



National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council
driving down vehicle theft

Theft WATCH

National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council –
No.18 February 2006

Stakeholder Reforms Continue to Cut Theft

Table 1: Australia, theft snapshot

| 12 months to December 2005 | |
|--|----------|
| Number of thefts | 78,604 |
| % change from previous 12 months | -8% |
| % of thefts recovered in year | 74% |
| Number of motorcycle thefts | 6,600 |
| December 2005 Quarter | |
| Number of thefts | 19,160 |
| % change from last quarter | 1% |
| % change from same quarter previous year | -10% |
| % of thefts recovered in quarter | 69% |
| Estimated % recovered* | 75% |
| Theft rate per 1,000 population | 0.9 |
| Theft rate per 1,000 registrations | 1.3 |
| Total value of stolen PLC vehicles# | \$137m |
| Total value of unrecovered PLC vehicles | \$43m |
| Number of motorcycle thefts | 1,673 |
| % change from last quarter | 2% |
| % change from same quarter previous year | 1% |
| % of motorcycles recovered in quarter | 31% |
| Number of claims | 7,470 |
| Average claim cost (\$) | \$9,810 |
| Median claim cost (\$) | \$5,290 |
| Average agreed value claim cost (\$) | \$11,990 |
| Total claim costs (\$) | \$73m |

Top Opportunistic Targets, December Quarter

| | Number Stolen |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Holden Commodore VL, VN, VK | 1,890 |
| Ford Falcon EA, XF | 1,030 |
| Ford Laser KB, KE, KC | 538 |
| Toyota Corolla | 300 |
| Hyundai Excel X3 | 290 |

Top Professional Targets, December Quarter

| | Number Missing |
|--|----------------|
| Holden Commodore VT, VS, VX, VY | 190 |
| Ford Falcon BA, AU, EL | 70 |
| Nissan Pulsar N15, N16 | 40 |
| Toyota Landcruiser 70, Prado 90 Series | 35 |
| Mitsubishi Lancer CE | 30 |

* Some vehicles stolen in the quarter will be recovered in later quarters.

Passenger and light commercial (PLC) vehicles accounted for 88 per cent of total thefts. Values calculated using the resources of Glass's Information Services.

Australia recorded its fourth annual vehicle theft reduction in 2005 with thefts falling by 8 per cent to 78,604.

The impact of coordinated reform was first reflected in the nation's theft numbers in 2001. Theft rates have almost halved since then to 5.4 thefts per 1,000 registrations, down from 10.6 in 2001.

New South Wales was a significant driver behind falling national numbers in 2005 with a 12 per cent reduction (3,751 fewer vehicles). Also contributing was: South Australia (-11 per cent or 1,027 vehicles), Queensland (-8 per cent or 987 vehicles), Western Australia (-8 per cent or 634 vehicles), and Victoria (-5 per cent or 1,051 vehicles).

Only the two Territories and Tasmania recorded increases in 2005. Small jurisdictions are prone to 'significant' proportional fluctuations because of low overall theft numbers and the impact of an additional 788 thefts between these jurisdictions is minimal in the national context.

The trend of relatively consistent levels of non-recovery continued with 20,188 of the vehicles stolen in 2005 not recovered¹.

Vehicle recovery has traditionally provided a broad indicator of opportunistic (recovered)

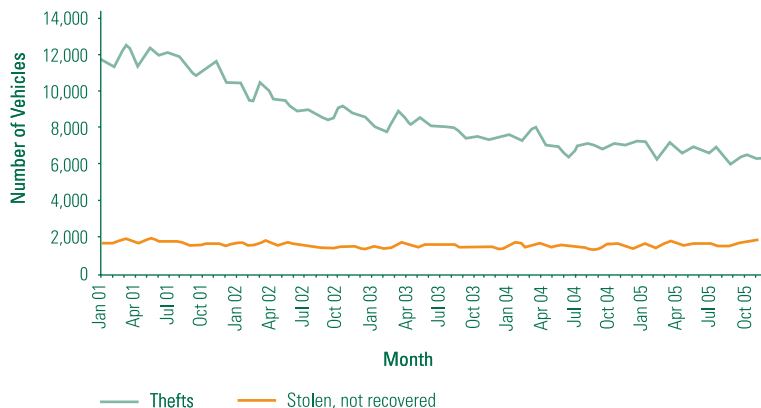
or profit-motivated (not recovered) theft but this division has become increasingly blurred with the impact of reforms, new technologies and other factors. For example, improved management of written off vehicles appears to have produced a shift in profit-motivated theft from re-birthing (unrecovered vehicles) to vehicles stolen for parts (where a portion of the vehicles may be recovered).

