



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

# Theft WATCH

National Motor Vehicle  
Theft Reduction Council –  
No.16 September 2005

## Another Fall, Record Lows, 'Missing' Levels Persist: A Year in Vehicle Theft

Table 1: Australia, theft snapshot

12 months to June 2005	
Number of thefts	82,840
% change over previous 12 months	-7
% of thefts recovered	75
June 2005 Quarter	
Number of thefts	20,050
% change from last quarter	-3
% change from same quarter previous year	-2
% of June thefts recovered in June <sup>1</sup>	69%
Theft rate per 1,000 population	1.0
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations	1.4
Value of PLC <sup>2</sup> vehicles stolen in June quarter	\$139 million
Number of motorcycle thefts	1,300
% change from last quarter	-17
% change from same quarter previous year	-11
% of motorcycles recovered	27%
Number of claims <sup>3</sup>	8,826
Average claim cost	\$8,100
Median claim cost	\$3,920
Average agreed value claim cost	\$9,330

### Top Opportunistic Theft Targets, June Quarter

	Number Stolen
Holden Commodore VL, VN and VK	2,270
Ford Falcon XF, EAII	720
Hyundai Excel X3	330
Toyota Hilux	300
Toyota Corolla	290

### Top Professional Theft Targets, June Quarter<sup>4</sup>

	Number Missing
Holden Commodore VT, VS, VX, VY and VSII	220
Toyota Hilux	40
Ford Falcon EL	32
Mitsubishi Lancer CE	25
Toyota Landcruiser 70 Series	20

- Some vehicles stolen in the June quarter will be recovered in subsequent quarters.
- 17,596 thefts in the June quarter were passenger and light commercial (PLC) vehicles.
- Excludes 361 claims finalised with no cost.
- Vehicles <10 years old.

The number of vehicles reported stolen in Australia fell by a further 3 per cent in the June 2005 quarter to 20,050 and contributed to another substantial reduction in annual theft numbers.

For the year ending 30 June 2005 there were 82,840 thefts reported. This is a 7 per cent reduction and follows falls of 13, 19 and 10 per cent in the previous three years.

The vehicle theft landscape has clearly changed in Australia since 2000/01 when almost 140,000 vehicles were reported stolen. Vehicle theft rates are now the lowest on record with 4.1 thefts per 1,000 population (c.f. 7.2 in 2000/01) and 5.8 per 1,000 registrations (c.f. 11.1 in 2000/01).

Cars 10 years and older continue to account for the majority of thefts because of their lack of adequate security and widespread availability. Table 1 shows the continuing dominance of older Commodores as opportunistic theft targets. Seventy-six (76) per cent of all stolen passenger and light commercial (PLC) vehicles were in this age group despite only making up 43 per cent of all PLC registrations.

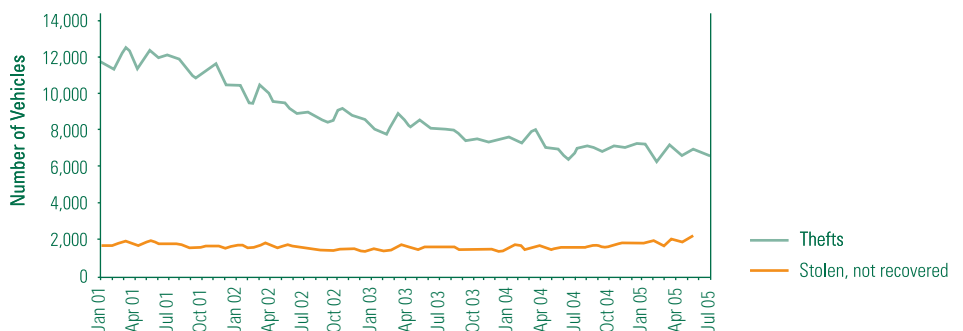
With older cars driving Australia's high theft numbers it follows that they also feature significantly in the nation's theft reductions. In 2000/01, PLC vehicles 10 or more years old accounted for 81 per cent of all thefts.

