



National Motor Vehicle  
Theft Reduction  
Council



# Strategic Plan 2020–2022

**Informing Australia  
on vehicle crime**

An initiative of Australian governments  
and the insurance industry

## **Vision**

To contribute to Australia's economic and social well-being by achieving the lowest rate of motor vehicle theft in the developed world.

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## **Mission**

To deliver a culture of continuous and sustainable vehicle theft reduction in Australia by advancing reform and cooperation between industry, government and community stakeholders.

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## **Goals that contribute to meeting the vision**

Reduce the volume of vehicle crime

Reduce the cost of vehicle crime

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## **Reform themes**

Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles

Reducing profit-motivated theft

Sub-themes:

Building stakeholder capacity and promoting innovation

Better data

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## **Operating philosophy**

The NMVTRC is committed to developing common goals with stakeholders through the promotion of the economic and social benefits of reduced vehicle theft. Its credibility will be judged by the quality of its proposals for change.

Communication, consultation and negotiation are the hallmarks of the NMVTRC's operating philosophy which underpins all its activities.

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## Content

- 02** Foreword
- 04** Introduction
- 05** Part A – Background
- 08** Part B – Section 1: Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles
- 14** Part B – Section 2: Reducing profit-motivated theft
- 21** Part B – Section 3: Motorcycles, heavy vehicles and plant
- 23** Part C – Work program summary
- 31** Appendix A – Parties consulted in development of this plan
- 32** Appendix B – Project Assessment Framework
- 33** Appendix C – The vehicle crime continuum
- 34** Appendix D – NMVTRC Decision Tree Model
- 35** Appendix E – Key Performance Indicators for NMVTRC operations

# Foreword

The NMVTRC's approach to strategic development is research-based and guided by crime prevention theory. In particular, the majority of our countermeasures are underpinned by situational crime prevention. It proposes that within the environment there are situational opportunities that enable car crime to occur and these opportunities can be reduced by:

- ① increasing the effort and risk required to steal or obtain profit from car crime; and
- ② reducing the benefits of committing the crime.

Vehicle theft increased marginally (2 per cent) in 2019/20 to a total of 56,312. This was primarily due to an 11 per cent rise in profit-motivated passenger/light commercial (PLC) theft, with short-term theft up just 1 per cent. Motorcycle thefts decreased by 3 per cent, and theft of heavy/other vehicles suffered a 4 per cent rise.

Increasingly, vehicle theft is not just a single crime; it is now often at the centre of a more complex mix of offending that may involve significant road safety risks, other crimes against a person, subsequent property crimes and a wide variety of fraudulent activity in respect of personal identity, finance and staged collisions. We now need to look at vehicle theft as often an enabler of other crimes. It is therefore no coincidence that several jurisdictions have also seen increases in property crime including robbery and burglary/break and enter over the past 12 months.<sup>1</sup>

We are clearly amid a challenging time both socially and economically and there is an established correlation between the performance of the economy and crime generally. With the ongoing disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic it is almost certain the current uplift in vehicle crime will extend well into 2021 at a minimum. There undoubtedly remains more to do to get back on the path of delivering our vision of achieving the lowest rate of vehicle theft in the developed world.

In the NMVTRC's assessment, the principal vehicle crime concerns currently facing the nation are the:

- prevalence of residential burglaries to access the keys of 'secure' vehicles;
- ancillary uses of stolen cars in facilitating a range of other crimes;
- the performative nature of many young offenders; and
- more than 10,000 cars that appear to simply vanish altogether from our roads each year and the rising proportion of these that are exported either as a whole vehicle or as separated parts, and growing instances of insurance fraud presented as vehicle theft.

The continuing challenging economic and social conditions require a sustained level of commitment from both the NMVTRC and its stakeholders.

In recognition of the likely constraining effect that economic conditions will continue to have on stakeholders' capacity to implement reforms, the NMVTRC proposes to maintain its focus on directing the greatest proportion of its resources to facilitating an operational, on-the-ground response to the 'highest priority' issues via effective partnerships. This includes a committed focus on diverting young offenders away from the criminal justice system to prevent short-term vehicle crime, as well as prioritising the need for better intelligence on the 'end fate' of vehicles stolen for profit and in particular, theft export risks.

We are also at a time where understanding community attitudes to vehicle crime and prevention mechanisms is vitally important. The difficult economic outlook will undoubtedly heighten the impact of having a vehicle stolen for some families. Likewise, a shift in offender methods to entering homes to steal car keys has the potential to heighten the sense of violation for victims (even when there is no confrontation with the offender) compared to a vehicle anonymously taken from the street, undetected. Conversely, we are also in a time of marked technological advances where the capacity to utilise the data generated by connected vehicles in the tracking of stolen cars or post-recovery investigation could enable faster recoveries or improve police clearance rates.<sup>2</sup>

Our forward work program therefore features a strong focus on engaging with a diverse community and understanding current attitudes to vehicle crime, security issues and technology. It also recognises the value in understanding the impact of current methods of vehicle crime on victims and considers how victim stories can be used to personalise community messaging.

1. While the time-series and definitions are not fully aligned across the data sets, it generally indicates that over the past 12-15 months property offences such as unlawful entry have risen in Vic (up 4 per cent), Qld (11 per cent), SA (16 per cent (commercial), 3 per cent (residential)) and Western Australia (1 per cent). Access to contemporary international vehicle crime data is limited but also indicates single digit rises for the United Kingdom, Ireland, Finland, and the Netherlands in 2019, while New Zealand experienced a 14 per cent increase to the end of February 2020. Generally, only the most serious offence which best describes a distinct course of criminal conduct is recorded in official crime statistics, even though an offender may be charged with other offences resulting from the one incident.

2. An offence is cleared when it is resolved, i.e. an alleged offender was processed, an investigation revealed no offence occurred or the perpetrator was known but for legal or other reasons could not be charged.

# Introduction

This Plan proposes a set of reform themes to reflect the principal vehicle crime concerns. This includes a range of initiatives and countermeasures to reduce short-term theft (and the ancillary uses of stolen vehicles) and to reduce profit-motivated vehicle theft that respond to the various vehicle, human and environmental factors that all work together or contribute to related crime occurring.

The Plan also introduces sub-themes which highlight the NMVTRC's commitment to promoting innovation and keeping ahead of crime trends with countermeasures that build stakeholder capacity and contribute to the collation and analysis of better data.

The Plan demonstrates that we will achieve our goals by:

- Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles by:
  - > diverting young offenders through:
    - > exploring and supporting innovative means of delivering young offender programs;
    - > developing/supporting primary prevention mechanisms to encourage young people to consider the risks and long-term impacts of becoming involved in vehicle crime; and
  - > working with affected partners to promote consistent community messages and resources to encourage motorists to take steps to reduce their theft risk.
- Reducing profit-motivated theft by:
  - > pursuing a range of countermeasures to:
    - > protect legitimate trading by encouraging the development of industry-lead commercial agreements between insurers, repairers and recyclers, and consumer education;
    - > reform scrap metal (second-hand dealing) laws in select jurisdictions;
    - > facilitate progression towards a secure and environmentally sound vehicle decommissioning system for end-of-life vehicles;
    - > conduct in-depth intelligence assessments of the export of stolen vehicles and parts;
    - > continue to manage written-off vehicle reform and optimise consumer awareness of stolen and written-off vehicle information;
    - > improve vehicle identification (through the management of high-risk mine vehicles and maintaining dialogue with Commonwealth in respect of mandatory vehicle identification standards); and
    - > facilitate intelligence gathering and information sharing between police services.

- Building stakeholder capacity and promoting innovation and achieving better data through:
  - > strengthening networks with diverse communities and motorcycle riders;
  - > collaborating with IAG's Research Centre on technological advances and cyber security risks in vehicle crime;
  - > exploring public policy requirements in relation to connected vehicles and data collection and use; and
  - > continuing to improve the quality, utilisation and tactical value of the NMVTRC's considerable data holdings through:
    - > enhanced consumer insights;
    - > reviewing fraud risk indicators and development of direct data interfaces to insurers; and
    - > investigating the ancillary uses of stolen vehicles through enhanced police data and related systems.

## Structure of this Plan

This Plan is set out in three parts. Part A outlines the background to the development of the Plan and the NMVTRC's role in Australia's theft reform process.

Part B examines the current theft dynamics by the two major reform themes (i.e. reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles vs reducing profit-motivated theft) with a snapshot of the prevailing trend data, an analysis of current and emerging threats and the NMVTRC's proposed responses. Both major reform themes include proposed responses that fall under the sub-themes of building capacity and promoting innovation and better data. These responses are highlighted in the summary tables by the superscripts \*(building capacity/innovation) and #(better data).

Part B also contains separate analyses of the specialised classes of vehicles in respect of motorcycles, heavy vehicles, plant and equipment.

How the overall program fits together and is organised (with indicative resource allocations) is summarised in Part C.

# Part A – Background

## Basis of Strategic Plan

The NMVTRC's Strategic Plan is a dynamic document, reviewed annually, with the first year of each plan comprising a detailed work program. Each revised plan reflects a review of progress and a consideration of methods of operation, as well as the changing priorities and operating environments of the NMVTRC's stakeholders.

A combination of multi-stakeholder workshops and in-depth consultations with senior representatives of our stakeholder base across the country have again been the major influence on the development of this Plan. These consultations help to ensure that the NMVTRC and its stakeholders develop a shared vision of what the priority actions required are and where the greatest resources should be invested.

Discussions held with peak bodies, special interest groups and stakeholders throughout the past 12 months of the NMVTRC's operations have also assisted to shape the revised Plan.

## Development and delivery of reforms

The primary role of the NMVTRC is to facilitate the implementation of vehicle theft prevention reforms, and coordinate associated activities across industry, agency and jurisdictional boundaries. As a result, the NMVTRC's brief is broad, involving all stages of vehicle theft prevention policy, including:

- policy development;
- the coordination of implementation; and
- the monitoring of outcomes.

