



National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council
driving down vehicle theft

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theft torque

Putting the brakes on motorcycle theft



Peter Major of the Motorcycle Riders' Association (ACT) presents a rider's perspective at the Motorcycle Theft Summit.

Despite the sustained reduction in passenger/light commercial vehicle (PLC) thefts, motorcycles have continued to resist this trend, with thefts rising by 20 per cent since 2000 and a notable spike in thefts over the past three years. Improving strategies to halt the upward trend remains a priority for the NMVTRC's 2009 work agenda, and strategic planning kicked off with the National Motorcycle Theft Summit held in August in Sydney.

The Summit brought together key stakeholder and agency groups to discuss a range of strategies, with the intention of developing a pragmatic and workable action plan to combat motorcycle theft. Key speakers included representatives from Victorian and Western Australian Police Vehicle Theft Squads, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), the Australian Motorcycle Industry Association, the Motorcycle Riders' Association and the insurance industry.

The Summit was well supported with a wide range of representatives drawn from police, transport, insurers, peak industry bodies and riders groups. Presentations drew an overall picture of motorcycle theft including: a statistical analysis of theft trends, gaps in the collection of data and current infrastructure barriers, the current and predicted growth in motorcycle sales, the retail, riders and insurers perspectives on theft and a number of police case histories to highlight the challenges of investigative responses.

Syndicate groups comprising the various stakeholders worked to review the issues and identify and assess the practicality of options for change. The key issues which were confirmed as being central to the growth of motorcycle theft and the challenges of developing sustainable barriers are, in summary:

- **Portability:** The ease with which motorcycles can be lifted onto the back of a truck or trailer and driven away limits the effectiveness of electronic security measures such as immobilisers.
- **Damageability:** The relative ease with which expensive components on motorcycles can be damaged fuels a profitable black market for parts and also can render a bike with relatively minor damage a total loss.
- **Identification:** The poor identification of motorcycles and their component parts makes re-identification relatively simple and facilitates a black market for parts.
- **Unregulated end use:** The many unregulated end uses for cycles and ATV's including racing, trail riding and farm use makes retaining a stolen cycle for personal use relatively risk free. Police case histories highlighted an emerging trend of stolen high end road bikes simply being fitted with false number plates, with offenders continuing to use the bikes on a daily basis.

Actions to tackle these key issues raised at the summit will form the basis of a report detailing the NMVTRC's proposed strategic responses to the problem.

Another successful year for Operation Bounce Back

Operation Bounce Back (OBB) has now wrapped up for 2007/08, and feedback from participating Local Government Areas (LGAs) has indicated that the program continued to deliver in its fourth year. Nineteen grants were distributed this year across the nation, with a combination of new and follow up grant recipients again involved in the program.

Findings from the 2007/08 OBB program are outlined in summary form below. Look out for a full summary of this year's program and grant recipients in the 2008 Annual Report, to be released at the end of October.

Follow-up grant recipients made the most of the knowledge gained from previous year's experiences, with the experience of third and fourth round participants in engaging the community and effective voucher dissemination methods clearly showing through. The familiarity of the program has allowed these grant recipients to not only continue implementing successful campaign features, but also to build upon their knowledge of 'what works' to design new and innovative ways to generate community interest, for example, letterbox flyer drops with key rings to capture attention and convening youth forums.

Demand for vouchers was very strong, and as a result, voucher redemption rates were at their highest across the board, with a first round grant recipient impressively achieving the highest take-up rate of 90 per cent. Overall, more than 1,100 installations had been completed by September.

Vehicle security messages were spread through the distribution of educational materials to a wide range of audiences, with translated brochures widely used in a number of jurisdictions.



Victoria Police working with local council to promote OBB in the City of Maribyrnong, Victoria.

Additionally, the key messages of OBB will continue to resonate with local communities through the use of ongoing and in some cases permanent mediums such as short films and car park signage.

Grant recipients were keen to acknowledge the additional benefits of OBB in strengthening partnerships between local governments, police, local installers and other community organisations. Participating LGAs also received much positive feedback from the community, who were pleased that their local government is taking positive steps to improve community wellbeing.

Overall, OBB is continuing to run smoothly and gain increased recognition each year. This is not only reflected in an increased demand for vouchers but also in the positive impact on theft numbers in the participating LGAs. Over half of the participating LGAs experienced reductions in thefts greater than their state averages. The outcomes for fourth round grant recipients were particularly encouraging, with five out of six of these LGAs recording a fall in theft numbers greater than their respective state averages.

Selection for the 2008/09 program will commence shortly, with a range of new and ongoing participants again to be offered grants for 2009.

Strategic Plan 2008

The NMVTRC's 2008 Strategic Plan has been distributed to key stakeholders, and is now available from our website. The Strategic Plan draws on stakeholder liaison to set out the NMVTRC's work program and project priorities for the 12 months to come. The 2008 Plan includes a focus on the need to make further inroads into the activities of profit-motivated thieves, amongst other key issues for the 2008/09 year.

Vehicle ID makers secure success

Identitek Systems, the makers of the new NMVTRC approved high-tech secure compliance label, has been awarded for their design at the 2008 IAATI Conference held in Sydney in August. The Melbourne-based company was presented with an award for Outstanding Achievement in the Reduction of Motor Vehicle Theft in Australasia,

for the development of their security device. Cloning or re-identification of stolen vehicles returns criminals tens of millions of dollars annually. The label, which has taken over five years to develop, makes a significant contribution to the improvement of vehicle identification at the point of manufacture.

