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Theft Reduction Council

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

NMVTRC newsletters are available on the CAR-SAFE website at carsafe.com.au and emailed directly to our mailing list. To join our email list contact info@carsafe.com.au



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theft torque

Heavy vehicles to join national written-off vehicle management scheme from late 2018

In May 2017, the Transport and Infrastructure Council (TIC) agreed to implement a Heavy Vehicle Written-off Vehicle Register to improve vehicle safety and mitigate theft risks. An equivalent scheme for light vehicles has operated in Australia since 2004.

With the assistance of a group of select government and industry experts, a detailed set of technical criteria has been developed to assist insurance personnel (and other notifiers) determine whether a vehicle declared a total loss should be classified as a repairable or statutory write-off.

The term total loss is an insurance expression to describe a vehicle that has been assessed as uneconomical to repair. Whilst the precise form of words used for calculation purposes may vary slightly between insurers and/or jurisdictional law, in plain English it refers to a scenario where the vehicle's market value, less its salvage value is less than its estimated cost of repair.

A statutory write-off may only be used for dismantling salvageable parts for reuse, or processing as scrap.

The technical criteria are set out in the Austroads/NMVTRC publication *Damage Assessment Criteria for the Classification of Heavy Vehicle Statutory Write-Offs*. The guide is designed to assist insurance personnel and other notifiers who are required to classify heavy vehicle write-offs for regulatory purposes with the classification task. You can download a copy of the guide and other background material via the Austroads website (www.austroads.com.au).

The specialised nature of heavy vehicle construction and fabrication means that the criteria (and respective damage counting rules) have been separated into three groups – with Group 1 comprising rigid trucks and prime movers, Group 2 covering trailers and Group 3 containing buses.



The key principles that have underlined development of the criteria have been to:

- ensure the application of sound engineering principles in respect of the kinetic energy associated with heavy vehicle crashes, manufacturers' repairs standards and safe repair practices;
- err on the side of safety where there has been any doubt about the best technical approach; and
- rely on an expert, in-situ visual assessment by an insurance assessor without recourse to scientific or destructive testing.

The new criteria will require a local law change to implement them. It is expected that NSW will be the first to adopt them from late 2018. Transport for NSW is consulting local industry on implementation details and Austroads and the NMVTRC are collaborating on the development of an appropriate industry training program and resources for delivery from late October.

Implementation dates for other jurisdictions are yet to be determined.

How do motorists perceive vehicle crime?



The NMVTRC's annual consumer survey provides insights on how Australian motorists perceive car crime. The 2018 national sample of 1,206 respondents was weighted to represent 12.6 million people aged 18 years and above across the nation's capital cities.

The 2018 results reinforce those of 2017 that the general motoring community has a better understanding of the underlying dynamics of vehicle crime with a much stronger correlation between their perceptions and vehicle and offender profiles. Despite these improvements,

the vulnerability of the home and the significance of key theft is still not yet fully understood. Key points include:

- awareness and concern levels are generally in line with current levels of vehicle crime in individual jurisdictions;
- the motivations of offenders and vehicle targets are generally well understood; and
- although media focus is often on the most extreme cases it is not leading to mis-conceptions.

The power of collaboration

The consequences of vehicle theft are felt strongly by local communities. Vehicle theft and home burglary go hand in hand – more frequently vehicle keys being stolen via a house burglary and stolen vehicles are often used to transport stolen property. Car theft often results in extensive damage to property and sometimes, tragically, in the injury or death of innocent road users.

Effective communication is essential to influencing community perceptions about crime and to encourage personal behaviours that can help mitigate risks. There are many well intentioned players, all competing for media coverage, publicity, sponsorship and cut-through to reach the vehicle owner, householder or business operator.

