

Wheelchair accessible vehicle subsidy scheme guidelines

The Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Subsidy Scheme (Scheme) is administered by Safe Transport Victoria (ST Vic). Section 115F of the *Transport Integration Act 2010* sets out the functions of ST Vic which includes the administration of subsidy schemes established in relation to the commercial passenger vehicle (CPV) industry.

This Scheme reflects ST Vic's ongoing commitment to expand and maintain the accessibility of WAV services in urban, regional and country Victoria. The Scheme subsidises the purchase costs of a WAV, to make it a similar cost to a conventional unbooked service (taxi) vehicle.

To apply for a subsidy, applicants must complete the Application for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Subsidy (Application). If your application is approved, you will be required to enter into a WAV Subsidy Agreement (Agreement). Subsidies will only be paid on the terms of this agreement. You should read the Agreement carefully and obtain independent legal, taxation and financial advice if necessary.

These guidelines include:

Section A	About the scheme
Section B	Schedule of subsidy payment
Section C	Application form

Eligibility criteria

Before being approved for a subsidy you must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- have owned and operated an urban, regional or country WAV (taxi) licence prior to 9 October 2017 and you have continued to provide WAV services in these areas with a current CPV registration,
- be replacing a WAV that is older than 5 years,
- be able to accept and process Multi Purpose Taxi Program payments, and
- not owe a previous unexpired subsidy to ST Vic (a pro-rata balance would become payable to ST Vic under certain circumstances - See the 'Repayment of subsidy' section of these guidelines).

Important: WAVs that only operate or will only operate in the Melbourne Metropolitan area cannot be subsidised. Subsidised WAVs are required to, almost exclusively, operate in the region nominated on the application. WAVs conducting trips starting and ending in the Melbourne Metropolitan area are not eligible for the WAV subsidy.

Section A: About the scheme

ST Vic will consider each application on its merits, ensuring that the application meets all the criteria. Applicants are required to provide ST Vic with a completed application form and any relevant supporting documentation. ST Vic may also request additional information when processing your application. For approved applicants, ST Vic will provide a subsidy as per Section B.

Assessment

ST Vic will endeavour to review applications and notify you in writing of its decision to approve or refuse your application within 14 days of receiving a complete and valid application.

ST Vic will contact you if it requires additional information. If you do not respond to our request for further information within 30 days, ST Vic will process your application based on the information provided. This may result in your application being refused.

Lodgement details

Email registration@safetransport.vic.gov.au

Post Safe Transport Victoria, GPO Box 1716, Melbourne, VIC, 3001.

There is no fee applicable for the WAV Subsidy application.

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The replacement WAV

The replacement vehicle must comply with the specifications for WAVs as published in the Government Gazette in February 2020, found on our [website](#).

The vehicle age will be calculated from the build date, as shown on the manufacturer's compliance plate.

Replacement WAVs are categorised as follows:

- An existing unbooked service (taxi) vehicle converted to a WAV.
ST Vic will consider applications to cover the conversion cost of a suitable existing conventional (taxi) vehicle providing unbooked services to a WAV where that vehicle is already owned by the applicant. The same criteria will apply, but any subsidy is limited to the conversion cost only, with no retrospective payment in respect of the base vehicle. Funding in these cases will not be available where the replacement vehicle is more than five years old.
- Used vehicles.
The subsidy is available to replacement vehicles which are less than five years old at the time the subsidy is paid. The vehicle age will be calculated from the build date, as shown on the manufacturer's compliance plate.
- New vehicles.
If you are purchasing a new vehicle, and you wish to maximise the subsidy, you should ensure that the build date is very recent. That is, ensure that the vehicle is less than six months old at the time it is registered as a WAV, has been converted and all other conditions satisfied.

Granting of a subsidy

Once your application is approved, you will need to present a vehicle for registration as a WAV and satisfy all other requirements within six months of approval in order to remain eligible for the subsidy. ST Vic may agree in writing to an extension in some cases.

For approved applicants, ST Vic will provide a subsidy to equalise the difference between the cost of a conventional unbooked service (taxi) vehicle and a WAV, including conversion costs, up to a maximum subsidy of \$44,000 (including GST) on a progressively reducing scale. The amount of subsidy paid will depend on the age of the replacement vehicle at the time the subsidy is paid, up to a maximum vehicle age of five years. The amount of subsidy that will be paid is also based on whether the vehicle requires conversion or is pre-converted and whether at the time of purchase it is, or has previously been, a vehicle used for unbooked services (taxi). Refer to Section B.

