



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

**A Collaborative Approach.**

**Annual Report 2004**

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## **Vision**

To contribute to Australia's economic and social well-being by achieving the lowest rate of motor vehicle theft in the developed world.

## **Mission**

To deliver a culture of continuous and sustainable vehicle theft reduction in Australia by advancing reform and cooperation between industry, government and community stakeholders.

# Letter of Transmittal

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31 October 2004

## **Crime Prevention Ministerial Forum\***

The Hon Andre Haermeyer, MP (Chair)  
Mr Bill Wood, MLA  
Senator the Hon. Chris Ellison  
The Hon. John Watkins, MP  
The Hon. Dr Peter Toyne, MLA  
The Hon. Judy Jackson MHA  
The Hon. Michelle Roberts, MLA  
The Hon. Warren Pitt, MP  
The Hon. Michael Atkinson, MP  
The Hon. Phil Goff

## **Insurance Council of Australia President**

Mr Mike Wilkins

In accordance with the Rules of Association of the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc., I have pleasure in submitting the Council's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2004.

Yours sincerely,



David M. Morgan  
Chairman

*\* Forum membership as at 30 June 2004.*

# Council Members

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*David Morgan, Independent Chairman*



*Ray Rawlings, Austroads*



*Tony Selmes, Motor Trades Association of Australia*



*Dick Adams, Australasian Police Ministers' Council*



*Robert McDonald, Insurance Council of Australia*



*Mark Borlace, Australian Automobile Association*



*Dr. Dianne Heriot, Australian Government Agencies*



*Keith Seyer, Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries*



*William (Bill) McKendry,  
Crime Prevention Ministerial Forum*

# Chairman's Report

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The National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) strives to deliver Australia the lowest rate of vehicle theft in the developed world. Since its inception in 1999, 112,000 fewer vehicles have been stolen nationally saving the community more than \$670 million.<sup>1</sup>

The twelve months to 30 June 2004 have marked a third successive year of significant theft reductions. With 88,000 vehicles stolen in the period, Australia is enjoying its lowest theft rates<sup>2</sup> for more than three decades. The year saw a number of significant elements of the NMVTRC's reform agenda mature to the point where they can start to deliver clearly quantifiable benefits. These include:

- the completion of the national vehicle information grid on mainland Australia, and best practice written-off vehicle registers in every state and territory;
- the encouraging performance of VIN-based microdots in protecting some of the traditionally prime targets of professional vehicle thieves; and
- the development of a national code of practice for parts recyclers.

The NMVTRC was also delighted that the Tasmanian Government has committed nearly \$1.5 million to extend the innovative *U-turn* program, for young offenders through to mid-2007.

Pleasingly, the year has also seen police in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland break a number of significant car crime rackets.

This strong overall performance has enabled us to relinquish our former top ranking on the 'league table' of the worst performing nations. Australia now occupies fifth spot behind the United Kingdom (1), Canada (2), France (3), Japan (4), and ahead of the United States (6), Italy (7), Belgium (8) and Germany (9).

Such significant results are cause for optimism, but also bring a risk that:

- we may lose our collective focus on implementing the remaining 'missing links' in our national defence against thieves; and
- the search for new countermeasures to respond to the changing modus operandi of criminal networks may be stymied.

Achieving a culture of continuous, sustainable theft reductions relies on maintaining the current vigour with which governments and industry are working together to combat the problem.

The importance of effective collaboration was emphasised in this year's round of strategic planning (StratPlan) forums – based around the theme of *Locking in Sustainability* – which again provided a valuable opportunity to ensure that the NMVTRC's strategic priorities reflect the expectations of stakeholders. We look forward to your on-going support in jointly tackling the challenges to sustainable theft reduction that lie ahead.

Finally, I would like to once again record my thanks to my fellow Councillors for their on-going support and expert guidance, and congratulate our Executive Director and his staff for their continuing hard work and energy in driving a profoundly important reform program for the nation forward.



David M. Morgan  
Chairman

1. Based on cost per incident as determined by *Counting the Cost of Crime in Australia*, Australian Institute of Criminology (April 2003).

2. Per 1,000 vehicles registered.

# Executive Director's Report

As the Chairman noted, 2003-2004 has continued an unprecedented trend in falling vehicle theft nationally, as theft rates tumbled to new lows and significant advances in our reform agenda were locked in.

Pleasingly, the success of these reforms in bringing down thefts has resulted in cost savings for insurers with total costs for vehicle theft claims \$30 million lower this year compared to costs in 2000-2001.

Highlights for the year included the:

- completion of the national information grid on mainland Australia linking registration and police systems in real time for the first time;
- establishment of 'best practice' written-off vehicle registers in every state and territory (and the resolution of some inconsistencies in practice that had complicated compliance for industry);
- progression of the recyclers' code of practice to implementation stage;
- Tasmanian Government's commitment to invest an additional \$1.5 million to extend the NMVTRC's young offenders' program *U-turn* through to 2007, and the establishment of a second *U-turn* site in Western Australia;<sup>3</sup>
- encouraging performance of VIN-based microdots as effective whole-vehicle identifiers;
- development of exciting new community education programs to raise awareness of vehicle security issues, including new partnerships with local government nationally in theft hot spots; and
- movement to monthly data provision from police services in Victoria and the Northern Territory.

The NMVTRC was also delighted to see its widely acclaimed Comprehensive Auto-theft Research System (CARS) recognised by the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators with its award for Outstanding Achievement for 2004. CARS services were again improved this year with new online features such as *QuickStats* which provides users with answers to any one of more than 100 simple data queries, with just three clicks of their computer mouse.

The year also saw:

- an increased emphasis on examining the human toll of vehicle theft to better quantify the true costs of theft to victims and the community, with more detailed work planned for 2004-2005; and
- the continuation of the NMVTRC's Student Consultancy Program to help develop the next generation of crime prevention practitioners.

