



**G2** 

**Strategic Plan 2003**

the next generation of vehicle theft reform

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## LESS COST



REDUCING THE COST OF VEHICLE THEFT



IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF VEHICLE  
AND COMPONENT IDENTIFICATION



IMPROVING NATIONAL INFORMATION  
EXCHANGE AND REGISTRATION PRACTICES



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AND INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION





## VISION

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

## 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.

## 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 underpin all its activities.



## FOREWORD

This is the fifth Strategic Plan to be submitted by the NMVTRC to Australasia's Crime Prevention Ministers and the Insurance Council of Australia. Significantly, it marks the extension of the NMVTRC's life beyond its original five year term and maps out the path for the next generation of vehicle theft reform in Australia through to December 2006.

Pleasingly, the collaborative efforts of government and industry over the past five years has seen a significant raft of reforms implemented to counter the nation's vehicle theft epidemic.

In 1999:

- 132,000 vehicles were stolen;
- the collation of national vehicle theft data was limited to the high level analysis published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 6-8 months after the end of each calendar year;
- only New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria were exchanging vehicle registration data in real time;
- only NSW and South Australia were recording the identity of wrecked and written-off vehicles;
- vehicle theft was assigned a low priority

by police services nationally;

- deficiencies in the way vehicle manufacturers applied vehicle identifiers made re-identifying stolen vehicles relatively simple;
- fewer than 3 in 10 vehicles were protected by an engine immobiliser; and
- public awareness of the incidence and dynamics of vehicle theft was low.

By the end of 2002:

- the number of vehicles stolen for the year had fallen to 109,000—representing the lowest rate of theft in more than 20 years;
- a comprehensive suite of integrated data from more than 40 sources is published quarterly, and stakeholders are able to customise their own information needs on-line;
- only the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania are not exchanging registration data;
- only Western Australia is yet to implement a written-off vehicle register;
- vehicle theft is a priority issue to most police services and the newly formed Australian Crime Commission;

- more than 80,000 new cars were sold bearing state-of-the-art VIN-based microdot technology;
- more than 44 per cent of the national vehicle fleet is protected by an engine immobiliser; and
- the public are better informed about which vehicles are most at risk of theft and the best means to minimise those risks.

Despite these significant changes in the nation's vehicle theft performance, much remains to be done if Australia is to rid itself of the unenviable reputation as one of the car theft champions of the developed world.

Recent reforms—such as the completion of the national information grid—need to be fully bedded down and others—such as the use of improved vehicle identification technologies in the form of vehicle security labelling and VIN-based microdots—must be accelerated.

The challenge for the next four years is to continue to identify innovative ways to build on recent successes and to advance a collective stakeholder culture of striving for continuous and sustainable theft reductions.

In this year's round of annual stakeholder consultations conducted in May and June—

the 2003 StratPLAN Forums—participants were asked to consider the pros and cons of adapting the Vision Zero philosophy, embraced by road safety strategists in a number of countries, to vehicle theft. In the road safety field a Vision Zero approach requires the builders of vehicles and road systems, together with those that administer them, to design vehicles and systems that protect road users from death or serious injury. As an ethically based premise, Vision Zero is intended to operate as “a light on the hill” to provide focus and direction rather than setting artificial targets.

Put most simply, a vision zero for vehicle theft would translate to a philosophy that eventually no motor vehicle will be stolen and it can never be ethically acceptable that a stolen motor vehicle is used within the road system.

While many participants in the StratPLAN forums expressed the view that Vision Zero held some attraction in terms of setting a goal to aspire to and attributing accountabilities, many believed it may be too ambitious (or unrealistic) for where the vehicle theft reform process is now.

Notwithstanding this, the NMVTRC is of the view that the two primary tenets of Vision Zero are relevant to the challenges that lie ahead.

The first is that the designers of motor vehicles and vehicle systems—including road user systems—must be ultimately responsible for the design, operation and use of the theft reduction features of their vehicles and systems and thereby responsible for the level of vehicle theft.

And secondly, if vehicle users fail to obey the “rules” set by the designers—due to lack of knowledge, acceptance or ability—or if theft still occurs, the vehicle/road system designers must take the necessary further steps to counteract a vehicle being stolen.

As a consequence, one of the NMVTRC's priorities over the next four years will be to challenge vehicle manufacturers, registration agencies, insurers, police and justice agencies, and the motor trades to embrace this philosophy and help to set Australia on the road to achieving the lowest rate of vehicle theft in the developed world.



**David M. Morgan**  
Chairman

# REDUCING VEHICLE THEFT IN AUSTRALIA

## THE CONTEXT

### BACKGROUND

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.

As in previous years, a series of stakeholder workshops—the 2003 StratPLAN Forums—have been a major influence on the development of the Plan. These annual forums with senior executives of stakeholder organisations help to ensure that the Council

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 and stakeholders throughout the past 12 months of the NMVTRC's operations have also assisted to shape the new Plan.

As observed in the Foreword, this Plan has been developed on the premise that while the recent significant reductions in Australia's level of vehicle theft are welcomed, much remains to be done to lock in and further improve on those results. As the vehicle theft landscape continues to evolve, so must the search for innovative solutions to combat the activities of determined vehicle thieves.





# DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF REFORMS

## METHOD OF OPERATION

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 co-ordination of implementation; and
- the monitoring of outcomes.

As the NMVTRC's internal resources are small, 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.

In line with the recommendations of the independent review of the NMVTRC, the NMVTRC will extend its use of expert reference groups to supplement its policy development and standards setting processes on key issues.



