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Theft Reduction Council

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# theft torque

## Car security begins at home



As we reported in the April edition of Theft Torque, significant parts of the nation have been in the grip of a spike in residential burglaries to access the keys of 'secure vehicles' in recent times.

In fact, vehicle keys are the only property stolen in up to one in four reported burglaries in which a vehicle is taken. Offenders are also becoming more brazen, prepared to enter even occupied premises to quickly grab keys left in easily accessible spots, often gaining access via unlocked doors or windows.

These changes in the nature of car crime present a significant challenge in finding a balance between appropriate community messages about key security and mitigating theft risks, without unnecessarily raising community concern about crime and personal safety.

The NMVTRC has been working with operational, policy and communications experts from police, insurers, motoring clubs and local government to develop some general principles, overarching themes and key messages for a new suite of public education materials on the matter. Filming of a suite of television and cinema advertisements wrapped up in early July with Melbourne-based production company NiceBike. If you are familiar with the 'I bought a Jeep' or 'It's not a car – it's an Alfa Romeo' series of ads, then you know their work.

One of the general principles agreed upon by stakeholder experts was that the creative execution of campaign materials needed to be innovative to cut through the plethora of competing social messages.

# Car security begins at home continued

The brief to NiceBike was therefore to use humour or irony as a point of difference rather than stereotypically playing on personal fear. Their response gives a nod to three famous 'heist' scenes from hit movies to raise awareness of the need to safeguard keys from would-be burglars in an over-the-top, non-threatening way. The iconic films Raiders of the Lost Ark, Mission Impossible, and Entrapment provide the underlying themes as our hapless homeowner's lounge room is set upon by the three 'treasure seekers'. The 'behind the scenes' stills from the shoot (featured right) give you a guide.

The ads are designed to run as community service announcements on TV and in cinemas. Stakeholders will also be able to link directly to them via a dedicated website should they wish to reference them in their own communications campaigns. Post-production and sound editing is currently under way and should be completed by the end of the month.

The ads will be supported by online and print resources that provide practical advice about how to safeguard your home and keys. The campaign will launch in late September.



# ITF report to support ELV reform

Numerous investigations across Australia have shown that some of the most serious profit-motivated theft activity is conducted in association with enterprises that on the face of it are part of the automotive trades; including the recycling, end of life scrap and export sectors. In addition, many middle tier businesses that operate in these sectors, whilst not criminal themselves, have such poor business practices and records systems that they can unwittingly facilitate stolen vehicle disposal.

Responsible industry participants are finding it increasingly difficult to remain profitable in the face of unfair competition from growing numbers of operators who have no outward appearance of compliance with regulatory requirements or established industry standards and are calling for greater enforcement action from regulators.

In 2013, at the instigation of the NMVTRC, the Victoria Police agreed to lead an Inter-agency Task Force (ITF) to assess the level of regulatory compliance across the industry in Victoria. With the active cooperation of the Australian Crime Commission and other regulatory agencies, the ITF has undertaken the most comprehensive assessment of the status of the industry ever undertaken in Australia.

Following eight months of site visits across Victoria, a report into the ITF's findings is now in the final stages of preparation and will be released by the NMVTRC in coming weeks. Its analysis of the balance between legal trading, unlicensed trading and potential for criminal involvement in the industry will provide the NMVTRC with the objective information it needs to support its regulatory reform proposals. The ITF findings will also provide the participating agencies with an improved understanding of the vulnerabilities in the current regulatory regime and inform their internal decision processes regarding the direction of enforcement and investigative efforts in the future.

There are no quick fixes to either criminal infiltration or poor operating standards in the industry. The most effective outcomes will be derived from a combination of medium term improvements aimed at optimising the efficiency of existing regulatory regimes and in the longer term, the alignment of theft reduction objectives with reducing the environmental impacts of end of life vehicles and improving industry entry and operating standards through proposals such as product stewardship. The ITF findings will be an important step in this process.