As the NMVTRC's internal resources are finite, the establishment of productive relationships with stakeholders and others is absolutely crucial to the delivery of its theft prevention reforms. Only by its stakeholders embracing and adopting the reforms promoted by the NMVTRC can it deliver sustainable reductions in vehicle theft.

The NMVTRC also remains committed to:

- seeking input from subject experts at every stage from project design to development to implementation;
- maintaining the most transparent and accessible consultative and communications mechanisms possible to ensure stakeholders and affected parties are informed of progress and issues;

- asking stakeholders to rate us regularly and reporting the results publicly;
- seeking to continually improve our data and related services to ensure its accuracy, timeliness, flexibility and accessibility;
- applying an action-oriented approach to research;
- maintaining a consistent, persistent and non-bureaucratic approach to dealing with issues;
- continuing to be organisationally lean; and
- demonstrating value for money.

The NMVTRC work program will continue to focus on the development and implementation of a manageable number of key projects with a particular emphasis on facilitating an operational, on-the-ground response to issues identified as 'highest priority'.

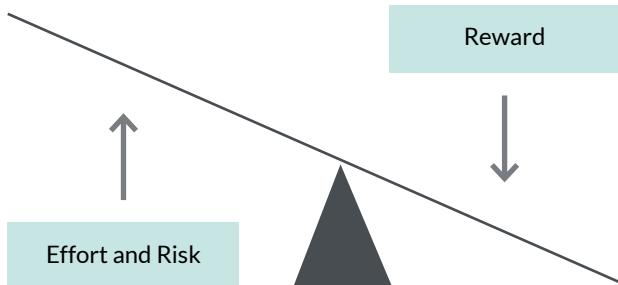
**Figure 1: Vehicle theft reform process**



The NMVTRC's approach to strategy development is research-based. Our countermeasures are guided by the principles of situational crime prevention theory which proposes that increasing the effort and risk involved in committing a crime and reducing the rewards will lead to a reduction in the number of offenders prepared to engage in it. In doing this, our challenge is to increase the effort for criminal behaviour whilst ensuring there is not undue impact on the community or legitimate business.

# Part A – Background continued

**Figure 2: Situational crime prevention – risk versus reward equation**



Crime prevention theory recognises that there are a range of environmental factors that present opportunities for crime to occur. We use the 'four Es' (Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Encouragement) to illustrate the comprehensive nature of the program and reinforce the notion that vehicle crime occurs within the context of a range of environmental factors, as well as human and vehicle factors, that directly or indirectly enable it.

Borrowed from the road safety field, the four Es represent a scientific approach to crash reduction. While there are some clear differences – as intent and criminality are absent in most crashes – there are some significant parallels and similar principles apply in attempting to develop a holistic response to the vehicle crime problem. Our proposed responses for both major reform themes are summarised by the four Es. Our work program is also presented by the four Es at Figure 7.

**Figure 3: The four Es**

Education	➤ The provision of information on how to reduce theft risk to the community via targeted communications and/or the mass media.
Encouragement	➤ Promotion of behaviours and actions that reduce the risk of theft, particularly amongst vulnerable groups.
Engineering	➤ Improving on-board vehicle security, utilising intelligent transport system infrastructure or the security of road user systems – including information exchange systems.
Enforcement	➤ Theft detection, deference, punishment and penalties.

Each of the projects proposed in the Work Program has been evaluated against the NMVTRC Project Assessment Framework<sup>3</sup> and are considered as:

- essential to delivering the NMVTRC's vision of Australia achieving the lowest rate of motor vehicle theft in the developed world;
- consistent with one or more of the NMVTRC's four reform themes for action;
- being of national, regional or sectoral significance;
- having a clear, evidence-based case for action; and
- enjoying sufficient stakeholder commitment to maximise the likelihood of successful implementation.

3. A full description of the Project Assessment Framework is included in this Plan as Appendix B.

# Theft facts

## Passenger and light commercial vehicles

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**45,010**

80% of all vehicle thefts



More than 3 in 4 PLCs stolen  
were recovered



**53%**

were stolen from a residence



**25%**

were stolen from a street



**10%**

were stolen from a business

# Part B – Section 1: Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles

The short-term theft (STT) category comprises those instances where the vehicle has been targeted by opportunistic thieves for short-term uses such as transport or to commit another crime but has been recovered intact or subject to malicious damage.<sup>4</sup>

Short-term theft accounts for the largest proportion of motor vehicle theft in Australia (72 per cent in 2019/20). Over time the dynamics of short-term theft and offender motivations have changed considerably.

Up to the mid-2000s older vehicles were targeted for their ease of hotwiring a vehicle parked on the street, often by young people for the purposes of joyriding. However, the introduction of the mandatory fitting of engine immobilisers has rendered modern cars almost impossible to steal today without gaining access to the keys. Offenders have adapted and key theft via residential burglary is now the most common method of stealing a modern car for short-term use (representing 53 per cent of all thefts).

This shift is reflected in the age profile of stolen vehicles. While traditionally older vehicles have been the top theft targets due to their inadequate security, the spread is now much more even with roughly half of cars stolen aged less than 11 years, and half aged more than 11 years. Eight in 10 PLCs stolen in 2019/20 were protected by an Australian-Standards Equivalent (ASE) engine immobiliser.

Vehicle theft is also often no longer a single crime and offender motivations for short-term theft are much more complex. Stealing a vehicle for short-term use can facilitate a range of more complex high-harm, high-impact offending which may include:

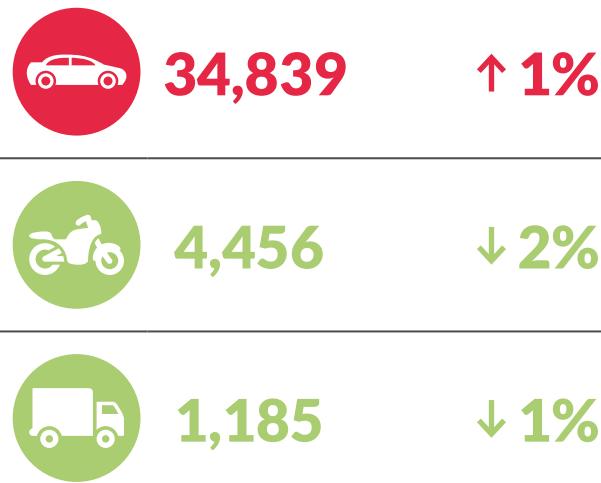
- other crimes against a person (such as an assault, abduction or shooting);
- subsequent property crimes (such as an aggravated burglary or robbery, arson, drug or firearms dealing);
- terrorism (in the form of vehicle-based attacks or explosions);
- other forms of theft (fuel drive offs, toll evasion); and
- a wide variety of fraudulent activity in respect of identity and vehicle identification, finance and staged collisions.

These links are illustrated by the Vehicle Crime Continuum provided at Appendix C.

Vehicle crime often also poses significant road safety risks in the form of dangerous driving, pursuits and evasions and more recently, the ‘ramming’ of police vehicles. The consequences of short-term vehicle theft are, therefore, wide-reaching.

4. Short-term use numbers will include an unknown but assumed small number of recovered vehicles that were recovered in a substantially stripped condition that were the likely target of profit-motivated thieves.

## Short-term theft at a glance

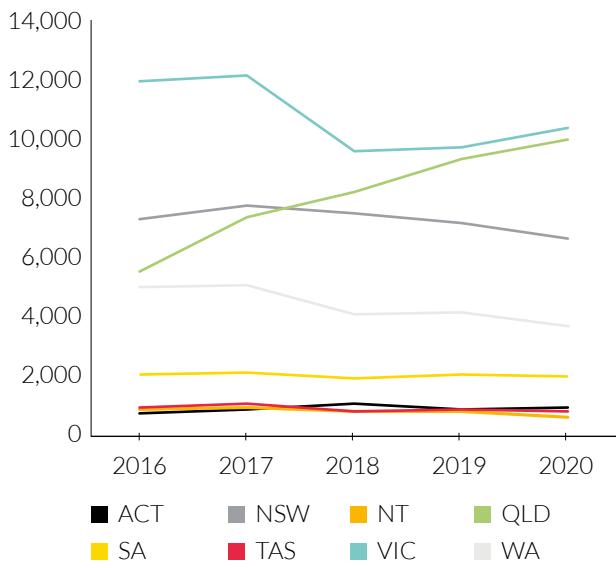


Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary uses of stolen vehicles requires a strong community approach where there is recognition of the important and valuable role that all motorists can play in preventing vehicle theft on an individual level but also in terms of reducing the potential wider impacts of the crime within the community.

For many young offenders, vehicle theft represents their first foray into crime and there is the potential for it to escalate rapidly from stealing for personal use to stealing vehicles to facilitate more serious offending and drug use. The NMVTRC is therefore a strong believer in youth diversion spanning from primary prevention through to diversionary programs to steer young people away from the criminal justice system.

The NMVTRC’s forward work program for reducing short-term theft leverages community support, encourages stakeholder support for youth diversion and aims to achieve better outcomes through improved understanding of motorist attitudes and victim experience. Clear changes in median recovery times of vehicles stolen for short-term theft (indicating that thieves are retaining the use of vehicles for extended periods) also warrants further investigation to better understand how the vehicles are being used. Improving our understanding of these relationships will be a major focus over the next 12 months.

**Figure 4: STT PLC theft five-year trend**



## Threat assessment

The NMVTRC has identified a range of threats to achieving our goal of reducing short-term theft in Australia. Threats are assessed according to a ‘traffic light’ coding system.

**Red** represents the highest order danger to sustainable theft reduction and poses a clear, present threat.

**Amber** means the threat has been assessed as moderate or reducing, but still requiring some attention.

**Green** means the threat has been assessed as minor or significantly reduced.

The assessed threats and what the NMVTRC is doing to combat them is outlined below.