Figure 1: Vehicle Theft Reform Process

# BASIS OF STRATEGIC PLAN

## CURRENT THEFT TRENDS

In response to NMVTRC initiatives, the concerted effort of stakeholders to get theft reforms operating on-the-ground has seen the reversal of the previous rapid escalation in the level of vehicle theft in Australia. The nation's prevailing theft rates of 7.5 thefts per 1,000 vehicles registered and 5.1 thefts per thousand population are the lowest in more than twenty years. Despite this, Australia remains one of the worst performing developed nations.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR CONTINUING AND SUSTAINING THEFT REDUCTIONS

A sustained reduction of vehicle theft in Australia requires action across a broad range of industry and government disciplines. Considerable challenges for the NMVTRC and its stakeholders include:

- the remaining high proportion of older

vehicles with little or no effective security;

- the ease with which components can be absorbed by the black market;
- remaining, albeit reducing, gaps in our national exchange of vehicle information between police and registration authorities;
- the emerging global trade in stolen vehicles; and
- major misconceptions concerning the scale and nature of vehicle theft within our motoring population.

## THEFT REFORM ACHIEVEMENTS

Significant achievements of the NMVTRC and its stakeholders include:

- the development of nationally consistent arrangements for managing written-off vehicle identities based on best practice;
- securing the transfer of Tasmania's written-off vehicle information into the

national "information grid" ahead of the State's full connection to the grid;

- developing theft and fraud reduction system performance measures for national information systems and the delivery of vehicle status information to consumers and the motor trades;
- establishing a national network of more than 400 registered installers under the NMVTRC's Immobilise Now! program to provide motorists with access to high-quality Australian Standards approved engine immobilisers at discounted prices;
- introducing the mandatory fitting of engine immobilisers as standard equipment to all new passenger vehicles;
- establishing the Comprehensive Auto-theft Research System (CARS) as the most statistically powerful collection of vehicle theft data in the world;
- developing performance-based technical standards for the application of state-of-the-art vehicle identification technologies (vehicle security labels and microdot





vehicle marking systems) that will appear on more than 100,000 new vehicles sold in Australia in 2003;

- developing and establishing a best practice diversionary program for young vehicle theft offenders under trial in Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland;
- investment in other broadly based youth programs in NSW and Victoria;
- the development of an education kit on young people and vehicle theft which is used in schools and youth centres nationally; and
- the development of a comprehensive range of public education resources which are used extensively by community groups, government and industry to raise consumer awareness of the impact of car crime on the nation.

The nation's recent gains need to be 'locked in' and accelerated. Achieving long-term, sustainable reductions requires commitment to long-term strategies.

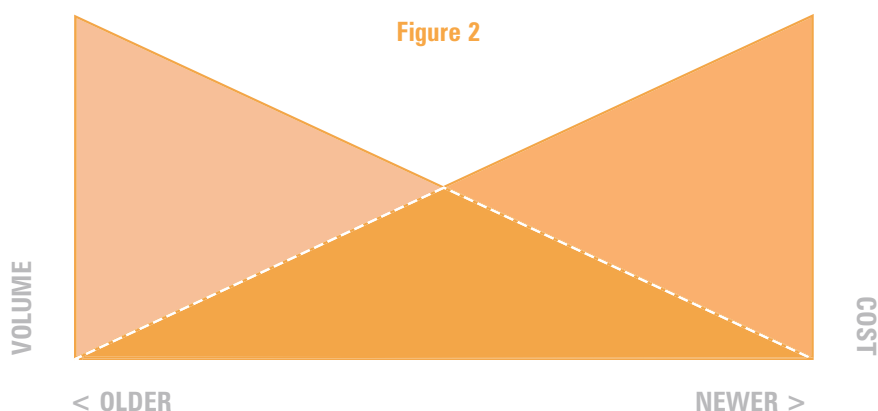
## STRATEGIC GOALS

Figure 2 demonstrates the inverse relationship between the volume of theft—three out of every four vehicles stolen in Australia are taken for short-term use—and the community cost of theft—with the one in four vehicles stolen to convert to cash contributing to more than half of the \$1 billion cost of vehicle theft to the nation.

The NMVTRC has restructured its work programme into these two streams to better convey what can, at times, seem a

complex reform agenda to both key stakeholders and the community at large:

1. Reducing the **COST** of vehicle theft—via countermeasures that impede the activities of organised criminals attempting to convert stolen vehicles or components into cash; and
2. Reducing the **VOLUME** of vehicle theft—by improving the security of the older vehicle fleet and reducing the level of youth offending.



## REDUCING THE COST OF VEHICLE THEFT

Reducing the cost of theft requires responses that diminish the lucrative returns to those parties who seek to deal in stolen vehicles and parts, and/or increase the likelihood of their activities being detected.

The NMVTRC's strategies to reduce the COST of vehicle theft over the next four years will include the following measures:

- Maximising stolen vehicle prevention and detection outcomes through auditing and reporting on transport agency and insurance company compliance with national information exchange and written-off vehicle related business rules

and protocols;

- Reviewing the outcomes of jurisdictional vehicle identity inspection models to identify any systemic weaknesses and/or potential improvements;
- Establishing multi-agency agreements to provide public and industry access to cross-border vehicle information;
- Negotiating third party access to national information systems to enhance the business practices of insurers and the motor trades and reduce the incidence of fraud;
- Ensuring police service priority to vehicle theft investigation is maintained;
- Ensuring appropriate priority is assigned

to the collation of intelligence on organised vehicle crime within the new national police intelligence structure;

- Limiting Australia's exposure to the international trade in stolen vehicles and parts through development of export related prevention and detection strategies;
- Continuing expansion of improved vehicle identification systems into mainstream vehicle manufacturing;
- Developing infrastructure and systems to support implementation of a full vehicle component identification system;
- Facilitating insurance industry commitment to identified vehicle related



*The theft of older vehicles by youths for transport or to commit another crime accounts for the overwhelming volume of vehicle theft in Australia...*



fraud reduction strategies;

- Introducing a parts recycling code of practice to minimise the likelihood of stolen parts being used unwittingly in the legitimate recycling and vehicle repair industries;
- Continuing to refine CARS data processing to deliver even more timely analysis of theft trends to stakeholders; and
- Determining what (if any) value the NMVTRC can add to existing efforts to combat the theft of marine craft.

