



VETERAN CAR CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA)

PO Box 2300, Mt. Waverley, Vic., Australia. 3149

19 November, 2009

The President - Neil Athorn,
Federation Victoria,
PO Box 175,
Brunswick East,
Victoria, 3075

Dear Neil

Re: Federation and the Club Permit Scheme Review

Recently, Federation's last notice regarding the review of the Club Permit Scheme, accompanied by pro forma letters, arguing rejection of the proposed changes and retention of the current system, was considered by the full committee of The Veteran Car Club Australia, Victoria.

Subject to the proposed changes to a 90 day (and possibly 45 day) log book system being substantially as outlined in the draft proposal, the full committee of the VCCA (Vic.) unanimously endorsed the introduction of the log book based permit scheme amendments and condemns Federation for taking such a negative and alarmist view about the proposed changes.

Over the years the VCCA (Vic.) has considered that it has had some ownership of the current permit scheme, however it realises that the scheme has now been opened up to a wide variety of clubs (without reference to the VCCA (Vic.)), catering to a wide range of vehicles and performances. It is therefore reasonable for our club to adapt and to comply with a scheme which Vic Roads believes is more manageable and suitable for the wide cross section of historic vehicle clubs.

Federation has chosen to be negative and unconstructive in its arguments against the proposed changes and for every negative argument that has been put forward by Federation, a positive and more realistic argument can be substituted.

The positive outcomes which the committee believes will result from the changes are as given below. They are generally aligned with the item numbering in Federation's pro forma letter to Minister Pallas.

1. An historic vehicle club should not rely for its survival on the application of the club permit scheme, but rather prosper and have good participation from its membership, if it is performing as it should: by providing interesting runs, social contact with like minded people, technical support and good communication via its newsletter. In fact the clubs will not be missing out, as it is proposed that the 90 day log book scheme will only be made available to people who belong to an eligible vehicle club. People will not be able to have access to private use of their "permitted" vehicle without being a member of an approved club. Clubs have the ability to vet potential new members and someone initially joining with a view to being able to use their car in a limited manner for private activities, could well become a very active club member.
2. By moving fully registered vehicles onto the scheme it will make the ownership of historic vehicles more attractive and if anything will enhance club activities and participation. In the

case of VCCA (Vic.), it is a state based organisation which has many members throughout the state (this will be similar to many other clubs). There are many country members who are unable to participate in the short metropolitan events, such as breakfast runs and one day outings. Under the current permit system these country members miss out on the use and enjoyment of their vehicles, unless they pre arrange a special use permit. By having the log book system they will be able to use their vehicle at short notice for a local personal run, if the weather is pleasant or when some interested person calls in and would like to be taken for a run (by being able to immediately respond to a person's interest in having a drive - it may result in a new club member). Also it will allow people, both metropolitan and country, to be able to respond readily to a request by a charitable or fair organisation for their vehicle to be in attendance (the problem of it not being a designated red plate event no longer arises). Through the log book permit scheme, they can quickly respond and drive the vehicle legally. Also the log book system will permit greater flexibility when travelling to and from remote events and without the need for specifying a detailed route and involving the club registrar for a special use permit. The VCCA (Vic.) believes that through the introduction of the log book based system, if anything, it will reduce the load on the club officers, as the individual can be held more accountable by the police for the use of the vehicle and the club registrar will not have to be tied up with the issuing of special use permits. Again, more readily available use of a vehicle will make ownership more attractive and will serve to enhance club activity and the historic vehicle movement in general.

3. The VCCA (Vic.) does not support the view that there will be an explosion of vehicle use, an increase in vehicle accidents and possible rises in private insurance cover. This contention is supported by the experience in South Australia where there are comparable or if anything, lower insurance premiums; the experience in Great Britain where any vehicle older than 1970 enjoys free registration (only a TAC equivalent payment) and where an historic vehicle can be used 365 days per year for private activities, without the need for club membership (incidentally this has not impacted on historic vehicle club membership or participation) and where insurance costs are comparable with ours. Also we can currently insure fully registered classic vehicles, which are nominated to have limited annual mileage use, for relatively low premiums.
4. Federation's statement that the introduction of a log book system will put Victoria out of step with nominated other states, conveniently fails to mention that Tasmania also has a popular Special Interest Vehicle log book based system (in addition to the Concessional Registration system). Also we are aware that people in Queensland are closely following the developments in Victoria in order to put pressure on the Queensland Government for a log book based system.
5. The "Hoon" argument is fallacious and alarmist as the VCCA (Vic.) doesn't believe that the introduction of the log book system will result in people buying 25 years and older vehicles and joining a club in order to obtain cheap registration, for the purpose of every day use and driving in a reckless manner. They will be restricted to an average of less than 2 days a week use and it is most unlikely that the "Hoon" element will purchase 25+ year old vehicles for fast and reckless driving, when they can purchase more modern and faster vehicles, for little money and which they can use every day of the year. Again the British and South Australian experiences don't support Federation's claims in this respect.
6. The incorporation of vehicle modification into the argument against the introduction of the log book based system is also fallacious. This is a totally separate issue, as it applies equally to both the current system and the log book based system. If there is a concern, then this should be addressed as a separate issue with Vic Roads. Federation would have much better served the historic vehicle movement, by working in collaboration with AOMC in order to establish a system which is satisfactory to all parties. Already within the current permit system and club participation there are many modified vehicles, which have been accepted by individual clubs and have provided much enjoyment to the owners and other club

members. Some examples of modified vehicles operating within the existing club and permit system are: veterans with an axle, wheels, engine, gearbox etc from another model or make in order to provide an operating car, motorcycles with non original frame/forks etc, specials made up from an assortment of one make parts, Austin 7s with later braking systems, MG TCs with improved brake drums and Datsun 1200 steering boxes and Morris Minors with Datsun 1200 engines.

7. Cost increases are likely to be minor, with a charge for the log book and perhaps numberplate fees. TAC charges will not necessarily rise and if they do increase a little it will be only a minor impost for a system which provides greater flexibility.
8. Federation's claim that there will be substantial increases in insurance premiums is again alarmist and is not supported by experience in other jurisdictions as previously mentioned, such as South Australia, Great Britain and those vehicles operating on the SI log book system in Tasmania. Victoria will certainly not end up with the exposure of historic vehicles on the road such as that experienced in Great Britain, where as previously mentioned the vehicles can be used 365 days per year. Experience with other jurisdictions has not demonstrated a huge blow out in vehicle use through the introduction of the log book based system, but rather it has provided greater ownership enjoyment, flexibility and certainty for legal use of vehicles.

In the unlikely event that the recommended changes to the permit system, released for comment by the Minister, are a large departure from the original draft proposal for the log book based system and present unacceptable conditions, then the VCCA (Vic.) will write to the Minister expressing its concerns, but not in the alarmist and extreme language used by Federation.

Yours Faithfully,

Jim McCaffrey
Secretary, Veteran Car Club of Australia (Victoria)

CC. AOMC and other affiliated historic vehicle clubs