### Theft by key and residential burglaries

Stolen keys result in seven in 10 late model thefts with half of all stolen cars taken from a residence

The increasing penetration of electronic immobilisers across the Australian fleet has made a major contribution to improving the nation’s theft performance since 2001. Nationally, nine in 10 vehicles are protected by an engine immobiliser.

There has now been a distinct shift in offenders’ methods towards:

- residential burglaries to access the keys of ‘secure vehicles’ – with vehicle keys being the only property stolen in up to one in four reported burglaries in which a vehicle was taken; and
- ‘sneak’ thefts, where offenders enter occupied homes undetected and steal car keys left in easily accessible places such as near an open door or window. In only a small number of cases do offenders come face to face with home occupants.

Seven in 10 cars are stolen with their own keys and half of these are taken from the home. The NMVTRC’s most recent annual motorist survey, however, revealed a level of confusion amongst motorists on what to do with car keys in the home to reduce the risk of theft.

Stakeholders in all jurisdictions point to changing motorists’ behaviour towards safeguarding keys as the key to combating contemporary vehicle crime.

## The way forward

While perhaps the most difficult theft method to counter, a pro-active approach to responsibly raise motorist and homeowner awareness of actual risk profiles and practical mitigation strategies is essential to maintaining a balance between restoring a sense of community safety and encouraging risk mitigation.

The NMVTRC has worked with behavioural economics consultants and video content creators to develop direct and factual messaging to ensure the best chance of influencing householders to adopt appropriate key safeguarding practices that will not expose them to other risks. The Pop. Lock. Stop campaign reminds motorists that car theft is preventable and there are simple steps they can take to reduce their risk ([carsafe.com.au/pop-lock-stop](http://carsafe.com.au/pop-lock-stop)).

Vehicle crime has wide-reaching implications for many of our stakeholder organisations. Going forward the NMVTRC will seek to establish more coordinated arrangements with partner organisations to ensure a consistent approach to community messaging with a greater focus on social media and relating victim experiences to personalise messaging. We will also look for opportunities to directly target owners of high-risk vehicles through registration and other databases and promotion of resources at in-person service centres.

# Part B – Section 1: Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles continued

The advent of connected vehicles is also expected to bring challenges in respect of the large volume of data that will be generated and how it will be accessed/used by police services in the case of a stolen vehicle. The NMVTRC proposes to work with police services to explore their preparedness for connected vehicles and their expectations around using data to respond to reports of a vehicle being stolen. Engaging with consumers about where the line should be drawn between privacy and public safety will be critical.



## Electronic hacking

Electronic devices are not being used to bypass security in short-term thefts

While some CCTV footage from around the world appears to depict organised criminals using electronic devices to defeat electronic security systems there is no evidence of such devices being used to steal vehicles for short-term use. The NMVTRC will continue to liaise with police and insurers to keep abreast of any potential increases in the use of such devices.



## Managing young offenders

Keeping a young person in secure care costs more than \$550,000 a year. New multi-agency approaches are required

Over the past five years we have seen a fundamental, and in our assessment, permanent shift in young offender behaviour. This has seen:

- residential burglaries to access keys become the most common method of vehicle theft;
- an overall reduction in young offender numbers offset by an increase in recidivist offending with smaller numbers of offenders responsible for a high proportion of car crime;
- a ‘performative’ element to vehicle crime spurred on by social media; and
- an increase in young offenders ‘debuting’ in serious armed robberies and aggravated burglaries as opposed to following the former trajectory of hotwiring a vehicle on the street being the first foray into crime.

While most young offenders aim to sneak in and out of homes undetected to steal car keys ('sneak' thefts), there are a small number of offenders with a propensity for violence. The NMVTRC commissioned research into young violent offender behaviour by Swinburne University found that these young people are almost always themselves the victims of abuse, family violence or other childhood trauma, have become disengaged from society and are often homeless. In these situations, drug use – particularly methamphetamine use – is endemic.

New approaches to deal with young offenders are clearly required. On any day there are up to 1,500 young people held in juvenile detention nationally and a very high proportion of them are because of motor vehicle offences. Detention is costly – keeping a young person in secure care costs more than \$550,000 a year – and its impact on post-release re-offending is open to debate. Offenders are often returned to the community without the skills or support required to stay away from crime.<sup>5</sup> A 2016 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report found that young people who were matched across the specialist homelessness service, child protection and youth justice were more likely to report having a mental health issue and have repeat bouts of homelessness.<sup>6</sup>

## The way forward

There is a clear need for a whole-of-community approach with early intervention, diversion and greater coordination of education, health, and specialist services. Reform of the way agencies deal with issues of substance dependencies, mental health and exclusion from mainstream education will be central.

In the early 2000s the United Kingdom (UK) introduced a coordinated multi-agency approach to the delivery of youth justice services across local health, social care and justice agencies. The establishment of youth offending teams (YOTs) (under the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*) has been highly successful in diverting young people away from the criminal justice system with:

- the number of young people cautioned or convicted in 2015 down 79 per cent since 2007;
- the number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time falling by 82 per cent;
- the number prosecuted at court down 69 per cent; and
- there now being around only 900 under-18s in custody (down from 2,909 in 2007).<sup>7</sup>

The model ties the level of government funding provided to participating agencies with offender outcomes.

5. Report on Government Services, Productivity Commission, 2020.

6. Vulnerable young people: interactions across homelessness, youth justice and child protection, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2016.

7. Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales, Ministry of Justice, December 2016.

Despite the strong metrics outlined above, a 2016 review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales found that due to structural limitations YOTs were failing to support more serious young offenders to prevent recidivism.<sup>7</sup>

In 2017 the Victorian Government announced the formation of a new network of Children and Youth Area Partnerships to join-up social and government services to better support vulnerable children and young people. The approach aimed to bring together the most senior representatives in a local area from State and local governments, the community sector and the broader community, who are most able to make a difference for young people.

In 2020/21 the NMVTRC will aim to determine the most recent outcomes and implications of the UK and Victorian models on current rates of offending and recidivism, and to assess implications for the establishment of a similar multi-agency approach for an Australian context.

The NMVTRC also remains an advocate for the expert design and delivery of diversionary programs for young theft offenders based on the development of trade skills.

Young offenders have a chance to turn their lives around through the commercially based social enterprise, Synergy Auto Repairs (SAR). Synergy is a unique partnership between Mission Australia (MA), the Suncorp Group (SG) and the NMVTRC to deliver technical training and work experience for offenders aged 16-20 with a view to them securing full-time employment in the repair sector.

All work is supervised by an experienced, trade-qualified workshop manager and two full-time spray painters and panel-beaters and must meet same quality standards of other Suncorp repairers. Synergy Melbourne continues to operate at a high level in respect of therapeutic outcomes and celebrated its sixth anniversary in 2020. The enterprise has now repaired more than 3,000 customer repairs and placed more than 50 participants in trade apprenticeships.

We will continue to work with Mission Australia to look for ways of expanding SAR to other jurisdictions.

We also consider primary prevention, i.e. targeting at-risk youth before they become involved in vehicle crime, an essential element of the NMVTRC's holistic response to juvenile car crime offending. This year will see a review of the NMVTRC's Choose a Ride resource aimed at a nine to 14 year old age group for its ongoing relevancy and impact.



### Attack by 'coat hanger and screwdriver'

Non-immobilised cars still face twice the risk

Almost nine in 10 vehicles stolen in 2019/20 were fitted with an ASE immobiliser which, without the key, cannot be started without advanced technical know-how and specialised equipment.

While the significant penetration of engine immobilisers in the vehicle fleet means there has been a clear shift in offender method towards stealing car keys from a residence, 23 per cent of vehicles stolen were taken from the street with another 4 per cent taken from car parks. Older model vehicles, most notably the Nissan Pulsar, also continue to be top theft targets due to their generally poor standard of security features. The absence of electronic protection means they can be stolen using basic tools such as a coat hanger and screwdriver. When adjusted for their exposure within the fleet, such vehicles face twice the risk of theft.

There is therefore still a place to promote the utility of engine immobilisers to owners of older vehicles. The NMVTRC will continue to find cost-effective means of directly informing owners of the most targeted vehicles about their risks and the best means of mitigating them.

### Understanding the impact of vehicles stolen for short-term use

The NMVTRC proposes a two-fold approach to better understand the true impact of vehicles stolen for short-term use on the community and at the individual level.

As outlined earlier, anecdotal reports from police in several regions of Australia are that thieves are retaining the use of vehicles that will ultimately be recovered for extended periods. An NMVTRC analysis of time from reported theft to recovery of the vehicle shows that the median days to recovery has increased from one day in 2009 to now up to four days in some larger jurisdictions, supporting the anecdotal reports.

For over a decade, the NMVTRC has attempted to classify vehicle theft data by the offenders' motivation – short-term use or profit-motivated. While the short-term category has by definition included incidents where a stolen vehicle is used in the commission of other crimes (as well as purposes such as joyriding and for transport) the changes in recovery time warrants further investigation to better understand how offenders are using the stolen vehicles and the related wider impacts.

7. Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales, Ministry of Justice, December 2016.

8. Ibid.

# Part B – Section 1: Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles continued

The NMVTRC proposes to work with select police services to investigate the ancillary use of vehicles stolen and recovered. With short-term vehicle theft also often posing significant road safety risks including more frequently the ‘ramming’ of police vehicles, we will also conduct an analysis of jurisdictions’ legislation around using a stolen vehicle as a weapon.

Challenging economic times and a shift in offenders’ theft methods to sneaking into homes to steal car keys means that it is also important to understand the impact of vehicle crime at an individual level. The NMVTRC proposes to work with relevant agencies to connect with victims of car theft to better understand the psychological as well as financial impacts of the crime and how victim stories can be used to enhance community education messaging.

## Reducing short-term theft: Summary of NMVTRC program responses by the four Es

The below is a summary of how we will work to reduce short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles. It includes responses which also fall under the sub-themes of building community capacity and promoting innovation\* and better data# highlighting our commitment to understanding our stakeholder needs and working to reduce the impact of short-term theft for the community, industry and government.

