

## Conditional Registration and the HRSCA

Before we start to explore this less than fascinating subject how about a quick quiz? Okay then, hands up if you know the answer to this question.

What do motorised golf-buggies, all-terrain vehicles, agricultural motorcycles, lawnmowers, wheelchairs, classic sedans and sports cars have in common? Vexing isn't it? Sure, all have wheels and each is motorised. However, if that's your answer you can put your hands down and look sullenly towards the floor. If your answer is that each is eligible with the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) for Conditional Registration you're right and your milky bar is in the post.

So the good old RTA have bunched us with a hotch potch of motorised vehicles *that are built to perform specific operational functions and don't comply with the construction and equipment requirements of the Australian Design Rules (ADRs) and vehicle standards*. That's RTAspeak in case you haven't gathered. As you have probably figured out by now most of these vehicles cannot be fully registered for the road except for one group. These vehicles would also use the roads fairly infrequently.

Now here is where the RTA has been clever and we should be thankful that the world has moved on from less liberal times. A couple of years back the clever people at the RTA got together with the equally clever people in the older car movement (CVVTMC/CMC etc). There were no doubt interminable meetings between everyone but eventually they came up with the idea of classifying the vehicles that were previously entitled to Unregistered Vehicle Permits (Club Plates) as eligible for Conditional Registration.

### Simple Isn't It?

Simple? It certainly is. So when Wes asked me to once again put fingers to the keyboard to explain how Conditional Registration works I knew something was afoot.

Am I cross? Am I angry? What about wits end? Does anyone know why some car clubs are full of overzealous people who seem to go to extreme lengths to make life more complicated and difficult for their fellow club members?

Conditional Registration is really simple. The policies and rules of the RTA are really simple. It is the car clubs that make it difficult by introducing petty paranoid rules that they think will protect the innocent – club members who just want to enjoy their cars in a law-abiding fashion.

Whew! I've got that off my chest and I feel better. So what I thought I would do is to go through the RTA rules and policies for Conditional Registration and provide the HSRCA interpretation. So if it's in *ITALICS* it's what the RTA says (*RTAspeak*) and the rest is what's applied in the HSRCA. This makes it very clear (I think) and if you are a member of another club that asks for a letter from your mum witnessed by a JP just to move your car around the block you will then know it's not the RTA that's insisting on whatever, but the club. Simple?

When we finally get to the end of this epistle I'll rave on a bit about the myriad of rules the HSRCA has introduced apart from the RTA rules and policies. These are quite minor and to my feeble mind only make sense.

### Registered Operator

*Only a natural person can be recorded as the registered operator of a conditionally registered vehicle.*

Like most of us I have some great memories of operating my classic cars!!!! Anyway what this means is that couples ie a husband and wife cannot be shown as the registered operator. I have had a few requests for joint names but sorry this can't be done. It also cuts out having your car in your dog's name or that of your long departed (but generous) aunt.

## Eligibility

*An historic vehicle must be 30 years of age or older as from the year of manufacture.*

This is a carry over from the Club Plate days and while in the early days we had to be a little liberal with some cars most of our cars now quite comfortably fit into this category and even more so do the registered operators.

*Vehicles must be as close to original condition as possible, with NO alterations except for safety features such as seat belts and turn indicators or period accessories and options, if desired.*

Now this is where it gets interesting as some clubs are extremely strenuous in the policing of this rule. If we did the same there would be quite a few cars that could not be conditionally registered. I have always looked at this from a very simple and period viewpoint. If a car carries a period modification it's okay, conversely if it has a modern modification, it's a case of "sorry mate but I can't help you!".

Some clubs say that a car should be exactly how it was when it left the factory. For our club this just does not make sense as most of our cars were sporting cars and there would be very few that were not modified in some way especially during the first decade or two following manufacture. How about a couple of extreme examples to show what I mean.