On an international note, I was fortunate to be invited to deliver the keynote address to a world conference on car crime hosted by Rutgers University in New Jersey (USA) in October 2003. My paper's themes of building national capacity for collaboration, creating a catalyst for reform and demonstrating results appeared to resonate strongly with the international audience and illustrated the increasing recognition that the NMVTRC model is receiving for its strategic focus and innovation. The year also saw the NMVTRC provide strategic input and advice to crime prevention agencies in New Zealand, the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada and South Africa.

In summary, while 2003-2004 has been a good year for vehicle theft reform in Australia the coming years will continue to pose significant challenges for the NMVTRC and its stakeholders to ensure recent gains are sustained and improved upon.



Ray Carroll  
Executive Director

<sup>3</sup> *U-turn* is funded in partnership with the Australian Government's National Crime Prevention Program.

# Our People

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*Ray Carroll, Executive Director*



*Siobhan Sheridan, Research and Project Officer*



*Beryl Dukes, Administration Officer*



*Geoff Hughes, Director – Strategy and Programming*

# Motor Vehicle Theft in Australia

Australia is now experiencing its lowest vehicle theft rates<sup>4</sup> on record with rates almost half that of those recorded in 2000-2001.

Theft rates fell again in the 2003-2004 period, down to 6.4 thefts per 1,000 registrations (compared to 11.1 in 2000-2001) and 4.4 per 1,000 population (compared to 7.2). Following on from last year's 19 per cent reduction, theft fell by a further 13 per cent in 2003-2004 to 88,000.

All states and territories recorded substantially fewer thefts for the period with Victoria and Tasmania (each down 19 per cent) having the greatest proportional reductions, and Victoria and New South Wales (down 4,700 and 3,400 thefts respectively) the greatest reduction in raw numbers. For more detailed state and territory summaries, refer to the appendices of this report.

The recovery rate for stolen vehicles was 75 per cent in 2003-2004 compared to 79 per cent the previous year. The actual number of stolen vehicles that remain missing – i.e. they were never recovered – however stayed relatively consistent. A total of 21,670 vehicles were missing in 2003-2004, representing 60 fewer than last year but almost 5,000 fewer than in 2000-2001.

Vehicles manufactured in the 10 year period from 1982 to 1991 were the most stolen. These vehicles accounted for six out of every ten thefts in 2003-2004 but comprised only one quarter of Australia's registered vehicle fleet.

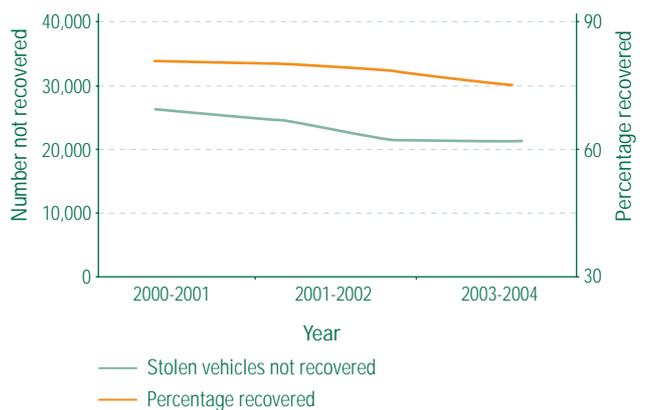
Popular models of family sedans, four wheel drives and work vehicles proved to be enduring professional targets over the period. Holden Commodore VT and VS, Ford Falcon EF and EL, Toyota Landcruiser 70 Series and Hilux, and Mitsubishi Lancer CE were amongst the nation's top late model theft targets and 1,200 of these vehicles worth more than \$16 million<sup>5</sup> in resale value are still missing.

With around 112,000 fewer vehicles stolen in Australia since 1999, investment in theft reforms has saved the community more than \$600 million<sup>6</sup> to date.

Figure 1. Theft Numbers in Australia



Figure 2. Recovery Rates and Vehicles Not Recovered, 2003-2004



4. Rates per 1,000 population and per 1,000 registrations.

5. Mid-range values for vehicles in average condition based on Automotive Data Services Pty Ltd's Redbook, March 2004-April 2004.

6. Counting the Cost of Crime in Australia, (Australian Institute of Criminology, April 2003) estimated the cost to the community of each theft incident to be \$6,000.

# Reducing the Cost of Vehicle Theft

## Desired Outcome

Reducing the cost of vehicle theft by development and implementation of cost-effective systems infrastructure and practices that:

- impede the activities of criminals attempting to convert stolen vehicles or components into cash; and
- can respond to changes in criminal behaviour.

## NEVDIS

The National Exchange of Vehicle and Driver Information System (NEVDIS) is the central element in the 'national grid' of information exchange. With the connection of the Australian Capital Territory's redeveloped registration system, Rego.ACT, in June 2004 the national grid is at last a reality on mainland Australia. Police and registration authority personnel across the country now have instant access to up-to-the-minute status information on more than 20 million of Australia's 20.8 million vehicle and driver records.

This leaves Tasmania as the only jurisdiction still to connect to the system. The State's transport agency – the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) – is well advanced in its pre-connection planning and now expects to link to the national grid by early 2005. Importantly, DIER has already implemented interim solutions to ensure that Tasmania's stolen and written-off vehicle information is uploaded to NEVDIS and therefore available to other jurisdictions.

The past 12 months has also seen good progress on the development of a performance monitoring framework to measure the effectiveness of national systems in combating vehicle theft and fraud. The NMVTRC and Austroads reached in-principle agreement on a suite of seven measures covering the identification of suspicious vehicle transactions, the management of written-off vehicle identities and identity inspection services and the resolution of anomalous vehicle identification numbers (VINS). While a small number of implementation issues are still to be worked through, the monitoring framework is expected to be in place by March 2005.

The NMVTRC also contributed to a major program of resolving anomalous VINS by Victoria's road management agency, VicRoads, as a model for improving the integrity of VINS nationally.

## Written-Off Vehicle Registers

The establishment of a written-off vehicle register (WOVR) by Western Australia's Department for Infrastructure and Planning in October 2003 – the seventh jurisdiction to adopt the national model developed by the NMVTRC – marked a significant milestone in the management of wrecked vehicle identities.