Adelaide hosted the first workshop of the NMVTRC's Australian Vehicle Crime Communications Alliance in June. It brought together representatives from police, insurers, motoring clubs and local government to:

- define the common prevailing issues of community concern about vehicle crime; and
- explore options for formulating clear, coherent advice for homeowners and motorists about how to mitigate theft risks while ensuring their personal safety.

Presentations from the NMVTRC and RAA (SA) on their analyses of recent short-term theft trends and consumer perceptions were followed by detailed syndicate group discussions in which participants were asked to identify the:

- critical themes that should guide the development of appropriate consumer-focused messages for use across all partner organisations' communications; and



- challenges and opportunities that the prevailing crime dynamic presents.

The workshop heard that:

- the increased frequency of home burglaries to access keys and vehicles is the new 'permanent state' – with the vehicle being the sole objective or integral to an intention to commit other burglaries;
- 'Look, Lock, Leave' style campaigns were no longer relevant to the prevailing theft dynamic;
- the low incidence of confrontation suggests that offenders mostly try to avoid being discovered; and
- the vulnerability of the home and the significance of key theft is not yet fully understood.

The NMVTRC's is reviewing its public education materials to ensure that they remain consistent with the workshop deliberations which were that development of creative ideas and execution should continue to be guided by the following general principles:

1. Consumer messages should cover advice for both security about the home and what to do with keys when out and about.
2. Maintaining personal safety is paramount.
3. Home owners and motorists need to play their part to secure their property – don't make it easy for thieves.
4. Materials need to be innovative and of exceptional quality to 'cut through' the plethora of competing social marketing messages.
5. The incidence is real and based on empirical data.

Theft by wire: facts vs fiction

Studies conducted by the NMVTRC and international theft bodies indicate that the majority of late model (secure vehicle) thefts have been facilitated by access to the key and transponder, most recently via a burglary.

In early 2017, independent expert analysis of the theft claims of more than 200 late model vehicles, each valued at more than \$50,000, lodged with a leading Australian insurer supports these prior assessments. If a key duplication or hacking method was used, you would expect to see a repeated exposure pattern of similar models as the location of OBD ports, the compatibility of service tools and entry methods vary so significantly.

With the exception of Audi, which had a clear issue due to a service key being left in vehicle log books and/or glove compartments, there was no clear pattern of model, age or location. Media hype about remote hacking experiments has fueled widespread perceptions that all modern vehicles are now vulnerable to electronic attacks.

The most commonly reported scenario relates to a form of relay attack in which an offender remotely intercepts and manipulates the near field communication between a vehicle and its electronic key.

The internet is full of videos of claimed examples. However, enquiries with authoritative experts, including the United States' National Insurance Crime Bureau, indicate that authorities are yet to confirm real live incident or recover a capable low-cost device.

The NMVTRC will continue to monitor developments in overseas markets and liaise with insurers and police services to monitor the potential risk of related theft methods in Australia.

PPSR Now Even Better Value

The NMVTRC has long been a leading advocate for improving consumer and motor trades' access to non-personal vehicle status information.

The PPSR is the national one-stop-shop for vehicle encumbrance, stolen and written-off status for consumers and the motor trades. It is operated by the Australian Government and provides prospective buyers of used vehicles with a one-off certificate confirming a vehicle's recorded status.

In great news for consumers, the operator of the PPSR, the Australian Financial Security Authority, announced in August that search fees would reduce to just \$2 (down from \$3.40) after a cost recovery review. This represents outstanding value compared to other so-called 'value added' products provided by commercial data aggregators. The NMVTRC would like to see all Australian motoring clubs do more to promote the basic PPSR check to their members. The PPSR report now also includes Takata airbag recall information.

In 2017, the PPSR processed almost 9 million registration status checks.



How much does prison really cost?

Corrections Victoria commissioned the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) to investigate the comparative cost of managing offenders in prison and in the community. The sample group included 804 prisoners who received a prison term and 804 offenders who received a community based order.

