



National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council
driving down vehicle theft

Theft TORQUE

National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council –
No.31 December 2007

Contents

[Canberra Immobilises](#)

[Secure By Design –
National Tour Complete!](#)

[Annual Report in Brief](#)

[Vehicle Theft Related Deaths](#)

[Operation Bounce Back 2008](#)

[Insurers Online Access
to Registration Data](#)

Canberra Immobilises

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government is extending its Vehicle Immobilisers Scheme with an additional \$965,000 over the next two years. The current scheme offers a \$200 rebate to recipients of a Centrelink pension – the expansion will extend to all citizens who own an older vehicle a \$100 subsidy to fit an approved engine immobiliser.

Under the extended program, an extra 5,000 engine immobilisers will be subject to a rebate. 3,775 subsidies will be again available to recipients of a Centrelink pension, and from July 2008 up to 1,050 subsidies will be offered to ACT citizens who own an older vehicle. The subsidies for these recipients will be \$100.

The scheme will be running alongside the NMVTRC's *Operation Bounce Back* program, which has been operating in the ACT and administered by the Territory's Department of Justice and Community Safety for the last three years.

The NMVTRC's independent analysis of the likely impacts of higher immobiliser rates for the ACT was influential in the Government's decision to extend the scheme.

The start date for the extended program is expected to be set for January 2008.

Christmas Message

NMVTRC Councillors and staff would like to wish all our readers and stakeholders a happy Christmas and a safe new year. Thank you for your cooperation and support and we look forward to again working with you to further drive down vehicle theft next year!

Secure By Design – National Tour Complete!

We have now completed our national tour of *Secure By Design* (SBD), the NMVTRC's flagship publicity event for 2007, visiting capital cities in all states and territories to showcase innovations in vehicle security. Media coverage and stakeholder involvement has been excellent, and we would like to thank all those who came out to support the initiative. We would also like to once again congratulate those vehicle manufacturers who have taken the initiative to ensure their vehicles are the most secure in the country.

Awards were presented in Sydney to representatives from the relevant manufacturing industries for the following winning vehicles, presented by vehicle class:

- Small car category – Volkswagen Polo and Citroën C2 (joint winners)
- Medium car category – Subaru Liberty
- Large car category – Mitsubishi 380
- Luxury car category – Audi A8
- Compact SUV category – BMW X3
- Large SUV category – Audi Q7
- People mover category – Volkswagen Multivan
- Commercial category – Volkswagen Caddy Cargo Van



Guests listen to the presentations at the Sydney SBD launch at Olympic Park.



Attendees at the Sydney SBD launch. From left to right: Andrew Scipione (NSW Commissioner of Police), John Bussell (Mitsubishi), the Hon. David Campbell (Minister for Police), Derek Ashby (Subaru), Anna Burgdorf (Audi), Silvio De Denaro (BMW), David Morgan (NMVTRC Chairman), Kerrie Kelly (Insurance Council), Jon Dawe (Volkswagen).

Annual Report in Brief

The NMVTRC Annual Report for 2007 is now available online. If you would like to request a hard copy, please contact us at info@carsafe.com.au. Here is a short-form version featuring the highlights of the year.

Motor Vehicle Theft in Australia, 2006/07

Australia has pleasingly again reached new lows with respect to theft numbers and rates, with total thefts having now declined by over 45 per cent since numbers peaked in 2001. This performance has enabled Australia to improve its 'world ranking' on the vehicle theft 'league table' of developed nations. The reduction in theft numbers for the year has saved the community an estimated \$24 million to \$46 million¹.

Reform Activity

The NMVTRC implemented a number of reforms in 2006/07, which will be outlined in brief below structured roughly according to theft motivation².

In order to address the issue of theft for short term use, we carried out a number of projects to promote secure practice in the community, secure older vehicles, divert young people from car crime, and maintain effective responses by police. These projects included *Operation Bounce Back* for its third year running, and *Secure By Design*, our flagship publicity tour for 2007³.

To address young offenders and young motorists, we continued our support of project *U-turn* to divert young people away from car crime, and also began a review of our youth education resources for use by schools, youth centres, and other youth organisations.

