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CONFERENCE PAPER:

REDUCING THEFT OF AND THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENCES: THE VICTORIA POLICE EXPERIENCE

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This conference was organised by the Australian Institute of Criminology in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Executive Summary

Theft of Motor Vehicles

- During 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004, there have been 23,783 recorded thefts of motor vehicles. This is a decrease of 18.2% when compared to the same time in the previous financial year.
- About 80% of police districts have experienced a decrease in the number of Theft of Motor Vehicle offences.
- 52.9% of the motor vehicles stolen were from either outside a private address, the street/road/freeway or shopping centre car parks.
- The number of motor vehicles stolen from reserves, car park - beach and forest / bushland have increased.
- The recovery rate for Theft of Motor Vehicle for the state has decreased 3.6% to 78.8%.
- 50.8% of vehicles stolen are recovered within one day. This is an increase of 1.9% from the previous period.
- There was a decrease of 16.9% in alleged offenders processed for theft of motor vehicle offences.
- Of all alleged offenders, about 54% are younger than 21 years of age.
- The percentage of car recovered where stereos are stolen has increased to 27.3%.
- There were notable increases in prestigious cars such as BMW's, Honda's, Hyundai's, Mercedes Benz's, Suzuki's and Volvo's stolen.
- 63.2% of cars stolen were either a Ford or a Holden.
- Vehicles made from 1984 to 1990 are the most frequently stolen. Vehicle made after 1990 are stolen less due to better security features fitted to these vehicles.
- 64.4% of vehicles stolen are recovered in the same division. Whereas vehicles stolen from Region 1 are more likely to be recovered in another division.

Theft from Motor Vehicles

- During 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004, there were 50,623 recorded thefts from motor vehicles. This is a decrease of 10.3% when compared to 2002/03.
- The number of offenders apprehended for the theft from motor vehicle has decreased by 8.0%. However offenders aged between 17 - 20 and 36 - 40 have increased.
- Vehicles gained entry either through smashed windows or forced lock have remained constant.
- The most common items stolen from vehicles are mobile phones, cash, CDs and car stereos.
- There were increases in the number of computers and cameras stolen during 2003/04 (10.4% and 8.6% respectively).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to analyse Thefts involving Motor Vehicles during the 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004 and in some instances over the past five financial years including national comparisons.

Introduction

The Victoria Police undertook the Theft of Motor Vehicle Review in 2001.

Operation Vehicle Watch has been an initiative set-up by Victoria Police to reduce the number of thefts of motor vehicles and thefts from motor vehicles offences by at least 20 percent. This operation has been running since 1 March 2002. See Diagram in Section 3 for further details.

Following the widespread concern with this issue, the Parliamentary Committee on Drugs and Crime Prevention reported on their inquiry into Motor Vehicle Theft in October 2002¹.

During 2003/04, there have been substantial decreases recorded in the thefts of motor vehicles and thefts from motor vehicles within Victoria.

Between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004, there were 23,783 recorded thefts of motor vehicles. This is a decrease of 18.2% on the number recorded compared to the previous period. There were 50,623 recorded thefts from motor vehicles recorded during the same period. When compared to the previous financial year this is a decrease of 10.3%.

This report is divided into two sections. Section One provides a profile referring to thefts of motor vehicles. Section Two provides a profile that relates to thefts from motor vehicles. In both Sections, variables such as the location and area of the theft were extracted in order to provide a clearer picture of when and where these crimes occur.

Source of Data

The implementation of the Victoria Police Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) database on the 1 March 1993 has allowed for the collection of detailed statistics on crimes. LEAP allows us to provide detailed profiles and trends on variable such as offenders, victims, and locations.

Scope of Analysis

The following analysis compares the figures taken from (1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004) and the previous period. In some instances, data for the past five years are compared.

