

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)

Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme (VOSS) Guidelines

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Overview

The Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme (VOSS) is aimed at enabling people with a disability, their families and carers to participate further in social and economic opportunities in their community by providing a package of funding options to meet their vehicular access needs. Eligible clients may participate in the VOSS process to choose from a range of options that will enable and enhance their private transport.

The Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme (VOSS) has been established in response to issues raised in community consultation with people with a disability, their families and carers throughout Queensland. The feedback identified that public transport is not always suitable or available and private transport is sometimes the only appropriate and safe means of transport for people with a disability. Submissions to the Australian Government's Productivity Commission 2011 Public Inquiry on Disability Care & Support further highlighted the need for people with disability to have access to suitably modified vehicles.

VOSS has been developed through extensive consultation with an advisory group of external stakeholders, people with a disability and allied health professionals with many years of experience in the sector. This group has advised on the scope, process and the package of options to be funded by VOSS.

VOSS acknowledges the efforts of the advisory group with representatives from;

- *Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS), Queensland Health*
- *Department of Rehabilitation Engineering, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital*
- *Driving Assessment & Rehabilitation Service, Princess Alexandra Hospital*
- *RACQ*
- *Carers Queensland*
- *Queensland Disability Network Inc*
- *LifeTec Queensland*
- *Department of Transport and Main Roads*

This group was also assisted by key sector stakeholders who provided advice from their extensive experience in providing vehicle modifications for people with disability.

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Purpose

VOSS will enable people with a disability improved access to their communities of choice and will improve their private transport choices by providing subsidies for a range of vehicle access options.

Principle

VOSS is aimed at supporting people with a disability, their families and carers by subsidising vehicle options which:

- *enable improved social, economic and community participation*
- *facilitate increased independence and employment opportunities*
- *provide eligible clients with control and choice on the determination of their options*
- *utilise a consistent subsidy funding model that considers an individual's requirements, and operate with best practice assessment and procurement processes*
- *support carers and families in their caring role for people with a disability.*

Disability & Community Care Eligibility

Eligibility for VOSS is aligned with the broader Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) guidelines as set out in the Disability Services Act 2006.

Further eligibility information is available from the DCCSDS Eligibility Policy 2011 on the DCCSDS website

Eligibility is initially determined by the DCCSDS intake and assessment process. Contact 13QGov if you have not previously completed this eligibility assessment.

The eligibility criteria used during this process are as follows:

You are:

- *an Australian citizen or permanent resident with a suitable visa.*
- *a Queensland resident.*
- *under 65 years of age at the time of application.*

You have a disability that is:

- *due to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment (or a combination of impairments).*
- *permanent or likely to be permanent.*

Your disability results in:

- *a substantial reduction in capacity for communication, social interaction, learning, mobility or self-care/management .*
- *a need for support.*

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VOSS Ineligibility

To ensure equitable access to funding for eligible persons, VOSS subsidy funding is not available to persons entitled to receive assistance for vehicular access from other government-funded programs, agencies or organisations or if they are entitled to any form of compensation related to their disability. VOSS subsidies are not available for vehicles (1) owned by organisations or (2) intended for use or used for business or commercial purposes.

People who may be ineligible include those who would be able to receive assistance for vehicle access from:

- *Queensland WorkCover*
- *Department of Veterans Affairs (as Gold Card holders)*
- *An existing insurance policy where a vehicle access/ modification is available or any other compensable claim that will cover the cost of a vehicle/ vehicle modification.*

VOSS funding is only available for passengers if they reside with the carer or a family member who is the intended driver of the funded vehicle. Employed carers are not able to be the principal drivers of a VOSS funded vehicle.

Subsidised Service Options

Subsidised Service Options

- *Funding is aimed at contributing to a range of identified needs to enable vehicular access.*
- *It is likely that the subsidy may not cover the full cost of any of the vehicle or modification options for people with a disability.*

A VOSS client is able to access a portion of the maximum subsidy to meet their vehicle modification needs and further submissions for assistance may be made at a later date. VOSS funding for each eligible applicant will not exceed a cumulative total of up to \$10,000 over a five year period from the date of the client's first payment. The subsidies may be available individually or simultaneously. All subsequent applications will be subject to further VOSS approval. This flexibility in VOSS funding strengthens the capacity of the scheme to meet client's changing needs throughout key life stages.