In response to the above threats the NMVTRC will:

### Education and encouragement

1. Work with key partners to promote consistent community messages and resources on safeguarding keys
2. Maintain partnerships with local councils to promote consistent community messaging in crime hot spots\*
3. Support and advocate for young offender programs based on development of technical trade skills and employment
4. Maintain advice to community/agency attempts at youth interventions
5. Assess the impact of the UK’s youth offending teams’ model for suitability for an Australian context
6. Catalogue jurisdictions restorative justice approaches for young offenders
7. Work with motorcycle rider groups to disseminate theft prevention messages\*
8. Work with diverse communities to disseminate theft prevention messages\*
9. Enhance community education messaging via links with road safety and victim experiences
10. Regularly monitor motorist attitudes to vehicle security, theft prevention technology and related issues#
11. Maintain education resources for ‘pre-offenders’ i.e. Choose a Ride

### Engineering

12. Work with police in Queensland and Victoria to conduct a deep analysis of ancillary uses of stolen vehicles (and establishment of a national Analytics Expert Reference Group)<sup>#^</sup>
13. Explore the nation’s preparedness for connected vehicles including public policy requirements in relation to vehicle for data collection and use for law enforcement\*^

### Enforcement

14. Maintain expert data systems for local area police to assist them to develop effective local responses#
15. Conduct analysis of legislation around using a stolen vehicle as a weapon (‘ramming’)

\* Building stakeholder capacity and promoting innovation.

# Better data.

^ Also included in strategies to reduce profit-motivated theft.

# Theft facts

## Motorcycles

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**9,021**



16% of all vehicle thefts

Almost half of motorcycles stolen  
were recovered

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**61%**

were stolen from a residence

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**17%**

were stolen from the street

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**7%**

were stolen from a business

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## Part B – Section 2: Reducing profit-motivated theft

The profit-motivated theft category refers to vehicles stolen for conversion into cash via various illegal methods. In 2019/20 profit-motivated theft accounted for 28 per cent of all motor vehicle theft in Australia.

While profit-motivated theft volumes have remained relatively steady over the past five years (with an overall increase of 8 per cent in the past 12 months), there has been a shift over time in their predicted ‘end fate’. While significant tightening of the processes for managing written-off vehicles (WOV) substantially curtailed thieves converting whole vehicles into cash, vehicles in the profit-motivated theft category are now primarily stolen for conversion into separated parts for domestic use, export or as scrap.

A look at the age profile of vehicles stolen for profit supports this likely end fate, with three in five PLCs stolen for profit over the past year aged 11 years or older and a large proportion valued at less than \$10,000.

Given the proven links between poor economic outlook and increases in property crime, there are likely to be further changes in the dynamics of profit-motivated theft going forward. It is expected that there will be greater incidences of insurance fraud disguised as motor vehicle theft including staged collisions, likely to result in increases in theft of vehicles in a ‘younger’ age group.

The NMVTRC’s forward work program for reducing profit-motivated theft prioritises gaining a better understanding of theft export risks, as well as continuing to explore much needed options for reform of the scrap metal market in jurisdictions where activity is still largely unregulated, and related fraud impacts for insurers as a result of a poor economic outlook.

There is also a focus on keeping abreast of emerging technology in vehicle theft investigation including the potential uses of stored vehicle data for law enforcement and insurance investigations.

### Profit-motivated theft at a glance

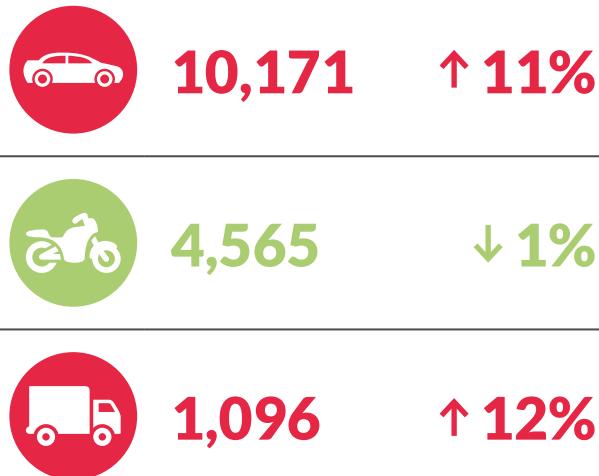
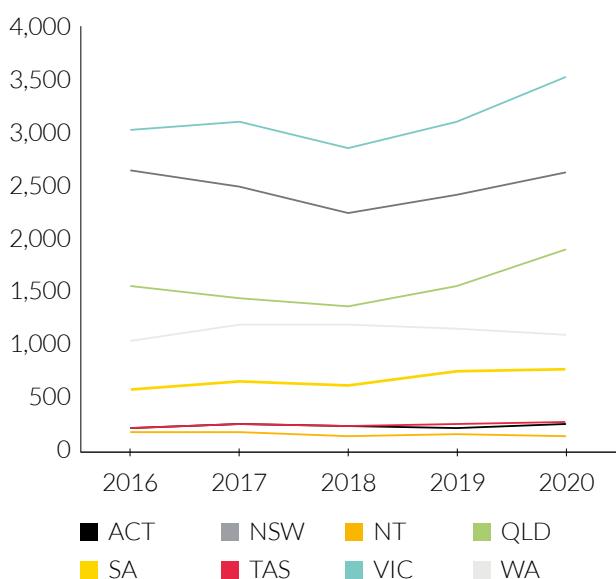


Figure 5: PMT PLC theft five-year trend



## Threat assessment

The NMVTRC has identified a range of threats to achieving our goal of reducing profit-motivated theft in Australia. Threats are assessed according to a 'traffic light' coding system.

These threats and what the NMVTRC is doing to combat them is outlined below.



### Electronic hacking

Less than one in 100 Australian thefts involve electronic hacking

Media hype about remote hacking experiments has fuelled widespread perceptions that all modern vehicles are now vulnerable to electronic attacks. The most reported scenario relates to a form of relay attack in which an offender remotely intercepts and manipulates the near field communication between a vehicle and its electronic key. The internet is full of videos of claimed examples.

While some recent local CCTV footage appears to depict criminals using electronic devices to defeat the security systems of vehicles in an apparent relay attack, studies conducted by the NMVTRC and international theft bodies still indicate that the majority of late model thefts have been facilitated by access to the key and transponder via a burglary. Likewise, enquiries with authoritative experts, including the United States' National Insurance Crime Bureau and General Motors (US), indicate that authorities are yet to confirm a real incident or recover a capable, low-cost device.

More recently, independent expert analysis of the theft claims of more than 200 late model vehicles valued at more than \$50,000 supports these prior assessments.

If a key duplication or hacking method was used, you would expect to see a repeated exposure pattern of similar models as the location of on-board diagnostic (computer) ports, the compatibility of service tools and entry methods vary so significantly. Apart from Audi, which for a period had a clear issue due to a service key being left in vehicle logbooks and/or glove compartments, there has to date been no clear patterns of model, age or location.

Across Europe, the estimated impact of electronic hacking ranges from one in 20 thefts in the United Kingdom up to one in five in Russia. Australia's exposure is estimated to be in the very low range, along with Sweden and Finland, at less than one in 100.

## The way forward

The NMVTRC maintains its collaborative alliance with IAG's Research Centre (IAGRC) to ensure that we keep abreast of technological advances in vehicle architecture and e-theft methods. The partnership provides the NMVTRC with access to expert advice on cyber security risks and the practical testing of select, aftermarket security devices and/or Original Equipment Manufacturer security features. It is currently exploring the utility of stored vehicle data for law enforcement and insurance investigations.



### Dismantled for parts

Accounts for one in four profit-motivated thefts. Regulatory regimes require major reform

As whole vehicle laundering has become almost impossible to execute without detection, the dismantling or stripping of major components becomes increasingly more attractive and less risky for car criminals. Theft for dismantling is of course not limited to unrecovered vehicles, but data on the extent of stripping of recovered vehicles is inconsistent. It is now also clear that criminal networks are increasingly more likely to dispose of the stripped shell by crushing or shredding rather than simply abandoning it.

The potential pathways for illicit parts are diverse but closely parallel the legitimate market and include<sup>9</sup>:

- the substitution of legitimate parts in commercial crash repairs<sup>10</sup>;
- the replacement of worn components in programmed maintenance or servicing<sup>11</sup> (via both commercial and private networks);
- exchange for other goods, including drugs and firearms;
- upgrading standard or base model vehicles to limited edition or performance variants; and
- rebuilding repairable written-off vehicles.

9. Australian Institute of Criminology, Nature and Extent of Stolen Vehicle Parts in Australia (NMVTRC 2001).

10. The difficulty of identifying stolen parts means that legitimate recyclers and repairers may inadvertently purchase them.

11. A survey conducted by AAMI in 2000 on the cost of replacing 'a basket of parts' for the 12 most popular model vehicles found that for some vehicles the cost of replacing these parts can be as much as 45 per cent of the current value of the vehicle.

# Part B – Section 2: Reducing profit-motivated theft

continued

## The way forward

Contemporary Europol investigations of late model thefts suggest that resale as separated parts is the major motivation even for high end vehicles. The NMVTRC proposes to formalise relationships with Europol and Interpol to ensure we remain informed of international trends and potential future implications for Australia.<sup>12</sup>



### Converted to scrap metal

Accounts for one in four profit-motivated thefts. Exemption from licensing or accreditation for metal recyclers needs to be reviewed

The prevailing vehicle age profile of profit-motivated thefts indicates that theft for scrap (including dismantling for parts) could account for half of all profit-motivated thefts and highlights the vulnerability of the prevailing end-of-life vehicle (ELV) practices to manipulation by profit-motivated thieves.

Industry sources maintain that demand for vehicles for metal recycling and the export of whole and partial vehicles continues to grow and that legitimate industry participants are finding it increasingly difficult to compete against rogue operators who have no outward appearance of compliance with regulatory requirements and established industry standards.