Disappointingly, South Australia (SA) continued to be slow in bringing its practices into line with the national model in 2004, undermining the good progress of the other jurisdictions and potentially allowing

professional vehicle thieves to exploit gaps in the national network. After representation by the NMVTRC and local stakeholders, the SA Government introduced the necessary regulatory reforms in September 2004.

With a consistent approach to managing these high risk vehicles, registration authorities are now well positioned to provide a truly effective last line of defence against vehicle re-birthers. An analysis of vehicle recovery rates from late 2002, when complying WOVRs were operating in most jurisdictions, indicates that reductions in the number of unrecovered vehicles nationally have delivered insurance savings alone of more than \$29 million.

To assist transport agencies more readily identify the highest-risk vehicles coming back through the registration system, the NMVTRC and Victoria's road management agency, VicRoads, commenced the joint development on an 'early warning system' to alert registration personnel and vehicle inspectors to the models of vehicle currently most targeted by professional thieves. The email based alert filters monthly unrecovered vehicle data from Victoria Police to identify hot targets by volume and flag distinct or special vehicles. Users can also drill right down to a full list of all potentially suspicious vehicles by model and series. The system will be expanded as other police services are able to supply monthly data.

Significant progress was also made on refining the consistency with which the national WOVR policy operates between jurisdictions. An Expert Reference Group (ERG) of senior representatives of transport agencies, insurers and the motor trades assisted the NMVTRC develop practical solutions to improving the consistency of both forms and practices that were identified as complicating compliance and reporting.

Importantly, the NMVTRC also secured the commitment of transport agencies to promptly implement the most critical reforms, while work on a small number of contentious issues like the management of previously legally registered statutory write-offs continues.

Substantial progress was also made in reviewing the effectiveness of state and territory vehicle identity inspection regimes to confirm their consistency in supporting written-off vehicle reforms.

## Improving Consumer Access to Vehicle Status Information

Providing consumers and motor traders with information about a vehicle's registration history can significantly reduce the risk of them unwittingly buying a stolen vehicle. Professional thieves rely on being able to disguise a stolen vehicle's identity by altering or swapping its key identifiers. This is much more difficult if potential purchasers are able to easily determine the true status of those identifiers.

# Reducing the Cost of Vehicle Theft Continued

The past year saw little progress towards delivering the NMVTRC's vision of a 'virtual one-stop shop' for vehicle status information on any vehicle registered in Australia. The failure of transport agencies to finalise the terms on which participating agencies use NEVDIS, and technical issues in some jurisdictions, means that only Queensland is providing a truly comprehensive service.

Consumers deserve better access to information and the NMVTRC urges transport agencies to place the highest priority on resolving the barriers to providing effective access.

## Secure Compliance Labels

The historically poor standard to which a vehicle's key identifiers are applied in the manufacturing process has greatly contributed to the ease with which thieves are able to disguise a stolen vehicle's true identity and makes the detection of suspicious vehicles in the field by transport agencies and police (without applying complex forensic techniques) almost impossible.

The baseline in improved vehicle identification technology is a secure compliance label that is low-cost, highly resistant to tampering and easy to verify in the field as genuine by simple visual inspection.

By July 2003 the NMVTRC had developed a specification for a technically secure label and was working with a label supplier and vehicle manufacturers to subject a complying label to detailed product testing in high-volume vehicle manufacturing environments.

While this process has taken longer than desired, it has been absolutely critical to ensure that all parties have complete confidence in the product and application processes. The NMVTRC's clear expectation is that the first of the NMVTRC-spec labels should appear on some vehicles by late 2004 with most locally made vehicles to follow by early 2005.

Pleasingly, the nation's leading independent theft risk rating system for new vehicles, developed by Insurance Australia Group (IAG), has added the NMVTRC-spec label to its scoring system for 2004 onwards. The IAG system scores new vehicles according to the standard of engine immobiliser, alarm, door and ignition locks and other security features fitted as standard equipment. To obtain the maximum score for vehicle identification a vehicle must bear the NMVTRC-spec label or have its compliance plate protected by VIN-based microdots.

The scoring system has also been built into the ratings of Australia's Best Cars, the prestigious awards of the combined Australian motoring clubs.

## Whole Vehicle Marking

While secure compliance labels represent the improved baseline in effective vehicle identification, VIN-based microdots represent the current gold standard. This world leading technology enables up to 10,000 tiny 'birthmarks' to be applied to a vehicle making the system virtually impossible to remove and providing authorities with conclusive and easily accessible proof of the vehicle's identity.

Sales of 'microdotted' vehicles now account for more than 15 per cent of new vehicles sales. Audi's announcement that it will progressively extend microdots across its range, starting with the all new A6 in October 2004, brings the number of participating marques to nine. The others are: BMW, BMW Mini, HSV, Mitsubishi Ralliart, Subaru, Porsche, Ford Performance Vehicles, and Ford Mustang.

Yamaha – the only motorcycle manufacturer to embrace the technology to date – decided to discontinue marking its vehicles after just 12 months. The company cited cost pressures and the failure of competitors to follow suit as grounds for its decision. The NMVTRC is frustrated with the continuing failure of motorcycle manufacturers to seriously address the historically appalling recovery rate of stolen motorcycles of just 30 per cent compared to 85 per cent for all vehicles.

The NMVTRC continued to work with police and transport agencies this year to ensure that use of the microdot technology is built into their practices and systems.

The NMVTRC's on-going evaluation of the technology's deterrent effects has begun to show positive results. The study compares the relative theft/recovery performance of marked BMW, HSV and Subaru vehicles against control groups of their non-marked predecessor models at an equivalent time of the vehicles' exposure in the market. While the study necessarily has some limitations, each of the three marques has experienced significant improvements in theft performance with reductions of between 65 and 92 per cent in the incidence of non-recovered stolen vehicles.