All applications to VOSS must follow the process as outlined in this VOSS Guidelines document and be approved before funding is available.

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Funding is NOT available retrospectively and as such, purchase of a vehicle or modifications should not occur until the client is advised by VOSS of approval, and provided with an Approval in Principle document.

Set subsidy payments as outlined below may contribute towards the cost of:

- a VOSS prescription by a registered VOSS prescriber (RVP) that includes professional assessment and prescription of vehicle access options, as outlined in the VOSS guidelines
- the purchase of a suitably modified vehicle (within the VOSS guidelines)
- the purchase of a vehicle, deemed suitable for modification to facilitate the vehicular access to an eligible person with disability.
- modifications to a vehicle to enable a person with disability to be the operator
- modifications to a vehicle for a person with disability to travel as a passenger in a vehicle operated by a family member or carer
- lessons for an eligible client, as identified by the registered VOSS prescriber (RVP) to learn to drive a suitably modified vehicle

Allocation of Subsidy	Explanation	Amount
Prescription from VOSS prescriber	Contribution towards the cost of professional assessment and prescription from a registered VOSS prescriber.	up to \$800
Purchase of a vehicle	Contribution towards the cost of a vehicle deemed suitable for modification to enable disability access for the eligible client.	Up to \$4,500
Purchase of already modified vehicle	Contribution towards the cost of a vehicle that has modifications in place that meet the needs of the VOSS client as outlined in a VOSS assessment.	Up to 50% of the cost of the modification plus the purchase of vehicle subsidy (capped at maximum subsidy levels)
Vehicle modification and accessories	Contribution towards the cost of vehicle modification to facilitate access to a private vehicle specific to the identified needs of the eligible client.	Up to \$4,300
Driver Training	Contribution towards the cost of driving lessons for the eligible client to work with a suitably qualified professional to learn to drive a modified vehicle.	up to \$400

For the purpose of vehicle access options a vehicle modification is defined as any changes to the original build of a vehicle.

Modification Subsidy

A wide variety of modifications are funded by VOSS. Vehicle modifications may fall into two categories, modifications and accessories.

- **Modifications** are defined as adjustments that significantly alter the vehicle's occupant space, entry/exit apertures and the vehicle's sub and superstructure. Examples of modification include the installation of ramps or hoists, lowering the vehicles floor, altering the roof height to accommodate a passenger or wheelchair, or the installation of special steering/brake/accelerator control systems.
- **Accessories** are defined as removable devices with minimal intrusion to the vehicle's occupant space structure or other control systems. Examples of accessories include hand controls and passenger postural supports.

Subsidies may include but are not limited to the following vehicle modifications and accessories:

- *driver controls*
- *mobility aid hoists*
- *person access hoists*
- *wheelchair restraints and occupant restraint systems*
- *swivel seats*
- *additional grab rails and steps for transferring*
- *anchor points*
- *wheelchair ramps*
- *occupant restraints for the transport of children and adults with a disability*
- *wheelchair stowage devices.*

All vehicle modifications must comply with all applicable standards and regulations including Queensland Vehicle Standards and Safety Regulation 2010 and Vehicle Registration Regulation 2010. Where applicable, compliance with 'Australian Design Rules' and relevant Australian and New Zealand Standards is also mandatory. Where a vehicle modification is carried out according to a code of practice, the modification must be certified and approved according to that code of practice. Where a vehicle modification is likely to be outside the code of practice, approval to modify must be sought from DTMR before commencing the modification. Applicants should also refer to the Queensland Transport Vehicle Standards information Sheet 8 (VSI 8) and the Guide to modifications for motor vehicles for information on Queensland Transport requirements relating to modifications. For further information see index.

Pre-modified vehicle subsidy

Consideration for a VOSS subsidy towards the cost of a modification already in place in a vehicle will require an independent evaluation from a Registered VOSS Modifier. The VOSS subsidy will then be determined as 50% of the evaluation*.