How these activities fit within an overall strategic framework and a description of specific outputs is set out later in this Plan.

## REDUCING THE VOLUME OF VEHICLE THEFT

The theft of older vehicles by youths for transport or to commit another crime accounts for the overwhelming volume of vehicle theft in Australia, with three out of every four stolen vehicles falling into this category.

The NMVTRC's strategies to further reduce the VOLUME of vehicle theft over the next four years will include the following measures:

- Facilitating individual state-based implementation plans for compulsory immobilisation in jurisdictions where a clear cost-benefit case exists;

- Promoting effective security practices to the motor trades and the general community;
- Promoting the integration of best practice diversionary programs for young vehicle theft offenders into mainstream juvenile justice programs; and
- Co-ordinating the delivery of public awareness campaigns, including how to minimise the risk of theft of property from vehicles.

How these activities fit within an overall strategic framework and a description of specific outputs is set out later in this Plan.

# SUB-PROGRAM A:

## REDUCING THE COST OF THEFT

### DESIRED OUTCOME

Development and implementation of cost-effective systems infrastructure and practices that:

- impede the activities of criminals attempting to convert stolen vehicles or components into cash; and
- can respond to changes in criminal behaviour.

### THE PROBLEM

While accounting for only 1 in 4 stolen vehicles, theft for conversion to cash contributes more than half of the \$1 billion cost of vehicle theft to the nation.

This is because if a vehicle is stolen for this purpose it is:

- likely to be newer; and
- currently much less likely to be recovered—or if it is recovered, it is likely to be substantially stripped.

Criminals attempt to convert a stolen vehicle into cash by:

- attempting to disguise its true identity by portraying the stolen vehicle as a legitimately registered vehicle from another part of Australia—a practice

referred to as cloning;

- re-identifying the stolen vehicle using the identity of a wrecked or written-off vehicle of the same make, model and age—a practice called re-birthing;
- stripping the stolen vehicle of its major components and selling the separated parts on the black market, or constructing a “new” vehicle from the separated parts of several vehicles; or
- shipping and selling the vehicle overseas.

The NMVTRC estimates that the cloning or re-identification of whole stolen vehicles returns criminals more than \$100 million annually, with the trade in illicit parts at least twice that.

### THE SOLUTIONS

Combating these modes of criminal operation requires a multi-faceted response in which:

- a vehicle’s primary identifier—its Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)—is securely applied to the vehicle at the point of its manufacture (or prior to its release for sale) in a way in which any attempt to alter, copy or otherwise tamper with the vehicle’s identification is easily

discernible;

- the major components of a vehicle are traceable to its original VIN and those traders legitimately dealing in separated parts keep accurate records of the source of their stock;
- accurate and timely information on a vehicle’s current status—ie stolen, recovered, written-off—is readily available to registration authorities, police, motor traders and consumers nationally;
- vehicle registration and export protocols and related inspection practices are sufficiently robust to detect suspicious vehicles; and
- enforcement agencies are able to identify and effectively prosecute the individuals and groups involved in related criminal activities.

The NMVTRC is committed to providing continuing assistance to stakeholders to introduce effective countermeasures to these criminal activities.

The NMVTRC’s role may involve co-ordination or collaboration activities, the provision of specific research and development of solutions, or the direct contribution of resources to address identified obstacles to implementation.



# NMVTRC APPROACH

## A1: IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF VEHICLE AND COMPONENT IDENTIFICATION

### Vehicle Identification

In 2002-03 the NMVTRC and the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) concluded their joint development of a performance specification for a new single purpose vehicle security label. The high-tech, low cost label is designed to supplement other vehicle identifiers and will enable registration authorities and police to confirm the identity of legitimate vehicles and easily detect fake or altered labels by simple visual inspection. The same label technology is also capable of providing a secure compliance label in place of the existing aluminium plate.

Vehicle manufacturers have committed to progressively introduce complying labels over the next 18 months. The NMVTRC views the adoption of the security label as the new baseline in improved vehicle identification in 2003-2004 as absolutely imperative and will continue to monitor industry's response.

The NMVTRC will also continue to evaluate the performance of VIN-based microdots, which represent the current gold standard in vehicle identification technology. VIN-based microdots repeat the VIN thousands of times throughout the vehicle making it virtually impossible to remove them all and

providing authorities with conclusive evidence of a vehicle's identity. More than 100,000 new vehicles sold in Australia in 2003 will carry this technology as original equipment. The NMVTRC will continue to monitor the development of in-line application systems that may address the logistical issues associated with applying microdots in high-volume just-in-time manufacturing environments.

Although currently applied as a whole vehicle identifier and partial component identification, VIN-based microdots may ultimately evolve to provide a comprehensive component identification system—see later section on Management of Vehicle Components.

The NMVTRC will continue to work with police services, transport agencies and relevant motor trades to ensure an effective interface between new vehicle identification technologies and vehicle inspection and investigative practices.

As vehicle identification technology evolves, international harmonisation and/or standards will become increasingly important. The NMVTRC will continue to:

- monitor the development of new technologies in other markets, including their integration with intelligent transport

systems infrastructure; and

- actively pursue opportunities to promote the importance of improved vehicle identification in international forums.

At a domestic level, the NMVTRC will also:

- develop an electronic “early warning system” to alert registration authorities to those models of vehicle currently most at risk to re-birthing, based on monthly non-recovered vehicle data; and
- use the results of independent vehicle security ratings to raise public awareness of vehicle identification issues, and encourage vehicle manufacturers to conform with best practice.