In 2016 the NSW Government introduced the *Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016* which requires persons dealing in scrap metal to register with NSW Police, bans cash transactions and imposes a range of obligations on participants to maintain certain records and report suspicious activity. Following this, in 2018 the Victorian Government amended its second-hand dealing laws to adopt key elements of the NSW approach including banning cash payments and trading in de-identified vehicles.

While the NSW and Victorian reforms represented a major step forward, similar vulnerabilities exist in all the remaining states and territories with like reform required to close off gaps that allow some activity to go unregulated and equip regulators with a better ‘tool-kit’ to deal with serial non-compliance.

## The way forward

Last year the NMVTRC worked with stakeholders in WA to develop and submit a Regulatory Impact Assessment to the state’s Minister for Police, outlining our recommendations for legislative reform of the scrap metal industry. The NMVTRC will look to replicate this process with South Australian and Queensland stakeholders in FY2021.



### Rebirthed or cloned

Accounts for less than one in 20 profit-motivated thefts. Traditional methods substantially curtailed by registration reforms. Number plate cloning on the rise

While the former method of choice for profit-motivated thieves converting whole vehicles into cash has been substantially curtailed by a significant tightening of the processes for managing written-off vehicles (WOV), discussions with stakeholders have indicated that number plate cloning is a concern in a number of jurisdictions. Anecdotal reports from police services indicate that some offenders are cloning the identity of a like registered vehicle (including registration plates and supporting documents) to retain stolen vehicles for their own use or passing them on to criminal associates for a form of financial consideration much lower than the vehicle’s value.

There are also reports from the UK that registration plate cloning in London has grown exponentially since the so-called Tax Disc (the equivalent to the windscreen registration label formerly used in Australia) was discontinued in 2014. The UK estimates that up to 8 per cent of registration plates have been cloned based on successful challenges to various automated penalty notices.

To aid the detection of fake plates, Queensland will become the first Australian jurisdiction to incorporate directional security marks in new number plates in September 2020. The marks are invisible when viewed from directly in front, but can be seen, both during the day and at night, when viewed from certain angles. The NMVTRC will encourage other jurisdictions to follow Queensland’s lead.

In Victoria, a multi-agency working party is also exploring options to mitigate number plate theft and cloning.

12. Europol is the law enforcement agency of the European Union focused on the exchange of criminal intelligence on international organised crime and terrorism between member states. Interpol is the worldwide information hub for law enforcement cooperation and provides members with a range of technical and operational support.



### Leakage from existing barriers

Criminals targeting 'off-register' vehicles that fall outside current mandatory reporting arrangements

There are reports of criminals seeking to exploit current regulatory barriers by using the identifiers of 'off-register' vehicles such as 'retired' PLCs used exclusively on mining sites and damaged ex-rental vehicles that are not captured in state and territory WOV systems.

Likewise, some road authority vehicle inspection personnel have suggested that the 15-year age limit for the mandatory reporting of written-off vehicles is being exploited by criminals targeting vehicles outside this range. The likely incidence has not been able to be quantified to date.

The NMVTRC has also been advised of reports of written-off vehicles (WOVs) including statutory write-offs (SWOs) being exported from Australia to New Zealand for road registration.

### The way forward

The NMVTRC is in discussions with NSW Police to jointly engage the mining industry to develop a policy position to mitigate the risks posed by 'off-register' PLC mine vehicles. We will also liaise with the New Zealand Transport Agency in respect of mitigating related consumer risks.



### Exported as whole vehicle, parts or scrap

Estimated to account for four in 10 profit-motivated thefts. Proliferation of new entrants in 'cash for cars' sector focused on scrap metal exports

As outlined earlier, legitimate recyclers have for some time observed that many new enterprises buying vehicles exclusively for scrap or export are relying on the ambiguity of the scrap metal exemption to avoid holding either LMCT or second-hand dealer registration.

Most of these enterprises operate via cash transactions with no record of the seller's identity or regard for the status of the vehicle being purchased. This facilitates a fertile environment for the sale of stolen vehicles into the commercial trade. There is also now considerable evidence that many of these enterprises ignore fundamental regulatory requirements in the areas of occupational health and safety, environmental laws, and taxation.

In April 2019, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement (PJCLE) supported the NMVTRC's call for stolen vehicles to be expressly added to the prohibited exports list to assist in curtailing theft for scrap and export. The Committee also recommended that the Australian Border Force (ABF) work with state and territory law enforcement agencies and the NMVTRC to develop a national strategy to reduce the export of stolen motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts.

In response the Australian Government has advised that it will direct the ABF to consider amendments to Australia's export declaration process to require an exporter to confirm the legitimacy of their goods at the point of export, with sanctions of up to \$55,500 and 12 months' jail for a false or misleading declaration. The development of a national strategy has been referred to the Department of Home Affairs for further consideration.

### The way forward

Stakeholders in most jurisdictions have expressed a critical need to better understand export risks and the end fate of vehicles stolen not recovered. With export estimated to account for at least 40 per cent of profit-motivated vehicle theft, the NMVTRC has prioritised understanding export risks as a major element of its 2020/21 forward work program. The NMVTRC proposes to work with affected agencies to conduct joint intelligence assessments of export theft risks including documenting the end-to-end export logistics chain and possible intervention points.



### Insurance fraud presented as vehicle theft

Estimated to account for up to one in 20 reported profit-motivated thefts

Those vehicles reported as stolen that are more likely to be the subject of fraudulent claims will be those that are of higher value, insured for an agreed value (rather than market value) and subject to a financial encumbrance.

# Part B – Section 2: Reducing profit-motivated theft

## continued

While sophisticated scams may involve stripping of the vehicle and/or complete disposal of the shell by crushing or shredding, the most common fraudulent claims have traditionally been likely to relate to burnt-out recovered vehicles. However, discussions with insurers in some jurisdictions indicate an increase in the number of vehicles that have been assumed to have ‘vanished’ suddenly being found within days of the vehicle being determined to be a total loss and the claim settled. Increases in staged collisions and ‘induced’ accidents (i.e. deliberately causing an at fault accident with a stranger) have also been reported in some parts of the country.

Some insurers are also reporting that claimants are exploiting the widely reported rise in residential burglaries to steal keys, to explain why they may not be in possession of all keys.

### The way forward

Given the increasingly challenging economic situation, an increase in such fraudulent activity is expected. The NMVTRC is working with IAG’s Research Centre to assess the utility of stored vehicle data for police and insurance investigations. We are also seeking to work collaboratively with insurers via the Insurance Fraud Bureau to review our fraud assumptions and risks.



**Dumped in waterways or bushland**  
Estimated to account for one in 20 non-recovered stolen vehicles

Pre-2000 vehicles comprised one in five non-recovered stolen vehicles in the 12 months to June 2020. Many will have been dumped in waterways or bushland. With 15 per cent of these vehicles valued at under \$2,000, the NMVTRC has assumed most are unlikely to have been the target of criminal networks.

There is, however, some inter-relationship between this group and the ‘Theft for Scrap-ELV’ group referred to earlier with some recyclers who hold local government contracts to remove abandoned vehicles reporting that they frequently encounter instances of vehicles being removed by unauthorised third parties prior to their arrival at the vehicle’s last recorded location.

### End fate of vehicles

A stolen vehicle’s characteristics (recovery status, age, value, insured status and type, export potential, and immobiliser presence (and standard)) are all potential pointers to its likely fate. The NMVTRC uses a ‘Decision Tree Model’ (DTM) to estimate the most likely end fate of a stolen vehicle based on its characteristics. A flow-chart of the DTM is included in Appendix D.

In summary, based on the profile of the 10,468 PLC vehicles that ‘vanished’ in the year, the NMVTRC’s DTM suggests that they are likely to have been disposed according to the following shares:

End use or fate	Share %	Trend
Dismantled for parts	25	Rising
Converted to scrap metal	25	Rising
Re-birthed or cloned	5	Reducing
Exported	40	Rising
Dumped in bushland or waterways	5	Steady

## **Profit-motivated theft: Summary of NMVTRC program responses by the four Es**

The below is a summary of how we will work to reduce profit-motivated theft. It includes responses which also fall under the sub-themes of building community capacity and promoting innovation\* and better data# highlighting our commitment to understanding our stakeholder needs and working to reduce the impact of profit-motivated theft for the community, industry and government.

In response to the above threats the NMVTRC will:

### **Encouragement and education**

1. Support industry efforts to assure the provenance of parts used in legitimate supply chain via trade accreditation schemes and insurance repair networks
2. Promote consumer awareness of the Personal Property Securities Register

### **Engineering**

3. Maintain liaison with police and insurers nationally in respect of electronic theft risks
4. Work with Austroads on how state and territory registration systems can support the better management of end-of-life vehicles
5. Engage the Federal Government on a joint counter-export strategy
6. Review data exchange arrangements with NZ Transport in respect of stolen and WOVs
7. Conduct joint intelligence assessments of export theft risks with select law enforcement agencies
8. Conduct a deep analysis of ancillary uses of stolen recovered vehicles (and establish an Analytics Expert Reference Group through its Australasian Vehicle Crime Managers' Network)<sup>#^</sup>
9. Improve WOV repair process including exploring feasibility of an online repair diary and improved POS information for buyers at auction
10. Mitigate identification risks posed by 'off-register' ex-mine vehicles

### **Enforcement**

11. Continue to seek the reform of second-hand goods and related laws to remove ambiguities and deal with enduring non-compliance (i.e. scrap metal trading)
12. Formalise relationships with Europol and Interpol with respect to resale of separated parts and scrap
13. Maintain the operations of the Vehicle Crime Managers' Network to facilitate inter-agency cooperation and intelligence sharing
14. Maintain expert data systems for local area police for more effective local responses<sup>#</sup>

\* Building stakeholder capacity and promoting innovation.

# Better data.

<sup>^</sup> Also included in strategies to reduce profit-motivated theft.

