# Accessible Parking Permit Scheme - FAQs

### ****How do I apply for a disability permit?****

Parking permit applications are now managed via an online process on the VicRoads website.  You can find a link to the application on our Council website under disability parking or visit [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/APP](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/APP)

There are 3 steps in applying for a permit:

1. start your application online
2. take your reference number to your doctor or occupational therapist to complete the application
3. If your application is successful, you’ll receive your permit in the mail. Otherwise, you’ll receive a letter explaining why your application was declined.

What type of permits will be issued under the scheme?

The scheme will continue to offer the same permit types as the current scheme:

* An Australian Disability Parking (ADP Permit) (formerly Category 1/blue permit)
* A Victorian Double Time accessible parking permit (former Category 2/green permit)
* An ADP Permit (for organisations)

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### ****How long will a permit be valid for?****

The ADP Permit and Double Time permits will be valid for five years, in line with the ADPS. Organisation permits will be valid for 12 months. A short-term permit, issued to someone who has an impairment expected to last longer than six months, can be provided for 6,12 or 24 months before it is reviewed.

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### ****What is a recognised mobility aid or device?****

Mobility aid means an aid which has more than one contact point with the ground, such as crutches (used in both upper limbs), a walking frame, a walking stick with three or more feet, motorised mobility device (e.g. motorised scooter or wheelchair) and manual wheelchair.

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### ****What to do if I do not have a mobile phone?****

Mobile phone numbers are used to provide correspondence on your application, including the reference number you take to the GP or occupational therapist appointment. It is a mandatory requirement for applying online.

If you do not have a mobile phone, a carer, family member or nominated representative is able to complete your online application (if they have a mobile phone).
If you do not have access to someone who can assist, contact your local council who will provide you with a paper form to take to your GP or occupational therapist to complete the functional assessment.
Please be aware the processing time for a paper form application is longer than an online application.

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### ****Can I pick up the permit from Council offices?****

Yes. When completing your application, you can choose to pick up your permit from our office

Upon SMS notification - Please phone Council to arrange a pick up day.

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### ****How long does it take to get a permit?****

From the time council approves the outcome it will take 7 to ten days to arrive in the mail.

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### ****What if I do not have internet access or physically cannot complete the online application?****

Your carer, family or friends, GP or council customer service staff can help you should you require assistance or have no internet access.

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### ****Can I use a paper form instead?****

A paper-based version of the application is available for people with no access to mobile phone numbers or the internet; however, the online process provides a faster outcome. A paper application is available from your local council.

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### ****Can I or my GP use old application forms to apply for a permit?****

No. As part of disability parking scheme update, clearer assessment questions were developed in consultation with medical professionals, to allow GPs and Occupational Therapists to assess mobility issues against the criteria.  Some questions on old forms are no longer valid and do not align with the new scheme’s requirements.

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### ****Why is it too early to renew my permit?****

Permits can only be renewed in the six-week period prior to the permit expiry.  If there are extenuating circumstances that necessitate you renewing your permit early, please contact your local council to discuss.

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### ****What eligibility criteria does an applicant need to meet for a short-term disability parking permit?****

Under the current scheme an applicant, who is a local resident, must have an impairment that is expected to last longer than six months.  This is in line with six of the seven states and territories.  This will not change as part of the new scheme.

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### ****Can an applicant be issued with multiple permits?****

An applicant will only be entitled to one permit under the new scheme.  This is in line with other states and territories.  It is recognised that it can be challenging for some individuals to only have one permit, especially if they are being picked up and dropped off by different people, however issuing more than one permit to an individual opens up opportunities for permit misuse.

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### ****Will an applicant with a permanent disability need a medical assessment to obtain a permit?****

Everyone who applies for a disability parking permit under the new scheme will need to undergo a medical assessment as part of their application. As part of that initial medical assessment a doctor will record if a person has a defined permanent disability. When it comes to having their permit renewed, those with a defined permanent disability will not need to have a medical assessment.
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### ****What proof of identity will I need to provide in the Medical Practitioner appointment?****

The Medical practitioner will verify your identity with photo identification such as a driver’s licence, passport or Proof of Age Card.

