



CAR THEFT FROM HOMES UP, BUT THIEVES STILL PREFER PUBLIC PLACES

Latest figures from the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) point to an increase in the proportion of motor vehicles stolen from private residences in the past five years.

While the overall volume of motor vehicles stolen in Australia has declined by close to 30 per cent since 2004, the proportion of cars being taken from private dwellings has increased by 7 per cent, now making up just over a third of all car thefts¹. Cars stolen from private residences include those parked in a garage, driveway or yard.

The NMVTRC's Executive Director, Ray Carroll, explained that with a rise in home car thefts comes a greater risk of car keys being stolen or thieves taking vehicles to commit other crimes or transport stolen goods.

"The large majority of late model vehicle thefts are carried out by the thief gaining access to the keys, either through home burglary or the keys being left in the ignition. The stolen car may be used simply for a joyride or it could be seen as an easy way to transport other stolen goods," he said.

Motorcycles are also particularly vulnerable, with over two thirds of all bikes stolen in 2009 being taken from private residences.

Mr Carroll called for motorists to be vigilant in protecting their car keys as the best defense against this type of theft.

"The majority of vehicle theft from homes is opportunistic, meaning that it is simply a matter of thieves seeing an opportunity to take a vehicle. Car keys should never be left lying around on tables, benches or key hooks. If a thief can see your unattended keys, it is likely that he or she can figure out how to get hold of them."

Mr Carroll foreshadowed that despite this rise, the overwhelming majority of vehicles stolen are still taken from public places, with two fifths of all car thefts in 2009 occurring in outdoor areas such as the street, commercial businesses and public car parks. He called for all motorists to follow these simple car safe tips to reduce their risk of theft:

- Park wisely – use off-street parking where possible or even better, park in a garage or behind lockable gates. At home, motorcycles should also be well

¹ Figures have been derived using New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia data. These three states represent 55 per cent of total vehicle theft in Australia.

secured in a locked garage, behind lockable gates, or secured to an immovable object or anchorage;

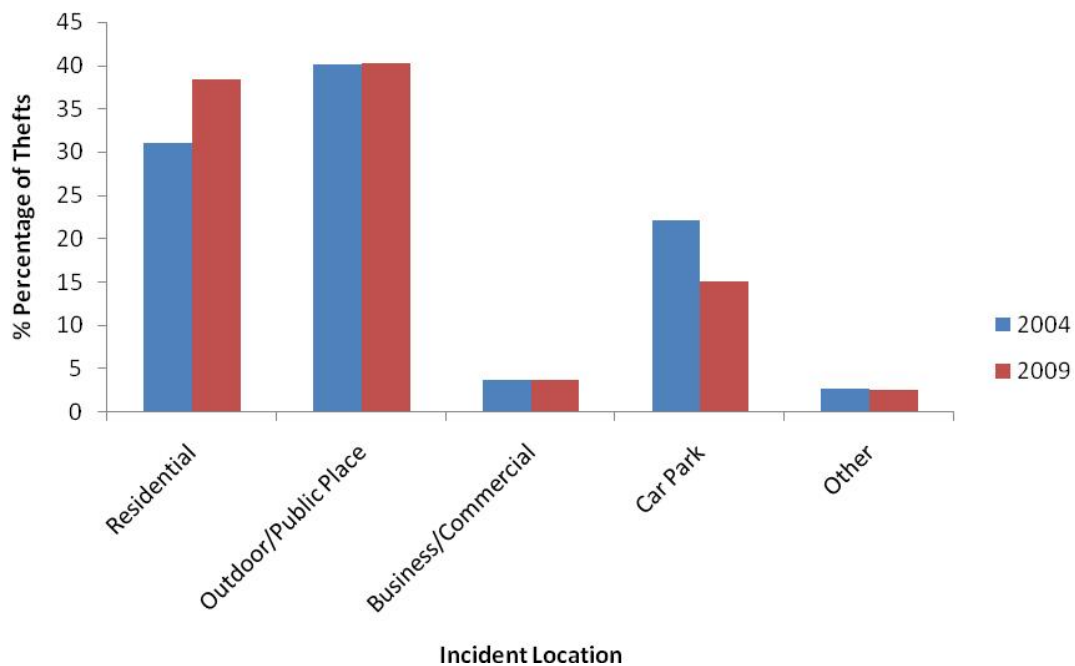
- Remove all valuables when leaving your car unattended; and
- If you own an older vehicle, consider installing an engine immobiliser for maximum protection against theft.

Further information about the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council:

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Figure 1: NSW, SA, WA[^] passenger/light commercial vehicle thefts by incident location as a proportion of total thefts, 2004 and 2009.



[^]Sufficient incident location data is only available from NSW, SA and WA. These three states represent 55 per cent of total theft in Australia.



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