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Theft Reduction Council

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Governments and the Insurance Industry**

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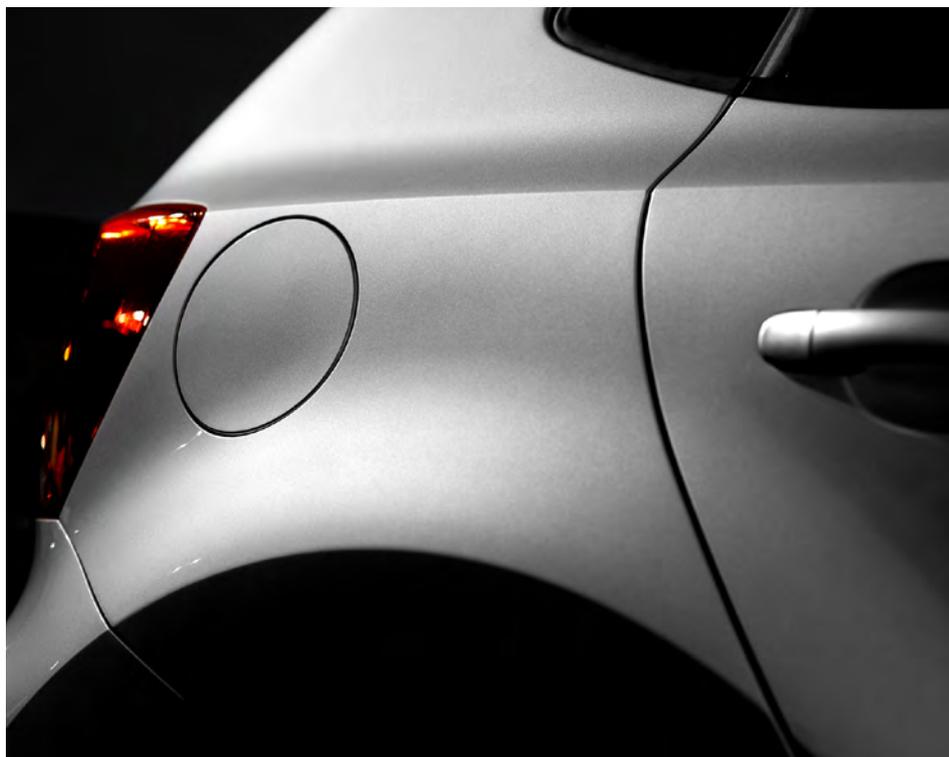
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theft torque

Regulatory reform key to addressing theft for scrap and parts



One of the NMVTRC's primary vehicle crime concerns is the almost 10,500 cars that appear to simply vanish altogether from our roads each year – the surrogate indicator of the level of organised criminal activity seeking to convert stolen vehicles into cash. The NMVTRC estimates that illicit activity in the second-hand goods and scrap metal markets is likely to account for at least half of all profit-motivated thefts.

In response we have invested in a considerable body of work that has identified clear deficiencies in the regulatory systems currently in place to manage the separated vehicle parts and scrap metal markets. These deficiencies create an almost 'perfect' environment for criminals to ply their trade with little risk of detection or consequence for their conduct.

Task Force Discover (TFD) – the multi-agency task force initiated by the NMVTRC and led by Victoria Police – revealed an staggering level of regulatory non-compliance across industry that facilitates the intentional and incidental laundering of stolen vehicles. It also found a significant number of cases of extreme environmental and work place safety breaches.

Further evidence of the need for reform came in late May with the release of the Victorian Law Reform Commission's (VLRC) report on its 18 month review of the use of regulatory regimes in preventing the infiltration of organised crime into lawful occupations and industries. The review was commissioned in response to growing recognition – in Australia and many other countries – that organised crime groups seek to infiltrate lawful occupations and industries to support their illicit activities and to provide new opportunities for profit and influence.

Regulatory reform key to addressing theft for scrap and parts

continued

The VLRC report draws heavily on the NMVTRC's submission and Task Force Discover's findings to illustrate the impact of criminal activity in a lawful industry. While the VLRC's conclusions are of a general nature that can be applied to any lawful occupation or industry that may be at risk of criminal infiltration, it affirms the direction of the NMVTRC's recent work. From the NMVTRC's perspective, the VLRC's most important observation is that there is a growing movement around the world towards re-designing regulatory regimes to position them as key tools for disrupting organised crime as an alternative to traditional criminal law approaches.