While the retirement of older cars from Australian roads and their replacement with newer models fitted with engine immobilisers will contribute to lower theft numbers, there are still currently more than 5 million older, high risk vehicles on the road. Sustainable reductions in theft rely on a substantial reduction in the number of these non-secure vehicles.

The notified recovery rate for vehicles stolen in 2004/05 was 75 per cent although this will rise to around 77 per cent as some vehicles stolen late in the year are subsequently recovered. While the percentage of total theft not recovered is steadily rising, the actual number of unrecovered 'missing' vehicles has remained relatively static over time.

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Figure 1: Vehicles stolen by month, January 2001 – June 2005



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The NMVTRC is an initiative of all Australian Governments and the Insurance Industry

# State and Territory

## Australian Capital Territory



Thefts	1,625
Change over last year	down 27% or 600 vehicles
Recovered	79%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	7.4
Thefts per 1,000 population	5.0

ACT data prior to 2004/05 included some number plate thefts and it is estimated that the actual reduction in thefts is approximately 22 per cent, which is one of the nation's highest. Three out of every five cars in the ACT is less than 10 years old but four out of five stolen cars are more than 10 years old. Motorcycles made up only 4 per cent of thefts, which is half the national average.

## Northern Territory



Thefts	617
Change over last year	down 22% or 170 vehicles
Recovered	82%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	3.1
Thefts per 1,000 population	5.6

Although low in actual theft numbers, NT's percentage reduction was amongst the nation's highest. NT has relatively low rates of theft per population and registrations, and a recovery rate that points to a predominately opportunistic theft problem. Motorcycles accounted for a particularly high proportion (12 per cent) of the Territory's thefts.

## New South Wales



Thefts	30,778
Change over last year	down 8% or 2,580 vehicles
Recovered	72%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	7.4
Thefts per 1,000 population	4.6

NSW recorded the largest reduction in actual theft numbers and was the main driver behind the 7 per cent national reduction. The State recorded the nation's second lowest recovery rate and the second highest number of thefts per 1,000 registrations. Along with NT and WA the State has the highest proportion (more than 30 per cent) of stolen cars less than 10 years old, indicating that the professional theft industry in NSW is still very active.

## Queensland



Thefts	11,699
Change over last year	down 5% or 630 vehicles
Recovered	79%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	3.0
Thefts per 1,000 population	4.1

QLD's has the nation's lowest rates of theft per 1,000 registrations and population. The State's proportion of older cars in its fleet, its percentage reduction in theft numbers and its recovery rate are all very similar to the national averages.

# Round-up, 2004/05

## South Australia



Thefts	9,686
Change over last year	up 6% or 510 vehicles
Recovered	84%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	6.3
Thefts per 1,000 population	8.4

SA defied the national trend with a 6 per cent increase in reported vehicle thefts. Recorded rates of theft are substantially above the national average and are the highest of all jurisdictions. Almost 90 per cent of cars stolen were 10 or more years old and the State's high recovery rate of 84 per cent indicates the continuing strong influence of opportunistic theft.

## Victoria



Thefts	18,672
Change over last year	down 8% or 1,627 vehicles
Recovered	75%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	3.7
Thefts per 1,000 population	4.9

Victoria recorded the second largest reduction, after NSW, in actual thefts numbers and the State's theft rates of 3.7 per 1,000 registrations and 4.9 per 1,000 population are below the national average. Four of every five thefts in the State involve vehicles 10 or more years old.

## Tasmania



Thefts	1,829
Change over last year	up 1% or 15 vehicles
Recovered	93%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	3.8
Thefts per 1,000 population	4.7

Tasmania was the only other jurisdiction besides SA to record an increase in thefts, albeit a very small one with an additional 15 stolen vehicles. The State has the nation's highest recovery rate, oldest vehicle fleet, and highest proportion of thefts involving cars aged 10 or more years. Motorcycles account for a particularly low proportion (4 per cent) of Tasmania's thefts.

