
- Purchase document for the vehicle in your name (A purchase document can be a pro-forma invoice/receipt for deposit or full payment).
- A copy of your international or overseas driver's license;

- A copy of the registration documents for the vehicle (for the qualifying period), in your name;
- Applicants importing a vehicle from Japan should also provide:
 - A copy of the Japanese parking approval, in your name; and
 - A copy of the Japanese compulsory tax and insurance documents;
- A statement of travel prepared by you, listing any international travel you undertook during the qualifying period. In particular, the statement is to set out any absences from your country of residence. If travel was for business reasons, you should supply a letter to that effect from your employer;
- A copy of the identity page of your passport. If you hold dual passports, you should provide a copy of both passport identity pages;
- A copy of your current Australian permanent resident visa if you are not a citizen;
- If you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

Applicants should be able to substantiate their intention to remain in Australia indefinitely by supplying a selection of the following documents, up to a value of 100 points. The documents provided should be as recent as possible for the purposes of supporting your application.

Primary documents

50 points

You should supply at least one of the primary documents:

- Your employment details, such as a letter from your Australian employer.
- Your resignation from employment in your former country of residence.
- A rental agreement/purchase agreement for your residential property in Australia (i.e. longstanding holiday or second homes do not count).
- The sale of your residential property in your former country of residence.
- The cancellation of your residential rental property in your former country of residence.

Secondary documents

20 points

- The shipment of your household goods to Australia.
- The enrolment of your children in an Australian school.

10 points

- Your new Australian telephone / electricity accounts.

In addition, foreign citizens settling in Australia may substantiate an intention to remain in Australia indefinitely, by providing evidence that they have recently:

25 points

- Applied for an Australian Tax File Number.
- Registered with Medicare.
- Applied for Australian medical insurance.
- Applied to open an Australian bank account.
- Applied for an Australian driver's license.

These lists are a guide. You may also be required to provide further evidence, including:

- A copy of the deregistration certificate, from the previous owner of the vehicle.
- A copy of insurance documents for the vehicle.
- A copy of the Japanese de-registration certificate, in your name;
- Copies of other documents that support your purchase of the vehicle (such as bank statements, receipts from vendors).
- Copies of other documents that show you used the vehicle (such as receipts for any maintenance or repairs made to the vehicle).
- If using an agent—a letter signed by the applicant or company representative (on company letterhead) stating that the agent is authorised to act on behalf of the applicant for this import application, setting out responsibilities of the agent;
- if you have applied previously you will need to quote your previous application number.

NOTE: All documents not in English require a translation certified by a member of an accredited agency such as the National Accreditation Authority of Translators and Interpreters.

You may be required to submit original documentation (not photocopies) to confirm eligibility under the option.

If you believe you meet the option requirements above, but are missing certain documents, please provide a covering letter to explain. Your application may be considered with [discretion](#), however only where a clear case has been made.

The personal import plate and vehicle registration

If you are eligible under the Personal Imports Option (and a vehicle import approval has been granted), you may apply for the issue of a personal import plate. There is an additional charge for the supply of the plate (payable to the plate contractor).

Vehicle registration is administered by the registering authority in your state or territory. Contact details for state or territory registering authorities are provided at the end of this bulletin.

The approval papers forwarded to you will contain four parts:

- one copy allows the vehicle to be cleared from its point of entry into Australia (by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service);
- one copy allows you to obtain a personal import plate from the plate contractor;
- one copy is for the state or territory registering authority, and is for the purpose of vehicle registration; and

- one copy is for your own records, and should be kept with the vehicle.

A personal import plate is evidence that the vehicle is an approved vehicle import and allows the vehicle to be registered. Before you may apply for a personal import plate, the vehicle must be brought up to acceptable ADR standards and the original approval documents must be completed. For Australian registration purposes, a vehicle imported under the Personal Imports Option must:

- be roadworthy; and
- meet minimum safety standards.

Modifications to bring the vehicle up to minimum safety standards can be deferred until you wish to register the vehicle.

Some state or territory registering authorities will inspect your vehicle and sign a statement of compliance. Others will refer you to an authorised signatory for inspection. The statement of compliance on the approval documents must be signed by an authorised person. The original signed statement of compliance must then be sent to the plate contractor (whose address is set out in the approval documents).

You should contact your state or territory registering authority for further details on how to have your vehicle inspected and registered.