Payment

The subsidy is paid as a lump sum at the time the WAV is registered to operate and all documentation has been provided as per the WAV subsidy agreement.

If a base vehicle is purchased and requires conversion to meet WAV specifications, then payment of the subsidy will occur at the time the vehicle commences service as a WAV, not when the initial base vehicle is purchased.

ST Vic will pay the subsidy when it sights and/or receives (as appropriate) original or certified copies of the following documentation:

- a Licensed Vehicle Tester (LVT) inspection report to confirm compliance with the specifications for WAVs as published on the ST Vic website, found on our [website](#).
- an engineering certificate for WAV conversion
- evidence of comprehensive insurance cover on the WAV
- proof of vehicle ownership
- 'Provision of new vehicle details' form (note this form will be sent to you once the WAV Subsidy Agreement is signed)
- a valid tax invoice for the vehicle and separate tax invoice for the conversion if this has been undertaken and paid separately, and
- a valid invoice made out to Safe Transport Victoria to claim the subsidy payment.

A certified copy means a document that has been certified as a true copy of an original by a person listed in section 107A of the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958*. These persons include a member of the police force, a legal practitioner, medical practitioner and a pharmacist.

The subsidy will be paid approximately 14 days after receipt of all the documentation above.

The subsidy may only be used for the purchase of a WAV vehicle, or the purchase and conversion of a vehicle to a WAV.

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The WAV owner will be responsible for all ongoing costs and fees associated with the purchase and registration of the vehicle, including, but not limited to, taxi livery, taxi equipment, stamp duty, vehicle inspection, vehicle registration, Transport Accident Commission (TAC) fees and insurances and repayment of the unexpired subsidy (if applicable).

Application timeline

In summary, the following timelines are a guide for the application process and its finalisation:

- Application: ST Vic decision within 14 days of receiving a complete and valid Application.
- Satisfying the conditions for payment: If approved, 6 months from the approval letter date.
- Payment of invoice: The subsidy will be paid approximately 14 days after satisfying the conditions for payment.

Driver accreditation and WAV training

Drivers of the WAV must hold driver accreditation issued by ST Vic, complete the WAV practical assessment, and hold 'W-endorsement' which allows them to provide CPV services to passengers in wheelchairs.

Contract Management

Under the Agreement, you must make the WAV available for inspection by ST Vic on request. You must also notify ST Vic immediately if you:

- intend to sell the WAV or your CPV business,
- no longer have permission to use the WAV, or
- are facing circumstances that may require the sale of the WAV.

Important: In these circumstances, you may be required to pay the subsidy back to ST Vic.

You must operate the WAV in a manner that ensures priority is given to bookings by people in wheelchairs and ST Vic will undertake measures to determine whether this is occurring. This will include analysing trip data for the subsidised vehicle.

Repayment of subsidy

Under the Agreement, you may be required to repay some or all of the subsidy to ST Vic if:

- the WAV is not used in the region nominated in the Application or is not used to give priority to people in wheelchairs,
- the WAV is only being used in the Melbourne Metropolitan Zone,
- the WAV is not used for a substantial period, irrespective of the reason for failing to do so (including but not limited to the vehicle being 'written off'),
- the WAV or the business is sold,
- the CPV registration of the WAV is cancelled,
- any term of the Agreement is breached.

For example, if you were paid a \$44,000 subsidy for a WAV you purchased, and you sell the vehicle or your business two years later, then you are required to reimburse ST Vic for \$15,092. The amounts you may need to reimburse ST Vic are specified in Tables 2, 3 and 4 in Section B.

In all cases, once the unexpired subsidy falls to less than \$10,000 you are no longer required to reimburse ST Vic. It is on this date that the Agreement expires.

Vehicle insurance

Evidence of comprehensive insurance cover is required to be provided to ST Vic to receive the subsidy. The WAV must be comprehensively insured throughout the term of the Agreement.

Exceptional circumstances for certain wheelchair accessible taxi licence holders

Certain wheelchair accessible taxi licences were issued to individuals who were directors of companies that operated in regional and country areas (Directors).

