



THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE NZ
FEDERATION OF
MOTORING CLUBS

WHEEL TORQUE

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Vehicle Identity Card developments

Member clubs will be aware the Federation has been pursuing for some time the concept of a Vehicle Identity Card (VIC), borrowing from the Vintage Car Club's model, which would identify vehicles that were exempt from certain Warrant of Fitness requirements that they were never designed to meet. The VCC's card – of which over 6,000 have been issued to date – provides an exemption for older vehicles from some of the lighting requirements in the WoF, namely vintage acetylene or dyno-operated lamps. Over 400 such lighting 'endorsements' have been issued by the VCC since the card was introduced in 1999, helping owners to obtain a WoF.

As many vintage and classic vehicle owners will know, lights aren't the only issue when obtaining a WoF and the Federation is compiling a list of other items for which vehicles can fail a WoF, but are in fact as the car was manufactured or within the original tolerances of the equipment (e.g. wheel bearings, tie rod ends, suspension bushes, door handles etc.).

The crux of the issue is the continuing changes being made to vehicle specifications or inspection standards which do not take into account the classic or historical vehicle that met the standards of its day in both construction and maintenance. For example, historic vehicles have increased bearing and suspension tolerances than a modern car, yet vehicle inspectors have limited discretion in this area and rely on the NZTA Vehicle Inspection Requirements Manual (the inspectors WoF bible). This can lead to enthusiast vehicle owners having to make unnecessary repairs to their vehicles, and is a cost that can be avoided through clarity of information being provided to vehicle inspectors.

The Federation's goal has been to use the VCC's card and lighting endorsement as a template for all heritage vehicle owners to obtain identified exemptions

so that they don't unfairly fail WoF's or have to produce proof that the item(s) are as originally manufactured. This would include vehicles younger than the VCC's 40-year age limit, as well as historic commercials and military vehicles. The Federation, led by Norman Pointon with assistance from the VCC, developed our own version of the VIC, and trialled it amongst several clubs. The intention was that each club, as required, would be responsible for identifying WoF issues within their marque and issue VIC's under the Federation's guidance. The VIC would be administered by the Vintage Car Club.



Last year the Federation presented the draft VIC manual to the NZ Transport Agency for consideration. Due to more pressing commitments, the NZTA were unable to pursue the expanded VIC concept at this stage, and we were left with the impression that approval for any of the 27 exemptions we had identified (in addition to lighting) may not be forthcoming. The

Federation met again with the NZTA in June this year, and as a result of the discussions it was made clear that the VIC card did not have, and would never have, any legal status. As such, NZTA did not consider it a matter of further interest to them. With reference to the current lighting endorsement, NZTA confirmed they will not consider any further requests for additional endorsements.

To assist our member clubs and their individual members, NZTA made some positive proposals which the Federation is now developing and we will continue to liaise with NZTA to develop and implement these for the future benefit of our membership.

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At the Federation's August executive committee meeting, the status of the VIC was discussed, and given that there is no clear path ahead and no foreseeable benefit to be gained from further input into the development of the proposed FOMC Vehicle Identity Card, it was resolved by the committee not proceed further with our application.

The Federation recognises that what is needed instead is a supplementary information manual to inform vehicle inspectors of the mechanical features of older vehicles via a website, or linked to the NZTA's electronic VIRM. This will assist the NZTA, vehicle inspectors, and vehicle enthusiasts in ensuring the vehicle being inspected meets its manufactured standards and therefore continues to be able to be used safely on the road.

As a result, the Federation has decided to develop a process to record WoF issues being encountered by clubs from which we will develop a template for ratification by the NZTA to supplement the VIRM in the form of notes, similar to the system the Low Volume Vehicle Technical Association uses for modified and scratch-built vehicles.

Comment:

The work put into the VIC card by the Federation was considerable. It was done in the firm belief that the future loss of, or lack of, knowledge of the original construction and mechanical tolerances of pre-1980s vehicles by those employed in the compliance system would become an increasing issue for our members. What the Federation saw as an entirely rational solution in having the individual vehicle issues authentically flagged for the tester to view at testing time, has been rejected by the NZTA. It is therefore now up to NZTA to prove that they can deliver to all owners of heritage vehicles an ongoing standard of service at all testing outlets that is fair and equitable to all. The key issue NZTA needs to address is the dependence on individual testers' knowledge or lack thereof. Many issues club members are faced with are clearly set out in the VIRM. Some are not, but the problem with the VIRM is it is a large, constantly changing document, and many testers simply lack an acceptable knowledge of its contents. That must be remedied. As we have already said, the Federation shall continue to assist in providing information, but will continue to be forthright in representing members concerns when and where the system fails them. It is therefore vitally important that if you are having issues, you make these known to you club representatives.

Ross Hopkins, FOMC President



AUGUST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The key topic at the last quarterly committee meeting was the Vehicle Identity Card developments, detailed on the front page. The committee also agreed to form a technical panel to prepare a template of issues and solutions.