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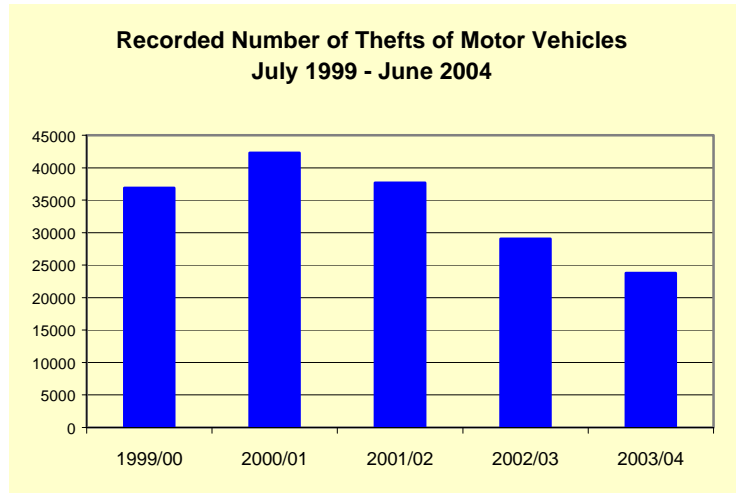
Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee. (2002) *Inquiry into Motor Vehicle Theft – Final Report*. No. 183 – Session 1999-2002. DCPC, Parliament of Victoria: Melbourne.

Section 1: Theft of Motor Vehicles

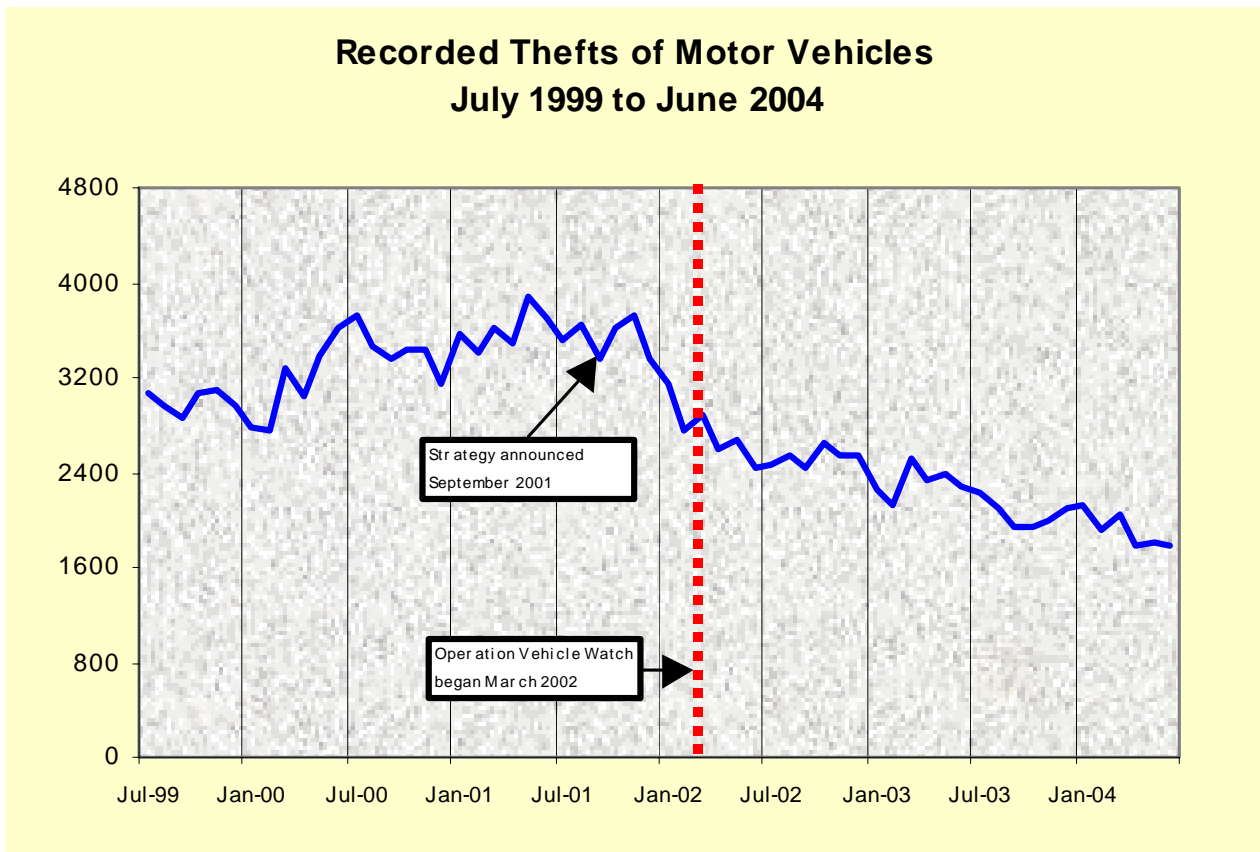
Trends in the thefts of motor vehicles

During the 2003/04 financial year there were 23,783 recorded theft of motor vehicle offences compared to 29,067 recorded vehicle thefts for the same time period in 2002/03. This is an overall decrease of 18.2%.

