

Incorrectly Registered Low Volume Vehicles

Introduction:

The purpose of this LVV Information Sheet is to explain to LVV Certifiers and interested vehicle owners why some vehicles have incorrect vehicle attributes recorded against them in the NZ Transport Registry system, and if they are recorded incorrectly, how to go about having them corrected. Specifically, we're referring to new (or relatively new) vehicles that are registered as old vehicles.

Legal Requirements:

The NZ Transport Agency's view on this matter is that the requirements and policy have never changed; - that is, it has never been permitted to describe a home-built replica vehicle as the vehicle which it replicates, nor has it ever been permitted to modify a vehicle to the point where there is little left of the original vehicle but still retain that vehicle's identity, without changing the registration status of that vehicle.

Background:

If someone owns, or is LVV certifying a scratch-built low volume vehicle that was built in NZ prior to the early 1990s, it may have been incorrectly registered when its details were first loaded into the transport registry database system upon completion of the vehicle's construction. This was a common situation which spanned from the 1970's through to the early 1990's, when a vehicle owner could turn up to a local Post Office and register a new car without any processes such as proof of compliance, or even verification of what it is. In fact many vehicles that became registered back then that never even existed at the time! All that was required was to explain to the person at the counter what it should be called, pass on a few basic details, and the process was complete – despite the fact that nobody had even sighted the car!

There are many different examples of such vehicles, including T-Buckets, replica MGTFs based around Triumph Heralds, and Beach Buggies based around Volkswagens. Many of these vehicles are still on the road today.

However, in some cases, it's not until these vehicles need low volume vehicle certification that the problem becomes apparent. LVVTA sees around one such case every other month, usually when a re-cert has been required for new modifications, the registration has lapsed, or where the modification declaration certificate has been lost.

When the situation involves the LVV certification system, the Low Volume Vehicle Technical Association (LVVTA) finds itself in the difficult position of having to say "sorry, we can't process that fiberglass replica T-bucket as a 1923 Model-T Ford (as the vehicle is registered), simply because its not". The reality is that LVVTA has considerable responsibilities to the NZ Government in looking after the vehicle modification hobby and industry, and no matter what angle you view it from, two wrongs don't make a right.

Resistance by vehicle owners:

One common argument from vehicle owners who find themselves in the 'compromising' position of having to correct their vehicle attributes is; "it must have been OK for vehicles to be registered like this back in the day, otherwise it wouldn't have happened". Unfortunately, that's not the case. Any scratch-built vehicle which has been identified as a 'production car' in its registration details, has been incorrectly registered.

Just because it happened, doesn't mean that it should have happened, but with the gaps in the registration system of the day, it's understandable that it did.

So, as part of the solution to the problems of the past, it's up to LVVTA to help to get its hobby car house back in order. This situation is tending to place LVVTA somewhat unfairly in the spotlight from time to time, with sometimes upset vehicle owners who argue that "it's always been like that, so why change it now?" In most cases, these owners are aware of these convenient errors of the past, and the main bug-bear is that they can't continue to get the benefit of cheap registration, which they were never really eligible for in the first place!

Why is it LVVTA's problem?

So, why must LVVTA get involved? The answer is simple. As part of LVVTA's contractual agreement with the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) to manage the LVV certification system in NZ on behalf of NZTA, LVVTA are legally obliged to ensure that any vehicle passing through the LVV certification process is correctly identified in the LANDATA system. This has been the case since the mid 1990's, and over the past 15 years many vehicles have been sorted out as they've gone through LVV certification, however the problem continues to this day for many other vehicles, both LVV certified and uncertified.

Any scratch-built hot rod should be registered as just that, and not the vehicle it replicates or resembles.

The solution:

LVVTA recommends to vehicle owners with incorrectly registered vehicles that this problem is sorted out before it becomes a dilemma at LVV certification time. And fortunately, the fix isn't a major.

LVVTA has worked through this with the key people within NZTA, and have agreed that such vehicles do not usually need to become de-registered, and then subsequently re-registered in its correct description, as some people have had to do in the past. The filling out of a form is all that is needed.

Affected vehicle owners should drop in to their local VINZ, AA, or VTNZ testing station with their vehicle, collect an MR16 form, and complete that with the required information, before posting it through to NZTA. In most cases there is little or no cost for this to be done, however this does depend on each testing station's individual policy. The testing station people will need to sight the vehicle, and may want to carry out a basic inspection.

The whole process is relatively simple; however it can take a month to complete the paperwork, so vehicle owners shouldn't leave it until the week before that big event they've been planning to attend.

In summary:

It's important that we all take our responsibilities seriously – vehicle modifiers and LVVTA alike – and consider the bigger picture and the long-term future of the hobby, as well as the short term well-being of our wallets.

If someone has been fortunate enough to have had cheap vintage car registration for the past 20 years when he or she really shouldn't have, they need to accept that they've had a good run, but their run has run out!

If you need any help or advice with this process, you can contact one of the Technical Team at the LVVTA office on (04) 238 4343, or email tech@lvvta.org.nz.

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