## Synergy repairs goes live

In a world first, Synergy Repairs, the NMVTRC's joint venture with Mission Australia and the Suncorp Group opened its doors in May, the culmination of more than three years of negotiation and planning.

Synergy is a 'social enterprise' based, commercial business offering non-structural smash repair services, while providing on-the-job training, work experience and support to young car crime offenders. The program aims to create meaningful career pathways for the young participants, while preparing a much needed next-generation workforce for the industry. The six month placement will equip graduates with the skills to commence a smash repair apprenticeship.

All Synergy work is supervised by an experienced, trade-qualified workshop manager and two full-time spray painters and panel-beaters and must meet the same quality standards of other Suncorp repairers.

Rob Bartlett, Suncorp's National Industry Relations Manager who helped develop the concept, said this is an excellent opportunity for Suncorp's recommended repairers to attract new potential tradespeople to the industry, while helping improve some young lives in the process.

"It's no secret that not enough young people are coming into the repair industry which is why we have been working with our recommended repairers to find alternative sources of recruitment," Mr Bartlett said.

Mission Australia is an established leader in social enterprise programs in Australia, since opening its Charcoal Lane restaurant in inner Melbourne in 2008. Mission's State Director, Kylee Bates, said it was an exciting opportunity for Mission to provide troubled youth with a chance to turn their lives around, while also developing a business that will meet the needs of industry.

"As a leading provider of programs and support for disadvantaged youth, we know how easy it is for young offenders to get stuck in a cycle of crime. This program aims to break that cycle in a positive and sustainable way," Ms Bates said.

The NMVTRC has been a leading advocate for the expert design and delivery of diversionary programs for young vehicle theft offenders based around technical training and the development of trade skills.

The NMVTRC has a long association with Mission Australia in developing and delivering successful programs, such as *U-turn* in Tasmania and Synergy Repairs is the next evolution of that relationship.

We hope that the Synergy model will quickly be recognised as 'the model' for the delivery of sustainable, expertly designed young offender programs.

## Modernising regulatory regimes to optimise compliance

The upcoming report of the Victorian Inter-Agency Task Force (ITF) into compliance with local laws is likely to demonstrate that the existing law in respect of the management of separated vehicle parts and vehicle-related scrap is in need of major reform.

The NMVTRC's 2013-14 work program indicated that we would build on the previous review of the 'modernity' of related laws, conducted by lawyers DLA Piper in 2012, by developing a proposal for the consolidation of relevant laws to remove ambiguities and gaps, and deal more effectively with enduring non-compliance.

The model law package is being developed for the NMVTRC by Duncan Lawyers. Campbell Duncan, is a former Victorian Parliamentary Counsel and internationally recognised expert in regulatory system design. The model will propose:

- the introduction of an accreditation requirement for a person who carries on business as a motor vehicle dealer, motor vehicle recycler (including a metal recycler) or motor vehicle repairer;
- the provision for the responsible Minister to set co-regulatory business standards in conjunction with relevant industries;
- the inclusion of a chain of responsibility model for related parties which requires prescribed persons to:
  - take all reasonable steps to ensure that stolen motor vehicles or parts are not traded by any party in the chain; and
  - report suspicious vehicles or parts, whether in their custody or offered to the person for sale;
- a broad range of search, seize and retention powers for authorised officers – with or without consent;
- a range of regulatory tools for the 'Regulator' to promote or assure compliance including the power to publicise breaches or offences;
- the creation of separate commercial and general offences – the former allowing the profit made in a non-compliant transaction to be taken into account;
- the inclusion of civil penalty orders with daily penalties for continuing non-compliance; and
- improvement and exclusion orders, under which a person may be required to improve their performance or face exclusion from the industry.

The model law package will be ready for stakeholder feedback in August.