It was noted that nine new clubs had joined the FOMC in the last quarter, with total membership now over 130 clubs, comprising some 44,000 individual members and representing



The 2010 FOMC committee

around 58,000 vehicles. One of the newest member clubs was the Motor Caravan Association (MCA) who bring a new element of vehicle ownership to the FOMC, and their technical advisor, Fred Fellows, was invited to join the committee. The MCA has already asked us to assist with an issue concerning regulations which require safety chains to be fitted to imported lightweight trailers which have breakaway brakes installed – more details in the next issue.

There was an update on Special Interest Vehicles and particularly left-hand-drive cars, and the committee was assisting an enthusiast who imported a limited edition Chev RSR light truck who was unable to get it complied under the old rules because he returned two days before the 90-day overseas ownership deadline (the SIV criteria does not apply to vehicles classed as utes).

- *copies of meeting minutes are published in the newsletter section of our website: www.fomc.org.nz*

VEHICLE SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The Federation of Motoring Clubs is represented on an influential industry-wide working group set up by the NZTA to provide input into its vehicle and road user safety strategies. The Vehicle Safety Advisory Group consists of representatives of the vehicle industry, vehicle users, lobby groups as well as NZTA and Ministry of Transport officials, including new and used car importer associations, the parts industry, Motor Trade Association, VTNZ and VINZ, the AA and Road Transport Forum.

At the last meeting, NZTA discussed plans to review the current WoF regime next year, which would encompass:

- *the frequency of test*
- *international best practice for periodic inspection*
- *technical requirements of test*
- *cost of the test*
- *possible links between WoF, RUC and vehicle licensing*

The aims of the review are to improve safety and on-road compliance while reducing compliance costs for vehicle owners.

The review will consider whether the WoF should continue to be 6-monthly for older vehicles, or whether a distance-based measurement could be used instead, but also whether the inspections should be more invasive, including 'shake tests' for suspensions, and means to check the operability of modern safety equipment. The Federation's representative voiced concern about more invasive tests for older enthusiast vehicles, and suggested a two-tier system where vehicles failing a visual inspection could be referred to a physical test. We also supported less frequent WoF intervals for older vehicles that were clearly travelling limited annual mileages but were not suffering wear and tear.

- www.nzta.govt.nz/about/who-and-what/working-with-others/vsag

IMPORTED VEHICLES WITHOUT ODOMETERS

The Federation has learnt about problems involving used vehicles with new odometers or missing their odos altogether.

According to the Low Volume Vehicle Technical Association (LVVTA), a situation arose earlier this year where a vehicle enthusiast imported a hot-rodded 1956 Ford F100 panel van from the USA. Amongst its extensive modifications was an aftermarket digital dash. Because the new dash provided a mileage reading that did not accurately reflect the distance the vehicle had travelled (throughout its complete life), NZ Customs deemed that the vehicle was a prohibited import and seized it.

Vintage vehicles and motorcycles without odometers, and road-going race cars with aftermarket or removed odometers, are also at risk of being declared prohibited imports. The Customs Import Prohibition Order 2008 prohibits the importation into New Zealand of any motor vehicle:

- *the odometer reading of which does not correctly record the distance the vehicle has been driven; and*
- *imported without an odometer.*



So, if there is no odometer it's a prohibited import. Additionally a replacement odometer would not correctly record the distance the vehicle has been driven so it would be a prohibited import. According to NZ Customs, the prohibition is absolute, with no exceptions or approvals.

In order to try and prevent repeats of this, LVVTA is working on a proposal to present to NZ Customs, offering more categories for vehicle types that can be exempted from the current import prohibition order.

– thanks to the LVVTA and NZ Customs for this information

LEGISLATION UPDATE

A round-up of planned legislative changes that may affect club members:

ACC motor vehicle levies

The Accident Compensation Corporation recently consulted on proposals for the 2011-12 motor vehicle levies. The next financial year's levies are largely business as usual, without the big hike in motorcycle levies we saw this year. The main change however is an increase in the petrol levy from 9.9 cents per litre to 12.9c/l, with a corresponding drop in the fixed vehicle licence levy (about \$25 per car).

The Federation put in a submission on the proposals, supporting raising the petrol tax as it is an efficient means of ensuring the cost to the user is proportionate to the accident risk incurred. A major flaw with the current vehicle-based levy scheme is that owners of multiple vehicles pay more than their share despite being only able to drive or ride one vehicle at a time; paying more of the levy via petrol tax helps address this (although we think a driver-based levy would be best).

To that end, ACC also sought feedback on introducing a similar distance-based levy for diesel vehicles, probably added to the Road User Charge. Unlike petrol, there is no ACC levy on diesel fuel so diesel vehicles pay the same annual levy regardless of mileage. For similar reasons, the Federation said it supported levying a proportion of ACC on RUC as this will reduce the disproportionate cost imposed on our members owning military vehicles, motor homes, and other hobby and recreational vehicles which are a low accident risk as they cover minimal mileages each year.

