



## Don't be an unsuspecting buyer

It may come as a surprise, but Australia has one of the highest rates of vehicle theft in the western world. Figures show that one out of every 120 Australian households fell victim to car theft in the last 12 months.

Shockingly, of the 60,000 or so vehicles stolen each year, around one-quarter are never recovered. A large number of these vehicles (or parts stripped from them) are given new identifiers and placed back on the market to be sold to unsuspecting buyers.

While it may seem unfair, if you buy a car from a private buyer which is later found to be stolen, you may lose both the vehicle and the money you paid for it.

This can also be the case if you purchase a car which is still under finance.

Minimise the danger of buying a stolen vehicle by following the tips in this brochure.

## Who we are

The National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) is an independent, non-profit organisation established by all Australian governments and the insurance industry. The NMVTRC works with its partners to reduce Australia's unacceptably high level of vehicle theft and the associated costs of this crime to the community.

Our Council is drawn from major national bodies whose systems and practices have a direct impact on vehicle theft. This includes government justice and transport agencies, insurers, vehicle manufacturers, the motor trades and motoring associations.

To find out more visit [www.carsafe.com.au](http://www.carsafe.com.au)

1. In Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory traders are not licensed but purchases from commercial dealers are protected by an industry guarantee fund.
2. New South Wales law bans the re-registration of most written-off vehicles.



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*driving down vehicle theft*

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An initiative of all Australian governments and the insurance industry

# WISH YOU'D CHECKED YOUR USED CAR WAS LEGIT



**CAR SAFE**  
*Driving down vehicle theft*

To be completely safe, buy through a licensed dealer. This means you are protected by law against loss if the vehicle is later found to be stolen or financially encumbered.<sup>1</sup>

## Minimise the risk

If you decide to buy privately, minimise the risk by following these few simple steps.

### Be realistic!

Beware of vehicles that are significantly underpriced for their make, model, age and condition. If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.

### Check the vehicle's identifiers for signs of tampering

Identifiers are usually found on the firewall at the back of the engine compartment. Any evidence of grind marks, scratching or over-stamping on the vehicle's engine number, chassis number, vehicle identification number (VIN) or compliance plate should be treated with extreme caution.

### Cross-check the vehicle's identifiers against those on the registration certificate

The registration number, engine number, VIN or chassis number should always match.

### Ask for evidence of the vehicle's history

Ask the seller for their proof of purchase; check the vehicle's odometer reading against the service manual and look for authentic receipts for major servicing.

### Make sure that the person selling the vehicle is the owner

Ask the seller for photo identification and check the details against those on the registration certificate.

### Consider a professional inspection

If you are having the vehicle inspected by your state automotive club or motor trade association, ask them to check for evidence of tampering with the vehicle's identifiers.

### Check the vehicle is on the Personal Property Securities Register (PPSR)

The PPSR is Australia's one-stop-shop for vehicle status information. A PPSR check will confirm:

- that basic vehicle description information (e.g. make, model, colour, jurisdiction of registration, expiry date, etc.) is consistent with the national register;
- whether any party, such as a bank or other lender, has a recorded financial interest in the vehicle;
- whether the vehicle is recorded as stolen; and
- whether the vehicle has ever been declared a total loss (i.e. write-off) result of damage induced by a collision, fire, water inundation, other weather event, malicious action, dismantling or stripping.

A written-off vehicle is one that has been assessed as being too expensive to repair, or too damaged for safe repair. This is a very critical piece of information because criminals may use the identity of a written-off vehicle to disguise the true identity of a stolen vehicle, or rebuild a written-off vehicle with stolen parts.

A statutory write-off means that the vehicle has been damaged beyond safe repair and by law cannot be re-registered. A repairable write-off can be repaired and re-registered but the vehicle will require a physical identity and special safety inspection by the registration authority. Inspection fees may vary between jurisdictions but can cost in excess of \$600.<sup>2</sup>

To conduct a PPSR check go to [www.ppsr.gov.au](http://www.ppsr.gov.au). A check costs \$3.70. No information will be confirmed by telephone.



"I now realise that a simple, low-cost check could have saved me from being \$5,000 out of pocket and without a car"

### Get a detailed receipt

If you decide to buy a vehicle, ask the seller for a receipt that includes the date of sale, your name, the amount you paid, the VIN or chassis number and the seller's name, address, licence number and signature.

### Trust your instinct

If something just doesn't seem right about the deal, don't buy it.

### Theft prevention tip

To minimise the risk of theft to an older vehicle, install an Australian Standards (4601:1999) approved engine immobiliser.