If you happened to have a Healey Silverstone that originally had the Riley four-cylinder and it had been fitted in the early '50s with a Cadillac V8 and Ford gearbox would it be eligible for conditional registration? Too right it would, as probably would an Austin-Healey that was fitted with a V8 during the late fifties or sixties and registered with an engineers certificate. However, if you came up with an MGB fitted with a modern quad-cam zillion valve Lexus V8 I would obviously say no!

*The registered operator must be a member of an RTA recognised historic vehicle club, proof of club membership must be provided to the RTA prior to establishing or renewing conditional registration.*

This sounds really simple doesn't it? I would have thought so, but many HSRCA members are members of multiple clubs and it's possible in the Conditional Registration application to list those clubs. This means that operators (I keep seeing us sitting on top of earth moving equipment) can use their cars in events run by the other clubs they are members of. That's fine but please remember that while we all have to stick to the RTA rules there are many other clubs where the zealous have set different rules that apply just to that club. So **PLEASE DON'T** have a stand up blue with the president of the Widget Appreciation and Drivers Club saying that you don't have to book three months ahead in writing just to drive around the block in the HSRCA. Remember also that the other club you list must be a participating club with regard to Conditional Registration. GEAR, ARDC and Appendix J Association do not to my current knowledge.

## Vehicle Roadworthiness

Important stuff this, after all we don't want to drive unsafe cars on the road do we? All those years back when we started with club plates there were quite a few cars that perhaps were not safe enough to drive on the roads – not HSRCA. Thankfully, that has changed dramatically and the standard of all cars has improved. That can only be a good thing.

The RTA rules like all others are really very straightforward and state:-

*A vehicle operating under the scheme must be declared roadworthy by:*

- *A Safety Inspection Report (pink slip) issued by an Authorised Inspection Station examiner, or, if the club is over 2 years old, the authorising member must hold relevant mechanical knowledge.*
- *A Club Declaration of Roadworthiness issued by a member of the club.*

Some clubs have two bob each way on this as by providing an annual inspection day as well as accepting pink slips. HSRCA do not offer such a system and require a pink slip or "sorry mate – no

conditional rego". The reason has to do with all sorts of legal claptrap about what happens after certifying a car as roadworthy and it has an accident. Whose neck is in the noose – most likely mine?

Do we all run around in ever decreasing circles panicking about this and finally disappear up our own orifices? Of course not! It's your responsibility to ensure that your car is roadworthy, not mine. When you take your paperwork along to your efficient RTA office, it's you that is entering into a contract with them to use your car on the road in accordance with the conditional registration scheme, not me or the HSRCA. It's no different to when you do likewise with your everyday car.

## **Vehicle Use**

Now it's getting red hot as over the years it is surely when you can and when you can't use your car that is the most contentious. This is also the area where the zealous amongst us have had a field day marching about with their little caps and brown shirts telling us what to do. This is the area that really gets me worked up so I will apologise before I say anything. I will say however that our club has always tried to make it as easy as possible for club members by allowing the greatest degree of flexibility and a far less draconian system.

So here goes, RTA rule by RTA rule and what we do.

*Vehicles can only be used for events organised by their club, another club or recognised community organisations provided an official invitation has been received and documented by the club in the official minutes, or the official 'Day Book'.*

That's it! That's all the RTA says about using your conditionally registered vehicles for club events. Nowhere does it say that events must be on the weekend, or you must contact the club registrar before sparrow fart on the morning of the event to let them know that you are about to exercise your car. The RTA rule is simple saying that you can use your vehicle on any event organised by the HSRCA or one our club is invited to. The same applies to any other club that you may have nominated (if a Conditional Registration participant) but they may have introduced more rules.

This brings us to the point of travelling to and from, an aspect that really gets my goat. Unless you have managed to convert your car into a four-wheeled version of Dr Who's TARDIS I cannot see any other way of attending an event without having to travel there. To anyone with more than half a brain you have probably now worked out that travelling takes time. (For the sake of the exercise I am ignoring if an event is held at your own home.) So if an event is to take place in the next suburb, across the other side of Sydney or even the other side of the country the time to get there and back has to be factored in. That time of course is permitted usage for a Conditional Registered vehicle.