## Western Australia



Thefts	7,931
Change over last year	down 12% or 1,041 vehicles
Recovered	69%
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	4.0
Thefts per 1,000 population	5.1

Data from WA Police currently understates stolen vehicle recoveries and, until corrected, the State's recovery rate should be assumed to be consistent with the national average. In terms of actual theft numbers, WA recorded the third greatest reduction in thefts. WA has lower levels of older vehicle thefts and a particularly high number of motorcycle thefts. Almost one-fifth of thefts in the State were of motorcycles, compared to less than one-tenth nationally.

# Another Fall, Record Lows, 'Missing' Levels Persist: A Year in Vehicle Theft

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Profit motivated criminals have been able to utilise alternative disposal methods for stolen vehicles despite the infrastructure improvements that are in place to deter whole vehicle re-birthing. Only 1,500 fewer vehicles stolen in the past year will remain missing than was the case in 2000/01.

Motorcycle thefts continue to worsen. An increase of 6 per cent in 2004/05 to 6,350 puts motorcycle theft at a record high. While marginally more

registered than unregistered bikes were reported stolen, the number of unregistered motorcycles thefts has risen 18 per cent over the past four years while registered bike theft is down 10 per cent. Registered motorcycles had a recovery rate of 41 per cent, compared to only 18 per cent for unregistered motorcycles.

Finalised insurance claims for theft provided to the NMVTRC for 2004/05 totalled \$242 million,

a reduction of \$8 million in claims details provided by the same insurers in 2000/01.

The average cost to finalise a claim in 2004/05 was \$7,410 (c.f \$6,180 in 2000/01); the median cost was \$3,640 (c.f. \$3,210 in 2000/01). The average cost to finalise an agreed value policy has increased by 27 per cent, compared to four years ago, to \$8,490.

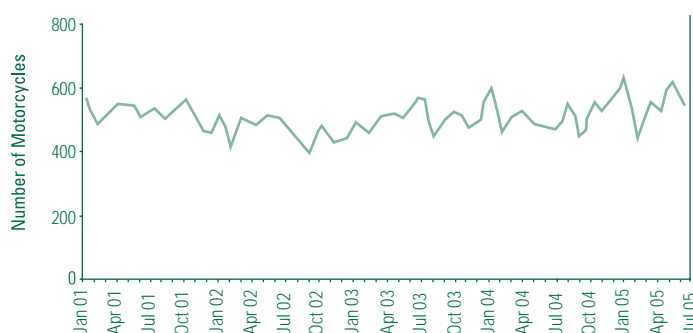
Table 2: State and territory theft snapshot

	Thefts, June 2005 quarter	% change over last quarter	Thefts not recovered	% of thefts recovered	Thefts per 1,000 population	Thefts per 1,000 registrations	Thefts for 12 months to June 2005	% change over previous 12 months
ACT	487	35	123	75	1.5	2.2	1,625	-27
NSW	7,397	-2	2,682	64	1.1	1.8	30,778	-8
NT	148	-22	40	73	0.7	1.5	617	-22
QLD	2,884	1	728	75	0.7	1.0	11,699	-5
SA	2,206	-10	442	80	1.4	1.9	9,686	6
TAS	577	32	53	91	1.2	1.5	1,829	1
VIC	4,486	-5	1,388	69	0.9	1.2	18,672	-8
WA	1,861	-7	687	63	0.9	1.2	7,931	-12
Australia	20,046	-3	6,143	69	1.0	1.4	82,837	-7

The NMVTRC acknowledges all police services, registration authorities, participating insurers, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, Glass's Information Services and Insurance Australia Group for their supply of the data. Theft incident data may be subject to later revision by the data providers.

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Figure 2: Motorcycles stolen by month, January 2001 – June 2005



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