### Management of Vehicle Components

In 2002-03 the NMVTRC worked with parts recyclers, insurers, the motor trades, registration authorities, offices of fair trading and police to develop a voluntary code of practice for dealing in second hand parts. The code aims to minimise the incidence of recyclers unwittingly facilitating the illicit trade in spare parts and relies on the support of insurers to confer ‘preferred supplier’ status on accredited recyclers.

With an exposure draft of the code and



business plan for its implementation due to be completed by September 2003, the NMVTRC will proceed to work with key stakeholders to refine the model and resolve implementation issues. A key issue for the code will be demonstrating additional benefits for participants beyond that which regulated regimes (where they currently exist) can deliver.

The NMVTRC will also:

- review the infrastructure needed to support a comprehensive component identification system in Australia and how it may interface with the use of OEM, recycled and generic replacement parts; and
- actively pursue opportunities to promote the importance of component identification in international forums.

### **Theft of marine craft**

In response to calls from some governments and insurers for the NMVTRC to extend its charter to tackling the theft of marine craft, the NMVTRC will commission a study to quantify the extent of the problem and what (if any) value it may be able to add to existing efforts to reduce its incidence.

## **YEAR 1 SUMMARY (2003-2004)**

Monitor the take-up of vehicle security labels that comply with the NMVTRC/FCAI specification by Australian vehicle manufacturers and importers.

Continue to evaluate the impact of VIN-based microdot marking technology on the theft of marked vehicles and monitor the development of in-line application systems for marking vehicles in high-volume, just-in-time manufacturing environments.

Monitor the development of new technologies in other markets, including their integration with intelligent transport systems infrastructure.

Ensure integration of improved vehicle identification with police, transport agency and relevant motor trades vehicle inspection and investigative practices.

Promote the benefits of improved vehicle and component marking systems in international forums.

Use the results of independent vehicle security rating systems to raise public awareness of vehicle identification issues, and encourage vehicle manufacturers to conform with best practice.

Develop and implement a monthly “early warning system” to alert registration authorities to those vehicles currently most at risk of re-birthing.

Refine the model and negotiate implementation of a code of practice to minimise the likelihood of stolen parts being laundered through legitimate parts recyclers.

Review the infrastructure required to support a comprehensive component identification system.

Review whether the NMVTRC can add value to existing efforts to combat the theft of marine craft.

## **OUTCOMES**

Application of improved identification to all new passenger vehicles sold via vehicle security labels and/or VIN-based microdots leading to a reduction in stolen vehicles passing undetected through vehicle registration identity inspections.

An agreed industry code for the management of recycled vehicle parts supported by non-regulatory financial incentives for participating recyclers that will lead to a decrease in the demand for stolen parts.



*While accounting for only 1 in 4 stolen vehicles, theft for conversion to cash contributes more than half of the \$1 billion cost of vehicle theft to the nation.*



## YEAR 2 (2004-2005)

Monitor final implementation of vehicle security labels by vehicle manufacturers and importers.

Complete evaluation of the effectiveness of VIN-based microdot marking technology as a theft deterrent.

Report on the development of new vehicle identification technologies in other markets and infrastructure required to support a comprehensive component identification system.

Maintain registration authority “early warning system” for vehicles most at risk of re-birthing.

Complete implementation of parts recyclers code of practice.

Develop marine craft theft reforms (subject to Year 1 investigations).

## YEAR 3 (2005-2006)

Make recommendations to state and territory crime prevention ministers on the on-going need for improved vehicle identification and the feasibility of mandating a comprehensive component identification system.

Review effectiveness of registration authority “early warning system” for vehicles most at risk of re-birthing.

Complete implementation of marine craft theft reforms (if any).

## A2: IMPROVING NATIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND REGISTRATION PRACTICES

In 2003-04, the “national information grid” of vehicle information will become a reality with key government agencies, motor traders, consumers and others able to access accurate, up-to-the-minute vehicle status information—including stolen and written-off status—appropriate to their needs.

In simple terms:

- police and registration authorities require

access to vehicle status information to recover or detect vehicles suspected of being stolen;

- motor traders and consumers need to be able to verify that the vehicle they are considering buying is not stolen, is consistent with the description of the vehicle held by the registration authority (as protection against re-birthing), and is eligible for registration, ie it has not been

declared a statutory write-off (as protection against re-birthing and fraud);

- insurers need to be able to confirm the existence and details of a vehicle for which a client seeks cover at both the “front end” of its operations (ie underwriting and risk acceptance) and “back end” (ie claims management, theft/rebirthing mitigation, multiple insurance scams); and



- the timely communication of information such as when a vehicle is declared a statutory write-off back to vehicle manufacturers also has the potential for them to “bar” the ordering of replacement parts for a vehicle bearing that Vehicle Identification Number.

State and territory registration authorities have invested more than \$40 million in developing real-time information exchange via the National Exchange of Vehicle and Driver Information System (NEVDIS). The system provides a “communications gateway” between jurisdictional systems so that changes in vehicle or driver status are automatically accessible nationally. The system will facilitate improved customer service when people and vehicles legitimately move between jurisdictions, limit the potential for fraud, enforce sanctions for unsafe vehicles and driving, and reduce the trade in stolen vehicles.

With implementation now so advanced, the NMVTRC and Austroads—the association of Australian and New Zealand road transport and traffic authorities—have commenced work on the development of a performance framework for monitoring compliance with key NEVDIS transaction and vehicle inspection protocols, and the overall efficacy of the system in combating vehicle theft and fraud.

The past twelve months also marked the progressive implementation of a national approach to the management of written-off vehicle identities and the rigorous inspection of high risk vehicles, with all jurisdictions except South Australia and Western Australia having now introduced written-off vehicle registers based on a set of agreed best practice principles (BPP).