Now before you loose focus just go back and read the RTA rule again and tell me anywhere that it says that all the vehicles of a club attending an event must travel together? Nothing wrong with travelling together and it's something we do most of the time but it's not compulsory.

Nor does the RTA rule state that we must travel by the most direct route. However, I believe that this is one aspect of Conditional Registration that needs to be considered fairly and very much in the spirit of what is normal usage. Frankly, if you live on the Northern Beaches of Sydney and there is an event at Lane Cove National Park, I think it's unreasonable to end up driving your vehicle to Bundeena near the Royal National Park. However if you attended an Historic Race Meeting at Wakefield Park in Goulburn I think it would be reasonable to take an extra day to return because you wanted to visit Aunty Flo at Bundanoon.

The same goes for say Phillip Island (HSRCA is formally invited to this event) as most would go via the most direct route and that's okay but to detour by yourself to Broome and other points north would not be on UNLESS the short drive home via Darwin was an event organised by the club. It's really that simple but for the life of me I cannot understand other classic car enthusiasts who want to make it difficult for their fellow enthusiast.

## **Servicing & Maintenance**

This aspect is worth a close look and seems to attract the “Club Rego Police” and their unnecessary rules. Once again the RTA rules are simplicity itself: -

*Vehicles can also be used (I wonder what happened to operated?) on a road or road related area for:*

- *Servicing within a short distance from their place of garaging*
- *The inspection of the vehicle.*

*If a longer journey is necessary, the member must notify the Club Secretary so that they can enter the details in the Club's official 'Day Book' or minutes.*

Please don't ask me what a road related area is, as I have never quite worked it out. Our club has specified that after servicing your car you can drive it within a 10-kilometre journey of where it's garaged, which is probably your home without notifying me. No doubt there are those amongst us who now have the street directory on their laps working out how far the hardware store or local bottle shop is. This also covers when you want to take your car for servicing at your favourite spanner wielder. However if you have a rush of blood to your head and you want to take you car to Melbourne for fettling give me a call first.

The inspection aspect is easy and covers the occasions when you are taking your vehicle to have inspected for a pink slip.

Like the rest using (I won't use operate) your vehicle for other occasions is straightforward and just requires a phone call, email, carrier pigeon, sky-writing or whatever. So if you wake up on a drop dead gorgeous Sunday morning and just have to go for a run to Palm Beach to test the new driveshaft grease nipples you installed last Pancake Tuesday all you need to do is get in touch.

*Any Club member wishing to use their vehicle for the carriage of persons to or from a wedding or reception should first check their legal obligation under the Passenger Transport Act 1990 with the Taxi & Hire Bureau of the Ministry of Transport, Parramatta on (02) 9689 8888. The Club must also authorise the use of the vehicle for this purpose.*

*Vehicles must display conditional registration number plates and a current registration label.*

*Name bars may be affixed to the number plate provided the positioning of the name bar does not obscure the number plate.*

All this means that you can use you car to carry the blushing bride but let us know first. If you have a need to request some form of payment get in contact with the Ministry of Transport first as there is all sorts of legal hoops and hurdles involved.

Of course we display the conditional registration plates and rego label that were issued to us by the RTA. You would be a Skippy short in the top paddock if you didn't. The interesting extra bit here is that if you do have an identity problem you can continue to display those name bars we had under the previous club plate scheme. By the way I have a few left over if anyone wants one.

## **Conditions**

This is where all the small print is and it pays to read it carefully. However once again the RTA hasn't gone overboard with its rules.