Total claim costs to insurers² increased by less than 2 per cent to \$264 million in 2005³. The average cost to insurers to finalise a theft claim for the year was \$9,220 with the average cost to finalise an agreed value claim substantially higher at \$11,650. The overall median claim cost was \$4,900.

Australia's 8 per cent reduction equates to 6,662 fewer vehicles stolen in 2005 and represents a saving of stress and inconvenience for thousands of motorists and a cost saving of around \$40 million to the broader community.⁴

1. Some vehicles stolen in 2005 will be recovered in early 2006.
2. Data received from Australia's top 20 insurance brands.
3. For 12 months to September 2005.
4. The Australian Institute of Criminology (2003) estimated community costs per theft of \$6,000.

Figure 1: Vehicles stolen by month, Australia, 2001-2005



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The NMVTRC is an initiative of all Australian Governments and the Insurance Industry

State and Territory Summary

Table 2: State and territory snapshot

| Jurisdiction | Number of thefts, December quarter | Change in theft numbers from last quarter | Number of thefts not recovered in the quarter | % of thefts recovered in the quarter | Theft rate per 1,000 population, December quarter | Theft rate per 1,000 registrations, December quarter | Number of thefts, 2005 | Change in theft numbers from last 12 months |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|---|
| ACT | 434 | -131 | 103 | 76 | 1.3 | 2.0 | 1,856 | +211 |
| NSW | 6,912 | +15 | 2,545 | 63 | 1.0 | 1.6 | 28,841 | -3,751 |
| NT | 164 | 0 | 34 | 79 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 672 | +38 |
| QLD | 2,648 | -92 | 722 | 73 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 11,142 | -987 |
| SA | 1,994 | +7 | 393 | 80 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 8,540 | -1,027 |
| TAS | 666 | +161 | 58 | 91 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 2,201 | +539 |
| VIC | 4,529 | +69 | 1,327 | 71 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 18,202 | -1,051 |
| WA | 1,813 | +145 | 678 | 63 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 7,150 | -634 |
| Australia | 19,160 | +174 | 5,860 | 69 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 78,604 | -6,662 |

Immobilisers Impact Stolen Vehicle Age

Engine immobilisers as original equipment were introduced into some cars in the early 1990s and in 2001 the inclusion of an immobiliser as standard equipment was mandated for new passenger vehicles sold in Australia. While some models of light commercial (LC) vehicle introduced immobilisers over this time, the mandatory requirements did not apply to these vehicles.

Despite the demonstrated success of immobilisers in preventing theft – only one in every 440 vehicles

fitted with an Australian Standards equivalent immobiliser was stolen in 2005 compared to one in every 110 for vehicles without – many models of LC vehicle still do not feature this most basic anti-theft device as standard equipment.

Since 2001, passenger vehicle thefts have fallen by 47 per cent. Thefts of LC vehicles fell by only 32 per cent in the same period.

A comparison of passenger vehicles with LC vehicles by year of manufacture further highlights the absence of immobilisers on LC vehicles. While theft numbers for passenger vehicles manufactured from the 1990s are clearly and substantially lower than their older counterparts (figure 2), newer LC vehicles are almost as likely to be stolen as older LC vehicles (figure 3).

Figure 2: Theft of passenger vehicles by year of manufacture, Australia, 2005

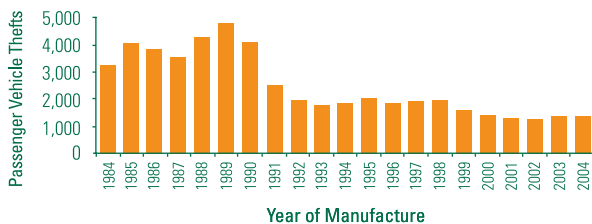
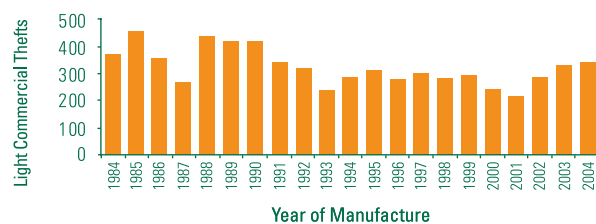


Figure 3: Theft of light commercial vehicles by year of manufacture, Australia, 2005



National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc

50-52 Howard Street
North Melbourne Victoria 3051
Australia

Telephone (03) 9348 9600
Facsimile (03) 9348 9988
Email info@carsafe.com.au

The NMVTRC acknowledges all police services, registration authorities, participating insurers, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, Glass's Information Services and Insurance Australia Group for their supply of the data. Theft incident data may be subject to later revision by the data providers.

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