# Theft facts

## Other vehicles

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**2,281**



4% of all vehicle thefts

1 in 2 'Other vehicles' stolen  
were recovered



**22%**

were stolen from a residence



**20%**

were stolen from the street



**35%**

were stolen from a business

# Part B – Section 3: Motorcycles, heavy vehicles and plant

## Motorcycles

Stolen motorcycles made up 16 per cent of all thefts in Australia in 2019/20, with the total volume decreasing 3 per cent to 9,021 thefts.

The dynamics of motorcycle theft vary considerably from those of other vehicles. Half of all motorcycles are not recovered (profit-motivated theft) and around two in five of these are off-road or unregistered bikes. Unlike other vehicles, newer model motorcycles manufactured after 2010 are stolen in higher numbers than older ones (also making up over a half of all registrations); smaller bikes with an engine capacity of 150cc or less are most targeted; and the risk of multiple thefts from a single location is much greater.

The low recovery rates are driven by the ease with which motorcycles can be disassembled and sold for parts and – in the case of off-road motorcycles – the absence of “mandatory” transactions at which a suspicious vehicle may be detected. Developing effective interventions for any vehicle outside the mainstream registration system is extremely difficult for this reason. Pleasingly, the

identification of stolen motorcycles is improving with the VIN now being reported in two in three cases (up from one in five years ago).

There is consensus that for on-road bikes the demand for parts is the principal driver of theft. In some cases, the value of separated components is considered to exceed that of complete units<sup>13</sup>. There are also anecdotal reports that many stolen motorcycles are broken down and used for spares in amateur motorsport events.

Despite the different theft dynamics, like PLCs, most motorcycle theft occurs from the home (61 per cent). There is therefore a parallel need for similar strong community engagement and theft prevention messages for motorcyclists to understand that a bike is most at risk when parked at home, and there are simple steps that can be taken to reduce the risk.

The NMVTRC's forward work program includes countermeasures specifically aimed at reducing motorcycle theft. These are detailed below.

### In response to the above threats, the NMVTRC will:

1. Maintain liaison with rider groups to look to disseminate key motorcycle theft prevention messages\*
2. Develop mechanisms to improve the quality of motorcycle theft data recorded by police and secure the active participation of specialist insurers in providing data to CARS#

\* Building stakeholder capacity and promoting innovation.

# Better data.

# Part B – Section 3: Motorcycles, heavy vehicles and plant continued

## Heavy vehicles, plant and equipment

In 2019/20 some 2,281 heavy vehicles (1,113 trucks and 126 buses) and 649 items of plant or equipment (PE) were stolen, representing an overall increase of 4 per cent.

A high proportion of equipment recorded as stolen lack any detail as to type, age or other classification details. The prevailing non-recovery rate for heavy PE is almost two in three and two in three for all other heavy vehicles. While the frequency of heavy truck and PE theft is relatively low (4 per cent of all thefts) the cost of an incident can be extremely high with a single prime mover or large excavator worth hundreds-of-thousands of dollars.

Costs to individuals and businesses impacted by this type of theft will generally be much higher than for other vehicles in terms of temporary replacement costs, lost productivity, and increased insurance premiums.

Like motorcycles, both heavy vehicles – particularly prime movers – and PE pose significant challenges in developing cost-effective countermeasures. In the case of prime movers, the high level of customisation of vehicles and the interchangeability of key components makes conclusive identification very difficult even for the very experienced eye.<sup>14</sup>

In May 2017, the Transport and Infrastructure (Ministerial) Council agreed to establish a National Written-Off Heavy Vehicle Register as a priority.

The work was led by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) with support from Austroads and the NMVTRC. With the assistance of an NMVTRC recommended expert reference group, a set of appropriate assessment criteria was agreed on with major heavy vehicle insurers, manufacturers, repairers, and transport agencies in late 2018.

NSW was the first jurisdiction to pass enabling laws in December 2018. In March 2020, the NMVTRC and Austroads concluded work on the resolution of range of pre-implementation tasks required to introduce a consistent

scheme nationally and minimise the implementation lead times for other jurisdictions. With all pre-implementation tasks now complete we are now awaiting firm timelines for implementation from other jurisdictions. It is expected to take until 2022 for the last jurisdictions to come into line.

PE pose similar problems to off-road bikes in that because most operate outside the mainstream registration system, there are no mandatory transactions at which a suspicious vehicle may be detected. In addition, identification marks are generally limited to non-unique serial numbers – the legitimacy of which cannot be easily interpreted or verified by non-experts. This also has implications for the accuracy of the descriptive information recorded in police systems.<sup>15</sup> There have been suggestions that equipment manufacturers are progressively adopting improved, VIN-based or VIN-like identification markings and this will be further explored.

Conditional registration of PE has been proposed from time to time but has been steadfastly resisted by industry due to the onerous levels of stamp duty that apply to registration transactions and the reluctance of state revenue offices to grant exemptions. Where PE is used on the road it is usually under a form of permit authority.

There are also anecdotal claims that suggest there is an extensive and accepted theft culture within some elements of related industries.

The United Kingdom has a privately run register and recovery service, but views on its effectiveness are varied. The NMVTRC has attempted to engage major equipment importers and distributors on developing a local equivalent, but the response has been poor.

There are also reports of stolen plant and equipment being exported as whole vehicles.

The NMVTRC's forward work program includes countermeasures specifically aimed at reducing heavy vehicle and plant and equipment theft. These are detailed below.

### In response to the above threats, the NMVTRC will:

1. Work with affected parties to progress the consistent management of heavy vehicle write-offs<sup>^</sup>
2. Develop mechanisms to improve the quality of plant and equipment theft data recorded by police<sup>#</sup>
3. Include P&E in the intelligence gathering exercise on export risks

<sup>^</sup> Reducing profit-motivated theft.

<sup>#</sup> Better data.

14. This was one factor in the decision by some states to exclude heavy vehicles from mandatory written-off vehicle reporting requirements when they were first introduced nationally in 2002-04.

15. In 2015 NSW Police modified its COPS system to incorporate a PE menu to improve reporting accuracy.

# Part C – Work program summary

The work program for 2020-2021 will focus on the following priorities in the context of the NMVTRC's four reform themes.

**Figure 6: FY2021 program structure – by reform theme**

## Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles

<b>Young offenders</b>	Maintain support of Synergy Repairs (and support replication) Advisory support to other good practice community-based programs Review Choose a Ride (primary prevention) resources Review UK multiagency approach to youth offending and suitability for Australian context Catalogue jurisdictions' restorative justice approaches for young offenders
<b>Community education</b>	Boosted Stop Sneak Theft Initiative ( <i>formerly Operation Bounce Back</i> ) Enhance promotion of Pop. Lock. Stop. campaign via social media and stakeholder collaboration Enhance community education messaging by exploring links between road safety and vehicle crime and incorporating victim experiences

## Reducing profit-motivated theft

<b>Auto recycling reform</b>	Support/promote industry responses, codes, agreements Expert working groups in select jurisdictions to counter theft for scrap activity
<b>Export</b>	Engage Australian Government on counter-export strategy Conduct joint intelligence assessments of export theft risks
<b>Management of written-off vehicles</b>	Monitor implementation of heavy vehicle WOVR Investigate feasibility of on-line repair diary portal Improve quality of POS information for WOV buyers Low cost publicity opportunities to promote PPSR Review data exchange arrangements with New Zealand Transport Agency in respect of stolen and written-off vehicles
<b>Vehicle ID</b>	Management of high-risk mine vehicles Maintain dialogue with Commonwealth on Secure Vehicle ID (ADR 61-3)
<b>Police responses</b>	Maintain Vehicle Crime Managers' Network Conduct analysis of legislation around using a stolen vehicle as a weapon Formalise relationships with Europol and Interpol with respect to resale of separated parts and scrap

## Building stakeholder capacity and promoting innovation

<b>Better networks</b>	Improve liaison with key motorcycle rider groups Improve liaison with diverse communities
<b>Technology</b>	Collaboration with IAG on e-theft and cyber security risks Explore preparedness for connected vehicles

## Better data

<b>Expert systems</b>	Maintain and expand Expert Data Systems
<b>Consumer insights</b>	Monitor motorists' attitudes to vehicle security issues and the experiences of victims
<b>Mitigating insurers' risks</b>	Work with IFBA to review fraud risk indicators Develop Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to automate exchange of sanctioned data with insurers
<b>Deeper analysis</b>	Investigate 'ancillary use' of vehicles stolen and recovered ACT local theft characteristics Improve data quality – motorcycles, HVs, insurance claims 'gap'

# Part C – Work program summary continued

Figure 7: 2021 program structure – by the four Es

	<h3>Encouragement</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review UK multiagency approach to youth offending and suitability for Australian context</li><li>Maintain support of Synergy Repairs (and Support Replication)</li><li>Review Choose a Ride (primary prevention) resources</li><li>Advisory support to other good practice community-based programs</li><li>Catalogue jurisdictions' restorative justice approaches for young offenders</li></ul>
	<h3>Education</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Boosted Stop Sneak Theft Initiative (<i>formerly Operation Bounce Back</i>)</li><li>Enhance promotion of Pop. Lock. Stop. campaign via social media and stakeholder collaboration</li><li>Improve quality of POS information for WOW buyers</li><li>Low cost publicity opportunities to promote PPSR</li><li>Enhance community education messaging by exploring links between road safety and vehicle crime and incorporating victim experiences</li><li>Improve liaison with key motorcycle rider groups</li><li>Improve liaison with diverse communities</li></ul>
	<h3>Engineering</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support/promote industry responses, codes, agreements</li><li>Expert working groups in select jurisdictions to counter theft for scrap activity</li><li>Monitor implementation of heavy vehicle WOVR</li><li>Investigate feasibility of on-line repair diary portal</li><li>Management of high-risk mine vehicles</li><li>Collaboration with IAG on e-theft and cyber security risks</li><li>Maintain Expert Data Systems</li><li>Monitor motorists' attitudes to vehicle security issues and the experiences of victims</li><li>Work with IFBA to review fraud risk indicators</li><li>Develop Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to automate exchange of sanctioned data with insurers</li><li>Investigate 'ancillary use' of vehicles stolen and recovered</li><li>Improve data quality – motorcycles, HVs, insurance claims 'gap'</li><li>ACT local theft characteristics</li><li>Explore preparedness for connected vehicles</li><li>Review data exchange arrangements with New Zealand Transport Agency in respect of stolen and written-off vehicles</li><li>Maintain dialogue with Commonwealth on Secure Vehicle ID (ADR 61-3)</li></ul>
	<h3>Enforcement</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage Australian Border Force et al on counter-export strategy</li><li>Reform Customs Act to classify stolen vehicles (parts) as prohibited exports</li><li>Maintain Vehicle Crime Managers' Network</li></ul>