For example: A vehicle that is already modified is valued at \$20 000. The RVM evaluates the modification is worth \$4000. The VOSS subsidy is considered up to \$2000 for the modification and \$4500 for the vehicle purchase, totalling \$6500 subsidy payment.

Subsidies are not available for:

- *modifications that do not comply with Queensland Vehicle standards and Safety Regulation 2010 and Vehicle Registration Regulation 2010*
- *items generally available for purchase for more common use including rear-vision cameras and rear parking sensors, global positioning system devices, mirrors, cruise control, window tinting and standard trailers*
- *vehicle modifications involving transmission conversions*
- *vehicle running costs, registration, statutory charges or insurance premiums*

As part of the VOSS assessment process applicants will be assessed by a registered VOSS prescriber to determine the most appropriate and safe modification or combination of modifications to best suit the applicant's needs.

* up to the maximum Vehicle Modification Subsidy

Purchase of a Vehicle

VOSS clients are required to seek advice from their Registered VOSS Prescriber and Registered Vehicle Modifier before purchasing a vehicle.

Some vehicle models are more suited than others to specific personal needs and modifications. Be aware that older vehicles may not be eligible under the VOSS criteria for purchase of vehicles. Selecting the most suitable vehicle can make the modification easier, cost less and not compromise the vehicle's original safety features.

A VOSS subsidy for the purchase of a vehicle may be considered where these conditions are met:

- *The vendor is a licensed motor vehicle trader under the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000*
- *The vehicle is less than 10 years old AND has covered less than 160,000 kilometres. Applications for vehicles outside these parameters will be referred to the VOSS Advisory Panel (VAP) and will require independent inspection by an agent such as RACQ or equivalent.*

What should I do before I buy a vehicle? Deciding on the right vehicle

Some vehicles are more suited to specific modifications than others or may have features that are better suited to you. It is an expectation that the client seeks advice before proceeding with the purchase of a vehicle and modifications particularly those that require significant structural changes.

Please consider additional costs associated with vehicle purchase and ensure that your budget can accommodate these costs. Costs including financing payments, fuel, servicing, tyres, registration and insurance are not available from VOSS.

Warranty cover

Most vehicles sold from a licensed dealer will come with a statutory warranty for up to three months. The dealer may also offer additional warranty for an extra cost. Make sure you are satisfied with the terms and conditions of any offered warranty before agreeing to it. Newer vehicles still under the manufacturer's new vehicle warranty can provide that extra peace of mind.

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More information

For a more comprehensive list of things to check for when buying your next vehicle, follow the link to:

http://www.racq.com.au/motoring/cars/car_advice/car_fact_sheets/ten_tips_for_buying_a_car

Ongoing Repairs, Maintenance and Insurance

On purchase of a vehicle, completion of a vehicle modification, and payment of the agreed subsidy by VOSS, the client assumes ownership of the modification. The client is responsible for ongoing maintenance and repairs relating to the vehicle and modifications including liaison with suppliers about any warranty provisions. VOSS does not fund insurance for vehicles or any further vehicle modification/s. It is recommended that the vehicle owners have suitable insurance cover to include the vehicle modification. VOSS clients are also responsible for notifying their insurer of any modifications made to their vehicle.

Department of Transport & Main Roads

All vehicle modifications must comply with all applicable standards and regulations including Queensland Vehicle Standards and Safety Regulation 2010 and Vehicle Registration Regulation 2010. Where applicable, compliance with ‘Australian Design Rules’ and relevant Australian and New Zealand Standards is also mandatory. Where a vehicle modification is likely to be outside the code of practice, approval to modify must be sought from DTMR before commencing the modification. Applicants should also refer to the Queensland Transport Vehicle Standards information Sheet 8 (VSI 8) and the Guide to modifications for motor vehicles for information on Queensland Transport requirements relating to modifications. For further information see index.

