

Media Release

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Stop - don't do it. VACC tells Federal Government to step away from relaxing restrictions on new car imports

VACC, the peak automotive industry body in Victoria, and members of the Victorian Automobile Dealers Association (VADA), have told the Federal Government to back away from relaxing new car imports.

VACC says consumers and businesses alike will be negatively affected by the introduction of personal importation of new cars into Australia. The number of pitfalls far outweighs any perceived benefits and too many questions still remain unanswered.

Federal Government stated that relaxing restrictions will increase consumer choice and provide more access to vehicles at the lowest possible cost. VACC, its national body, the Australian Motor Industry Federation (AMIF), AMIF member states and many other motor industry groups, strongly disagree.

“The vast majority of the automotive industry is united in opposing the relaxing of new car imports into Australia. The message from industry is loud and clear, and yet, it now appears we are swimming against the tide,” VACC Executive Director, Geoff Gwilym, said.

If restrictions were relaxed, a new vehicle would potentially be the biggest investment a person would buy overseas. How consumers will navigate a system including customs, freight, inspections and insurance or what they'll do when their pre-paid, new vehicle, is detained for inspection at an overseas port is anyone's guess. VACC asks who will consumers seek assurances from if their vehicle doesn't pass the Australian Design Rules and how will buyers know that the gleaming vehicle they saw online, is the one they actually received, and with a true odometer reading?

VACC predicts disgruntled consumers, having purchased imports privately, in the mistaken belief they are saving a buck, will take their frustrations out on branded service and repair centres, when they discover repairs are complex, time consuming and costly.

“When they discover the lack of warranty, and that one-off parts and tools are not available in Australia, vehicle owners will claim the industry has failed them when, in fact, it's the system that will have failed the industry.

“VACC is also astounded by the Federal Government's sudden concern about new vehicle affordability. For years, VACC has advised Governments to abolish the Luxury Car Tax. If it is serious about new vehicle affordability, then we are more than ready for that conversation,” Mr Gwilym said.