As mentioned above in relation to secure compliance labels, IAG has also included VIN-based microdots as a critical element of its updated vehicle security rating system. Under the system BMW, HSV, Porsche and Subaru all received maximum vehicle identification points for 2003-2004.

## Encouraging Best Practice in Parts Recycling

The trade in illicit parts is estimated to net criminals more than \$300 million per annum and almost 60 per cent of parts recyclers report being approached at least once or twice a year by people seeking to trade suspect vehicles or parts.

The year saw the NMVTRC complete its development of a voluntary industry code of practice to minimise the likelihood of stolen parts entering the legitimate industry. An ERG – comprising representatives of the motor trades, independent and affiliated parts recyclers, police, registration authorities, insurers and offices of fair trading guided the development process.

Implementation will proceed with the establishment of an independent code administration body by the end of 2004. The NMVTRC has committed \$350,000 to underwrite administration costs for the first year. The Code will require a participation rate of between 15 and 20 per cent of recycling businesses nationally to meet the demand of insurers and other trade buyers.

Provided that such rates are achieved the NMVTRC is confident that leading insurers will support the Code by requiring their approved vehicle repairers to source any used replacement parts from participating recyclers.

### Improving Investigative Responses

In September 2003, the NMVTRC and Victoria Police hosted a two-day forum of the 30 key investigation managers who are leading the police services' fight against organised vehicle theft. The forum also involved senior officers from the Australian Crime Commission (ACC), Australian Customs Service and the Department of Transport and Regional Services.

The forum analysed a series of case studies involving the theft and laundering of vehicles and examined options for identifying suspected illicit vehicle exports and imports. Most importantly, the forum was able to reach agreement on:

- a set of key principles to improve inter-agency collaboration; and
- several projects to address perceived deficiencies in the coordination of investigations across multiple jurisdictions.

Arising from the forum, the NMVTRC has established a regular program of liaison between investigative managers in all states and territories to encourage more frequent and effective collaboration.

The year also saw the NMVTRC and ACC develop more effective communications channels to assist their respective responsibilities.



**The NMVTRC has established a regular program of liaison to encourage more frequent and effective collaboration.**

# Reducing the Volume of Vehicle Theft

## Desired Outcome

Development and implementation of cost-effective measures that:

- raise community awareness of key vehicle theft and security issues;
- significantly increase the security of older vehicles; and
- reduce the incidence of vehicle theft by young people.

## Youth

Young people continue to be responsible for the overwhelming majority of vehicle thefts in Australia. While most young thieves will stop offending as soon as they are caught, or simply grow out of it, around 15 per cent develop entrenched habits and become high-rate recidivist offenders. By their late teens some will have stolen hundreds of vehicles.

In October 2003, the inner-Perth suburb of Northbridge became home to the second of three trials of the NMVTRC's young offender program, *U-turn*. Each of the trials is co-funded by the Australian Government's National Crime Prevention Program (NCPP). The Northbridge site is operated by Mission Australia under contract to the Western Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet.

*U-turn* uses the fascination that most young offenders have with vehicles to help them to develop practical automotive repair skills that can lead to further vocational or educational opportunities. The program also provides:

- the opportunity to safely participate in go-karting or other motorsport activity as a substitute for the 'adrenalin rush' which motivates many to steal cars; and
- literacy, numeracy and life skills coaching to help participants develop the self-esteem and motivation to put some space between impulse and action when temptation arises.

In May 2004, the Tasmanian Government announced that it would invest \$1.5 million to extend the Hobart-based program beyond its two year trial period. The decision will secure the program's future through to 2007 and is indicative of the strong local support that the program has enjoyed since its inception. The Department of Police and Public Safety expects to call tenders for the extended service in the last quarter of 2004.

The NMVTRC's objective in investing in the *U-turn* trials was to test whether such programs work and are worthy of direct investment by governments and others. The Tasmanian Government's decision is therefore a great vote of confidence in the program model.

The final trial site, to be operated by the YMCA at Logan in southern Brisbane, will commence in September 2004 under contract to the Queensland Police Service.

Each of the three *U-turn* sites is being subjected to rigorous independent evaluation to review the effectiveness of the program model and related service delivery and management arrangements. A meta-evaluation, which draws together and analyses data on all three sites, is also being undertaken by the NCPP.

With the assistance of Streetwise Communications and Village/Hoyts Cinemas, the NMVTRC's innovative *Ride of Your Life* animation again ran alongside youth oriented movies in cinemas in theft hot spots in all capitals during school holiday periods and on Streetvision public screens. The animation tells the story of three teenagers on a joy-ride and graphically depicts the life and legal consequences of becoming involved in car crime.

A further 5,000 copies of the accompanying *Spur of the Moment* comic and 300 copies of the successful *Ride of Your Life Educators' Kit* – which provides teachers and youth workers with practical classroom exercises based on the comic and animation – were distributed to schools and youth programs around Australia this year.

The NMVTRC's communications  
program raises public  
**awareness**  
of vehicle security issues.

## Immobilisers

Australia's national immobilisation rate increased to 46 per cent in 2004. This leaves more than six million older vehicles still vulnerable to opportunist attack with even the most basic of tools, such as a coat hanger and screwdriver.

The NMVTRC's *Immobilise Now! (IN!)* program again provided motorists with access to Australian Standards approved engine immobilisers at a reduced price. Although *IN!* has now secured more than 450,000 older vehicles nationally, vehicle owners continue to be reluctant to voluntarily invest even modest amounts in vehicle security.

With its regular consumer surveys indicating that six in 10 motorists support the compulsory retro-fitting of engine immobilisers to older vehicles, the NMVTRC continues to promote the benefits of mandatory immobilisation, based on the very successful Western Australian model which has seen penetration of engine immobilisers in that State grow to more than 80 per cent in the past five years.

## Community Communication Initiatives

The year saw the NMVTRC review its communications program which aims to raise public awareness of vehicle security issues.