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### ****I only have a P.O. Box?****

You must have a Victorian residential address to be eligible to apply. Enter this address for your application.
If you only have a P.O. Box for your postage, you must pick up your permit outcome from your local council (the outcome is unable to be delivered to a P.O. Box). Please contact Council prior to pick up to arrange a pick up day.

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### ****Did not get a permit due to not meeting eligibility criteria****

If you believe your GP or Occupational Therapist has incorrectly assessed your mobility issue or medical condition you may seek a second opinion from a different GP or Occupational Therapist.

This is done by starting a new application with the functional assessment undertaken by a different medical professional.

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### ****Got a Double time when they wanted an Australian Disability Parking Permit****

Permit type is determined by criteria assessment and not personal preference or request.  An applicant’s mobility issue is the sole determent of permit type.  Based on your medical practitioner’s responses to the assessment questions you do not qualify for a Blue Permit.

It is important to remember that there is a hierarchy of needs within disability parking, people who require extra space to get out of a vehicle or whose medical condition restricts walking to less than 100m must be given priority over people who are simply slower at getting from point A to point B than they once were.

If you believe your GP or Occupational Therapist has incorrectly assessed your mobility issue or medical condition you may seek a second opinion from a different GP or Occupational Therapist.

This is done by starting a new application with the functional assessment undertaken by a different medical professional.

If you wish to dispute the eligibility criteria of the scheme or scheme operation you can request an explanation of the basis of the eligibility of the criteria and scheme operation from VicRoads.

You can contact VicRoads at accessibleparking@roads.vic.gov.au

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### ****Council declined a permit due to duplicates, misuse, conflicting functional assessments****

* Advise the person of your council’s formal complaint process

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### ****Why can I only have one permit?****

Permits travel with the permit holder and not vehicles or carers. This is to reduce the misuse of permits to park in bays when it is attached to a vehicle – regardless of whether the permit holder is in the car.  A permit is only valid when the permit holder is in the vehicle.

It is recognised that there are scenarios when a permit holder having two permits may be reasonable, such as divorced parents of disabled children - one doing school drop off and one collecting.   Scenarios such as this were considered when reviewing the scheme however it was felt the need to resolve the known misuse use that occurs when duplicate permits are in circulation took precedence.

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### ****Why was the scheme changed?****

The Disability Parking Permit (DPP) scheme in Victoria was last updated in 1995 and does not align with the Australian Disability Parking Scheme. The scheme is administered by each of the 79 different Victorian councils, which interpret the scheme differently as well as have individual administration processes. That leads to confusion within the community as well as the potential for inequitable outcomes for applicants and opportunity for the misuse of permits.

The updated scheme will continue to be administered by the 79 Victorian councils but the process for applying for and renewing permits will be streamlined.

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### ****What are the main differences with the new scheme?****

The Disability Parking Permit (DPP) project aims to streamline the permit application and renewal processes, clarify eligibility requirements, and introduce systems and tools to improve management of permits across Victoria.

Changes being made include:

* Permit holders who have been medically assessed as having an agreed permanent disability will no longer have to return to their doctor for reassessment as part of the permit renewal process
* The permit duration will be increased from three years to five years for individuals (with non-temporary permits)
* The permit application and renewal processes will be streamlined with applications to be submitted through a new state-wide digitised system
* Permits will adhere to a standard, highly secure permit design rather than 79 variations which currently exist
* The name of the scheme will be changed from ‘Disabled Persons Parking Scheme’ to ‘Accessible Parking Permit Scheme’

The following features which are specific to the Victorian Disability Parking Permit scheme will be retained:

* Green Permits/Category 2 Permits will continue to allow a permit holder to park for twice the permissible time in an ordinary parking bay
* Those with significant intellectual disabilities are eligible for a permit.

