

July 8, 2012

## Insurance Council calls for more action against professional car thieves

Seven vehicles are stolen every hour in Australia with nearly one-third never recovered, highlighting the need for greater cooperation between state governments and their agencies to tackle car theft rackets.

Statistics for the first quarter of the year reveal total thefts leaped 10 per cent compared with the final three months of last year. The National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council figures show that 16,082 vehicles were stolen in Australia during the quarter.

Of these, 4814 were stolen for profit-motivated purposes (for resale or stripped for parts) and not recovered, up 11 per cent.

The sharpest rises in total passenger and light commercial (PLC) thefts were in Queensland, with a 22 per cent increase in the quarter, and Western Australia, with a 16 per cent rise. The number of PLCs that were stolen and not recovered jumped by 36 per cent in WA, 18 per cent in Victoria, and 16 per cent in South Australia and Queensland.

Insurance Council of Australia CEO Rob Whelan said insurers received more than 7000 vehicle theft claims totalling \$50.5 million for the last quarter.

He said he was very concerned the number of stolen vehicles had risen sharply over the past year, up by 5 per cent nationally, after a decade of declining theft rates. In the year to March 31, total thefts in Queensland soared by 26 per cent, with WA experiencing a 17 per cent increase.

“The statistics reveal that professional car thieves are becoming more resourceful and audacious across many parts of Australia. They are increasingly stealing cars to cut up for spare parts and components and are moving cars across state borders to hide their activities,” Mr Whelan said.

“The Insurance Council urges state governments and their agencies to urgently support action against these professional car theft rackets before Australia returns to the bad old days of the late 1990s, when car theft was rife.

“Governments should also increase their focus on crime prevention and consumer education, alongside insurers, to make vehicle owners more aware of this significant issue.

“An increased in insurance claims, and rising levels of theft or attempted theft, can have an impact on insurance premium as insurers take into account the likelihood and risk of theft occurring.”

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**Editors note: The latest Carsafe data is available at:**

**[http://www.carsafe.com.au/images/stories/pdfs/Theft\\_Watch/Theft%20Watch%2043%20June%202012.pdf](http://www.carsafe.com.au/images/stories/pdfs/Theft_Watch/Theft%20Watch%2043%20June%202012.pdf)**