

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

11 September 2025

Dear Mr Duncan 

Thank you for your letter of 24 June 2025 concerning petition E-PET 048-24 regarding the registration of left-hand drive vehicles of any age.

At this stage, the Government has no plans to amend the *Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2000* and associated vehicle standards to provide for the registration of left-hand drive vehicles of any age as proposed by the petition.

Primary responsibility for determining what vehicles may be used on public roads resides with the Commonwealth Government. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication, Sport and the Arts manages the import and provision of vehicles to the Australian market.

Within these arrangements, there are some vehicles that are not required to be in a right-hand drive configuration. This is limited to vehicles having features that limit the practicality or number of vehicles provided for use in transport in Australia. These circumstances include special purpose vehicles, evaluation vehicles, vehicles imported under Status of Forces Agreements, vehicles older than 25 years old, vehicles produced in low numbers and vehicles imported as personal effects.

The petition states that the Northern Territory permits registration of left-hand drive vehicles. A review of NT Government information bulletin 'V48 – Imported vehicles – low volume' indicates left-hand drive is only available for older vehicles, Special Purpose Vehicles, vehicles in Australia temporarily by arrangement with the Commonwealth and vehicles imported as personal effects. This represents a small component within the vehicle fleet. There is no general arrangement in place for registration of newer left-hand drive vehicles.

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In reviewing arrangements for left-hand drive vehicles across Australia, all jurisdictions have an age minimum of at least 25 years for left-hand drive vehicles not covered by exceptional circumstances. Western Australia does have a provision for vehicles older than 15 years if the vehicle is exclusively for personal use. This age limit would still be affected by the Commonwealth 25-year age minimum importation requirement.

Although some other countries permit a mix of left hand-drive and right-hand drive vehicles, arrangements of this type are typically undertaken nationally.

In a road network set up for right-hand drive vehicles, left-hand drive vehicles represent a more challenging driving task, with some tasks made more difficult by a left-hand drive seating position such as overtaking and lane changing, lane keeping, line of sight at intersections and use of ticketing machines. International research indicates that 'off-handed' vehicles are overrepresented in vehicle accidents.

As with many vehicles imported through concessional arrangements by parties other than the vehicle manufacturer or their Australian agent, there is a risk that a left-hand drive vehicle would not be supported for repairs, warranty, spare parts or safety recalls by the manufacturer or their local agent and subsequently may also be more expensive to insure.

The petition states that there are greater numbers of left-hand drive vehicles produced than right-hand drive vehicles. The petition does not make it clear if there are any types or specific makes or models of vehicles that are not manufactured in right-hand drive that have particular benefits not covered by similar models currently available in Australia. It is unclear on what basis an economic, consumer or environmental benefit would come from permitting a larger number of left-hand drive vehicles to be used on roads in the ACT.

While I know this is not the outcome the petitioners were hoping for, I trust this information is useful.

Sincerely



Tara Cheyne MLA
Minister for City and Government Services