The revised communications program focuses activities into three main streams:

- Australia's Most Wanted – which is designed to focus community attention on the prevailing targets of thieves and provide clear advice to vehicle owners and buyers about how to minimise their risk of falling victim;

- Operation Bounce Back – a partnership with local government in theft hot spots to promote awareness of vehicle security issues and help theft victims get on with life, based on the NMVTRC's new *Community Guide for Tackling Vehicle Theft* which provides tips on how to run an effective community-based program; and
- *Ride of Your Life* – a youth oriented animation about the legal and life consequences of becoming involved in vehicle theft, in partnership with Streetwise Communications and Village/Hoyts cinemas.

Work on revamping the content and livery of the NMVTRC's community education materials (poster, brochures, etc.) and the CAR-SAFE website began this year, informed by the NMVTRC's surveys of theft victims and consultation with stakeholders who distribute the NMVTRC's materials.

The NMVTRC took a fresh look at analysing the personal impacts of vehicle theft this year to better quantify the out-of-pocket expenses of victims, the economic cost to the community of stolen vehicle fatalities and the trauma of families, witnesses and others affected by such incidents.

The starkest issue to emerge from the work to date is the extent to which the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by victims had been previously under-estimated with the average cost of a theft incident to a victim exceeding \$5,000. Work will continue in 2004-2005 to fully cost the human impacts of vehicle theft.

# Performance Indicators

## Vehicle Theft in Comparable Developed Nations

Table 1. International Theft Rates

	Theft per 1,000 persons
United Kingdom (England and Wales)	6.5
Canada	5.5
France	5.4
Japan	5.0
Australia*	4.4
USA	4.3
Italy	4.1
Belgium	3.0
Germany	0.9

Source: Interpol Crime Statistics, \*CARS Database.

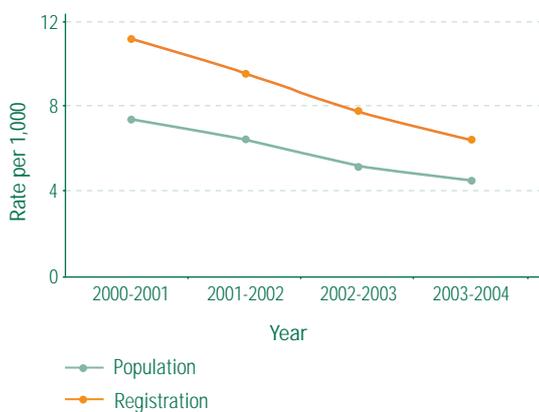
Australia's fall from first to fifth place when ranked as a rate of theft per 1,000 population is welcome.

It should be noted however that meaningful comparison across nations is difficult due to the absence of a current international dataset, the inconsistency of data collections and reporting methods across nations, and the age of the data available for other countries.

Australia is in the enviable position of having a reliable and current source of vehicle theft data in the CARS database whereas data for comparative countries may be several years old at the time of reporting. The most recent publicly available dataset via Interpol, for example, contains three year old theft data.

## Reduction in Rates of Theft

Figure 3. Rates of Theft per 1,000 Registrations and Population



During the 2003-2004 financial year, 4.4 thefts per 1,000 population and 6.4 per 1,000 registrations were recorded. Rates of vehicle theft in Australia are at an all-time low and have almost halved since 2000-2001.

## Changes in the Incidence of Opportunistic and Professional Theft

Table 2. Theft and Recovery

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Number of thefts	139,222	124,712	101,218	88,030
Percentage of thefts recovered	81%	80%	79%	75%
Number of thefts not recovered	26,475	24,765	21,733	21,664

The recovery or non-recovery of stolen vehicles is traditionally used to provide a broad distinction between opportunistic (recovered) and professional (non-recovered) theft. Recovery rate data shows that theft reduction to date has been greater in opportunistic than in professional theft.

Actual theft numbers have reduced significantly over the last four years, but so too did recovery rates – down from 81 per cent to 75 per cent. While the actual number of thefts has fallen by 37 per cent since 2000-2001, the number of stolen vehicles not recovered is down by 18 per cent.

## Analysis of References of the NMVTRC in the Media

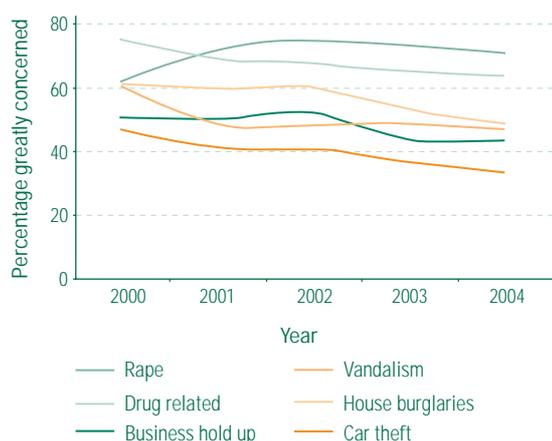
The issue of vehicle theft again received substantial media coverage in 2003-2004. The NMVTRC has clearly established itself as the peak national source for 'expert comment' on this issue and has had a presence in around 1,000 media reports.

The quarterly publication of vehicle theft statistics, Theft Watch, ensures a regular presence for the NMVTRC in the local and state based print media, and on internet based e-news sites. This year stories on vehicle theft and the work of the NMVTRC also featured in The Australian and the Australian Financial Review national newspapers and on the ABC and Nine television networks.

The NMVTRC also worked with specific interest based publications, such as 4x4 Magazine, Money Magazine, Asia Insurance Review, Secured by Design newsletter (UK) and Police Beat (USA) magazine, to ensure the broad coverage of vehicle theft related reporting.

## Community Perception of Vehicle Theft Relative to Other Crimes

Figure 4. Community Perception of Crime

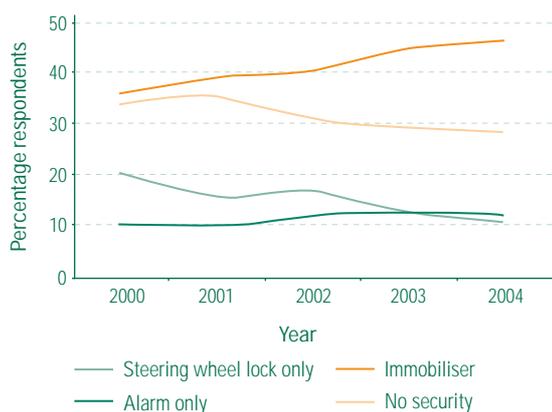


Source: Nexus Research, Car Theft Issues, May 2004.