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### ****How will the Victorian Disability Parking Permit Scheme align with the Australian Disability Permit Scheme?****

The aim of the review of the current Victorian scheme was to adopt the principle guidance from the ADPS and to align with as many states and territories as possible having regard to the current scheme. The ADPS provides common high-level criteria as well as a standard, permit design.

A review of disability parking schemes from other states and territories shows that they have all adopted the principles of the ADPS but have included a range of elements that are different to each other. Likewise, the new Victorian scheme retains elements which differ to other states and territories. For example, certain permit holders in Victoria are able to park for double the permissible time in an ordinary parking bay and permits are available to individuals with significant intellectual disabilities, which is not the case in other states and territories.

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### ****Why has it taken so long to align the Victorian Disability Parking Permit scheme with the Australian Disability Parking Scheme?****

The project approach has been to undertake a collaborative approach to research and co-design to support understanding and addressing as many of the stakeholder challenges as possible.  This is an iterative process to create a firm service model foundation which can be further built upon in the future.  More broadly, Victoria has the additional complexity of administration variations across each of the state’s 79 councils.  In other states and territories, the scheme is centralised and managed by the relevant road authority.

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### ****Who has VicRoads consulted with in designing these changes?****

Research and analysis included reviewing correspondence from the public to the Minister and VicRoads, engaging councils, medical practitioners and permit holders in surveys, interviews and testing, consulting with other states and territories, looking at international standards, and creating a reference group.

The Eligibility Reference Group (ERG) consisted of representatives from key stakeholder groups and was created to understand the challenges with the existing scheme and capture recommendations for improvements. This group met five times to assist in the review and drafting of the revised criteria and included representatives from:

* Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
* Australian Medical Association (AMA)
* Occupational Therapy Australia
* Disabled Motorists Australia (DMA)
* Office for Disability, DHHS
* Victorian Disability Advisory Council (VDAC)
* Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)
* Yooralla
* MAV (Municipal Association of Victoria)
* Local Councils (represented by Geelong, Stonnington and Whittlesea)
* VicRoads

The project continues to engage with key medical and disability stakeholder groups.

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### ****Why were psychologists not represented on the Disability Parking Permit ERG and why will they no longer be able to assess a person for a disability parking permit?****

Victoria is the only state in Australia that allows a person with a significant cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairment, who is unable to independently mobilise safely without the continuous support of a person (or carer) to be eligible for an accessible parking permit.  In this instance a clinical psychologist, in addition to a medical practitioner, can assess an applicant against this criterion.

Whilst we don’t currently have data indicating how many disability parking permits have been issued to people who meet this criterion, it is expected to be a small percentage of all permit holders, with the majority being issued to people who meet the other mobility-based eligibility criteria. Given the limited exposure psychologists would have in assessing permit applicants, they were not represented on the Disability Parking Permit Eligibility Reference Group.

The Disability Parking Permit Eligibility Reference Group explored the issue of whether a clinical psychologist was required to assess an applicant who had a significant cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairment.  The group decided that in this instance a medical practitioner could make an assessment on the applicant’s mobility or refer them to a psychologist where required.

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### ****Why will occupational therapists now be able to assess a person for a disability parking permit?****

The Victorian Code for the Disabled Persons Parking Scheme is primarily a mobility-based scheme, where an applicant must undergo a functional mobility assessment to determine their eligibility for a permit. Occupational therapists are trained to undertake functional mobility assessments of their clients, as such they are best-placed, along with medical practitioners to assess a person’s eligibility for a permit.

As a result, the Accessible Parking Permit Scheme (2020), enables a medical practitioner or occupational therapist to assess an applicant, however where the eligibility criteria relates to a person’s cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairment, then only a medical practitioner can make that assessment.

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### ****Has the eligibility criteria changed?****

The overarching eligibility criteria has not changed however the wording and the process by which a medical practitioner assesses a patient’s mobility or medical condition has.

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### ****How many people will the changes to the criteria affect?****

The intent of the Accessible Parking Permit Scheme is substantially unchanged from the old Disability Parking Scheme, the key difference being there is now greater clarity in the eligibility criteria to help medical professionals undertake functional assessments.

