



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

Theft WATCH



National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council –
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Reductions Roll on in 2006

The first three months of 2006 again delivered good news for the community and the vehicle theft reform process with theft numbers falling nationally by a further 3 per cent. This begins Australia's sixth consecutive year of reduced theft activity.

Five of the eight states and territories experienced drops in theft numbers. Tasmania and South Australia led the way with decreases of 22 per cent (146 fewer vehicles) and 11 per cent (223 fewer vehicles) respectively. Western Australia, Queensland, and Victoria likewise experienced lower theft numbers, with Victoria recording 314 fewer thefts than for the previous quarter.

Only the Australian Capital Territory (with an increase of 4 per cent or just 18 vehicles) and

New South Wales (with an increase of 3 per cent or 233 vehicles) recorded increases.

Non-recovery rates continue to remain relatively stable at around 33 per cent, with 6,092 of the 18,733 vehicles stolen in the March quarter not recovered.

The rolling 12 month trend shows thefts dropped nationally by 7 per cent from 82,850 in 2005 to 76,959 in 2006. States and territories reported varying drops in theft numbers of between 1 per cent and 17 per cent, with only the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania recording increases. It should be noted that smaller jurisdictions are prone to frequent fluctuations (both up and down) because of their relatively low base position.

Table 1: Australia, theft snapshot

12 months to March 2006	
Number of thefts	76,959
% change from previous 12 months	-7%
% of thefts recovered in year	74%
Number of motorcycle thefts	6,630
March 2006 Quarter	
Number of thefts	18,733
% change from last quarter	-3%
% change from same quarter previous year	-8%
% of thefts recovered in quarter	67%
Theft rate per 1,000 population	0.9
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations	1.3
Total value of stolen PLC vehicles*	\$137m
Total value of unrecovered PLC vehicles	\$46m
Number of motorcycle thefts	1,606
% change from last quarter	-5%
% change from same quarter previous year	1%
% of motorcycles recovered in quarter	29%
Number of claims (excluding zero cost#)	7,870
Average claim cost (\$)	\$10,135
Median claim cost (\$)	\$5,538
Average agreed value claim cost (\$)	\$12,299
Total sum of claims	\$80m

Top Opportunistic Theft Targets, March Quarter

	Number Missing
Holden Commodore VN, VH, VL	1,095
Ford Laser KB, KC, EA	918
Ford Falcon EA, XF	900
Hyundai Excel X3	286
Tarago YR22	275

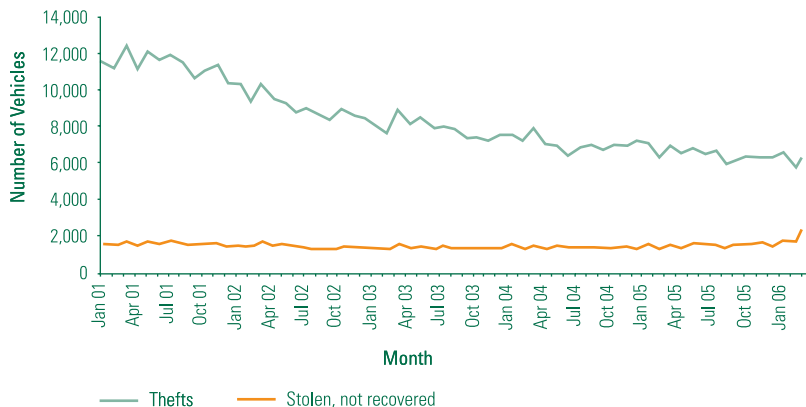
Top Professional Theft Targets, March Quarter

	Number Missing
Commodore VT, VX, VY	169
Falcon AU, BA, EL	109
Landcruiser 70, Prado 90, 100 Series	62
Hyundai Excel X3	31
Mitsubishi Lancer CE	26

* Passenger and light commercial (PLC) vehicles accounted for 87 per cent of total thefts. Values calculated using the resources of Glass's Information Services.