Operation 'River Sweep'

Victoria Police has continued investigations into the growing numbers of middle-aged and older vehicles stolen and not recovered in an operation to identify and remove vehicles dumped in Melbourne's Maribyrnong River.

Operation River Sweep, conducted throughout August, concentrated on a five kilometre section of the Maribyrnong River between Footscray Road and the north western end of Chifley Drive, Maribyrnong. The project aimed to address the problem of rising numbers of older vehicles being stolen and later vanishing into bushland and waterways. Sonar equipment was used to identify

vehicles and initial scans discovered upward of 130 vehicles on the riverbed. Subsequent searches throughout the operation revealed there to be a total of 169 submerged vehicles.

In the first 11 days, police managed to remove 68 of the 169 vehicles from the river. Despite corrosion from having been immersed in salt water which saw the aluminium being severely eaten away in a number of cases, all of the vehicles were able to be identified. A range of identifiers were used including engine/chassis/VIN numbers, with the reflective paint of the number plate the only identifier left in some cases.

With the assistance of insurance companies AAMI and RACV, all bar one of these vehicles were identified as stolen, with the total value of the stolen vehicles reaching \$645,000. Ford and Holden vehicles made up the majority of those vehicles recovered, the vehicle missing the longest being a 1981 Mazda RX7, which had been dumped over 20 years ago after being stolen in 1986. While the majority of cases have been closed, there are a number of ongoing investigations concerning insurance fraud.

One owner of a Holden VK Commodore pulled from the river had an extra reason to be thankful for his car being recovered. The night before his vehicle was stolen in November 2007 he had placed \$100 notes to the value of \$1,000 underneath the driver's side car mat as he had planned to purchase a fridge the following day. The gentleman was very pleased when his money was recovered and finally returned to him intact nine months later.

Plans are now underway for the Water Police and Search and Rescue to conduct similar operations in Melbourne's Yarra River and the Barwon River in Geelong to continue to make a dent in the numbers of stolen unrecovered vehicles in Victoria, and send a message to would-be thieves that dumping vehicles does not necessarily mean they will be forgotten.



A stolen vehicle is pulled from Victoria's Maribyrnong River as part of Victoria Police's Operation River Sweep.



Recovered vehicles await their fate at Total Auto Recyclers in Dandenong.

South Australian stakeholders tackle complacency



South Australian Police, State Crime Prevention Coordinator, Inspector Ian Humby, speaks to delegates at the South Australia Vehicle Theft Awareness Seminar.

South Australia's Vehicle Theft Reduction Committee (SAVTRC) hosted a one-day seminar for local stakeholders in August to counter the issue of 'reform fatigue' or the notion that with strong reductions in the volume of theft in recent years, a level of theft is somehow acceptable.

Opened by the Attorney General, Hon. Michael Atkinson, the timing of the seminar provided the opportunity to have Lieutenant Dan Kaliszak of the Baltimore County Police (USA) address the participants on tactics used by his department to successfully catch thieves in the act via the use of decoy vehicles and the strategic positioning of intercept vehicles in moving traffic. The program also covered a range of other issues including the role of outlaw motorcycles gangs, the potential

use of automatic number plate recognition technology as a car crime detection tool, parts stripping, vehicle identification, the impact of car crime on victims and youth offending.

SAVTRC Chairman, Mark Borlace rated the day a success, based on a strong turn out from local agencies, industry and community organisations but also added a word of caution. "Complacency is the car thief's greatest friend. Today's seminar really highlights that despite making some good improvements in recent years we've got a long way to go before we can say we've really delivered the permanent structural changes required to protect vehicle owners and the community from the major economic and social impacts of car crime," he said.

Transponder watch makes DBS owners feel like James Bond

As if Aston Martin DBS owners don't feel enough like James Bond while driving, Aston Martin and luxury watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre have announced the AMVOX2 DBS transponder watch.

The transponder watch will allow wannabe-007s to lock and unlock their DBS coupe by pressing the open and close positions respectively on the watch's glass.

The wristwatch features a prominent DBS logo, as well as bezel and dial details designed to reflect the gauges of the DBS. Aston Martin says the transponder module only adds a few grams to the weight of the watch and that the electronics inside have been shrunk to half the size of the same system in the DBS key.

For security and safety purposes, the transponder system can only be paired to the DBS at the dealership.

The AMVOX2 DBS transponder watch will be available in titanium or a very un-James-Bond pink gold this December in Europe. There it'll add a whopping €27,500 (AU\$46,620), about a 10th of DBS' AU\$466,600 Australian list price.

Article courtesy of CNET Australia, August 2008:
<http://www.cnet.com.au/cartech/accessories/0,2000438505,339291512,00.htm>

Review of the management of repairable write-offs

The NMVTRC's preliminary analysis of the case for further tightening of controls over the management of repairable write-off (RWOs) will be released for comment in mid October. The paper takes the form of a cost-benefit analysis of a range of options to limit access to vehicles currently

classified as RWOs by unlicensed or non-accredited motor car traders and/or repairers or recyclers and criminals.

You can pre-register your interest in a copy of the report by sending your email details

to info@carsafe.com.au and entering 'RWO Review Report' in the subject line. The public comment period will be open for six weeks, after which the NMVTRC will make its final recommendations on the need for reform to transport agencies.