All comparative categories of crime generated lower levels of concern during 2003-2004 than in the previous 12 months. Declining levels of concern have coincided with reduced levels of reported crime victimisation in most categories.<sup>7</sup>

## Improved Level of Awareness of Vehicle Security Practices and Vehicle Theft Issues by the Community

Figure 5. Current Anti-Theft Devices Used by the Motorists



Source: Nexus Research, Car Theft Issues, May 2004.

Compared to 2000 and 2001, when vehicle theft numbers were on the rise across Australia, motorists have more recently expressed much lower levels of concern at the possibility of having their car stolen. In 2004, just less than one-quarter of motorists reported being 'very concerned' that their car might be stolen compared to 35 per cent in 2000.

Lower levels of concern appear to reflect more effective and pervasive levels of vehicle security. An increasing number of motorists report that their vehicle is secured with an engine immobiliser while a declining proportion admit to not using any security or using just a steering wheel lock. Nationally, 46 per cent of respondents reported having an engine immobiliser in their car in the most recent 2004 Nexus Research consumer survey.

Half of motorists report that joyriding or opportunistic theft accounts for the majority of offending compared to 39 per cent who believe that organised theft is to blame. This is fairly consistent with survey results since 2001.

## The Cost of Motor Vehicle Theft

It is estimated that investment in theft reforms has saved the community in excess of \$670 million<sup>8</sup> since 1999.

Samples of more than 30,000 finalised claims for theft are provided by Australia's top 20 insurers each year to the NMVTRC's CARS database. Claims finalised in 2003-2004 totalled \$280 million compared to \$284 million last year and \$310 million in 2001-2002.

## Stakeholder Determined Performance Indicators

Stakeholders are asked annually to report their perceptions of the NMVTRC's:

- program coordination and performance in stakeholder consultations;
- publications; and
- influence on the implementation of reforms within their organisations.

The NMVTRC's interaction with stakeholders in 2003-2004 included:

- the release of a range of newsletters and other publications;
- provision of around 100,000 public education brochures to support stakeholder campaigns;
- consultations including the formation of ERGs to guide the development of a parts recyclers' code of practice and refine WOVRS;
- workshops and forums including the national theft investigators forum and the annual round of strategic planning forums;
- participation in the Austroads registration and licensing task-force and local theft steering committees in most jurisdictions, the police theft investigator teleconference series; and
- face to face liaison with a range of peak industry bodies.

7. *Reduced levels of victimisation reported in the Australian Bureau of Statistics' AusStats 4,510 Recorded Crime (May 2004).*

8. *Counting the Cost of Crime in Australian (Australian Institute of Criminology, April 2003) estimated the cost to the community of each theft incident to be \$6,000.*

Ninety-five per cent of respondents to the NMVTRC's annual stakeholder survey rated the NMVTRC's coordination and consultation performance as good or better with almost 40 per cent of respondents rating it as 'excellent'.

## Program Coordination and Performance in Stakeholder Consultations

The comments of respondents indicated a generally high level of satisfaction with the NMVTRC's consultations:

*"Highly professional, action oriented, and strong industry consultation and involvement..."*

(motor trades respondent)

*"The NMVTRC's consultant briefs and subsequent discussions [are] well developed, coordinated and disseminated to stakeholders..."*

(transport agency respondent)

Some stakeholders provided suggestions for how the NMVTRC's consultative relationships might be improved.

One motoring club respondent suggested that *"more consumer focussed communications"* were required. This issue is being addressed in 2004-2005 with the NMVTRC's new communications strategy.

An insurer highlighted a particularly important issue stating a desire to see a *"greater level of regular consultation between the NMVTRC and key business units"* within the respondent's organisation. The NMVTRC would welcome opportunities to improve the level of interaction and lines of communication across all levels within stakeholder organisations.

## Publications

All stakeholders rated the NMVTRC's publications as good or better, with 80 per cent of respondents rating them as better than good or excellent. All comments received about the publications were positive.

*"...comprehensive, professional and useful..."*

(transport agency respondent)

*"...easy to read, topical, informative..."*

(insurance respondent)

Several stakeholders noted that they use completed articles and published statistics from the NMVTRC's publications in their own in-house publications.

## Influence on the Implementation of Reforms

Two stakeholders responded that the NMVTRC had had no impact on reforms within their organisations. One, a smaller insurance company, offered no explanation for this while the other, also an insurer, suggested that their company's relationship with the NMVTRC was managed by a single person hence a lack of visibility and influence across different levels of their company.

This again suggests that internal lines of communication within stakeholder organisations need to be opened up to the NMVTRC if the relationship and its outcomes are to be optimised.

Pleasingly however, 65 per cent of respondents reported that the NMVTRC had had a major positive impact on reforms within their organisations while a further 31 per cent reported a minor positive impact.

Reasons given for the NMVTRC's high level of influence related to its model of operation, its body of statistical data, and its knowledge of the political and commercial contexts in which it operates.

*"...clear focus on outcomes..."*

(motoring association respondent)

*"...channelling both information and representation through appropriate forums..."*

(transport agency respondent)

*"...excellent service on both strategic and more immediate issues..."*

(police respondent)

*"...it is independent of any particular lobby group..."*

(insurance respondent)

*"As a national body the NMVTRC is recognised for its expertise and focus."*

(motor trades respondent)

Several stakeholders noted that the drastic reductions in theft that have resulted from and encouraged further reform success were likely to slow without continued efforts by industry and other stakeholders, and constant public presence.

