



National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council
driving down vehicle theft

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

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CARS 
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theft watch

Further reductions see out 2007/08

Steadily declining theft numbers have fittingly wrapped up another successful year in vehicle theft reform. The majority of states and territories recorded a decrease in thefts from the previous quarter, contributing to an overall reduction of 506 thefts for that period. Nationally, 57,316 passenger/light commercial (PLC) thefts were recorded for the year, marking a substantial 7.9 per cent reduction from 2006/07.

There were some changes among the jurisdictions this quarter, with New South Wales and Queensland the only two of the larger states to experience a fall in thefts. Theft numbers continued to decline in the Australian Capital Territory, as the jurisdiction once again experienced the largest nation-wide reduction of 27 per cent from the previous quarter. Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania all recorded minor increases, amounting to 132 additional thefts. Theft numbers were down in almost all jurisdictions for the year, with Western Australia the only state to record a slight increase of 3 per cent.

Recoveries for PLC vehicles were down slightly for the quarter at 68 per cent, but remained stable for the year at 75 per cent. The total value of PLC vehicles is up \$5 million from this time last year at \$126 million, with the total value of unrecovered PLCs totalling \$42 million in the June 2008 quarter.

Motorcycle thefts continue to defy the downward trend of PLCs, increasing by 28 per cent from the June 2007 quarter, and rising over 16 per cent overall from the previous 12 months. The recovery rate remains consistently low for both the quarter and the year at 30 per cent and 35 per cent respectively.

Passenger and light commercial (PLC) vehicles accounted for 82 per cent of total thefts. Values calculated using the resources of Glass's Information Services.

* Excluding claims with \$0 cost. There were 308 claims with a cost equal to zero.

Table 1: Australia, theft snapshot, PLCs

12 months to June 2008	
Number of thefts	57,316
% change from previous 12 months	-7.9
% of thefts recovered in year	75.2
June 2008 quarter	
Number of thefts	14,011
% change from last quarter	-3.6
% change from same quarter previous year	-7.6
% of thefts recovered in quarter	67.8
Theft rate per 1,000 population	0.66
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations	1.02
Total value of stolen PLC vehicles#	\$126m
Total value of unrecovered PLC vehicles	\$42m
Number of claims*	6,714
Average claim cost (\$)*	10,344
Median claim cost (\$)*	5,586
Total sum of claims	\$69m

Top short term use targets, June 2008 quarter

	Number stolen
Holden Commodore	2,080
VN, VP, VK, VL, VS, VX, VR, VY, VT	784
Ford Falcon BA, EF, XF, EA, AU	290
Toyota Camry SV22, SV21	247
Ford Laser KE, KC	227
Hyundai Excel X3	

Top profit-motivated theft targets (aged less than 10 years), June 2008 quarter

	Number unrecovered
Holden Commodore VX, VT, VY, VZ	157
Ford Falcon BF, BA, AU	82
Mitsubishi Lancer CE	31
Toyota Corolla ZZE122R	25
Holden Astra TS	23

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

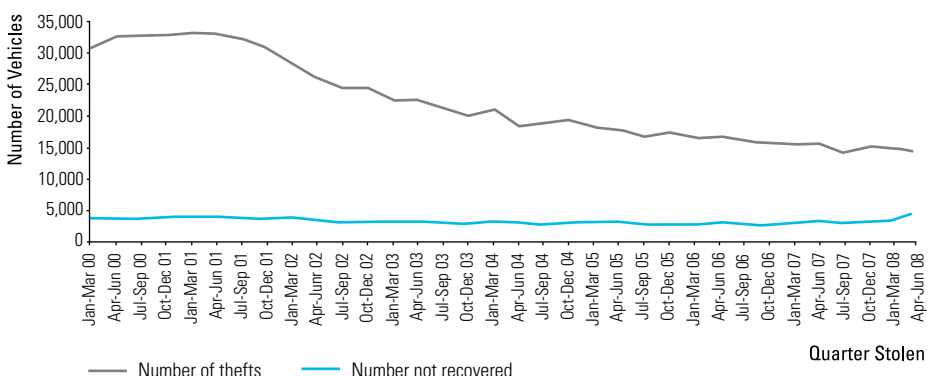


Table 2: Australia, thefts and recoveries by vehicle type, April – June 2008

Vehicle type	Number of thefts	Number not recovered	% Recovered
Passenger/light commercial	14,011	4,506	67.8
Motorcycles	2,181	1,513	30.6
Heavy/other vehicles/unknown	905	400	55.8
Total	17,097	6,419	62.5

Table 3: Australia, state and territory breakdown, PLCs

	Number of thefts, June 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, June quarter	Theft rate per 1,000 registrations, June quarter	Thefts for 12 months to June 2008	Change in theft numbers from last 12 months
ACT	316	-118	88	72.2	0.93	1.44	1,692	-127
NSW	5,194	-218	1,955	62.4	0.75	1.31	21,687	-1,574
NT	167	-3	29	82.6	0.77	1.55	629	-55
QLD	1,784	-75	507	71.6	0.42	0.62	7,354	-927
SA	1,374	19	318	76.9	0.86	1.28	5,626	-1,603
TAS	360	10	36	90.0	0.73	0.95	1,288	-220
VIC	3,501	103	1,289	63.2	0.67	0.97	13,553	-195
WA	1,315	-224	284	78.4	0.62	0.89	5,487	186
Australia	14,011	-506	4,506	67.8	0.66	1.02	57,316	-4,515

Table 4: Australia, theft snapshot, motorcycles

June 2008 quarter		12 months to June 2008	
Number of thefts	2,181	Number of thefts	7,796
% change from last quarter	6.1	% change from previous 12 months	16.1
% change from same quarter previous year	28.4	% of thefts recovered in year	35.1
% of thefts recovered in quarter	30.6		
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations*	3.77		

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

Motorcycle sales in overdrive

According to data from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), motorcycle sales have increased by 70 per cent over the last five years, hitting an all-time high in 2007 of close to 130,000 sales. The FCAI has indicated that almost all of these sales represent bikes for recreational use, with a relatively small commuter market. Recreational motorcycles include both on and off-road bikes, with around 50 per cent of sales over the last five years being of off-road motorcycles.

A breakdown of thefts for metropolitan compared to non-metropolitan areas suggests there is some indication that the rise in recreational motorcycle sales can also be seen in the increasing number of thefts over a similar period. While the majority of motorcycles continue to be stolen from metropolitan regions (63 per cent in 2007), thefts from non-metropolitan areas have increased by 22 per cent since April 2000, compared to an 18 per cent rise from metropolitan areas. Rising theft rates in non-metropolitan regions is likely to indicate increasing numbers of off-road and recreational motorcycles being stolen, corresponding with the upward trend of motorcycle sales figures.

The absence of a commuter market and increasing sales of recreational bikes poses a number of barriers to theft reduction. FCAI figures indicate that less than half of off-road bikes purchased are registered. Off-road motorcycles are particularly problematic because they are not impacted by the suite of infrastructure barriers that have been developed for passenger vehicles and registered motorcycles. These bikes can be difficult to identify as often a valid Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

is not captured in police reports – only two in 10 unregistered motorcycles stolen in 2007 had a valid VIN recorded by police, compared to nine in 10 registered motorcycles with a captured VIN.

If the majority of motorcycle use is recreationally rather than commuter based, theft reduction initiatives may need to focus on issues such as better home security as much as public infrastructure for commuters.

Figure 2: Motorcycle sales, 2004-2007

