



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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comprehensive auto-theft research system

theft watch

Thefts down 7 per cent in the seventh year of record reductions

Another 7 per cent decrease in 2008 has brought about the nation's seventh consecutive year of sustained vehicle theft reductions. A total of 54,891 passenger/light commercial (PLC) thefts were recorded for the calendar year, down 4,314 from the previous 12 months, with larger states continuing to contribute significantly to the overall decline. The recovery rate for PLC vehicles remained relatively stable at 75 per cent, while the theft rate per 1,000 registrations and 1,000 population fell again from 2007, at 3.93 and 2.57 respectively.

State performances were split for the year with the larger states excelling. South Australia experienced the largest reduction for the nation of 20 per cent, while New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland all recorded decreases in the range of 3 to 10 per cent. Minor increases were seen in Tasmania, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory of between 1 and 3 per cent. The Northern Territory recorded an increase of 142 thefts. However, smaller jurisdictions are subject to frequent fluctuations because of their relatively low base positions.

The total value of stolen PLC vehicles increased to \$507 million for the rolling 12 month figure. The total value of unrecovered PLCs rose \$30 million to a total of \$140 million.

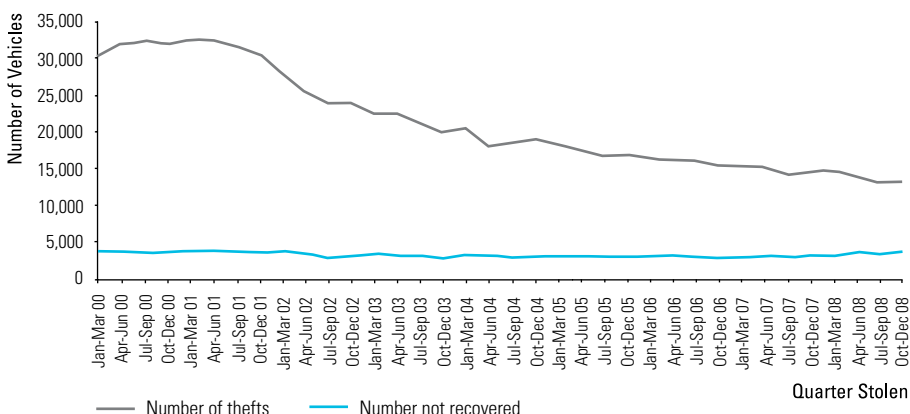
There is a clear nexus between the general performance of the economy and crime – with periods of good economic performance (growing real average weekly earnings and low unemployment) helping to deliver lower rates of property crime. The impact of the current economic situation is pertinent at this time in considering the vehicle crime outlook for 2009.

With major adverse changes in the nation's economy there is a significant risk that recent reductions in vehicle crime will stall or actually reverse. This will include vehicle theft and instances of insurance fraud disguised as vehicle theft and/or staged collisions.

The downward movement in the value of the Australian dollar will also have the effect of pushing up the cost of genuine replacement parts for imported vehicles (which currently comprise more than 80 per cent of sales by volume for passenger vehicles) and lead to higher demand for equivalent stolen parts. Unexpectedly, however, the fall in the value of scrap metal has resulted in a reduction in the number of older, unrecovered vehicles.

Motorcycle theft continues to rise, up 13 per cent from the previous 12 months. This was this case across all jurisdictions in 2008 with thefts increasing by 25 per cent in Queensland.

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



State and territory round-up 2008

South Australia

PLC thefts	5,210
Change from 2007	-1,295 or -20%
Recovered	81%
Rate per 1,000 population	3.25
Rate per 1,000 registrations	4.75
Immobilised fleet	53%

Motorcycle thefts	496
Change from 2007	-116
Recovered	34%

- South Australia recorded the highest percentage decrease in thefts for 2008.
- The State was also the second largest contributor to the nation's performance in terms of actual theft numbers, behind New South Wales.
- The high recovery rate (above the national average of 75 per cent) indicates a prominence of theft for short term use.