Approval in Principle

An ‘approval in principle’ funding status will be issued once VOSS has endorsed the application for vehicle modification and/or vehicle purchase. The ‘approval in principle’ process is designed to provide clients confirmation of subsidy funding to assist the negotiation with vehicle sellers and modifiers. Approval in principle however does not diminish the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the vehicle and its modifications meet the various statutory requirements stated above. The applicant’s Registered VOSS Prescriber and Registered VOSS modifier will be able to assist with determining a vehicle’s suitability for the proposed modification.

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Registration of Prescribers and Modifiers (RVP and RVM)

Both prescribers and modifiers will need to be registered with VOSS. VOSS prescribers will be an allied health professional (occupational therapist, physiotherapist, rehabilitation engineer), who is registered with their respective professional body. It is preferable that RVPs also attend a VOSS information session. Registered VOSS Modifiers will be private businesses with expertise in disability specific vehicle modifications. RVMs undertaking major modifications should be registered with the Department of Transport and Main Roads as an Approved Person (AP) or have business affiliation with an Approved Person for any modification work requiring DTMR certification from an AP. RVMs who undertake minor modifications that do not alter the structural integrity of the car do not have to be registered as an Approved Person.

Further information on the Approved Persons Scheme can be found at:

<http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Business-industry/Accreditations/Approved-Person-Scheme.aspx>

Roles and Responsibilities

VOSS

- central point of information on the VOSS process and applications
- ensure easy access to all VOSS stakeholders
- monitor, appraise, approve application
- agreement in principle to modifier/client/prescriber for vehicle purchase
- arrange relevant subsidy payments
- ongoing education opportunities for prescribers
- seek appropriate professional advice to review applications, including convening VAP
- continuous improvement to the VOSS business process
- develop, deploy, monitor and report on a set of key performance indicators.

Applicant/Carer

- direct the VOSS process including key choices on RVP and RVM
- supply information as required to confirm DCCSDS eligibility
- engage registered VOSS prescriber
- participate in the VOSS process
- participate and sign tripartite agreement
- comply with any relevant approval process of DTMR as advised by RVM
- agree to fund any gap after VOSS subsidy funding
- agree to manage ongoing ownership details (registration, insurance, maintenance).

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Registered VOSS Prescriber (RVP)

- undertake training on the VOSS process (i.e. through webinar or information session (when available))
- advise VOSS when a client makes contact to request a VOSS assessment
- complete a professional assessment, identify goals and probable costs that will be incurred
- discuss options with client including any further assessments that may be required
- identify most cost effective modification
- complete relevant VOSS documentation
- liaise with Registered VOSS Modifier and obtain quote
- participate in and sign tripartite agreement
- inspect completed modification and send Certificate of Completion to VOSS
- facilitate training of client/carer on use of the modification
- engage in VOSS information sessions for quality service delivery
- invoice VOSS on completion of assessment process

Registered VOSS Modifier (RVM)

- liaise with client and RVP and develop quote
- provide details of costs to be incurred by the applicant (if applicable)
- install modification as per quote and Tripartite agreement
- sign off completion as per legislation & VOSS requirements
- confirm that legal requirement of modifications are met
- engage with DTMR to confirm modification has endorsement

Department of Transport & Main Roads (DTMR)

- licensing of applicants
- registration of vehicles
- processing approval of modifications.

VOSS Assessment and Prescription

Once eligibility for DCCSDS specialist disability services is confirmed, contact is to be made with MASS to commence the VOSS application process which includes organizing an RVP to do a specialised assessment and prescription which will determine if a vehicle modification is the most appropriate to meet a client's needs. The process is set out below;