The study estimates the average cost of imprisonment to be \$61,179 per prisoner, or \$391 per prisoner per day. This was around 20 per cent higher than the direct sentence costs alone. The average net cost of community orders was estimated to be \$6,516 per offender and \$18.30 per day or 16 per cent lower than the direct sentence costs.

It was also determined that:

- offenders incarcerated incurred costs to themselves, their families, the government and the broader community which were on average nine times those of offenders given a community-based order; and
- the long terms effects of incarceration such as loss of income, mental health and quality of life are more than likely to accrue costs in the future.

While the sample may be small the research demonstrates that there may be significant savings associated with diverting individuals from shorter custodial sentences to community based orders in cases where risks to others can be mitigated.

New strategic plan out now

The release of the NMVTRC's 2018–2020 Strategic Plan marks the important milestone of participating state and territory governments and the insurance industry committing to extend their collaboration in the NMVTRC through to mid-2021.

The new Plan leverages off key aspects of the Secure System approach which takes a holistic view of the dynamics of vehicle crime and the interaction between vehicle design and manufacture, motorist choices, perceptions and behaviour, offender actions, and government and industry practices.

Vehicle crime in 2018 is also increasingly not just a single crime. It is often at the centre of a more complex mix of offending that may also involve:

- significant road safety risks in the form of dangerous driving, pursuits and evasions;
- other crimes against a person (such as an assault, abduction or shooting);
- subsequent property crimes (such as an aggravated burglary or robbery, arson, drug or firearms dealing);

- terrorism (in the form of vehicle based attacks or explosions);
- other forms of theft (fuel drive offs, toll evasion); and
- a wide variety of fraudulent activity in respect of identity and vehicle identification, finance and staged collisions.

Copies of the updated Plan can be downloaded from carsafe.com.au/assets/Strategic_Plan_2018.pdf



Change at the top of NMVTRC Executive

After more than 19 years at the helm of the NMVTRC founding Executive Director Ray Carroll has retired to spend more time chasing his numerous grandchildren. The Council and its executive staff are indebted to Ray for the excellence with which he led the organisation.

The Council has appointed Geoff Hughes as his successor. Geoff will be well known to most of the NMVTRC's stakeholders having led some of the Council's most significant work in areas such as the development of technical standards, legislative reform, communications and youth offending. Prior to joining the NMVTRC Geoff enjoyed an extensive career in road transport policy at both a state and national level in a wide variety of policy development and management roles ranging from commercial vehicle operations to traffic management to road safety.

The appointment assures the continuity of the NMVTRC's strategic direction with the recent release of the 2018–2020 Strategic Plan.



Australian Government
Australian Financial Security Authority



Buying a used car?

Check before you buy. Is that used car...



...free from debt?



...reported written-off?



...on the Takata airbag recall list?



...reported stolen?

Australian Government basic \$2 PPSR check at www.ppsr.GOV.au

Why check the PPSR?

If you're buying a used car privately – the car may still have money owing on it.

If the previous owner stops making payments, a finance company might be able to repossess it without paying you a cent!

Check you can get your car debt free just before you buy to give you peace of mind.

The PPSR is also handy to check other second-hand goods, such as motorbikes, caravans, boats, tractors, livestock and more.

Available online, 24/7.
Visit www.ppsr.GOV.au for the Australian Government's basic \$2 PPSR check.

What you'll need to do a basic \$2 PPSR check:

- credit/debit card (\$2)
- vehicle identification number (VIN)
- your email address.

What is the VIN?

The VIN is the unique identifier of the car you want to buy. It's usually stamped on a small metal plate which is attached to the car. A VIN has 17 numbers and could look like this:



Can't find your VIN?

Here are some common places to find it.

Your VIN may be located between the dashboard and windshield of your vehicle.



Under the bonnet at the front or rear of the engine

Under your front or rear wheel arches

Additional places to look

- Car boot – check the boot lid or under the spare tyre.
- Check front and rear doors and inner door frames.

PPSR/BAUC09/2018