Victoria

PLC thefts	12,964
Change from 2007	-400 or -3%
Recovered	74%
Rate per 1,000 population	2.45
Rate per 1,000 registrations	3.53
Immobilised fleet	57%

Motorcycle thefts	1,478
Change from 2007	+76
Recovered	23%

- After a significant fall of 507 in the September quarter thefts have continued to decline in Victoria, with the state contributing a sizeable reduction for the year.
- Victoria experienced the lowest motorcycle recovery rate for the State at only 23 per cent, below the national average of 34 per cent.

Tasmania

PLC thefts	1,338
Change from 2007	+45 or 3%
Recovered	93%
Rate per 1,000 population	2.69
Rate per 1,000 registrations	3.53
Immobilised fleet	46%

Motorcycle thefts	81
Change from 2007	+10
Recovered	41%

- After a substantial reduction in 2007 Tasmania experienced small fluctuations in theft numbers throughout the year, resulting in an increase of 45 thefts for the year.
- Small states are prone to fluctuations (both up and down) as a result of the low base rate of theft.

- The State continued to experience the highest recovery rate of the nation due to the large, unsecured, older vehicle fleet and the prominence of opportunistic theft.

Northern Territory

PLC thefts	819
Change from 2007	+142 or 21%
Recovered	88%
Rate per 1,000 population	3.72
Rate per 1,000 registrations	7.53
Immobilised fleet	61%

Motorcycle thefts	199
Change from 2007	+49
Recovered	49%

- After a strong decrease in the March quarter thefts have rose slightly quarter-to-quarter in the Northern Territory, resulting in an overall increase of 142 thefts for 2008.
- The Northern Territory is subject to fluctuations due to the low baseline position.
- Similar to Tasmania and South Australia, the high recovery rate of 88 per cent indicates low levels of profit-motivated theft.
- The high rate of theft per 1,000 registrations at 7.53 stands well above the national average of 3.93.

Western Australia

PLC thefts	5,237
Change from 2007	+66 or 1%
Recovered	80%
Rate per 1,000 population	2.42
Rate per 1,000 registrations	3.47
Immobilised fleet	83%

Motorcycle thefts	1,594
Change from 2007	+364
Recovered	47%

- Western Australia has the largest proportion of immobilised vehicles in the fleet – a result of the State's compulsory immobiliser scheme.
- At 80 per cent the recovery rate was higher than the national average, indicating a high incidence of theft for short term use.
- The high incidence of motorcycle theft continued – making up close to a quarter of all thefts in the State.

Australian Capital Territory

PLC thefts	1,671
Change from 2007	+48 or 3%
Recovered	74%
Rate per 1,000 population	4.85
Rate per 1,000 registrations	7.51
Immobilised fleet	61%

Motorcycle thefts	107
Change from 2007	+11
Recovered	41%

- After a large reduction of 19 per cent in 2007 the Australian Capital Territory experienced some fluctuations in theft numbers in 2008, with slight rises towards the end of the year.
- At 7.51 the ACT recorded the second highest theft rate per registrations in Australia.

New South Wales

PLC thefts	20,420
Change from 2007	-2,379 or -10%
Recovered	69%
Rate per 1,000 population	2.93
Rate per 1,000 registrations	5.11
Immobilised fleet	62%

Number of motorcycle thefts	2,373
Change from 2007	+113
Recovered	28%

- Consistent with previous years, New South Wales had the largest reduction in actual theft numbers for the nation.
- This figure represents over half of the overall PLC theft reductions in Australia for the year.
- The State again experienced the lowest recovery rate and the highest proportion of vehicles stolen without an immobiliser, indicating a higher incidence of profit-motivated theft.
- At 62 per cent New South Wales also has the second largest proportion of secured vehicles.

Queensland

PLC thefts	7,232
Change from 2007	-541 or -7%
Recovered	78%
Rate per 1,000 population	1.69
Rate per 1,000 registrations	3.42
Immobilised fleet	59%

Number of motorcycle thefts	1,454
Change from 2007	+358
Recovered	38%

- Despite an increase in the December quarter, Queensland achieved the third largest reduction in theft numbers and percentage decrease for the year.
- The State's theft rates per population and registrations were the lowest for the nation, both below the national averages of 2.57 and 3.93 respectively.