Specifically, the VLRC observed that collaboration between government agencies and industry is key. Regulators need to engage with industry in identifying risks, developing a regulatory response and implementing that response. The VLRC report sets out four main strategies for reducing the

risk of organised crime infiltration of a lawful occupation or industry:

- assessing the existing regulatory regime;
- restricting entry into an occupation or industry through a licensing scheme;
- regulating post entry behaviour; and
- addressing the use of professional facilitators.

It also proposes that specific vulnerabilities can be addressed through targeted post entry measures, such as record keeping requirements or restriction on cash based transactions.

These strategies are all embodied in the NMVTRC's draft model laws for better regulation of the vehicle scrap and parts industry which include:

- the consolidation of related laws to address critical omissions and anomalies;

- performance-based business standards set with peak industry bodies including environmental and OH&S compliance;
- the adoption of chain of responsibility principles to ensure stolen vehicles or parts are not traded; and
- a broad range of search, seizure and other 'tools' to assure compliance, including the application of court enforced commercial penalties to neutralise illegal profits.

The NMVTRC looks forward to working with its stakeholders across Australia to advance these vital reforms to help legitimate business make their practices more impervious to criminal manipulation.

The full suite of NMVTRC resources on the modernisation of regulatory regimes to optimise compliance as well as the VLRC report can be downloaded from our website at carsafe.com.au/publications.

New, more interactive online home

The NMVTRC website (carsafe.com.au) has a fresh new format aimed at improving usability and access to information on our current work program, publications, statistics and resources.

The updated design is mobile and tablet friendly and hosts a number of interactive features such as pop up 'theft facts', a search box, a number of videos and a timeline highlighting the NMVTRC's significant reforms since 2000.

Importantly, the new website consolidates all of the NMVTRC online statistical tools previously found on both the CARS and NMVTRC sites such as the restricted and general data dashboards, theft risk rating, local theft profiles and cluster maps, bringing them all together in the one handy location.

The website still features a wide-range of vehicle theft education resources including infographic posters, a guide for local communities, brochures, posters and print-ready advertisements as well as dedicated pages for motorist information and

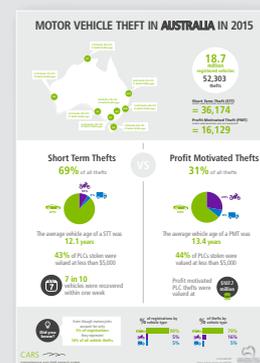


education campaigns such as *Car Security Begins at Home* and *Protect Your Bike*. These resources can be downloaded or linked to by any organisation looking to implement a motor vehicle theft prevention campaign.

We hope the refresh makes it even easier to navigate our comprehensive information, resources and statistics on motor vehicle theft in Australia.

Visit carsafe.com.au

The new NMVTRC website features all online statistical tools in the one location.



A range of infographic posters and other resources are available to download.

Australia's Most Wanted reimagined



Long-time stakeholders and readers of *Theft Watch* may recall the NMVTRC's 2005 'Australia's Most Wanted' campaign, aimed at raising awareness of makes and models of vehicles most commonly targeted for short term theft across the country.

The large-scale campaign, based on the popular television show at the time, was a logistical feat with physical examples of the most commonly stolen vehicles being revealed at media launches in every state and territory. The initiative was extremely well received, gaining extensive prime time news coverage in all jurisdictions over several months.

Given the popularity of the campaign and the changing nature of vehicle crime, the NMVTRC

recently engaged Melbourne-based production company NiceBike to develop a modern digital reprise of 'Australia's Most Wanted,' for online use.

The dynamics of vehicle theft have changed considerably over the past decade. When the campaign first ran the large majority of vehicles stolen were older vehicles targeted for their poor security and lack of electronic immobilisation, making them vulnerable to attack with simple tools such as a coat hanger and screwdriver.

In 2016 the landscape looks very different with more than half of vehicles stolen by the thief gaining access to the keys, often via residential burglary, and vehicles manufactured after 2001 making up the majority of thefts. It was therefore important that the campaign not only be reimagined

for online use, but to also reflect developments in vehicle theft and theft prevention.

The result is an engaging, short online video which aims to raise awareness of the ease with which new cars can be stolen (by the thief gaining access to the keys) and older non-immobilised vehicles (with simple tools) through the use of a direct and humorous approach. The video promotes the simple steps motorists can take to secure their cars, as well as the vehicles most commonly targeted by thieves in 2016.