There were 397 claims with a cost equal to zero.

Figure 1: Vehicles stolen by month, January 2001 – March 2006



Costs of Profit-Motivated Theft Also Down

In its 2005 Annual Report the NMVTRC observed that despite the significant improvement in the nation's overall theft performance, the rate of non-recoveries (an indicator of organised theft) remained a concern. However, a more detailed analysis of insurance claims since 2001 reveals

markedly different trends between newer and older vehicles.

Figure 2 shows total claims costs for unrecovered passenger and light commercial vehicles (PLCs) by vehicle age, and indicates a substantially improved



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

Costs of Profit-Motivated Theft Also Down continued

position for the newest and oldest vehicles. This suggests that improvements in managing written-off vehicles, better security systems and more effective policing are making life harder for criminals. The flatter result for mid-range vehicles is currently the subject of further investigations.

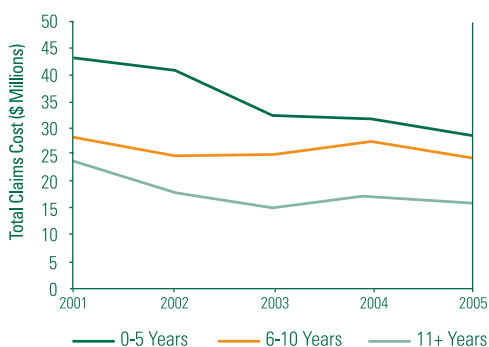
The higher proportion of older vehicles not being recovered appears counter-intuitive to the traditional theory based on simple economic returns. Table 2 provides a break-down of vehicle values for the 13,500 PLCs not recovered in 2005. The values have been derived from commercial pricing data provided by Glass's Information Services.

Value (\$)	Share (%)	Volume
<5,999	50	6,798
6,000-9,999	15	2,025
10,000-14,999	11	1,518
15,000-19,999	10	1,087
20,000-29,999	10	1,295
>30,000	6	751

Almost four in 10 of all non-recoveries involve a vehicle valued at less than \$4,000. In 2004 the NMVTRC posited the view that with such low values, such vehicles were more likely to have been stolen and dumped by opportunistic thieves rather than falling into the hands of organised criminals. That view was challenged by some commentators who suggested that the incidence of re-birthing of older vehicles and parts stripping was more prevalent than estimated.

This analysis demonstrates that understanding Australia's unrecovered vehicle theft rate is more complex than simply taking a look at the number of non-recoveries each year. The importance of having a closer look at the different features of unrecovered vehicles can be seen in the changing trends and profiles outlined above, and future analysis should maintain this focus in order to obtain an accurate perception of non-recoveries.

Figure 2: Total claims cost of unrecovered PLCs by age category



Note: Recovery status was obtained by matching insurance claims with police data on the basis of number plate and incident date (+/- three days). A match was achieved in 72 per cent of cases, and Figure 2 is based only on vehicles identified as unrecovered in this matched sub-set of claims.

State and Territory Summary

Jurisdiction	Number of thefts, March quarter	Change in theft numbers from last quarter	Number of thefts not recovered in the quarter	% of thefts recovered in the quarter	Theft rate per 1,000 population, March quarter	Theft rate per 1,000 registrations, March quarter	Thefts for 12 months to March 2006	Change in theft numbers from last 12 months
ACT	454	+18	100	78	1.4	2.0	1,951	+436
NSW	7,201	+233	2,675	63	1.1	1.7	28,507	-2838
NT	166	0	42	75	0.8	1.5	646	-5
QLD	2,634	-18	786	70	0.7	0.9	10,914	-692
SA	1,775	-223	392	78	1.1	1.5	7,968	-1656
TAS	515	-146	40	92	1.1	1.3	2,265	+559
VIC	4,217	-314	1,371	67	0.8	1.1	17,700	-1109
WA	1,771	-42	686	61	0.9	1.1	7,008	-586
Australia	18,733	-492	6,092	67	0.9	1.3	76,959	-5891



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