In some cases, the beneficial owners of these licences (and associated vehicles) were the companies and not the Directors. The Directors may never have had or no longer have an ongoing interest in the licence or the vehicle. In these circumstances, a company may apply for a subsidy. The subsidy application will need to include:

- a statutory declaration of the Director confirming that they never had or no longer have an ongoing interest in the licence or the vehicle,
- a written request signed by the Director to surrender the licence, and
- an application by the company to register the vehicle as a CPV.

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Section B: Schedule of subsidy payment

Except for vehicles less than six months' old the purchase price is not a factor in ST Vic's determination of the subsidy amount. For vehicles less than six months' old, ST Vic will seek validation of the purchase price. Vehicle age will be calculated from the build date, as shown on the manufacturer's compliance plate.

Table 1 (figures are GST inclusive)

WAV vehicle subsidy payment

Vehicle Age	Subsidy paid for vehicle (not previously a taxi) not yet converted to a WAV	Subsidy paid for vehicle (not previously a taxi) already converted to a WAV	Subsidy paid for converted vehicle, or vehicle to be converted, where the vehicle is or was previously a taxi
<6 months	60% of purchase price (incl. GST, excluding stamp duty) subject to maximum subsidy of \$44,000	60% of purchase price (incl. GST, excluding stamp duty) subject to maximum subsidy of \$44,000	N/A
6 to 12 months	\$39,600	\$33,000	\$28,050
1-2 years	\$36,300	\$30,250	\$21,175
2-3 years	\$33,000	\$27,500	\$19,250
3-4 years	\$29,700	\$24,750	\$17,325
4-5 years	\$26,400	\$22,000	\$15,400

Table 2 (figures are GST inclusive)

Subsidy initially paid for vehicle (not an existing taxi) to be converted to be wheelchair accessible - subsidy to be repaid to ST Vic.

Vehicle Age	Subsidy paid	Repayment amount < 1 year	Repayment amount 1-2 years	Repayment amount 2-3 years	Repayment amount 3-4 years	Repayment amount 4-5 years
<6 months	\$44,000	\$30,800	\$21,560	\$15,092	\$10,000	\$0
6 to 12 months	\$39,600	\$27,720	\$19,404	\$13,583	\$10,000	\$0
1-2 years	\$36,300	\$25,410	\$17,787	\$12,450	\$10,000	\$0
2-3 years	\$33,000	\$23,100	\$16,170	\$11,319	\$10,000	\$0
3-4 years	\$29,700	\$20,790	\$14,553	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
4-5 years	\$26,400	\$18,480	\$12,936	\$10,000	\$0	\$0

Table 3 (figures are GST inclusive)

Subsidy initially paid for vehicle (not an existing taxi) already converted to be wheelchair accessible - subsidy to be repaid to ST Vic.

Vehicle Age	Subsidy paid	Repayment amount < 1 year	Repayment amount 1-2 years	Repayment amount 2-3 years	Repayment amount 3-4 years	Repayment amount 4-5 years
<6 months	Up to \$44,000	\$30,800	\$21,560	\$15,092	\$10,000	\$0
6 to 12 months	\$33,000	\$23,100	\$16,170	\$11,319	\$10,000	\$0
1-2 years	\$30,250	\$21,175	\$14,822	\$10,375	\$10,000	\$0
2-3 years	\$27,500	\$19,250	\$13,475	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
3-4 years	\$24,750	\$17,325	\$12,127	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
4-5 years	\$22,000	\$15,400	\$10,780	\$10,000	\$0	\$0

Table 4 (figures are GST inclusive)

Subsidy initially paid for converted vehicle or vehicle to be converted where the vehicle was a former taxi - subsidy to be repaid to ST Vic.

Vehicle Age	Subsidy paid	Repayment amount < 1 year	Repayment amount 1-2 years	Repayment amount 2-3 years	Repayment amount 3-4 years
6 to 12 months	\$28,050	\$19,635	\$13,744	\$10,000	\$0
1-2 years	\$21,175	\$14,822	\$10,375	\$10,000	\$0
2-3 years	\$19,250	\$13,475	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
3-4 years	\$17,325	\$12,127	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
4-5 years	\$15,400	\$10,780	\$10,000	\$0	\$0

Safe Transport Victoria

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