People who received permits through loose or incorrect interpretations of criteria or by having medical assessment completed or changed to get a desired outcome may find their permit type changes or they receive no permit at all when they renew their permit.

The most obvious of these changes will be an increase in people who find when they renew their permits that they will be allocated a Double Time permit and not an Australian Disability Parking Permit.

Having an initial Double time permit application outcome changed so they receive a Disability Permit when resubmitted has been identified as a wide spread practice that changes to the scheme and administration process seek to stamp out.

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### ****Will people lose their entitlement to a disability parking permit as a part of these changes?****

Changes to the eligibility criteria in the new scheme are largely for clarification to reduce some of the subjectivity in functional assessments and the inequitable outcomes this produces.  This will mean some people’s permit type will change and others may no longer qualify. The most obvious of these changes will be an increase in people who find when they renew their permits that they will be allocated a Double Time permit and not an Australian Disability Parking Permit.

During consultation with Victorian Councils and GPs, a pattern of behaviour in some applications was identified where forms were being completed to get an outcome rather than as an honest assessment of mobility issues.  The most common example of this was people unhappy with receiving a green Double Time permit returning to their GP to have them change their assessment answers to get a blue disability permit.  All 79 councils reported this behaviour.

Permit holders who received permits due to previous generous interpretations of medical conditions or mobility issues or who had green permit outcomes amended to blue may find their permit outcome changes when they renew.

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### ****Do I need to apply for a new permit?****

You will need to apply for a new permit when your current permit expires.

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### ****Can I keep using my existing permit?****

Existing permits can continue to be used until their expiry date.

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### ****How many disability parking permits are currently valid in Victoria?****

As all councils manage their disability parking permits within their own municipality it is difficult to determine exactly how many permits are currently in use. Based on available data it is estimated there are 300,000 permits state-wide, with permits assigned to a permit holder rather than a vehicle. Permits are divided into Category 1 (wide width bay access, double time in standard bay), and Category 2 (double time in standard bay only), and are made up of drivers, passengers and organisations.  Centralised data collection will allow anonymised data and statistics from the system to be used for analysis and planning of future improvements to the centralised system and disability parking facilities.

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### ****What happens if a council does not adopt the scheme?****

Adoption of the Accessible Parking Permit Scheme is mandatory for all Victorian councils which means they must adopt the rules of the scheme and the new permit design.  How a council chooses to administer the new scheme is their discretion and they are under no obligation to use the Victorian Government’s online system.

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### ****How was the online system developed?****

VicRoads undertook a detailed consultation process with medical professionals, disability advocates and service providers and all Victorian councils to understand existing application processes and the flaws in the system lead that lead to lax medical assessments, permit misuse and fraudulent behaviour. The system was then designed to provide an easier application and administration process for all users that also addresses and resolves identified flaws in existing systems that facilitated permit misuse and inequitable outcomes across councils.

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### ****How does the new system reduce fraud and misuse?****

The APP online system reduces fraud and misuse in several ways.  A key feature being it is a secured application process that does not allow application forms to be altered once submitted – a significant issue with paper-based application processes.

Other enhancements include:

* AHPRA validation of medical professional credentials.
* Digital records that provide greater accountability and visibility of potential fraudulent responses on applications.
* State-wide access for councils and parking enforcement to permit data
* System identification of duplicate permits to stop the practice of holding permits with multiple councils.
* A single permit design with enhanced security features to reduce fraudulent reproductions and

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### ****Who has access to the data and how is it protected?****

Access is by individual log in only, with each person who accesses the system having a unique profile. General permit and application information can be accessed by approved council customer service staff and enforcement officers and limited personnel in Fines Victoria involved in the review of Accessible Parking Permit fine reviews.

Information provided by medical practitioners contained in functional assessments is further restricted to just 1 to 2 people in each council and they can only see functional assessments for their council’s permit holders.  Restricted staff within VicRoads, who provide support services to the system can also access the system.