# Financial Statements

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# Statement of Financial Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2004

	Notes	2004 \$	2003 \$
Revenue from ordinary activities		2,291,396	2,281,566
Employee benefits expense		(365,082)	(353,154)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	2	(17,840)	(5,203)
Advertising and sponsorship		(59,154)	(297,712)
CARS		(320,000)	(320,000)
Youth Program Funding		(351,000)	(217,000)
Consultancies (Projects)		(227,902)	(269,256)
Jurisdictional Support		(85,850)	(109,091)
Publications and Newsletters		(55,172)	(131,856)
Sitting fee		(30,000)	(30,000)
Travelling expenses		(91,188)	(71,179)
Other expenses from ordinary activities		(180,449)	(166,332)
Surplus from ordinary activities		507,759	310,783
Prior period adjustment		-	1,246
Total changes in equity other than those resulting from transactions with owners as owners		507,759	312,029

# Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2004

	Notes	2004 \$	2003 \$
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash assets	3	1,212,699	1,164,643
Receivables	4	247,500	-
Prepayments and bonds		22,272	21,693
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>1,482,471</b>	<b>1,186,336</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	5	46,785	21,452
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>46,785</b>	<b>21,452</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>1,529,256</b>	<b>1,207,788</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables	6	28,385	30,447
Interest-bearing liabilities		-	188,734
Provisions	7	41,576	37,071
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>69,961</b>	<b>256,252</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>69,961</b>	<b>256,252</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>1,459,295</b>	<b>951,536</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained surpluses	8	1,459,295	951,536
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>1,459,295</b>	<b>951,536</b>

# Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2004

	Notes	2004 \$	2003 \$
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Refunds and reimbursements		-	502
Grants received		2,250,000	2,250,000
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,002,771)	(1,928,711)
Interest received		41,396	31,064
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	10(b)	<b>288,625</b>	<b>352,855</b>
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(51,835)	(15,905)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(51,835)</b>	<b>(15,905)</b>
Net increase in cash held		236,790	336,950
Cash at beginning of financial year		975,909	638,959
<b>Cash at end of financial year</b>	10(a)	<b>1,212,699</b>	<b>975,909</b>

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2004

## 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act of Victoria.

The financial report is for the entity National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc as an individual entity. National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc is an association incorporated in Victoria under the Associations Incorporations Act 1981.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs. It does not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the association in the preparation of the financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

### (a) Income Tax

No provision for income tax has been raised as the association is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

### (b) Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

#### *Plant and Equipment*

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by the association to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount of those assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows which will be received from the assets' employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have not been discounted to their present values in determining recoverable amounts.

#### *Depreciation*

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets costing greater than \$1,000 are depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset was held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements. Assets costing less than \$1,000 are depreciated over 12 months, commencing from the time the asset was held ready for use.

The depreciation rates and useful lives used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Class of fixed asset	Depreciation rates/useful lives	Depreciation basis
Office equipment	3 years	Straight line
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	3 years	Straight line
Computer equipment	3 years	Straight line

### (c) Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits expected to be settled within one year together with benefits arising from wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave which will be settled after one year, have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled plus related on-costs. Other employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits.

Contributions are made by the association to an employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

### (d) Cash

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes cash on hand, at banks and on deposit.

# Notes to the Financial Statements Continued

## 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

### (e) Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised when earned.

Grant revenue is recognised when the right to receive the revenue has been established.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

### (f) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of expense. Receivables and payables in the Statement of Financial Position are shown inclusive of GST.

	2004 \$	2003 \$
--	------------	------------

## 2. Surplus from Ordinary Activities

Surplus (losses) from ordinary activities has been determined after:

### (a) Expenses:

Depreciation of non-current assets

- Office equipment	17,840	5,203
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Remuneration of the auditors for:

- audit or review services	2,300	2,300
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Net loss on disposal of non-current assets

- Property, plant and equipment	8,662	-
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### (b) Significant revenues and expenses:

Grants received	2,250,000	2,250,000
-----------------	-----------	-----------

## 3. Cash Assets

Cash on hand	200	12
Cash at bank	1,212,499	1,164,631
	1,212,699	1,164,643

## 4: Receivables

Current

Trade debtors	247,500	-
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	Note	2004 \$	2003 \$
<b>5. Property, Plant and Equipment</b>			
(a) Office equipment			
At cost		42,935	25,081
Less accumulated depreciation		(18,744)	(11,786)
		24,191	13,295
(b) Furniture, fixtures and fittings			
At cost		27,354	16,680
Less accumulated depreciation		(4,760)	(8,523)
		22,594	8,157
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>		<b>46,785</b>	<b>21,452</b>
<b>6. Payables</b>			
Current			
Unsecured liabilities			
Trade creditors		10,835	-
Sundry creditors and accruals		17,550	30,447
		28,385	30,447
<b>7. Provisions</b>			
Current			
Employee benefits	(a)	41,576	37,071
(a) Aggregate employee benefits liability		41,576	37,071
(b) Number of employees at year end		4	4
<b>8. Retained Profits</b>			
Retained profits at the beginning of the financial year		951,536	639,507
Net profit (loss) attributable to members of the entity		507,759	310,783
Prior period adjustments		-	1,246
<b>Retained profits at the end of the financial year</b>		<b>1,459,295</b>	<b>951,536</b>
<b>9. Contingent Liabilities and Assets</b>			
Contingent Liabilities			
Estimates of the maximum amounts of contingent liabilities that may become payable:			
<b>Program Commitments</b>			
Youth Program – <i>U-Turn</i> in Tasmania, WA and QLD		417,000	551,000
Parts Code of Practice		350,000	-
<i>Immobilise Now</i> – Local Government and Australia Most Wanted Program		739,000	-
		1,506,000	551,000