**Figure 8: Program resource allocation**



Reform Theme/Project Element/ Desired Outcome	Action		
	Year 1 (2020–21)	Year 2 (2021–22)	Year 3 (2022–23)
<b>Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles</b>			
<b>Divert young offenders</b> Improved access to diversionary programs that reflect NMVTRC's best practice model	Maintain support of Synergy Auto Repairs and work with partners to replicate in other jurisdictions  (STA/21/001)	Establish model in other jurisdictions	Maintain
	Contribute to qualitative review of Synergy Auto Repairs  (STA/21/001A)	Completed	
	Assess the impacts of the UK <i>Crime and Disorder Act</i> 1998 and the establishment of Youth Offending Teams, and the Victorian Government's Children and Youth Area Partnerships for effectiveness and suitability for the Australian context  (STA/21/002)	Develop strategy based on recommendations	Implement strategy
	Catalogue jurisdictions' restorative justice approaches for young offenders  (STA/21/003)	Develop strategy for expansion, if needed	Implement any remedial actions identified

## Part C – Work program summary continued

Reform Theme/Project Element/ Desired Outcome	Year 1 (2020–21)	Year 2 (2021–22)	Year 3 (2022–23)	Action
<b>Reducing short-term theft and the ancillary use of stolen vehicles</b>				
	Maintain an advisory support role to other community attempts at best practice responses	Maintain advisory support	Maintain advisory support	
	(STA/21/004)  Review Choose-A-Ride youth resources  (STA/21/005)	Refresh resources		
<b>Community education</b>	Boost <i>Stop Sneak Theft Initiative</i> (formerly <i>Operation Bounce Back</i> ) partnerships with select local governments focused on key security and mitigating personal risks  (STA/21/006)	Review	Refresh	
	Enhance promotion of Pop. Lock. Stop. campaign via social media and stakeholder collaboration  (STA/21/007)	Maintain	Review	
	Enhance community education messaging by exploring links between road safety and vehicle crime and incorporating victim experiences  (STA/21/008)	Maintain	Review	

Reform Theme/Project Element/ Desired Outcome	Year 1 (2020–21)	Year 2 (2021–22)	Year 3 (2022–23)	Action
<b>Reducing profit-motivated theft</b>				
<b>Auto recycling reform</b>	<p>Establish secure practices for decommissioning end-of-life vehicles to combat theft-for-scrap rackets and minimise environmental impact</p> <p>Support and promote industry lead responses, codes and agreements to improve provenance checks and systems in legitimate scrap metal and parts supply chain</p> <p>(PMT/21/001)</p>	<p>Complete reform program</p>		
	<p>Work with expert working groups in select jurisdictions to develop formal proposal for legislative reform of the scrap metal and recycled parts sectors based on the principles of the NSW crime prevention model, including no cash payments or trading in unidentified vehicles or parts</p> <p>(PMT/21/002)</p>	<p>Complete reform program</p>		
<b>Export</b>	<p>Facilitate legislative reform in respect to the export of stolen vehicles and parts</p> <p>Engage Federal Government on the development of a counter-export strategy in response to the recommendations of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Joint Committee on Stolen Vehicle Exports</p> <p>(PMT/21/003)</p>	<p>Assist to implement strategy</p>	<p>Maintain strategy</p>	
	<p>Conduct joint intelligence assessments with Victoria Police, NSW Police Force, Australian Border Force and Austrac (and Interpol) of export theft risks</p> <p>(PMT/21/004)</p>	<p>Implement any remedial actions identified</p>	<p>Maintain</p>	

## Part C – Work program summary *continued*

Reform Theme/Project Element/ Desired Outcome	Year 1 (2020–21)	Year 2 (2021–22)	Year 3 (2022–23)	Action
<b>Reducing profit-motivated theft</b>				
<b>Management of written-off vehicles (WOV)</b>	Monitor implementation of the national scheme for the management of heavy vehicle write-offs  (PMT/21/005)	Complete implementation		
Reduced pool of vehicles that are subject to criminal manipulation	Investigate the feasibility of an on-line repair diary portal to support the management of repairable write-offs by road agencies  (PMT/21/006)	Commence implementation	Complete	
	Improve the quality of point of sale information provided to RWO buyers about the pre-requisites for re-registration  (PMT/21/007)	Commence implementation	Complete	
	Look for low-cost opportunities to further promote consumer awareness of the Personal Property Securities Register  (PMT/21/008)	Maintain	Maintain	
	Review data exchange arrangements with New Zealand Transport Agency in respect of stolen and written-off vehicles  (PMT/21/009)	Implement any remedial actions identified	Maintain	
<b>Vehicle ID</b>	Engage the mining industry about mitigating identification risks posed by 'off-register' PLC mine vehicles  (PMT/21/010)	Implement any remedial actions identified	Complete implementation of any remedial actions	
Disrupting the vehicle laundering marketed through improved vehicle identification	Maintain dialogue with Commonwealth in respect to Secure Vehicle Identification (ADR 61-3)  (PMT/21/011)	Maintain watching brief	Maintain watching brief.	

Reform Theme/Project Element/ Desired Outcome	Year 1 (2020–21)	Year 2 (2021–22)	Year 3 (2022–23)	Action
<b>Reducing profit-motivated theft</b>				
<b>Police responses</b>	Maintain the Vehicle Crime Managers' Network to facilitate cooperation and intelligence sharing  (PMT/21/012)	Review/refine	Maintain	
Facilitate inter-agency cooperation and knowledge sharing	Conduct analysis of legislation around using a stolen vehicle as a weapon ('ramming')  (PMT/21/013)	Implement any remedial actions identified		
	Formalise relationships with Europol and Interpol with respect to resale of separated parts and scrap  (PMT/21/014)	Maintain	Maintain	
<b>Building stakeholder capacity and promoting innovation</b>				
<b>Better networks</b>	Improve liaison with diverse communities to understand their needs and to disseminate theft prevention messages  (BCI/21/001)	Review/refine		
	Improve liaison with rider groups to look to disseminate theft prevention messages  (BCI/21/002)	Review/refine		
<b>Technology</b>	Maintain collaboration with IAG's Technical Research Centre on e-theft and cyber security risks  (BCI/21/003)	Maintain	Review	
Showcase emerging/low cost technologies as crime reduction tool	Explore preparedness for connected vehicles including public policy requirements in relation to vehicles to data collection and use for law enforcement  (BCI/21/004)	Implement any remedial actions identified		

## Part C – Work program summary continued

Reform Theme/Project Element/ Desired Outcome	Year 1 (2020–21)	Year 2 (2021–22)	Year 3 (2022–23)	Action
<b>Better data</b>				
<b>Expert systems</b>	Maintain expert data systems (EDS)  (BDU/21/001)	Review/refine	Review/refine	
<b>Consumer insights</b>	Monitor motorists' attitudes to vehicle security and crime issues including victim experiences via annual survey and collaboration with partners  (BDU/21/002)	Review/refine	Review/refine	
<b>Mitigating insurers' risks</b>	Work with Insurance Fraud Bureau Australia to review fraud risk indicators  (BDU/21/003)	Maintain	Maintain	
	With interested insurers develop Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to automate exchange of sanctioned data  (BDU/21/004)	Maintain	Review/refine	
<b>Deeper analysis</b>	With police in QLD and VIC investigate 'ancillary use' of vehicles stolen and recovered  (BDU/21/005)	Review any remedial actions identified		
	Develop mechanisms to improve the quality of plant and equipment and motorcycle theft data recorded by police and secure the active participation of specialist insurers in providing data  (BDU/21/006)	Review/refine	Maintain	
	With ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate complete a deep analysis of local theft characteristics  (BDU/21/007)	–	–	

# Appendix A – Parties consulted in the development of this Plan

Allianz Australia Insurance

Austroads

Auto & General Insurance

Auto Recyclers Association of Australia

City of Salisbury

Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries

Insurance Australia Group

Insurance Council of Australia

Lake Macquarie City Council

Manheim Auctions

Mission Australia

Motor Trades Association of Western Australia

New South Wales Police Force

Pickles Auctions

QBE Insurance

Queensland Department of Youth Justice

Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads

Queensland Inspection Service

Queensland Police

RAA of South Australia

RAC Insurance

RACQ Insurance

Royal Automobile Club of Queensland

South Australia Police Service

South Australian Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Suncorp Group

TIO Insurance

Transport for New South Wales

VicRoads

Victoria Police

Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety

Western Australia Police Service

Western Australian Department of Transport

Youi Insurance

Zurich Insurance Group

# Appendix B – Project Assessment Framework

Priority projects included in this Plan have each been evaluated against the following assessment framework to ensure candidate projects support the NMVTRC's Vision and Goals.