There is limited sensitive medical information in the system as it is the impact on mobility that is assessed and recorded not the actual disability or medical condition.

An audit system tracks who has accessed any system data.

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### ****What is to stop someone pretending to be a GP and fraudulently completing an application?****

The system uses a medical practitioner’s name, AHPRA number and their date of birth to validate their identity against the AHPRA. While the name and AHPRA number are publicly listed information, a medical professional’s date of birth is not.

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### ****I was previously told I do not need to see a GP why do I need to do so now?****

As permit applications were managed by 79 councils this led to a range of variations in application processes and outcomes including variations in process for people with permanent disabilities.

The APP scheme has updated the questions GPs and OTs will use to assess eligibility against the scheme. Every applicant for a permit will need to be assessed at least once by a GP/OT using the new application process and criteria questions.

GPs and OTs will have the ability in this new assessment process to categorise someone as having a permanent disability. This will mean they will no longer require a functional assessment to renew their permit.

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### ****I was previously issued with a 5 year permit why am I unable to use it until its expiry date?****

As permit applications had previously been managed by 79 councils this led to a range of variations in application processes and outcomes including variations in lengths of permit.

The old disability parking scheme allowed for the allocation of three-year permits. The transition of all permits across to the new scheme has been planned based on this three-year maximum length.

Some councils opted to extend permits to five years; these permits will not be valid beyond July 2023

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### ****I was previously eligible for a permit but was not after applying for a renewal why?****

As part of disability parking scheme update clearer assessment questions were developed in consultation with medical professionals to allow GPs and OTs to assess mobility issues against the criteria. This related to both space requirements to exit and enter vehicles and the impacts of walking distances may have on an applicant’s health.

Previously questions were open to a broad interpretation. They are now more aligned with assessing against the scheme criteria, this may be why you are no longer eligible for a permit.

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### ****I used to have a blue permit now I have a green why is this?****

The allocation of Reserved Bay (Blue) and Double Time (Green) permits is determined by outcomes of a mobility assessment.  As permit applications were being managed by 79 councils, this led to a range of variations in application processes, assessments and subsequent outcomes including variations in how Green permits were or weren’t allocated.

As part of the disability parking scheme update, clearer assessment questions were developed in consultation with medical professionals to allow GPs and OTs to assess mobility issues against the criteria. This related to both space requirements to exit and enter vehicles and the impacts of walking distances may have on an applicant’s health.

Previously questions were open to a broad interpretation.  They are now more aligned with assessing against the scheme criteria.  This is why you may now have a Green Double Time permit rather than an Australian Disability Parking Permit (formerly the Blue permit).

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### ****I am a parent of a disabled child can my partner and I have a permit for each car?****

The conditions of use for an Accessible parking permit only allow for an individual to hold one permit.  Permits are assigned to individuals, not vehicles. This was also a condition of the old scheme.

It is recognised that this will create inconvenience and difficulties for some people who share responsibility for caring for someone with mobility issues. However, this needed to be weighed against the potential for permit misuse where people can hold multiple permits.

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### ****Why am I unable to get my permit on the spot anymore?****

Permit administration, printing and distribution is now managed through one central process which does not require a visit to your local council to process a form.  Once your medical practitioner has undertaken your functional assessment it should take 10-15 days for your application outcome to arrive in the mail.

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### ****Why does my GP or OT not know the outcome of my assessment?****

Your GP or OT will answer a range of questions that assess eligibility for a permit against the criteria. The answers to these questions determine your eligibility.  Prior to the assessment outcome being know your local council will check your application against any know duplicate permits or previous cancelled permits.  It is only after this assessment step is the outcome of your application determined and you are advised by mail.

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### ****Does my GP or OT decided if I get a green or blue permit?****

Permit type has always been determined by functional assessment against set criteria questions and not personal preference or request.  GPs and OTs are required to answer criteria eligibility questions, the responses to which determine permit eligibility and permit type.

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