It was inevitable that in implementing the BPP there would be some differences between jurisdictions in administrative procedures, legislative controls and business rules. While a degree of flexibility was provided for under the agreed national principles, some differences in practice are adding complexity to complying with reporting requirements and diminishing the full potential of the national network as a barrier to criminals. In response to stakeholder concerns on these issues, the NMVTRC will work with Austroads and key stakeholders to resolve critical inconsistencies.

The NMVTRC will also continue to monitor the implementation of public access systems by registration authorities and offices of fair trading to provide consumers and industry with non-personal vehicle status information. The NMVTRC’s emphasis will be on encouraging a “customer friendly” virtual one-stop-shop approach to service delivery arrangements.

To further enhance the collection and sharing of key vehicle-related information, the NMVTRC will undertake a number of studies to determine the feasibility of:

- capturing the identities of unregistered passenger and light commercial vehicles used on mining sites, prior to their disposal;
- capturing the details of vehicles refused registration on grounds that the vehicle’s identity could not be confirmed—to minimise the potential for criminals to “shop around” for different outcomes;
- storing digital images of written-off vehicles on key systems;
- establishing a publicly accessible or subscription-based plant and equipment register to minimise the risk of buyers unwittingly purchasing stolen machinery;
- improving access to national systems in remote areas.

To optimise the performance and value of its CARS database, the NMVTRC will:

- encourage key data providers to move to monthly data extracts (in lieu of the present quarterly downloads) wherever possible;
- work with insurers to refine the quality of insurance data; and
- add additional functionality to the on-line *Analyser* enquiry tool.

To minimise the exposure of insurers to vehicle-related insurance fraud, the NMVTRC will work with:

- Austroads and insurers to trial the on-line validation of VINs via NEVDIS; and
- insurers to implement other practical responses to combat the incidence of fraudulent vehicle theft claims.

## YEAR 1 SUMMARY (2003-2004)

Monitor the progress of the connection of the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania to NEVDIS.

In conjunction with Austroads, refine and implement a performance monitoring framework for national information systems.

In conjunction with Austroads, insurers and the motor trades resolve critical national inconsistencies in the management of written-off vehicle registers.

Encourage a virtual one-stop-shop approach by registration authorities and offices of fair trading to the delivery of vehicle status information to industry and consumers.

Determine the feasibility of further enhancements to the collection and exchange of vehicle information in respect of unregistered mining vehicles, vehicles refused registration on identity grounds, the storage of digital images of written-off

vehicles, establishing a plant and equipment register, and improving access to national systems in remote areas.

Move to monthly data extracts for CARS where possible and further develop the *Analyser* on-line enquiry tool.

In conjunction with insurers, progress practical reforms to reduce the incidence of vehicle-theft related insurance fraud.

## OUTCOMES

Continuous improvement of the national information grid and integration with insurance and motor trades business practices to strengthen barriers against vehicle re-birthing and fraud.

Continuous improvement of vehicle inspection standards to ensure a high likelihood of re-birthed stolen vehicles being detected.

A significant reduction in the avenues for the disposal of stolen vehicles through improving information access for insurers, motor trades and consumers.

Improved information flows into CARS to aid policy and decision makers.

Provision of seamless and cost-effective access to national vehicle data leading to a reduction in fraud committed on insurers and the motor trades.

## YEAR 2 (2004-2005)

In conjunction with Austroads, monitor the performance monitoring framework for national information systems.

Continue to encourage a virtual one-stop-shop approach to the delivery of vehicle status information to industry and consumers.

Advance implementation of feasible enhancements to the collection and exchange of vehicle information from Year 1 investigations.

Continue to refine CARS data processes and services.

Implement reforms to reduce the incidence of vehicle-theft related insurance fraud.

## YEAR 3 (2005-2006)

In conjunction with Austroads, monitor the performance monitoring framework for national information systems.

Complete implementation of enhancements to the collection and exchange of vehicle information.

Review future information exchange needs and make recommendations for change (if any).

### A3: IMPROVING INVESTIGATIVE RESPONSES AND INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION

2002-03 saw a renewed focus on vehicle theft investigation by police services nationally, with most services having now established dedicated “centres of expertise” within their organised crime departments to support regional investigations.

The principal obstacle to fully optimising the effectiveness of police investigative efforts is the continued absence of nationally co-ordinated intelligence on the activities of professional thieves.

The NMVTRC welcomes the priority assigned to the issue of organised vehicle theft by the newly established Australian Crime Commission (ACC) and will offer the ACC all assistance it can in terms of data or other information.

It was also clear from the NMVTRC’s 2003 StratPLAN forums that further improving inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional co-ordination and co-operation is a priority. As an initial step, the NMVTRC will establish a

collaborative forum for key investigative managers to:

- improve the understanding of cross-jurisdictional theft activity through the exchange of intelligence on the status of professional vehicle theft in each jurisdiction;
- improve the collective body of knowledge by examining and comparing current and emerging criminal methodologies and innovative investigative techniques being deployed;
- identify issues in cross-border and inter-agency co-operation including the collation and exchange of intelligence, communications channels and policies to ensure the most efficient use of available resources; and
- develop closer professional relationships between investigative managers across all jurisdictions.

The NMVTRC sees the forum as being central to subsequent development of a broader formalised network of key contacts on vehicle theft for all agencies and major stakeholders.

The NMVTRC will also promote the development of case studies of the current modes of theft to guide the design of new countermeasures and infrastructure responses.

In response to evidence of an emerging global trade in stolen vehicles, the NMVTRC will seek to establish more formal consultative arrangements with the Australian Customs Service (ACS) and the development of a joint work program with the ACS and Australian Federal Police (AFP) to identify and implement practical responses.