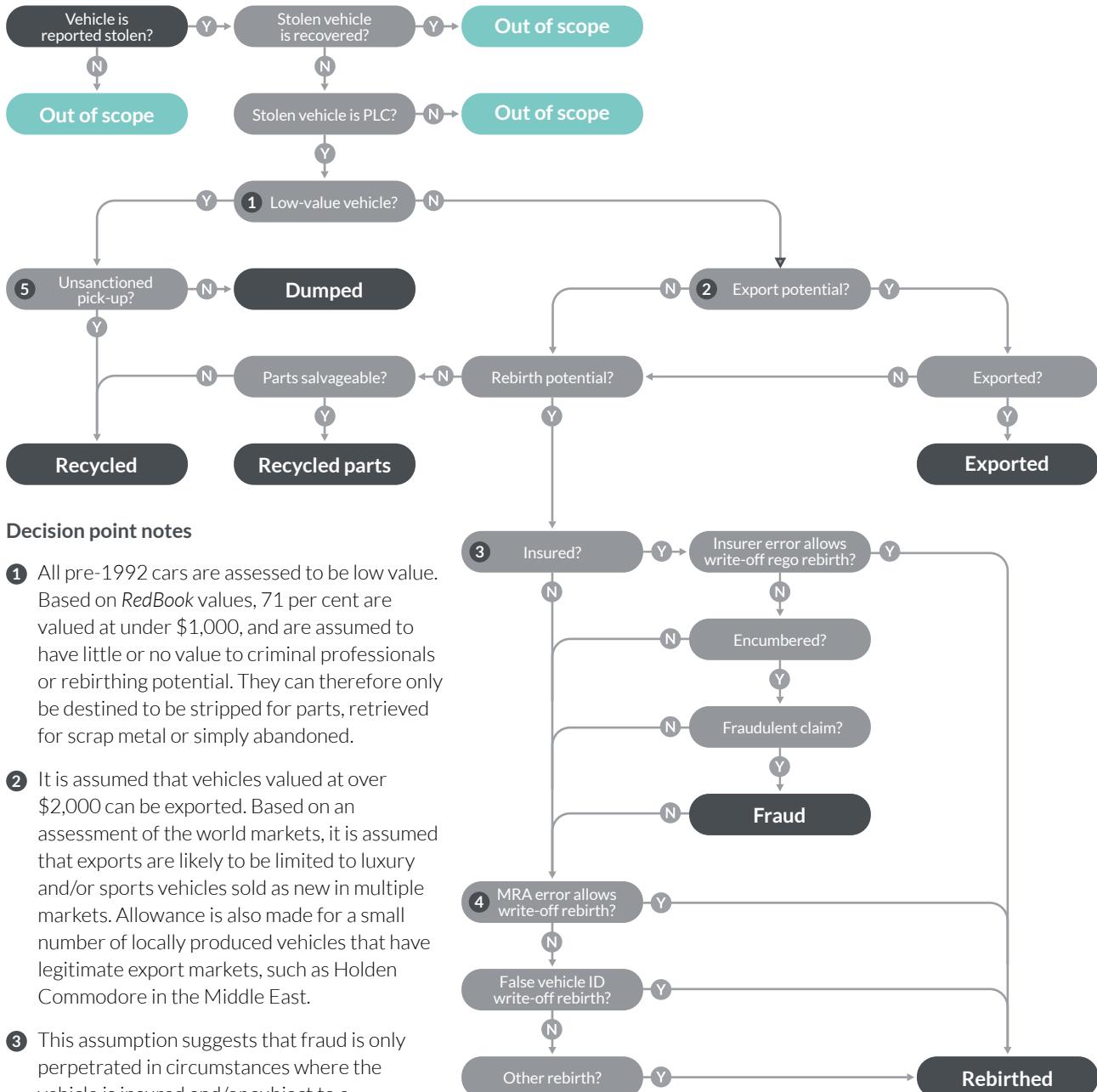
<b>1. Contributes to Vision:</b>	Possible rankings essential, value adding, discretionary
<b>2. Object definition</b>	Clearly articulated objective with specific goals/targets
<b>3. Problem identification</b>	Comprehensive identification of current deficiencies, likely future trends, stakeholder recognition
<b>4. Problem assessment</b>	Full analysis of the underlying cause of the deficiency and scale of impacts
<b>5. Problem analysis</b>	Clear articulation of why deficiency exists and contributing factors
<b>6. Option assessment</b>	Assessment of the range of possible interventions/means of implementation (advocacy, subsidies/incentives, regulation/penalties)
<b>7. Solution assessment</b>	Full analysis of why selected solution is favoured over alternative options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• likely impact and effectiveness</li><li>• interdependencies (the extent to which success relies on parallel sectoral reforms, national harmonisation, etc)</li><li>• achievability</li><li>• constraints/downsides</li><li>• timeliness (quick (1-2yrs), medium (3-5), long (5+))</li></ul>
<b>8. NMVTRC cost</b>	Estimate of NMVTRC costs

# Appendix C – The Vehicle Crime Continuum



Based on an original visual concept by Katie Scott (Victoria Police 2018).

# Appendix D – NMVTRC Decision Tree Model



## Decision point notes

- ① All pre-1992 cars are assessed to be low value. Based on RedBook values, 71 per cent are valued at under \$1,000, and are assumed to have little or no value to criminal professionals or rebirthing potential. They can therefore only be destined to be stripped for parts, retrieved for scrap metal or simply abandoned.
- ② It is assumed that vehicles valued at over \$2,000 can be exported. Based on an assessment of the world markets, it is assumed that exports are likely to be limited to luxury and/or sports vehicles sold as new in multiple markets. Allowance is also made for a small number of locally produced vehicles that have legitimate export markets, such as Holden Commodore in the Middle East.
- ③ This assumption suggests that fraud is only perpetrated in circumstances where the vehicle is insured and/or subject to a financial encumbrance.
- ④ Rebirths can also occur when errors (complicitous or otherwise) are made by a motor registry authority (MRA), or through deliberate deception using false identifiers plates or rebuilding a written-off vehicle with stolen parts. Unrecovered vehicles over \$2,000 that are neither exported nor rebirthed are assumed to be recycled for parts rather than simply for scrap metal. Removing parts and then dumping/scraping the rest is probably the most likely outcome.
- ⑤ It is surmised that very low-value vehicles would simply be abandoned in bushland, waterways or other remote locations.

# Appendix E – Key Performance Indicators for NMVTRC operations

The NMVTRC is a joint initiative of Australian Governments and the insurance industry and places a heavy emphasis on measurable outcomes and the delivery of high quality monitoring and evaluation processes. It considers its Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as crucial tools in measuring outcomes and determining the NMVTRC's success in achieving its mission. The data to measure the NMVTRC performance is gathered using a range of channels, including annual surveys of stakeholders' perceptions. The results are reported in the NMVTRC's Annual Report published each year in October.

## A: Motor vehicle theft trends in Australia

Program code	A1
Indicator	Comparisons with motor vehicle theft in comparable developed nations.
Source	Various sources.
Format	Calendar Year. Graphical or tabular representation of raw data and theft per 100,000 persons. The following countries are to be compared: Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States.
Baseline	Rolling five years (now 2015).
Program code	A2
Indicator	Reductions in the rate of vehicle theft per number of vehicles registered and per 1,000 population.
Source	Comprehensive Auto-theft Research System (CARS).
Format	Financial year. Graphical or tabular representation of percentage changes per 1,000 vehicles registered and per 1,000 persons.
Baseline	Rolling five years (now 2015).
Program code	A3
Indicator	Reductions or changes in the incidence and nature of short-term and profit-motivated theft.
Source	CARS.
Format	Financial Year. Graphical or tabular representation of short-term and profit-motivated theft rates based on recovery rate analysis. Vehicles recovered relatively intact attributed to short-term theft. Vehicles unrecovered or recovered in a substantially stripped condition attributed to profit-motivated theft. Vehicles which do not fall distinctly into either categories shall not be included.
Baseline	Rolling five years (now 2015).
Program code	A4
Indicator	Community perceptions of motor vehicle theft relative to other crimes.
Source	Public survey.
Format	Measurement of community concern with various types of crime relative to vehicle theft. Crimes to include: rape and assault, drug offences, murder, vandalism, house burglaries, street hold ups.
Baseline	2019 Nexus Survey.
Program code	A5
Indicator	The economic and social cost of motor vehicle theft, including the costs borne by the insurance industry.
Source	CARS.
Format	Financial Year. Insurance figure based on number of cars stolen times average cost of insurance claim.
Baseline	2019/20 FY.

# Appendix E – Key Performance Indicators for NMVTRC operations continued

## B: Assessment of NMVTRC consultation processes

Program code	B1
Indicator	Stakeholders' perceptions of the Council's program coordination and consultation performance.
Source	Stakeholder survey.
Format	Qualitative analysis of data collected.
Baseline	Rating of the Council's program coordination and consultation performance measures as good, very good or excellent by 80 per cent of respondents.
Program code	B2
Indicator	The quality of the Council's publications.
Source	Feedback forms from publications and annual stakeholder survey.
Format	Qualitative. To be expressed as a collective assessment.
Baseline	Rating of the Council's publications as good, very good or excellent by 80 per cent of respondents.
Program code	B3
Indicator	Analyses of references to the Council in the media and assessment of coverage as negative, neutral or positive.
Source	Media monitoring through monitoring agency.
Format	Quantitative (number of references and assessment of coverage). May also include qualitative analysis of major themes.
Baseline	80 per cent of media coverage rated as positive.
Program code	B4
Indicator	An improved level of awareness of vehicle security practices and vehicle theft issues by the community.
Source	Public survey.
Format	Quantitative and Qualitative. Graphical or tabular representation of changes in the public's level of awareness. To include: concern of having car stolen; rating of anti-theft measures; locking and security practices; beliefs regarding immobiliser effectiveness and cost and; types of cars stolen and offending groups.
Baseline	2020 Nexus Survey.

## c: NMVTRC's contribution to vehicle theft reforms implemented by stakeholders

Program code	C1
Indicator	Level of Council's influence on the implementation of reforms (major positive impact, minor positive impact, no impact, negative impact).
Source	Stakeholder consultation in the form of individual meetings, workshops or written surveys.
Format	Qualitative analysis of Council's influence on reforms outlined in yearly business plan. To be measured as having a major positive impact, minor positive impact, no impact, negative impact.
Baseline	Rating by more than 80 per cent of stakeholders as major positive impact.



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