ACC are also considering developing the levy system to link fee scales to vehicle or driver characteristics such as safety equipment, engine capacity, age of drivers and infringement history. The Federation's submission questioned whether there is evidence to support any presumption that older vehicles or those with larger engines can be linked to excessive injury costs. As vehicle in the 'vintage' class (over 40 years) already pay only 35% of the standard car levy, on account of their limited use and therefore lower accident risk, we submitted that this threshold should be lowered to 30 years and this class exempted from any vehicle characteristic-based ratings. We also opposed levy ratings based on engine capacity and driver age or (in)experience.

- *copies of our submissions are available on our website: www.fomc.org.nz/current.html*

Restricting access to the Motor Vehicle Register

From April 2011, access to vehicle owners' name and address details held on the Motor Vehicle Register (MVR) will be restricted after a new law comes into effect (postponed from the originally scheduled date of November 2010).

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Currently anyone can obtain your personal contact details from the MVR (for a fee), which has been publicly accessible for decades. While access to the MVR is legally required for law enforcement and other purposes, it has been abused mainly by direct marketing firms purchasing the database to send self-addressed promotional material, as well as individuals accessing details for criminal purposes (such as to steal a sought-after car).

The new law seeks to restrict access to the MVR, and will only permit the release of personal information for the following purposes:

- *enforcement of the law;*
- *maintenance of the security of New Zealand;*
- *collection of charges imposed or authorised by an enactment (e.g. fines or tolls); and*
- *the administration and development of transport law and policy (e.g. vehicle licensing and recalls).*

Anyone who wishes to obtain names and addresses held on the MVR for other purposes will have to make an Official Information Act request to the NZ Transport Agency. Alternatively any person may seek a special 'authorisation' from the Ministry of Transport to obtain information from the register.

However, people who don't wish for their details to be released to someone who has been granted special authorisation may ask for their details to be withheld. This is called 'opting-out', but won't take effect until the law comes into force next April 2011.

Whether you decide to opt out will depend on the extent to which you have received unsolicited personally-addressed mail from direct marketing companies using the database, or are concerned about someone tracking you from your rego plate, and if you don't think that will be adequately restricted under the new criteria.

Note however that the new law will therefore also make it difficult for clubs to attempt to contact prospective members via the MVR, or for enthusiasts to track down owners of vehicles they are interested in.

- www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle/registration-licensing/information.html

Changes to Road User Charges

The Minister of Transport has announced several changes to the RUC system designed to simplify the scheme and reduce compliance costs for transport operators.

Two of the key changes of importance to owners of diesel-engined enthusiast vehicles include:

- *changing from a nominated (e.g. laden or unladen) licence weight to one where each vehicle will have its own permanent RUC weight regardless of load;*
- *removing the time licence system.*

The time licences are being abolished because they are confusing and very few vehicles use them. However that

will mean specialist diesel vehicles that are not often used on the road, like military vehicles or traction engines, will have to purchase a minimum 1,000km licence instead.

The proposed changes follow an in-depth review of the scheme in 2008, and will be introduced to Parliament later this year in a new Road User Charges Amendment Bill.

INSURANCE UPDATE

An editorial in the July issue of *Beaded Wheels*, the Vintage Car Club magazine, noted that some insurance companies had changed or modified their interpretation or definition of what constitutes a road 'rally'. The editorial said "any group of vehicles gathering for either a competitive or non-competitive event that is being organised by a club or a private individual may now be deemed as a rally by some insurance companies and unless you have special cover your vehicle may not be covered by your present insurance" should you be involved in an accident during the so-called rally.

We asked the Federation's insurance advisor, John Barley, for his comments on what enthusiast owners should do to ensure they are fully covered under their vehicle insurance whenever operating the vehicle (legally) on the road.

John's advice is that you should always read the insurance policy before you buy and if you have any questions, ask the insurer and or broker. Check to see if the policy specifically refers to rallies, motokhanas, and time trials etc. held on public roads, and if not, ask the insurer to provide a definition to be included in the policy. John says so long as the car is being used in accordance with the Transport Act and is being used for its designed purpose then the owner of the vehicle should be fine.



"I think what is happening is that people are using the cars or vehicles in competitive events in a manner which the vehicle was not designed for and then arguing with the insurers to get the claim paid. So now the insurers are being more definitive and putting a line in the sand," Mr Barley said.

John suggests that if your club is engaging in on-road or off-road competitive events, that you consider belonging to MotorSport NZ to cover the club and the participants in a rally in the event that there is damage to third party property due to the use of the vehicle (note the vehicle is not covered).

In addition, he suggests owners investigate specialist insurers who understand the culture of car clubs and who can offer full vehicle cover, including for rallies, motorkhanas etc., something more and more owners are doing.

- www.barley.co.nz