



Council of Heritage Motor Clubs - NSW Inc.

Position Paper

Conversion of Heritage Vehicles to Electric Drive

Issue:

If a vehicle is converted from Internal Combustion to an electric motor powered is it still a heritage vehicle?

Background:

This paper does not seek to consider the merits or otherwise of electrification of the national vehicle fleet. It is limited to vehicles 30 years and older that have been converted from being powered by internal combustion (ICE) to electric drive (ED).

An industry is developing in Australia for undertaking these conversions. Some of these conversions use heritage vehicles as donors. There are significant complexities associated with such conversions not limited to battery and charging standards; electric motors replacing the ICE or alternatively the complete drive train; impact on steering, handling characteristics, braking performance and structural integrity; heating/ventilation systems and occupant protection.

South Australia has developed a "Vehicle Standards Fact Sheet - MR 648 - Conversion to Electric Drive" that addresses these complexities. Any conversions must meet the applicable Australian Design Rules (ADRs) applicable at the time of the original manufacture and require Engineering Certification. In NSW no specific Vehicle Standard has been developed but the principal document is "VSI 6 Light Vehicle Modifications" that requires ADR compliance and engineering certification and eligible for Classic Vehicle registration.

In 2022 the "Bay to Birdwood" included a category for historic sympathetic EV conversion.

Position:

The CHMC adopts the following as its position on conversion of heritage vehicles to electric drive:

- Conversion from ICE to ED is such a substantial departure from the vehicle's original design to render it ineligible to be considered as a heritage vehicle;
- No vehicle converted from ICE to ED will be approved to enter the CVS under the CHMC as an Approved Organisation;
- TfNSW will be lobbied to develop or adopt a VSI specifically for Conversion to Electric Drive;
- Vehicles converted from ICE to ED will not be allowed to participate in the CHMC Annual Rally; and
- A category for ED conversions in Heritage Display Days and/or Tours will not be supported.