

**EMBARGOED:  
0600hrs 17 September 2004**



### **New SA Laws to Tackle Car Re-Birthing Applauded**

The National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) today welcomed new South Australian laws to better control the use of wrecked vehicle identities which it says are crucial to shutting down professional car theft rings.

Mr David Morgan, Chairman of the NMVTRC, said, "Every month in Australia criminals launder more than \$7 million of re-identified stolen vehicles through state and territory registration systems. Most go through the system undetected because thieves are able to substitute the car's unique 17 digit vehicle identification number (VIN) with the number from a similar vehicle that has been severely damaged and declared a write-off. These "re-birthing" cars are then sold to unsuspecting buyers who are unaware they have purchased a stolen car."

Under the new laws which came into effect from Monday, accident or immersion-damaged vehicles which are assessed under strict criteria to be beyond safe repair will be banned from re-registration while repairable write-offs will have to undergo a new stringent identity inspection before being registered.

Mr Morgan explained that, "Capturing and controlling the use of written-off vehicle identities is central to our national strategy to combat vehicle theft. Professional thieves do not recognise state and territory boundaries except to use them to exploit differences in registration procedures. With the changes announced by Minister White today, we now have truly nationally consistent arrangements for managing wrecked vehicle identities right across Australia for the first time. Organised car thieves will be feeling increasingly uncomfortable."

South Australia's new laws will complement the renewed focus of Australian police services and the Australian Crime Commission on organised vehicle crime by allowing them to quickly identify thieves who try to launder stolen cars through the registration system. "Authorities are now able to tackle car theft on a range of fronts and we would expect to see a significant downturn in professional theft activity across Australia over the coming year," Mr Morgan said.

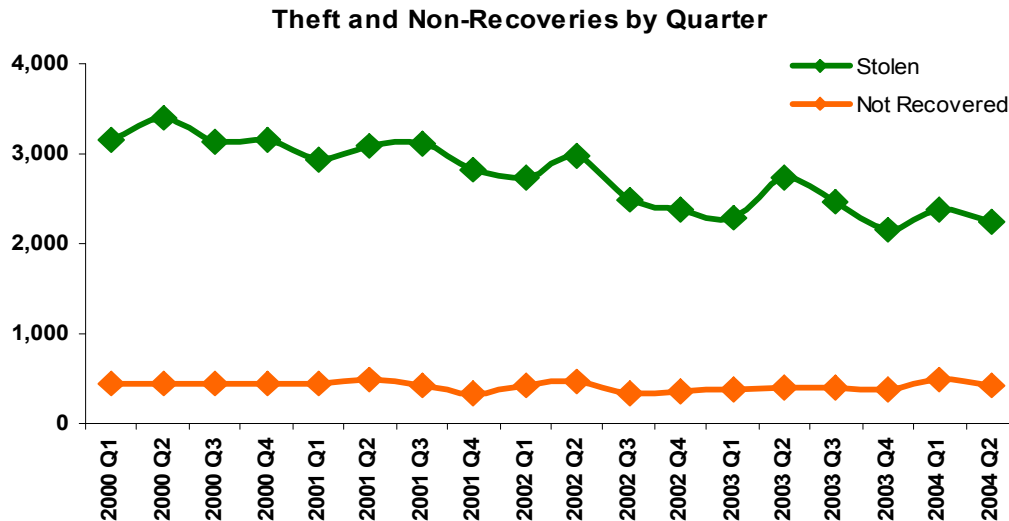
The NMVTRC is a joint initiative of all Australian governments and the insurance industry.

---

#### **For Further Information:**

- Ray Carroll, Executive Director, NMVTRC, (03) 9348 9600 or 0408 379 349
- Geoff Hughes, Director—Strategy & Programming, NMVTRC, (03) 9348 9600 or 0412 522 060

## VEHICLE THEFT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA (2003/04 Financial Year)



- South Australia (SA) recorded 9,250 vehicle thefts over the last year representing a reduction of 6 per cent over the previous twelve months.
- SA recorded 8.2 thefts per 1,000 vehicles registered and 6.0 thefts per 1,000 population during the last twelve months, well above the national averages of 6.4 and 4.4 respectively.
- 1 in 4 vehicles stolen in SA are never recovered.
- The number of later model vehicles (less than 10 years old) that are not recovered is at an all-time high in the State. Three-hundred and ninety (390) late model vehicles disappeared in the financial year, compared to 300 the previous year and only 240 five years ago.
- The most popular theft targets for organised criminals in SA are: Holden Commodore VS, VT and VR; and Ford Falcon EF. Thieves laundered more than \$600,000 worth of these vehicles stolen from SA alone in the last 12 months.