*Historic Vehicles registered under the conditional registration scheme are subject to the following conditions of operations:-*

- *“Registered operator must be a member of an authorised motoring club.”*
- *“Use only in conjunction with an authorised club event or maintenance.”*

*The name of the registered operator's Club (or primary Club if they belong to more than one) must be entered as a special condition. Other conditions may be applied as required.*

*The Certificate of Approved Operations, (RTAspeak for rego papers) detailing the conditions applicable to the operation of the vehicle, must be carried in the vehicle whenever the vehicle is used on a road or road related area.*

There's that *road related area* again and I am none the wiser. If you have got the idea that the RTA likes to repeat itself you wouldn't be far wrong. If you read earlier on in the diatribe, the condition of club membership and use in club events have already been covered. Why does the RTA mention it again? If I knew that I would know everything and would never have to work again.

What I do know is that if you look at you conditional registration papers (read Certificate of Approved Operations) you will find a number of conditions that we have to adhere to. Generally these conditions are those mentioned above. Oh yes, before I forget, when the RTA states *Other conditions may be applied as required* it refers to other RTA applied conditions and not those fabricated by the 'Classic Car Brown Shirts'.

## **General**

Being a government organisation the RTA just couldn't stop with the conditions so it looked around for anything else that wasn't included and listed it under General. There are a few but you will see how relevant they are to us.

*Motor cars, tourers and limousines can only carry one person per seating position. Seat belts must be worn, where fitted. Buses can only carry 7 passengers except for special events and specific approval from the RTA.*

*This policy applies to NSW and ACT Clubs listed on the RTA's database. All members must be financial members of these approved clubs and must be NSW residents.*

*Vehicles registered under the scheme may operate temporarily in other states and territories, under the same conditions as apply in NSW. Temporarily is considered to be 3 months continuously.*

*Interstate vehicles (operating under a similar scheme in their home state/territory) may be driven in NSW if they legally comply with the rules and regulations of their permit/registration.*

I don't think we need to worry that we can't carry more than 7 passengers and it only makes some sense that we don't try and fit five into a Sunbeam Tiger. Of course the RTA wasn't too sure if you knew you had to be a member of a recognised club or not. So just to avoid any confusion it was mentioned for a third time in their policy.

While we can now be totally at ease on the question of club membership I am not too sure about members of clubs in the ACT. The policy states that conditional registration applies to clubs in NSW and the ACT but only residents of NSW can conditionally register their cars. If you figure that one out please let me know.

The question on interstate travel is ruly truly simple and is above in black and white for you to read.

## **Extra HSRCA Rules**

Just to make our lives a little bit easier the HSRCA has introduced some extra rules of our own. However these are really simple and are just there to protect the innocent - me.

The first and most important rule is that we insist that each car on conditional registration through our club must carry at least third property insurance. This covers the club just in case you run into a Maybach or McLaren F1 during the next fish and chip run. Seriously, I don't know of any conditionally registered car that doesn't carry comprehensive insurance, especially as it's so cheap through our friends at Shannons.

Secondly, you need to complete an HSRCA declaration that says you will abide by the Rules and Regs set down by our club. I provide these Rules and Regs and the declaration form both at the time of application for and renewal of Conditional Registration.

Thirdly, I need a copy of your paperwork. Quite simply, if I sign off on your application for Conditional Registration and you go and pay the money to the RTA, collect your plates and papers but fail to send me the copy of the Conditional Registration certificate then we have no idea whether the car is registered or not. So, it is not on our database and you are on your own if something happens.

See, I said that Conditional Registration was really simple. So if someone tells you something different than the above RTA Policy it's just because their club has introduced it. That's fine, of course, but it does make me wonder why some people like to make life difficult.

Oh yes! Remember the current amount of \$51 you pay to the RTA covers the Conditional Registration as well as the compulsory third party insurance (CTP). There is also a once only plate fee (\$36) but all together it really is cheap as chips. Plus, when it comes to insuring your car I don't know of any insurance company that doesn't take into account the restricted use making the premium very light on indeed.

If you do have any questions just give me a call.

Happy motoring

***Rick Marks***