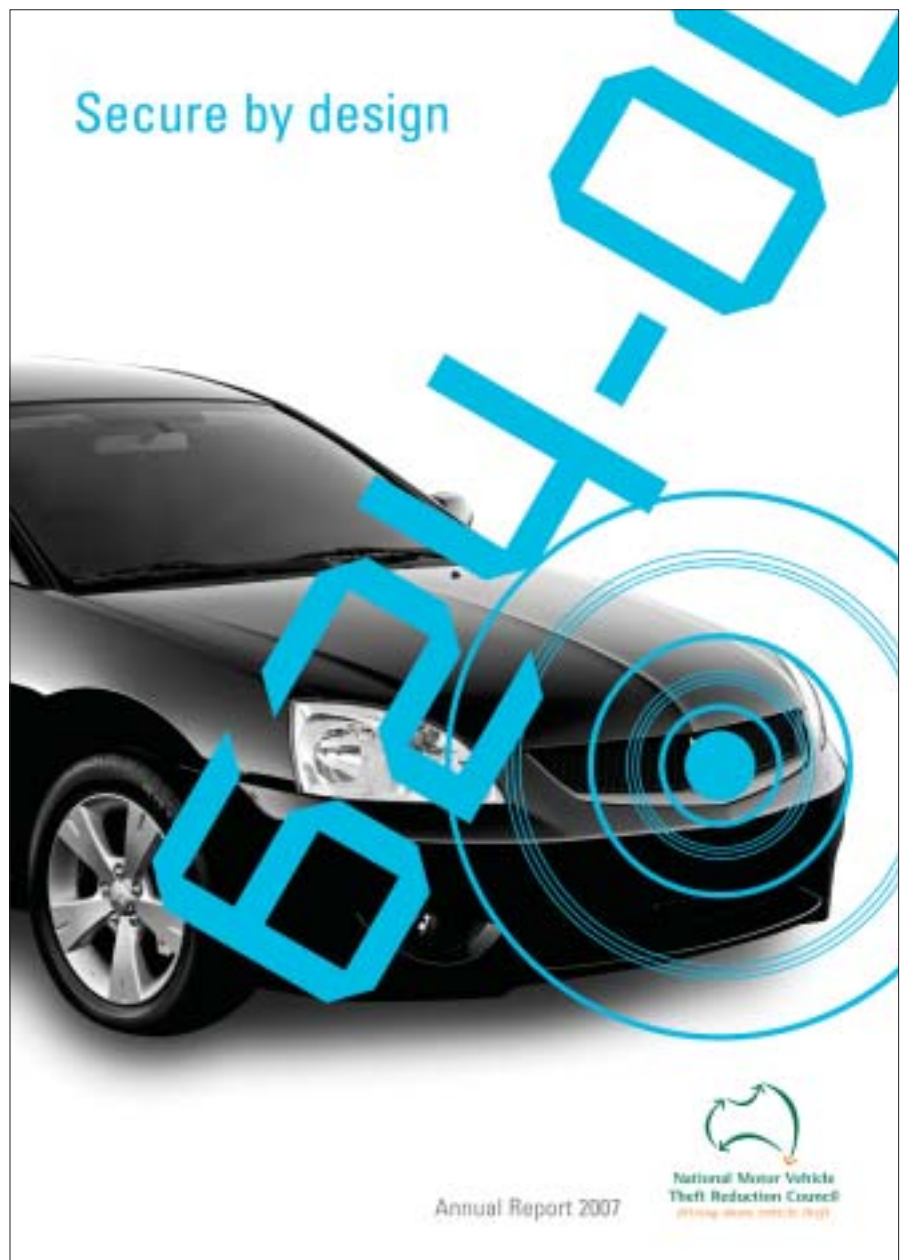
To address the theft of vehicles for mixed purposes, projects aimed at ensuring abandoned vehicles are properly disposed of will continue next year. We worked with Bankstown LAC to illustrate the nature and scale of parts stripping in the Bankstown area.

A project aiming to investigate the exposure of agreed value insurance policies to fraudulent claims of theft has been put on hold due to complications in extracting the relevant insurance data. The feasibility of this project will be re-examined in 2008.

