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A Journey, Not a Destination

There is no doubt that theft reduction initiatives of the past several years have impacted on those who profit from car crime at the expense of motorists and the broader community. However, organised criminals are extremely adaptive and quick to identify new or remaining system weaknesses and our own strategic responses need to continue to adapt accordingly.

Sustainable vehicle theft reform, like other major social and economic change, is a journey not a destination. I am pleased to report that the next steps of this journey will be outlined in our upcoming Strategic Plan.

The Plan focuses on the 18,000 stolen vehicles each year that are never recovered. Our annual round of stakeholder consultations, as we reported in the last edition of 'Theft Torque', focussed our collective attention on the government, business and community settings that allow these vehicles to disappear.

The outcomes of these discussions form the basis of our revised strategic direction for vehicle theft reform over the next three years. While the focus



David Morgan, Chairman.

on full implementation of current initiatives will continue, the new direction sees a more 'forensic' approach to analysing theft data and a greater emphasis on case studies of profit-motivated theft to reveal potential new countermeasures and ensure that the dynamics of organised car crime are clearly articulated and understood by all audiences.

David Morgan, Chairman

Smart Vehicle Identification: The Way of the Future

The traditionally poor standard of vehicle identification has greatly contributed to the ease with which organised criminals have been able to convert stolen vehicles into cash. The illicit trade in stolen vehicles generates around \$500 million per year and aids other areas of serious criminal activity including illicit drugs and weapons trafficking, money laundering, identity fraud, insurance/financial fraud and tax avoidance.

More than 100,000 new cars sold in Australia this year will have the most sophisticated marking system currently available, VIN-based microdots, and most passenger vehicles will soon be fitted with tamper-resistant and copy proof compliance or identification labels. These improvements in passive identification together with enhanced



Participants at the EVI Symposium in Melbourne, August 2005.

exchange of information between registration authorities and police assist in the detection of stolen vehicles, albeit after the time of theft and usually when the vehicle is in the hands of innocent purchasers.

Continues back page.



Inside...

*Australia's Most Wanted
hits the media trail.*

Apathy: A Car Thief's Greatest Friend

Community concern about having a car stolen has fallen by more than a quarter over the past five years to just 45 per cent and motorist apathy remains the car thief's greatest friend.

Creating a sustainable change of attitude within the community will always be a very difficult task. 'It won't happen to me', 'no-one would steal my old bomb', and 'I'm insured so it doesn't matter' are myths that a large proportion of the Australian community still believe.

Victims of vehicle theft were on hand at the NMVTRC's June and July Australia's Most Wanted

events to challenge these myths with their personal stories of the financial and socially debilitating impacts of car theft on their lives.

In South Australia, Luke told how his VC Commodore was stolen while he was scuba diving, leaving him without transport and with just the wetsuit he was standing in. In New South Wales, the theft of Julie's old Falcon left her several thousand dollars out of pocket and without the means to get to work. Erin, in Victoria, was the victim of theft twice in two weeks and was left reliant on relatives to get her daughter to necessary medical appointments.

Australia's Most Wanted focuses community attention on the current targets of thieves and how motorists can minimise their risk of becoming a victim. Following the success of the events in Hobart, Darwin and Perth in late 2004, the NMVTRC took the campaign to Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane.

Australia's Most Wanted was co-hosted by crime prevention ministers in each of the jurisdictions: the Hon. Tim Holding (VIC); the Hon. Carl Scully (NSW); Attorney-General, the Hon. Michael Atkinson (SA); the Hon. Judy Spence (QLD); the Hon. Michelle



Police Minister Judy Spence launches AMW in Queensland.



Victorian Police Minister Tim Holding and NMVTRC Chairman David Morgan check out the State's most stolen car, Holden Commodore manufactured 1979-1991.



Police Minister Carl Scully launches AMW in NSW.



NSW Police Minister Carl Scully with NMVTRC Chairman David Morgan and theft victims Julie and Tim.



Attorney General Michael Atkinson launches AMW in SA.



SA victim of theft Luke (on right) with Mr David Webber of AAMI Insurance.



SA Attorney General Michael Atkinson discusses the State's top theft targets with the media.



Queensland's Minister for Police Judy Spence with NMVTRC Chairman David Morgan.



Queensland Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson.

U-turners Give Back

Roberts (WA); the Hon. Paul Henderson (NT); and the Hon. David Llewelyn (TAS).

The campaign was one element of the NMVTRC's public education strategy for 2004/05, which also included the Operation Bounce Back (OBB) local government program and Ride of Your Life youth-focussed cinema advertising.



Top targets.



Police Minister Tim Holding launches AMW in Victoria.



Victim of theft Kelly is interviewed for the Brisbane television news.



The Clown Doctors in their classic Hillman, restored by U-turn Tasmania.

You can't miss the Royal Hobart Hospital's Clown Doctors traversing Tassie's roads in their colourful 1962 Hillman Deluxe Mini. The Clown Doctors program was established by The Humour Foundation to lighten up the lives of hospitalised children around Australia.

