



National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council
driving down vehicle theft

No. 27 – June 2008

In this issue

Record reductions across all jurisdictions

Missing vehicles now proportionally bigger problem

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

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 provider.

NMVTRC newsletters are reproduced on the CAR-SAFE website at www.carsafe.com.au and are also available electronically. To join our email list contact info@carsafe.com.au



National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc

50-52 Howard Street, North Melbourne
Victoria 3051 Australia

Tel (03) 9348 9600 Fax (03) 9348 9988
info@carsafe.com.au

www.carsafe.com.au



comprehensive auto-theft research system

theft watch

Record reductions across all jurisdictions

Further theft reductions in the first three months of 2008 have resulted in a record rolling 12 month performance as all states and territories experienced a decrease in thefts over that period. Reductions ranged from 4 per cent to 10 per cent in South Australia and Queensland and an impressive 23 per cent decrease in Tasmania. Overall thefts fell nationally by 7 per cent for the 12 months, an overall reduction in volume of 4,505.

New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia continued their consistent downward trend from the previous quarter, with reductions ranging between 1 and 4 per cent. The Northern Territory recorded a commendable fall of 14 per cent, while the Australian Capital Territory recorded the highest reduction of the nation for the quarter, down 19 per cent from the last three months of 2007. Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia all recorded minor increases for the quarter but in total this only amounted to 316 additional thefts. Recoveries remained stable at 75 per cent for the year and 70 per cent for the quarter.

The total value of PLC vehicles remains consistent with this time last year at \$127 million, with the total value of unrecovered PLCs totalling \$42 million in the March 2008 quarter.

Motorcycle theft increased from the previous quarter by 11 per cent, with only Tasmania and Western Australia experiencing a reduction in thefts. Overall, thefts increased by 8 per cent from the previous quarter however remain low, at 33 per cent for both the quarter and the 12 month period.

Table 1: Australia, theft snapshot, PLCs

12 months to March 2008	
Number of thefts	58,415
% change from previous 12 months	-7.2
% of thefts recovered in year	75.4
March 2008 quarter	
Number of thefts	14,465
% change from last quarter	-1.1
% change from same quarter previous year	-5.3
% of thefts recovered in quarter	70.2
Theft rate per 1,000 population	0.69
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations	1.06
Total value of stolen PLC vehicles#	\$127m
Total value of unrecovered PLC vehicles	\$43m
Number of claims*	6,064
Average claim cost*	\$9,874
Median claim cost*	\$5,455
Total sum of claims	\$60m

Top short term use targets, March quarter

	Number stolen
Holden Commodore	2,129
VN, VL, VP, VT, VS, VK, VR, VX, VY	902
Ford Falcon EA, AU, XF, BA, EF	372
Ford Laser KE, KC, KB	364
Toyota Camry SV22, SV21	253
Hyundai Excel X3	

Top profit-motivated theft targets (aged less than 10 years), March quarter

	Number unrecovered
Holden Commodore VX, VT, VY, VZ	133
Ford Falcon AU, BA	75
Toyota Corolla ZZE122R	35
Toyota Landcruiser 70 Series, 100 Series	34
Mitsubishi Lancer CE	27

Passenger and light commercial (PLC) vehicles accounted for 85 per cent of total thefts. Values calculated using the resources of Glass's Information Services.

* Excluding claims with \$0 cost. There were 303 claims with a cost equal to zero.

Figure 1: Passenger/light commercial vehicles stolen and not recovered by quarter, January 2000 – March 2008

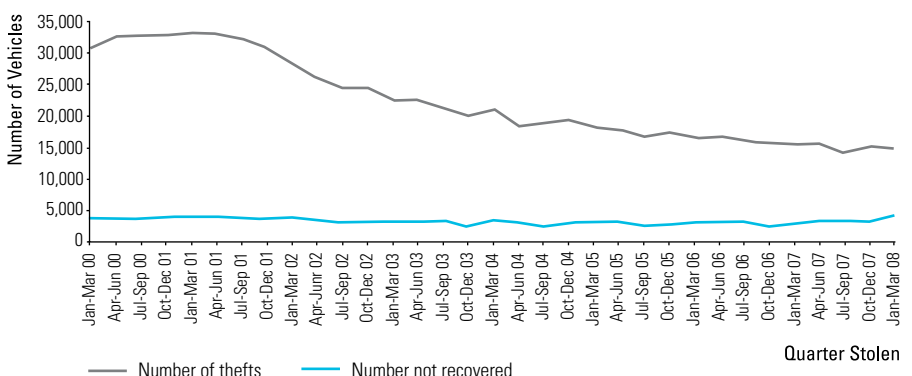


Table 2: Australia, thefts and recoveries by vehicle type, January – March 2008

Vehicle type	Number of thefts	Number not recovered	% Recovered
Pasenger/light commercial	14,465	4,313	70.2
Motorcycles	2,026	1,344	33.7
Heavy/other vehicles/unknown	855	333	61.1
Total	17,346	5,990	65.5