To address the theft of vehicles for profit, projects aimed at improving vehicle and component identification continued in 2006/07 alongside progress towards minimising the likelihood of stolen parts being traded by legitimate recyclers.

Our 'forensic approach' to analysing data continued, and the CARS data continued to provide stakeholders with comprehensive and timely information on vehicle theft. The first round of registration audits were carried out successfully, and we are on our way to completing a set of best practice principles for vehicle identity inspections.

We continue to encourage improvements in consumer access to vehicle information, and



NMVTRC 2007 Annual Report cover.

developments towards the implementation of a national Personal Property Securities Register also has implications in this field.

Encouraging an improved police response to vehicle theft was an important goal for the year, as well as applying strategic responses to combating insurance fraud through allowing the verification of vehicle information by insurers. Additionally, the Insurance Fraud Risk Assessment Group (now called the Economic Crime Working Group) has been taken over by the Insurance Council of Australia.

Performance Indicators

Car theft remained a focus in the media, with print, television, and radio features often mentioning the NMVTRC and its stakeholders.

Stakeholders once again gave very positive and useful feedback on the NMVTRC's performance

for the year, with excellent ratings on program coordination and consultation, quality and timing of the NMVTRC's publications, and the NMVTRC's influence on reforms.

For more details, see the full version of the NMVTRC's Annual Report in the publications section of our website, www.carsafe.com.au

1. Based on independent economic analysis conducted by MM Starrs Pty Ltd for the NMVTRC (September 2005).
2. The NMVTRC has recently adopted a new model of viewing all car crime as occurring within a continuum of offending – with theft for short term use at one end and pure economic gain at the other, and a high level of fluidity in the middle.
3. See other articles in this issue of *Theft Torque* for more information on these projects.

Vehicle Theft Related Deaths

The impact of vehicle theft on individuals and the wider community is at its highest when a fatality results from a stolen crash – whether that death be of the offender or an innocent bystander. Highlighting the frequency of these incidents and analysing the circumstances surrounding them is an important part of preventing individual and community loss. In order to minimise the number of lives lost each year from stolen vehicle crashes, it is necessary to understand the circumstances in which these incidents occur.

For the above reasons, the NMVTRC is taking another look at vehicle theft related fatalities in Australia in order to determine whether the

volume or profile of vehicle theft related deaths has changed substantially since the last analysis towards the end of 2004. The NMVTRC's 2005 report into the human toll of vehicle theft found that on average, at least 25 people are killed in stolen vehicle related fatalities each year. The profile of these deaths revealed that most fatalities are of males aged between 17 and 24 years old. For every four people killed whilst travelling in a stolen car, one other road user is killed.

The results of the updated project are expected to be ready in early 2008.

Operation Bounce Back 2008

The selection process is almost complete for councils participating in the fourth round of *Operation Bounce Back*, and we will be again offering around 20 grants to local councils across Australia to address the issue of older vehicle theft in those areas that are the most hard hit. Councils will be launching their programs in early 2008, and we expect the successes of previous years to be realised once again.

Insurers Online Access to Registration Data

Assisting insurers to actively and effectively combat vehicle theft fraud has been a key priority for the NMVTRC's work program for 2006/07. A 2002 NMVTRC study estimated that up to 25 per cent of motor claims may be fraudulent⁴.

As a consequence, this year the NMVTRC committed \$400,000 to partner Austroads, the national association of road transport and traffic authorities,

to develop a means of allowing insurers to validate Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) and other registration information in real time via a contracted independent information broker.

Negotiations with a preferred supplier, selected by an open bid process, are well advanced and a pilot service could commence as early as April 2008.

This significant development will mark a key step in the progress towards maximising the sharing of non-personal information to allow insurers to identify potential fraud and properly evaluate each claim.

4. Tozer (2002) 'Impact of Insurance Practices on Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud'.



National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc

50-52 Howard Street
North Melbourne Victoria 3051
Australia

Telephone (03) 9348 9600
Facsimile (03) 9348 9988
Email info@carsafe.com.au

www.carsafe.com.au

NMVTRC newsletters are reproduced on the CAR-SAFE website at www.carsafe.com.au and are also available electronically. To join our email list contact info@carsafe.com.au