Participants of the *U-turn* program in Tasmania restored the classic car as part of their ten week course and presented it to medicine's funny guys at their July graduation ceremony.

The following month, participants in Western Australia's *U-turn* program celebrated their graduation by receiving certificates from Police Minister Michelle Roberts and presenting a restored car to the Balga-Morley Police and Citizens Youth Club.

The Club will use the car to provide driving lessons to young people who may not be able to afford to take lessons and need a license to improve their job prospects.

The *U-turn* program is based on the NMVTRC's best practice model for young recidivist car theft offender programs. Traditional justice responses have done little to impact youth offending and the model provides a cost effective alternative with more positive outcomes over a longer term for the young person involved and the broader community.

Detaining one young person for a year costs around \$140,000 on average and often sees the young person released back into the community much the same way they entered their period of detention: lacking the life, education or employment skills needed to steer clear of an offending lifestyle.

The *U-turn* program model was developed specifically for high rate car theft offenders, using their interest in cars as a 'hook' to keep them committed to the program. Given the life circumstances of program participants – many live with substance abuse, domestic violence, intergeneration unemployment, lack of literacy and other issues – the three program trials in Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland have shown a pleasingly high level of retention of young participants.

U-turn was established and funded by the NMVTRC and the Australian Government to demonstrate the potential of such programs as an option to detention. The funding continues in Western Australia and Queensland. Based on the success of *U-turn* Tasmania, the program is now funded by the Tasmanian Government with support from local public and private stakeholders.



NMVTRC Executive Director Ray Carroll, WA Police Minister Michelle Roberts and Mission Australia State Manager Ann Russell-Brown.

Smart Vehicle Identification: The Way of the Future

continued

With passive identification now well advanced, active identification technologies may provide the 'missing links' in the multi-faceted, national effort to disrupt the theft of vehicles for profit. The current state of active Electronic Vehicle Identification (EVI) technologies and their feasibility in Australia was examined at a recent Symposium, hosted by the NMVTRC and Austroads, the association of Australian and New Zealand road transport and traffic authorities.

While the primary purpose of EVI is to contribute to road safety, pricing and traffic management, EVI systems may also assist to combat the trade in stolen vehicles. The NMVTRC believes such technologies should be seen as 'enablers' that can legitimately make other existing applications or systems more effective.

Dynamic EVI systems that can securely interact with road system management and other public and private infrastructure have the potential to make the movement of stolen vehicles by criminals much more difficult – at both the moment of theft and attempted disposal.

There are already a number of forms of non-original equipment (non-OEM) EVI in use around the world, for example transponder based tolling systems or electronic number

plates. However, 'bolted on' systems will always be more prone to tampering than those that are fully integrated with the vehicle's primary electronic systems as original equipment.

Where users derive a benefit from non-OEM EVI – such as higher operating masses or fewer route restrictions for large vehicles – the risk of tampering is lower. However, where it is used to detect breaches, impose charges, or flag 'vehicles of interest' the risk is high and will therefore require higher levels of confidence in accuracy, reliability, interoperability, security and, of course, cost.

The August Symposium heard from international EVI expert, Oene Kerstjens. Mr Kerstjens is a Project Manager with ERTICO, the European Union's public-private partnership to promote intelligent transport systems across Europe and is the coordinator of the EU's extensive EVI Feasibility Study.

The theft reform benefits of EVI in the EU were presented by Mr Guus Wesselink, the Director of the Netherlands' Foundation for Tackling Vehicle Crime (AVC). AVC is a public-private partnership whose membership is very similar to the NMVTRC's and the two organisations maintain a close strategic collaboration on international vehicle theft trends and operations of related criminal networks.

The National EVI Symposium concluded that while Australia should continue to closely monitor EVI developments in the EU, including standards development and the effectiveness of implemented applications, it is unlikely that the quantifiable benefits of EVI would exceed the significant infrastructure costs at this stage.

It was agreed however that there was a need to develop a strategic framework for the future of EVI in Australia and that any EVI system should be:

- based on a vehicle's unique VIN as the primary identifier;
- preferably applied across the entire vehicle fleet rather than just to specific vehicle types, such as heavy vehicles;
- able to facilitate or permit other applications rather than just registration status information; and
- integrated into the electronic components of vehicles at the point of manufacture rather than a 'bolt-on' system to safeguard against tampering.

The NMVTRC will continue to monitor the progress of the EVI in the EU and elsewhere.

Glass's Gets On-Board



Glass's Information Services, one of the leading providers of pricing and identification information

to the automotive and allied industries, has joined Australia's fight against vehicle theft.

Glass's contribution of information to the CARS database provides the NMVTRC with the ability to accurately value the nation's stolen vehicle fleet. Currently, passenger and light commercial

vehicles to the value of \$1.5 million are stolen every day in Australia.

The valuations, based on Glass's data, will be reported via the NMVTRC's Theft Watch newsletter and Quickstats reports.



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