

Historic Vehicle Registration in NSW, Australia: An Overview

A common question riders ask when looking to join our club is “how does historic club registration and insurance work? This article is intended to help you understand how it all works.

Historic vehicle registration in New South Wales (NSW), provides a cost-effective option for vintage and classic bike owners to legally operate their vehicles on public roads under specific conditions. The program is administered by the NSW Government (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/vehicle-registration/how-to-register/historic-vehicles-registration>). The primary requirements are the bike must be 30yrs or older and in original or near original condition, regardless of whether it is restored or not.

There is often some question surrounding exactly what “original or near original” condition actually means, the general assumption is that any changes to the bike would be minor, chassis, suspension, braking, engine/gearbox, controls etc are as the machine was designed and left the factory. Obviously an owner may have replaced shocks and springs, brake pads, a different colour perhaps. Exhausts are often non-standard because the originals are not available, same with seats but basically the machine should look, perform and ride as it did from the factory, though the overall condition may and probably will not be the same.

If the bike is modified in any significant way it should be registered under the “classic” scheme which is not applicable to our club. The classic scheme has a different set of requirements for the club to adhere to and administer.

The Role of Vehicle Clubs

Vehicle clubs are central to the historic registration process, the bike must be registered through a NSW Government-recognised historic vehicle club such as ours. These clubs are to ensure that bikes meet the age and condition criteria, and maintain a detailed record of each member’s vehicle.

Clubs may also keep information such as photographs, specifications and bikes restoration history. Club officials - often designated as scrutineers or registrars, are responsible for verifying the eligibility of bikes and endorsing the application forms that are submitted to Service NSW.

Insurance and Conditional Use

Vehicles on historic registration are issued with conditional registration, meaning their road use is limited. Owners may ride them for club events, maintenance, and testing purposes, additionally an owner can use the *Log Book Scheme* to expand flexibility, this allows up to 60 days of personal use annually outside of club event participation.

Like any bike it must be covered by Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance, this is bundled with the historic registration at a significantly reduced fee.

Comprehensive insurance is optional and up to the owner, but is a good idea, especially for bikes that are expensive to replace or repair. Note also the program does not cover the rider/bike for damage to other vehicles, for that you need 3rd party property insurance.

Owners are not required to write up the club events into the log book, but must record any ride outside that and are to carry the log Book with them on the ride.

Historic Number Plates

Once approved, historic vehicles are issued unique number plates beginning with "H" (e.g., H-12345), clearly indicating their conditional status. These plates are non-transferable if the bike is sold and must be surrendered if the vehicle ceases to be registered under the scheme or if ownership changes.

Club Records and Compliance

Vehicle clubs play a regulatory role by keeping comprehensive records of all vehicles within the club registers under the scheme, the records include annual declarations of continued eligibility and vehicle inspections. Clubs must also ensure their members comply with the rules, including correct log book usage and appropriate vehicle modifications - any major modifications post the original registration in the scheme may render a vehicle ineligible for future historic registration.

Registration Checks and Transfers

The Rego Check tool provided by Service NSW allows the public to verify a vehicle's registration status, including whether it is conditionally registered.

However, details specific to the vehicle's historic status (such as club affiliation or log book use) are not shown and must be verified through the club or by contacting Service NSW.

If an owner wishes to change clubs, a transfer process must be undertaken. The new club must verify and approve the vehicle, and the owner must submit updated documentation to Service NSW. A change in club may also necessitate a new historic plate and a fresh inspection, depending on the circumstances.

Most importantly, if a member resigns from the club, any bikes they have registered under the scheme will cease to be part of the program and can be considered no longer registered unless the owner has joined another club and arranged a transfer.

Historic vehicle clubs in New South Wales (NSW) are **required to notify Service NSW** when a member with vehicles registered under the [Historic Vehicle Scheme \(HVS\)](#) resigns or is no longer a financial member.

This latter point is why it is **crucial for members to ensure their membership fees are paid on or before time**. Should you ride the bike and are involved in an accident or stopped by the police you will effectively be regarded as unregistered.

So to Sum Up

Club Responsibility:

The club must ensure that only current, financial members are operating vehicles under the HVS.

Notification Obligation:

If a member resigns the club is obligated to:

- **Advise Service NSW** in writing.
- **Cancel the vehicle's registration** under the scheme, unless the vehicle is transferred to another eligible club or removed from the scheme entirely.

Vehicle Use Restrictions:

Once the member is no longer affiliated with the club, the vehicle registered under the scheme **must not be used** on public roads until it is registered under another **approved club**, or Converted to full registration.

Regulatory Basis:

This requirement helps ensure compliance with the conditional registration rules under [TfNSW Vehicle Standards Information VSI 6](#) and other TfNSW policies.

Continuing to use the vehicle on conditional registration after resignation from the club without transferring club affiliation, is **unlawful**.