Table 3: Australia, state and territory breakdown, PLCs

	Number of thefts, March 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, March quarter	Theft rate per 1,000 registrations, March quarter	Thefts for 12 months to March 2007	Change in theft numbers from last 12 months
ACT	433	-101	99	77.1	1.27	1.97	1,742	-158
NSW	5,391	-179	1,987	63.1	0.78	1.36	22,371	-1,422
NT	153	-24	20	86.9	0.71	1.42	642	-29
QLD	1,859	14	497	73.3	0.44	0.65	7,584	-910
SA	1,352	-11	274	79.7	0.85	1.26	6,189	-742
TAS	344	90	27	92.2	0.70	0.91	1,276	-391
VIC	3,394	-162	1,063	68.7	0.65	0.94	13,313	-607
WA	1,539	212	346	77.5	0.73	1.04	5,298	-246
Australia	14,465	-161	4,313	70.2	0.69	1.06	58,415	-4,505

Table 4: Australia, theft snapshot, motorcycles

March 2008 quarter		12 months to March 2008	
Number of thefts	2,026	Number of thefts	7,253
% change from last quarter	11.4	% change from previous 12 months	8.3
% change from same quarter previous year	22.6	% of thefts recovered in year	33.7
% of thefts recovered in quarter	33.7		
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations*	3.55		

* Must be regarded with caution as a large and unknown proportion of motorbikes are not registered.

Missing vehicles now proportionally bigger problem

While the volume of unrecovered PLCs has remained relatively stable over the last six years, there have been major changes in the characteristics of the vehicles that appear to simply 'vanish,' with middle aged (i.e. those aged 6-10 years) and older vehicles (more than 11 years old) making up a bigger proportion of the total compared to five years ago. As a group, missing vehicles now represent a bigger proportion of total thefts.

Close to one in eight stolen vehicles were unrecovered in 2002; however despite the sustained reductions in overall vehicle theft, the rolling 12 month figure indicates this proportion is now around one out of every five stolen vehicles. It is these missing vehicles that the NMVTRC and its stakeholders need to focus a concerted effort on in order to make further inroads into the activities of profit-motivated thieves.

As a result of major reforms to the way states and territories manage the re-registration of vehicles (including more stringent vehicle identity inspections), traditional car rebirthing (i.e. simply using the identifiers from a written-off vehicle to re-identify a stolen equivalent) has been virtually eliminated. However, criminal networks have responded by adapting to exploit other gaps.

The NMVTRC therefore sees five major factors driving the prevailing non-recovered rate. These are:

- the use of repairable write-offs as a 'trojan horse' for stolen components, which can be almost impossible to detect or trace with certainty;
- the elevated precious metals market has resulted in higher demand for scrap metal of all sorts. Recent reports of vehicle metal fetching over \$300 per tonne is almost certainly driving an increase in the theft of vehicles (particularly older vehicles) for their scrap value alone;
- the involvement of unlicensed motor car traders in the end of life vehicle supply chain and the demand for 'black market' replacement components for pre-mid 1990s vehicles;
- the high number of vehicles being stolen and dumped in waterways and bushland with police in Victoria and New South Wales recovering more than 200 immersed vehicles in just two locations in the past 12 months – the Georges River in New South Wales and Melbourne's Maribyrnong River; and
- a breakdown in local government protocols for removing 'abandoned' vehicles, which in just three municipalities in Victoria showed up

to 10 per cent of abandoned vehicles designated for auction or crushing were in fact uncleaned stolen vehicles.

Each of these matters will be highlighted in the NMVTRC's upcoming Strategic Plan for 2008/09.

Figure 2: Proportion of unrecovered vehicles to overall vehicle thefts, January 2002 – March 2003, January 2007 – March 2008