## YEAR 1 SUMMARY (2003-2004)

Establish effective consultative arrangements with the ACC.

Establish a collaborative forum for key investigative managers.

Develop and maintain a network of key agency and stakeholder contacts as the principal points of contact for inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional co-ordination.

Commission case studies of the prevailing modes of vehicle theft to guide the on-going development of effective countermeasures and infrastructure responses.

Develop a joint work program with the ACS and AFP to combat the activities of international vehicle theft rackets.

## OUTCOMES

Vigorous and on-going investigation of vehicle theft which delivers on-going deterrence and detection of offenders.

Improved priority for intelligence gathering and dissemination on the activities of organised vehicle theft rings leading to more effective investigation by state and Commonwealth authorities.

Implementation of strategies in conjunction with the ACS and AFP to reduce the number of stolen vehicles exported without detection.

## YEAR 2 (2004-2005)

Monitor priority assigned to intelligence collation and police investigation.

Maintain key investigative managers' forum.

Maintain inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional co-ordination network.

Review mix of strategic countermeasures in light of the case studies of prevailing modes of vehicle theft.

Implement joint projects with the ACS and AFP to combat the activities of international vehicle theft rackets.

## YEAR 3 (2005-2006)

Monitor priority assigned to intelligence collation and police investigation.

Review performance of key investigative managers' forum.

Review future investigative needs and make recommendations for change (if any).

# SUB-PROGRAM B:

## REDUCING THE VOLUME OF THEFT

### DESIRED OUTCOME

Development and implementation of cost-effective measures that:

- raise community awareness of key vehicle theft and security issues;
- significantly increase the security of older vehicles; and
- reduce the incidence of vehicle theft by young people.

### THE PROBLEM

The theft of older vehicles by youths for transport or to commit another crime accounts for the overwhelming volume of vehicle theft in Australia, with three out of every four stolen vehicles falling into this category (or almost 81,000 vehicles in 2002).

The high proportion of older vehicles on Australian roads which lack any form of adequate security provide would-be thieves with a literal feast of easy targets. The NMVTRC estimates that more than 6 million vehicles that can be stolen using nothing more sophisticated than a coathanger and screwdriver remain in the national fleet.

While public awareness of which vehicles are most at risk and the effectiveness of engine immobilisers as a deterrent to theft has increased in recent years, motorists

remain reluctant to invest even moderate sums to secure their vehicle. A perceived increase in the incidence of secure vehicles being stolen by access to the keys and immobiliser transponder also emphasises the need for more publicity about the importance of key security.

While the motivations of youths to steal cars are complex and varied, what is clear is that a relatively small number of high-rate offenders (estimated to be around 15 per cent of all young offenders) are responsible for a large proportion of opportunistic thefts.

### THE SOLUTIONS

A sustainable reduction in the volume of vehicle theft requires a multi-pronged approach in which:

- the penetration of Australian Standards approved engine immobilisers in the older vehicle fleet is significantly increased;
- the community is continually reminded of effective actions and practices that they can adopt to greatly reduce their risk of becoming a theft victim; and
- programs that are effective in diverting young high-rate offenders from crime are supported by the mainstream juvenile justice system.





## B1: SECURING THE OLDER VEHICLE FLEET

There is now clear evidence that the best way to protect older vehicles is to fit a quality after-market engine immobiliser.

Since late 1999 the NMVTRC has run its Immobilise Now! program to raise motorists awareness of the high theft risk faced by older vehicles and encourage vehicle owners to fit an Australian Standards approved engine immobiliser. Immobilise Now! operates in all states and territories except Western Australia (WA) where a compulsory scheme has been in place since mid-1999. The WA scheme superseded a voluntary scheme which commenced in 1997.

There is now a considerable body of evidence, based on the experiences of both the WA voluntary scheme and IN!, to suggest that the only way to significantly increase the penetration of immobilisers (and reduce the volume of opportunistic theft) in the medium term, is to mandate the fitting of engine immobilisers to older vehicles.

While the voluntary programs have significantly reduced the cost of quality immobilisers, owners of older vehicles remain reluctant to invest even moderate sums to secure their vehicle. Nationally, fewer than half the existing vehicle fleet is fitted with an immobiliser posing a clear and present threat to the sustainability of recent theft reductions. By contrast WA, which is now approaching an

immobilisation rate of 80 per cent, has enjoyed sustained, significant reductions over three successive years.

In 2002, the NMVTRC commissioned a review of the WA scheme to verify its effectiveness and develop a set of best practice principles for other jurisdictions contemplating a compulsory scheme. The NMVTRC considers that the WA review and the preliminary modelling completed for other states and territories provides a compelling case for a compulsory scheme in most jurisdictions. In 2003/04 the NMVTRC will work with local stakeholders to refine implementation options for the consideration of state and territory governments.

Interestingly, the NMVTRC's regular surveying of motorists attitudes towards vehicle theft and security shows sustained support for compulsory immobilisation, with 4 successive surveys each indicating at least 59 per cent of motorists in favour of it.

Until individual states and territories consider the issue, the NMVTRC will continue to maintain Immobilise Now!

### YEAR 1 SUMMARY (2003-2004)

Maintain Immobilise Now! to encourage the owners of older vehicles to fit an Australian Standards approved engine immobiliser to their vehicle.

Refine implementation options for compulsory immobiliser programs on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction basis.

### OUTCOMES

Compulsory engine immobiliser programs operating in most populous jurisdictions with a target of 70 per cent immobilisation within 5 years.

### YEAR 2 (2004-2005)

Implement compulsory engine immobilisers programs in larger jurisdictions (where positive cost-benefits exist).

Maintain Immobilise Now! in jurisdictions where compulsory programs are not operating.

### YEAR 3 (2005-2006)

Implement compulsory engine immobilisers programs in remaining jurisdictions (where positive cost-benefits exist).