- To be able to access any subsidy through VOSS; the applicant needs to be confirmed as eligible for specialist disability services provided by DCCSDS. An eligible client will either have undertaken a DCCSDS Needs Assessment and are classified as being an assessed client of DCCSDS or been registered as a prospective client of DCCSDS through this intake process. A client in this category will need to have eligibility information collected during the initial assessment.
- Once confirmed as eligible, applicants can participate in the VOSS process by choosing a RVP to engage in an assessment of their vehicular access needs – either passenger or driver. It is the client's responsibility to organise their assessment with an RVP and liaise with them with respect to any assessment and vehicle selection. Note: Applicants learning to drive or returning to driving will be required to engage with their treating specialist or general practitioner and may be referred for a driving assessment. A driving assessment is performed by an Occupational Therapist who has completed specific training and is qualified to undertake this assessment of people requiring a driver-related vehicle modification.
- When conducting the assessment the RVP should ensure the most appropriate and cost-effective vehicle and/or vehicle modification is recommended to meet a person's need. The RVP must consult with a RVM with respect to prescribed vehicle modifications.
- The RVP and the RVM will support the applicant in choosing a vehicle for modification. When signing the VOSS Tripartite Agreement the RVP and the RVM should be satisfied that the most appropriate and cost-effective vehicle for modification has been selected.
- It is the responsibility of the RVP, in liaison with the applicant and RVM to ensure all VOSS documentation is completed and supplied as required.
- All applications must be approved by VOSS as eligible for subsidy. Eligibility for the subsidy must be confirmed by VOSS (approval-in-principle) prior to any purchase being made by the applicant that may attract a subsidy.

VOSS Application Process

Client contacts their closest Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) service centre and requests an intake and assessment process occur to determine eligibility to apply for VOSS subsidy funding. DCCSDS will provide eligible clients with a letter including a BIS number. Eligible clients are then to contact MASS to access a list of Registered VOSS Prescribers (RVP) who will be able to assist the client to complete the VOSS application process.

The RVP will complete an assessment and work alongside the client to determine an appropriate vehicular option for the client. This also includes consultation with a Registered VOSS Modifier (RVM) for vehicle modifications as required. The RVP will assist the client to complete the VOSS application form and submit to MASS with all required documentation including quotes and modification plans.

- The MASS 40 VOSS Driver application may only be submitted by a Driver Trained prescriber.

The VOSS team will assess the application and determine whether the RVP has provided adequate clinical justification for the type of vehicle purchase and/or modification required and the client's suitability for a subsidy. Applications for extraordinary consideration will be considered by the Director, MASS.

On approval of the application the VOSS team will return a copy of the VOSS Approval-In-Principle to the applicant, to confirm an in-principle agreement for prescribed vehicle purchase and/or modifications subsidy, and funding amounts. MASS will issue the RVP/vendor a purchase order, to begin the requested purchase and/or modifications. The client, RVP and RVM will then work together to complete purchase and/or modifications.

Upon completion, delivery and acceptance of the vehicle purchase and/or modification by the client, the RVP and the RVM, the Tripartite Agreement must be signed by all three parties, stating that all are in agreement with the requested purchase and/or modifications and any gap in funding will be met by the client. This document is forwarded to MASS and will enable MASS to progress with the relevant VOSS subsidy funding payments.

Notification will be sent to the relevant parties when payment of approved VOSS subsidy funding has been paid.

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VOSS Index of Terms	
AP	Approved Person
'Approval-In-Principle'	A document issued by VOSS once an application is approved
Assessment	Process where a RVP assesses the applicants need for driving lessons, vehicle modifications, alternate transport needs
DCCSDS	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
DCCSDS Support Linker	Links applicants with service providers
Driver Training	Driver lessons or instruction on Learners Permit
DTMR	Department of Transport & Main Roads
GP	General Practitioner
'In principle approval'	Pre approval from QTMR to modify a vehicle
ISP	Integrated Support Plan
Intake & Assessment	Initial DCCSDS registration and assessment of need
MASS	Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme
Modification	The altering of a vehicle to suit user requirements
OT	Occupational Therapist
Passenger Postural Support	A device used to maintain a passengers posture

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VOSS Index of Terms	
Prescription	Process where an RVP prescribes the required modifications
RVM	Registered VOSS Modifier
RVP	Registered VOSS Prescriber
VAP	VOSS Advisory Panel
Vendor	Registered Voss Vendor
VOSS	Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme
VOSS Certificate of Completion	An agreement between the applicant, the RVP and RVM that any modifications have been completed and comply with the RVP prescription and applicant satisfaction
VOSS Tripartite Agreement	A formal agreement between VOSS, the registered VOSS modifier and the VOSS applicant