The production will feature on the NMVTRC website along with campaign materials including posters and a list of 'Australia's Most Wanted' cars, enabling stakeholders to link directly to them should they wish to reference them in their own communications material. Post-production editing is currently underway and should be complete by next month. Keep an eye out on carsafe.com.au for more information.



IAATI 2016

In late April the 23rd International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) Annual Training Seminar was held in Melbourne.

The NMVTRC was once again pleased to support this event which brings together a wide-range of representatives from police, insurers, motoring clubs, manufacturers, registration authorities and other key stakeholders.

This year's seminar theme was 'science and technology' with a number of presentations focusing on forensic services, emerging technology and the future of vehicle theft investigation. Related discussion points included the risks and benefits of rapidly developing technology in the area of autonomous vehicles and the extensive use of forensic evidence in vehicle theft investigation.

A highlight of the seminar is the annual awards program which recognises individuals and organisations that have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the area of auto theft prevention and investigation. This year's Investigation of the Year was awarded to New South Wales Police for 'Strike Force Granite.' The large-scale investigation into



New South Wales Police's Con Galea (left) and David West (right) accept the President's Award and Investigation of the Year Award for their roles in two major police investigations.

organised crime and re-birthing of motor vehicles resulted in the recovery of over 180 stolen re-birthed vehicles including passenger/light commercial cars, heavy trailers and boats with an estimated value of \$2.7 million.

The President's Award went to New South Wales Police's 'Initiative Refocus' which was established to investigate theft for parts and



The NMVTRC's Executive Director, Ray Carroll, addresses delegates at the IAATI seminar.

scrap in New South Wales after NMVTRC data showed that whilst overall motor vehicle theft was declining, profit-motivated theft was steadily increasing. With the assistance of affected agencies, the investigation resulted in the identification of over 150 stolen motor vehicles or engines, the disruption of a number of criminal organisations and various charges being laid.

Synergy celebrates second year of transforming young lives



Dr Monica Thielking announcing the key findings of the Synergy Evaluation.

Synergy Repairs, the NMVTRC's joint venture with Mission Australia and the Suncorp Group celebrated its second anniversary of operating as a commercially-based social enterprise earlier this month.

Young people are still responsible for more than half of all vehicle thefts in Australia. While operating as a commercial business offering non-structural smash repair services, Synergy Repairs aims to create meaningful career pathways for young car crime offenders by providing on-the-job training, work experience and support to participants.

Successful graduates earn the opportunity of an apprentice placement within Suncorp Group's repairer network.

The second anniversary saw the launch of the program's Process Evaluation Report prepared by Dr Monica Thielking and Associate Professor Jeffrey Pfeifer of Swinburne University. The evaluation was overwhelmingly positive. Key findings included that the program is valued by participants as a way to get into employment and to get 'back on track,' that participants value the

mentoring relationships with trainers and the opportunity to pursue their love of cars in an adult 'work' environment and that the program had a transformative effect as time management, confidence and communication skills improved amongst participants while less time was spent socialising with peers who continue to engage in criminal activity.

Recommendations focused on the importance of addressing the range of auxiliary issues faced by the young participants including improving access to psychological services for mental health problems and dealing with housing issues and varying levels of education amongst participants.

Overall, the integrated partnership between the NMVTRC, Mission Australia and Suncorp was considered the core element of the program's success and necessary in ensuring the program continued to achieve its goal of reducing participant offending and turning the lives of these young people around.

Interested readers can download a copy of the evaluation report at carsafe.com.au/publications.

Odd spot

Car theft suspects caught after being betrayed – by their sausage dog

Two suspected car thieves are facing charges after they were betrayed, police say, by their alleged accomplice – a sausage dog.

On a Saturday morning, officers with the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais got reports of a vehicle theft in La Pêche, Que., northwest of Ottawa.

A witness gave police a description of the two suspects, along with the hard-to-miss dachshund that accompanied them during their alleged crime.

The theft was also caught on surveillance video, police said.

Shortly afterwards, another witness told police they'd seen the stolen car in a ditch less than a kilometre from where it was initially pilfered – and that the two suspects and their dog had fled.

Officers tracked them to a nearby farmhouse, where one suspect further fled into the woods. He was captured after a short chase, police said.

As for the sausage dog: it's been taken into the care of the state's animal welfare shelter.

Article originally appeared on CBC News 18 June 2016.