# Notes to the Financial Statements Continued

	2004 \$	2003 \$
<b>10. Cash Flow Information</b>		
(a) Reconciliation of cash		
Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the Statement of Financial Position as follows:		
Cash on hand	200	12
Cash at bank	1,212,499	1,164,631
Bank overdrafts	-	(188,734)
	1,212,699	975,909
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with surplus from ordinary activities after income tax		
Surplus from ordinary activities after income tax	507,759	312,029
Non-cash flows in profit from ordinary activities		
Depreciation	17,840	5,203
Net (gain)/loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	8,662	-
Changes in assets and liabilities		
Increase in receivables	(247,500)	(66,167)
Increase in other assets	(579)	(8,054)
Increase/(decrease) in payables	(2,062)	95,703
Increase in provisions	4,505	14,141
Cash flows from operations	288,625	352,855

## 11. Association Details

The principal place of business of the association is:

National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc.  
Suite 1  
50-52 Howard Street  
North Melbourne Victoria 3051

# Statement by Members of the Committee

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In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 16 to 22:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc as at Wednesday, 30 June 2004 and its performance for the financial year ended on that date in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Dick Adams



David Morgan

Dated this 3rd day of September 2004

# Certificate by Member of the Committee

---

I, Dick Adams of Level 15, 201 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, and I, David Morgan of 50-52 Howard Street, North Melbourne, VIC 3051 certify that:

- (a) We are members of the committee of National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc.
- (b) We attended the annual general meeting of the association held on 3 September 2004.
- (c) We are authorised by the attached resolution of the committee to sign this certificate.
- (d) This annual statement was submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.



Dick Adams  
Committee Member



David Morgan  
Committee Member

Dated this 3rd day of September 2004

# Independent Audit Report

To the members of NMVTRC Inc.

## Scope

We have audited the financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Incorporated for the year ended 30 June 2004 being the Statement of Financial Performance, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements. The Committee is responsible for the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies used and described in Note 1 to the financial statements which form part of the financial report are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act Victoria and the needs of the members. We have conducted an independent audit of this financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Incorporated. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the members.

The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act Victoria. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the council's financial position, and performance as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows. These policies do not require the application of all Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

## Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, the financial position of National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Incorporated as at 30 June 2004 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the financial year then ended.



Geoffrey B. Johnson  
Of Rucker Mackenzie Pty  
3 September 2004

Suite 12, 602 Whitehorse Road  
Mitcham, Victoria 3132

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: State and territory summary

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Thefts	2,200	32,420	780	12,330	9,250	1,810	20,290	8,950
Per cent change over 2002-2003	-13%	-10%	-15%	-15%	-6%	-19%	-19%	-13%
Per cent of thefts recovered*	72%	70%	86%	79%	85%	90%	78%	71%
Thefts per 1,000 persons	6.8	4.8	4.0	3.2	6.0	3.8	4.1	4.5
Thefts per 1,000 registrations	10.8	8.0	7.4	4.5	8.2	4.8	5.5	6.0
Best Practice WOVOR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sept 2004	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connected to NEVDIS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Early 2005	Yes	Yes
Immobiliser program**	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Compulsory
Local theft reduction committee		Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
Youth intervention program	Other	Other		U-turn (late 2004)	Other	U-turn	Other	U-turn

\* Stolen and recovered in 2003-2004.

\*\* Voluntary = NMVTRC's *Immobilise Now!* program.

## Appendix 2: Reform matrix – reducing cost

	NVOI	NEVDIS	WOVOR	Registration inspections	Compliance labels	Whole vehicle marking	Public access to information	Insurance practices	Police investigation
X border transfer	•	•							•
Cloning		•		•	•		•		•
Wrecks		•	•	•	•		•		•
Parts		•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Cut and shut		•	•	•		•	•		•
Strip and buy back		•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Model upgrade						•	•	•	•

• Substantially in place    • Partially in place    • Some way to go

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## Appendix 3: Publications

The following publications were produced by the NMVTRC in 2003-2004:

### Reports

- *Improving the Consistency of State and Territory Written-off Vehicle Management: Post-implementation Review Phase 2 Interim Report*
- *Improving the Consistency of State and Territory Written-off Vehicle Management: Post-implementation Review Phase 2 Draft Recommendations*
- *Code of Practice for Dealing in Second Hand Auto Parts: Phase 2 Report*
- *Code of Practice for Dealing in Second Hand Auto Parts: Exposure Draft Including Proposed Accreditation Agreement and Frequently Asked Questions*
- *Market Dynamics and Vehicle Theft*

### Stakeholder Communications

- *Code of Practice for Dealing in Second Hand Auto Parts, Draft Final Participation Agreement and Updated FAQs*
- *Theft Torque*, quarterly issues newsletter
- *Theft Watch*, quarterly statistical newsletter
- *Theft Matters*, fact sheets
- *Express*, bi-monthly e-newsletter
- *Strategic Plan 2003*
- *Annual Report 2002-2003*

### Consumer Information

- *Save Yourself from Buying a Stolen Vehicle*, information brochure
- *Know the Facts Protect Yourself*, information brochure
- *Immobilise Your Car Before a Thief Does*, information brochure
- *Spur of the Moment*, Educators Kit
- *Spur of the Moment*, comic

# Appendices Continued

## Appendix 4: Number of meetings attended

Council member	Number of meetings attended (maximum 4)
Mr David Morgan, Independent Chairman	4
Mr Mark Borlace, Australian Automobile Association	3
Mr Robert McDonald, Insurance Council of Australia	3
Ms Nola Watson, Insurance Council of Australia (as alternate for Mr McDonald)	1
Mr Dick Adams, Australasian Police Ministers' Council	4
Dr Dianne Heriot, Australian Government Agencies	2
Ms Christine Freudenstein, Australian Government Agencies (as alternate for Dr Heriot)	1
Mr Bill McKendry, Crime Prevention Ministerial Forum	2
Mr Bernie Marshall, Crime Prevention Ministerial Forum (as alternate for Mr McKendry)	1
Mr Tony Selmes, Motor Trades Association of Australia	3
Mr Geoff Gardner, Motor Trades Association of Australia (as alternate for Mr Selmes)	1
Mr Keith Seyer, Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries	3
Mr Ray Rawlings, Austroads	4



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