Maintain Immobilise Now! in jurisdictions where compulsory programs are not operating.

## B2: PROMOTING SECURE PRACTICES IN THE COMMUNITY

While the public profile of vehicle theft and security has increased in recent years, about half the motoring population still fail to understand the true dynamics of vehicle theft.

The NMVTRC and its stakeholders have distributed millions of public education brochures and in 2002 there were almost 2,000 media references on the issue. The challenge for the next three years will be to continue to develop fresh and innovative ways to encourage regular media reporting of theft issues and optimise the dissemination of information via stakeholders' communications channels to supplement the NMVTRC's own activities.

The NMVTRC will also seek to further enhance its relationship with local governments in getting key theft prevention messages, including how to minimise the theft of property from vehicles, into local communities.

As part of an on-going review of its communication strategy, the NMVTRC's CAR-SAFE website will be redeveloped to improve its "user friendliness", add new features and provide greater flexibility for more frequent updates and news flashes.

### YEAR 1 SUMMARY (2003-2004)

Review communications strategy and activities to optimise communications outcomes within the limits of available funding.

Continue to survey motorists' attitudes to vehicle security issues at regular intervals.

Further develop links with local government to disseminate key vehicle theft messages to local communities.

### OUTCOMES

A better informed community on the risks of vehicle theft leading to a higher percentage of motorists employing effective measures to minimise their risk.

A better informed motoring public leading to a decline in theft of property from vehicles.

### YEAR 2 (2004-2005)

Maintain provision of a range of public education materials to stakeholders.

Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public education campaigns.

Use evaluation material to refine and target public education and community based programs.

### YEAR 3 (2005-2006)

Maintain provision of a range of public education materials to stakeholders.

Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public education campaigns.

Promote adoption of revised practices (if any).



## B3: REDUCING THE INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN VEHICLE THEFT

In 2002-03 the NMVTRC took a direct role in addressing youth car theft offending by co-funding three 18-24 month trials of its U-turn best practice program in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government. U-turn aims to break the cycle of offending of young high-rate vehicle thieves by helping them to develop new skills based around vehicle maintenance and repairs.

Sites are now operating in Tasmania and Western Australia under the auspices of a local lead agency and a third program will commence in Queensland in early 2004.

All three sites will undergo individual evaluation and an overarching meta-evaluation funded by the Commonwealth to determine their effectiveness in helping young offenders to cease offending and get their lives back on track. The NMVTRC's goal is to demonstrate to juvenile justice agencies that specific vehicle theft programs work and are worthy of consideration in the mix of responses to youth crime.

In addition to U-turn, the Council will continue to explore new opportunities to integrate its Spur of the Moment comic and Educators' Kit, and Ride of Your Life animation resources with other youth oriented education or communication programs.

### YEAR 1 SUMMARY (2003-2004)

Complete establishment of the third U-turn site in Queensland and in conjunction with the Commonwealth and local stakeholders monitor their effectiveness in reducing youth car crime.

Continue to promote the use of the NMVTRC's vehicle theft prevention youth resources in educational and youth focused programs.

### OUTCOMES

Best practice young offender diversion programs operating in a number of jurisdictions, leading to reduced offending levels by recidivist offenders.

Increased awareness among young people of the consequences of vehicle theft leading to less young people becoming involved in vehicle theft.

### YEAR 2 (2004-2005)

Monitor performance of U-turn pilot programs and refine program model.

Review and update youth communications resources.

### YEAR 3 (2005-2006)

Promote revised best practice model to key government departments and stakeholders in all jurisdictions.



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The NMVTRC places a heavy emphasis on measurable outcomes and the delivery of high quality monitoring and evaluation processes. The NMVTRC's Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are considered crucial tools in measuring outcomes and determining its success.

The KPI are based on the following principles:

- the NMVTRC will maintain continual monitoring and reporting throughout its life to gauge the effect of its theft reduction strategies;
- measurement of vehicle theft trends will be integral from the outset, but need to be viewed from the perspective that some strategies will take several years to have an impact on theft statistics; and
- the KPI should also measure the effectiveness of the NMVTRC's communications and consultation strategies.

A summary of the KPI framework is set out below.

Throughout the NMVTRC's life the following KPI will be reported upon.

## STATUS OF MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT TRENDS IN AUSTRALIA, BASED ON:

- comparisons with motor vehicle theft in comparable developed nations;
- reductions in the rate of vehicle theft per number of vehicles registered and per 1,000 population;
- reductions or changes in the incidence and nature of opportunistic (volume) and professional (cost) theft;
- community perceptions of motor vehicle theft relative to other crimes; and
- the economic and social cost of motor vehicle theft.

## ASSESSMENT OF NMVTRC'S CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS PROCESSES, BASED ON:

- stakeholders' perceptions of the NMVTRC's program co-ordination and consultation performance;
- the timeliness and quality (as assessed by stakeholders) of the NMVTRC's publications;

- analyses of references to the NMVTRC in the media and assessment of coverage as negative, neutral or positive; and
- an improved level of awareness of vehicle security practices and vehicle theft issues by the community.

## NMVTRC'S CONTRIBUTION TO VEHICLE THEFT REFORMS BY STAKEHOLDERS, BASED ON THE:

- level of stakeholder activity in respect to significant motor vehicle theft reforms (in progress or completed);
- level of stakeholder response to the reforms promoted by the NMVTRC for the period; and
- level of NMVTRC's influence on the implementation of reforms (major positive impact, minor positive impact, no impact, negative impact).

The NMVTRC's performance against the KPI will be reported in its Annual Report.

