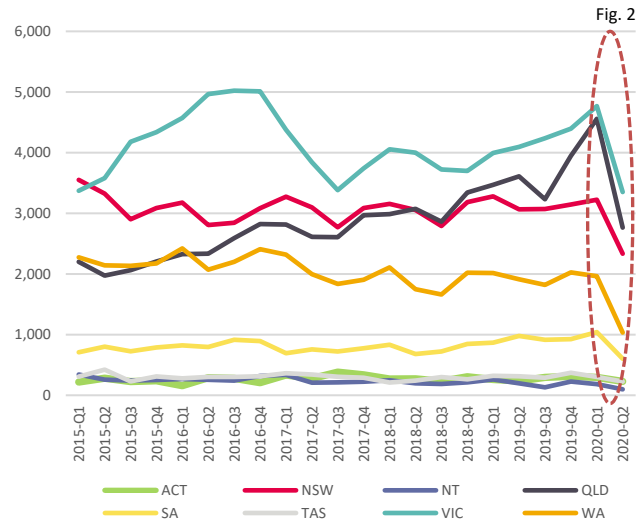
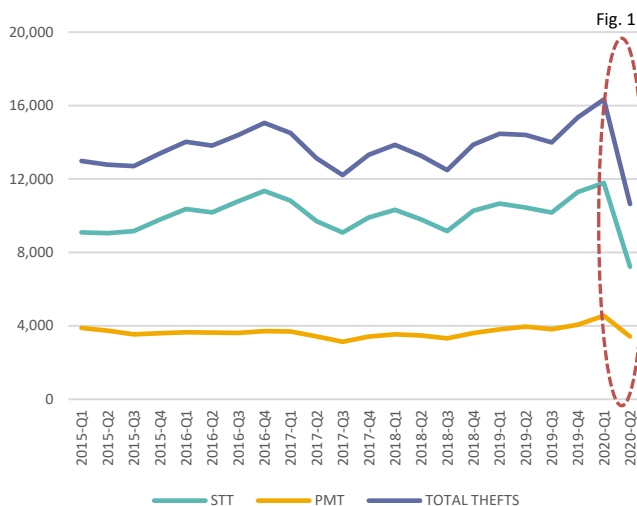




National Motor Vehicle  
Theft Reduction  
Council

# theft matters

## Impact of COVID-19 on motor vehicle theft



There is no doubt that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the daily activities of most Australians. Lockdown arrangements in place across the nation have resulted in curfews, travel restrictions and limits on time spent outside the home. However, what is the knock-on effect of these health and safety measures on vehicle crime?

The NMVTRC's CARS service examined the impacts that COVID-19 has had on motor vehicle theft trends during the initial response, from 1 March until 30 June 2020. The crime volumes during this time were compared with that from the previous quarter and the same period last year.

COVID-19 has affected all states and territories to differing degrees, leading to varied Government imposed restrictions and Victoria experiencing the strictest lockdown arrangements. The Results of the analysis, however, point to a nation-wide impact on vehicle crime.

- Nationally, April to June 2020 experienced the lowest theft figures recorded in the CARS database (10,638), down 35% from the previous quarter and 26% from the same quarter in 2019 (figure 1).

- The most dramatic decline occurred from March to April, with a national reduction of 32% (1,783 less thefts) compared to 3% from the same period in 2019 (-159 thefts).
- Thefts continued to fall from April to May (-355 thefts) through to June (-112 thefts), however at a lesser rate.
- The April-June period saw sizeable reductions in most jurisdictions compared to the previous quarter, including 28% in New South Wales, 30% in Victoria, 39% in Queensland, 42% in South Australia and 47% in Western Australia (figure 2).
- And theft numbers fell across all vehicle types: motorcycles declined two fifths (40%) while PLCs and other vehicles were down a third (34% and 33%, respectively).

The analysis clearly demonstrated an association between the COVID-19 nationwide lockdown restrictions and motor vehicle crime. However, with the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic and an established correlation between the performance of the economy and crime generally, it is almost certain there will be an uplift in vehicle crime that will extend into 2021.

The NMVTRC acknowledges all police services, registration authorities, participating insurers, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, Glass's Information Services and Polk Autospec for the supply of the data on which this report is compiled. Theft incident data may be subject to later revision by the data providers.

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CARS

comprehensive auto-theft research system



An initiative of Australian governments and the insurance industry.

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