## Hard work pays off for U-learners

Many young people caught up in the juvenile justice system have had a long history of negative experiences at school and, as a result, suffer from low levels of literacy and numeracy. So even when they try to get their lives back on track, they face this additional confidence barrier when seeking employment opportunities or returning to the education system.

That is why the NMVTRC's Best Practice Model (BPM) for Young Offenders Programs, first published in 2001, placed such a strong emphasis on identifying offenders' literacy deficits and developing practical, individual improvement plans. Based on the BPM, Tasmania's *U-turn* program was established and is now in its 11th year of operation.

The operator of *U-turn*, Mission Australia, has continually developed and refined the literacy and numeracy support elements of the program and now offers an extended post-course program it has dubbed *U-learn* for *U-turn* alumni. To support its initiative, the NMVTRC this year decided to reward the 'best in class' *U-learn* participants with an iPad Mini to encourage them to continue their skills.

Shane and Margaret (pictured above with *U-learn* tutor Michael Lowenstein (right) and the NMVTRC's Geoff Hughes) were the inaugural award recipients. Shane earned his acknowledgement as a result of developing his spelling and punctuation and his flair for creative writing. Likewise, Margaret has shown great patience and determination to develop her skills, not shying away from having to unscramble difficult words to create a coherent sentence. Keep up the great work!

## Theft reform under the microscope

The fourth triennial review of the NMVTRC's performance is underway to inform decisions on the future of the organisation.

Under the terms of its inter-government/insurance industry Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the evaluation will form the basis of a recommendation to state and territory Ministers and the Insurance Council of Australia as to whether the NMVTRC has a continuing role in vehicle theft reduction.

First established in 1999, the NMVTRC represents a unique model of public and private collaboration in crime prevention and the review process provides an opportunity to objectively assess the NMVTRC's operational performance and value. The review is being conducted in two major parts: a study of the economic and social benefits attributed to the NMVTRC's work, and an analysis of stakeholder views of the NMVTRC's performance.

The review will be completed by September and will inform recommendations to the NMVTRC's funding bodies on the organisation's future.

## 2014-2017 Strategic Plan coming soon

The NMVTRC's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan will be released in August. The plan presents a detailed forward program, applying the NMVTRC's 'Secure System' approach, to reduce both short term and profit-motivated vehicle theft. This approach considers all aspects of vehicle life, from manufacture through to end of life and aims to implement programs that will produce such outcomes as minimised theft opportunity, increased difficulty in laundering stolen vehicles and parts, deterred young offenders and increased rates and consequences of detection.

The focus for the next three years comprises of a range of projects, including those continuing on from the 2013-2014 period, as well as new projects that reflect changing priorities and shifting theft threats. Key output areas include:

- Building stakeholder/community capacity and encouraging innovation;
- Diverting young offenders;
- Disrupting separated parts markets; and
- Disrupting vehicle laundering markets.

The Strategic Plan will be available at the end of August 2014 at [www.carsafe.com.au](http://www.carsafe.com.au)

## Odd spot

**Owner finds stolen car... parked in its usual spot**

Original article from [www.kitsapsun.com](http://www.kitsapsun.com)  
April 8, 2014.

An accused car thief is in jail after parking in an unfortunate spot – the owner's.

A chef left his 1995 Honda Prelude in front of an Auto Centre store. When he returned the next morning, all he found was broken glass.

Twelve days later, as he left work, he walked to his usual parking space, unlocked the car and climbed in. Suddenly he remembered that this car had been stolen and that he had driven a pickup to work.

He realised he had found his car three miles from where it had been stolen. "They parked my car exactly where I park it behind the building every single day."

The accused car thief was "in here enjoying a beer and eating fries that I cooked for him" the man said.

The accused car thief had no key for the car, which had its ignition punched and the car's license plates had been swapped out with those from a different Prelude and a matching VIN number was glued to the dashboard. It had a newly broken window, trunk, hood latch, ashtray and cup holder, and a dented door.