*A sustained reduction of vehicle theft in Australia requires action across a broad range of industry and government disciplines.*

## APPENDIX



### 3 YEAR PROGRAM – AT A GLANCE

#### REDUCING THE COST OF THEFT

##### Improved Vehicle Identification

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Vehicle security labels	Monitor the take-up of vehicle security labels	Monitor final take-up of vehicle security labels	Review and report on level of compliance
VIN-based microdots	Evaluate the impact of VIN-based microdots	Complete evaluation/make recommendations	Implement recommended actions
	Monitor development of in-line microdot application systems	Complete evaluation/make assessment of practicality	
New vehicle ID technologies	Monitor the development of new technologies/integration with ITS infrastructure.	Monitor the development of new technologies/integration with ITS infrastructure.	Make recommendations for future improvements (if any)
Infrastructure support	Ensure integration of improved vehicle ID with agency/industry practices	Ensure integration of improved vehicle ID with agency/industry practices	Make recommendations for future improvements (if any)
	Promote the benefits of improved vehicle/component ID systems in international forums	Promote the benefits of improved vehicle/component ID systems in international forums	
	Use vehicle security ratings to raise public awareness/encourage best practice	Use vehicle security ratings to raise public awareness/encourage best practice	Use vehicle security ratings to raise public awareness/encourage best practice
	Develop monthly "early warning system" (EWS) to alert authorities to vehicles most at risk of re-birthing	Maintain EWS	Review EWS effectiveness/make recommendations for change (if any)
Management of vehicle components	Refine model/negotiate implementation of recyclers code of practice	Implement code of practice	Monitor code performance
	Review infrastructure required for component ID system	Refine implementation options	Make recommendations for future needs
Marine theft	Review value of NMVTRC tackling marine craft theft	Develop work program (if required)	Implement key reforms (if any)

## Improving National Information Exchange and Registration Practices

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
NEVDIS	Monitor ACT/Tas connection to NEVDIS		
System performance	Refine/implement a monitoring framework for national information systems	Monitor system performance	Review performance/make recommendations for change
Written-off vehicle registers	Resolve/implement written-off vehicle register inconsistencies	Monitor system performance	Review performance/make recommendations for change
	Encourage virtual one-stop-shop for vehicle status information	Encourage virtual one-stop-shop for vehicle status information	Review progress/make recommendations for change
National systems enhancements	Determine feasibility of further enhancements to info collection (mining vehicles, vehicles refused registration, storage of images, plant/equipment register, remote area access)	Develop implementation plan for feasible enhancements	Finalise implementation of key enhancements
CARS Analyser	Monthly data extracts/enhance <i>Analyser</i> tool	Expand monthly data extracts	Review/make recommendations for future arrangements
Fraud reduction	Develop fraud reduction reforms with insurers, including VIN validation (with Austroads)	Implement fraud reduction reforms	Review/make recommendations for further actions

## Improving Investigative Responses/Inter-Agency Co-Operation

National intelligence collation	Formalise NMVTRC/ACC liaison	Monitor national priority assigned to intelligence/investigations	Review future needs and arrangements
	Establish collaborative forum for key investigative managers	Maintain forum	Review future needs and arrangements
	Develop/maintain network of key agency/stakeholder contacts for inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional co-ordination	Maintain network	Review future needs and arrangements
	Commission case studies of prevailing modes of vehicle theft	Develop countermeasures to address changes in criminal behaviour	Review future needs and arrangements
International theft rackets	Develop joint work program with the ACS/AFP to combat international rackets	Develop appropriate countermeasures	Implement agreed countermeasures



## REDUCING THE VOLUME OF THEFT

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Securing older vehicles	Reducing the volume of theft Maintain Immobilise Now!	Reducing the volume of theft Maintain Immobilise Now! where compulsory programs not operating	Reducing the volume of theft Maintain Immobilise Now! where compulsory programs not operating
	Refine implementation options for compulsory immobiliser programs	Implement compulsory programs in larger jurisdictions (with positive cost-benefits)	Implement compulsory programs in remaining jurisdictions (with positive cost-benefits)
Promoting secure practices	Review communications strategy	Maintain provision of public education materials to stakeholders	Maintain provision of public education materials to stakeholders
	Survey motorists attitudes to vehicle security issues at regular intervals	Survey motorists attitudes to vehicle security issues at regular intervals	Survey motorists attitudes to vehicle security issues at regular intervals
	Further develop links with local government to deliver key messages locally	Evaluate effectiveness of community education campaigns	Refine public education materials/channels

## THE REFORM MATRIX: REDUCING COST

	▶ SUBSTANTIALLY IN PLACE			▶ PARTIALLY IN PLACE		▶ SOME WAY TO GO			
Professional Theft Methodology	NVOI	NEVDIS	WOVR	Registration Inspections	Compliance Labels	Whole Vehicle Marking	Public Access to Information	Insurance Practices	Police Investigation
X Border TFR	▶	▶							▶
Cloning		▶		▶	▷		▶		▶
Wrecks		▶	▶	▶	▷		▶		▶
Parts		▶	▶	▷	▷	▶	▶		▶
Cut and Shut		▶	▶	▷		▶	▶		▶
Strip & Buy Back		▶	▶	▷		▶	▶	▷	▶
Model Upgrade						▷	▶	▷	▶

This matrix illustrates how the complete range of countermeasures being pursued by the NMVTRC work together to defeat the common means by which criminals convert stolen cars into cash. The criminals'

principal modus operandi are listed in the left column. Reading across the matrix, unless each of the countermeasures marked against a particular method are fully implemented, that method may still be exploited.

The countermeasures to defeat high volume thefts are less interrelated and centre on making older vehicles more secure by fitting engine immobilisers and diverting young high rate thieves from re-offending.

**G2**

**Strategic Plan 2003 – 2006**  
the next generation of vehicle theft reform



National Motor Vehicle  
Theft Reduction Council  
*driving down vehicle theft*

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