It can be noted from the graph to the right that this is the third significant decrease experienced since the 2000/01 financial year.



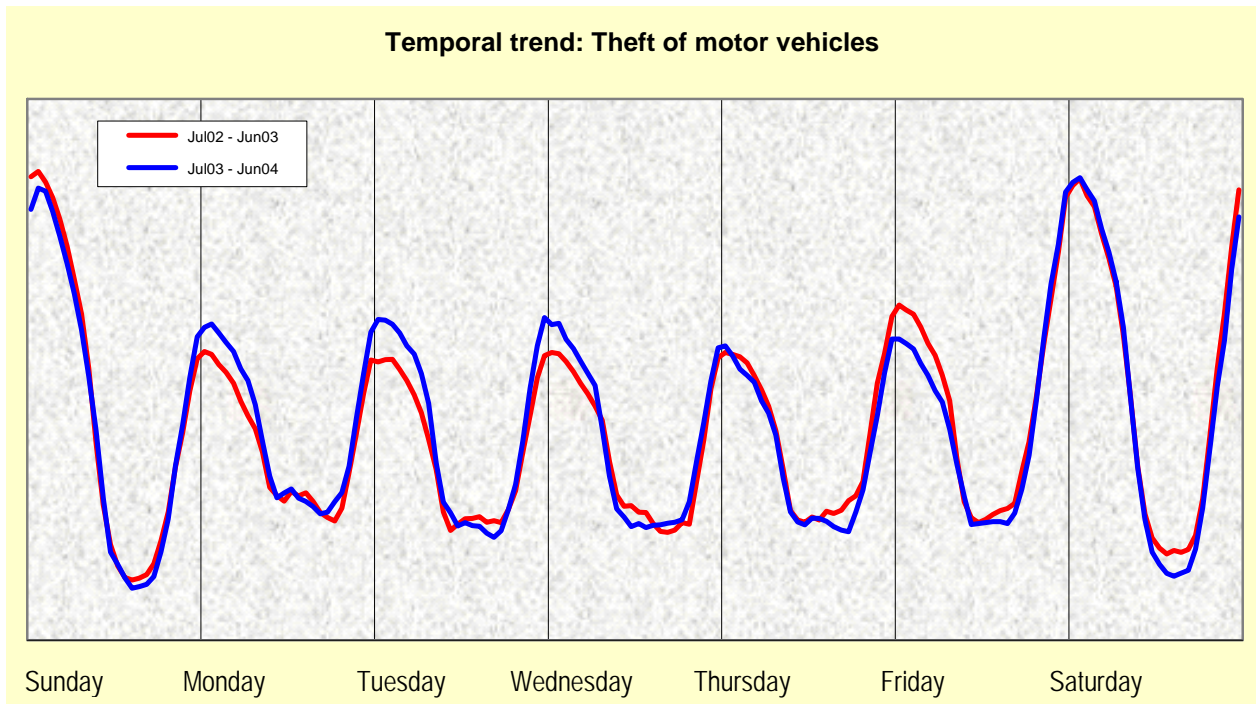
The number of recorded thefts of motor vehicles has been decreasing since November 2001, which is clearly indicated in the following time series chart.



When are the thefts occurring?

The chart below is a graphical representation of the day of the week and time of day when the offence was committed. This is known as a temporal trend, and is restricted to those offences where it is known that the theft occurred within a 24-hour period. Each offence is counted for each hourly interval over which the theft may have occurred. For example, a theft that was committed between 10.15pm on Saturday and 1.45am on Sunday will be counted in each hourly interval between 10.00pm and 2.00am. That is, it will be counted four times.

During the 2003/04, there has been no significant difference in either the day or time that motor vehicle thefts are occurring. The temporal trend graphs of the two periods almost exactly overlay each other.



Where are the thefts occurring?

The following table over the page lists the number and percentage changes of Vehicle thefts occurring in all fifty-six Police districts during the previous two financial years. Over 80% of Police districts have experienced a decrease in the number of Theft of Motor Vehicle offences compared to the previous period. Pages 8 to 11 contain maps, which show a graphical representation of the volume and percentage changes of state and metropolitan police districts within Victoria.

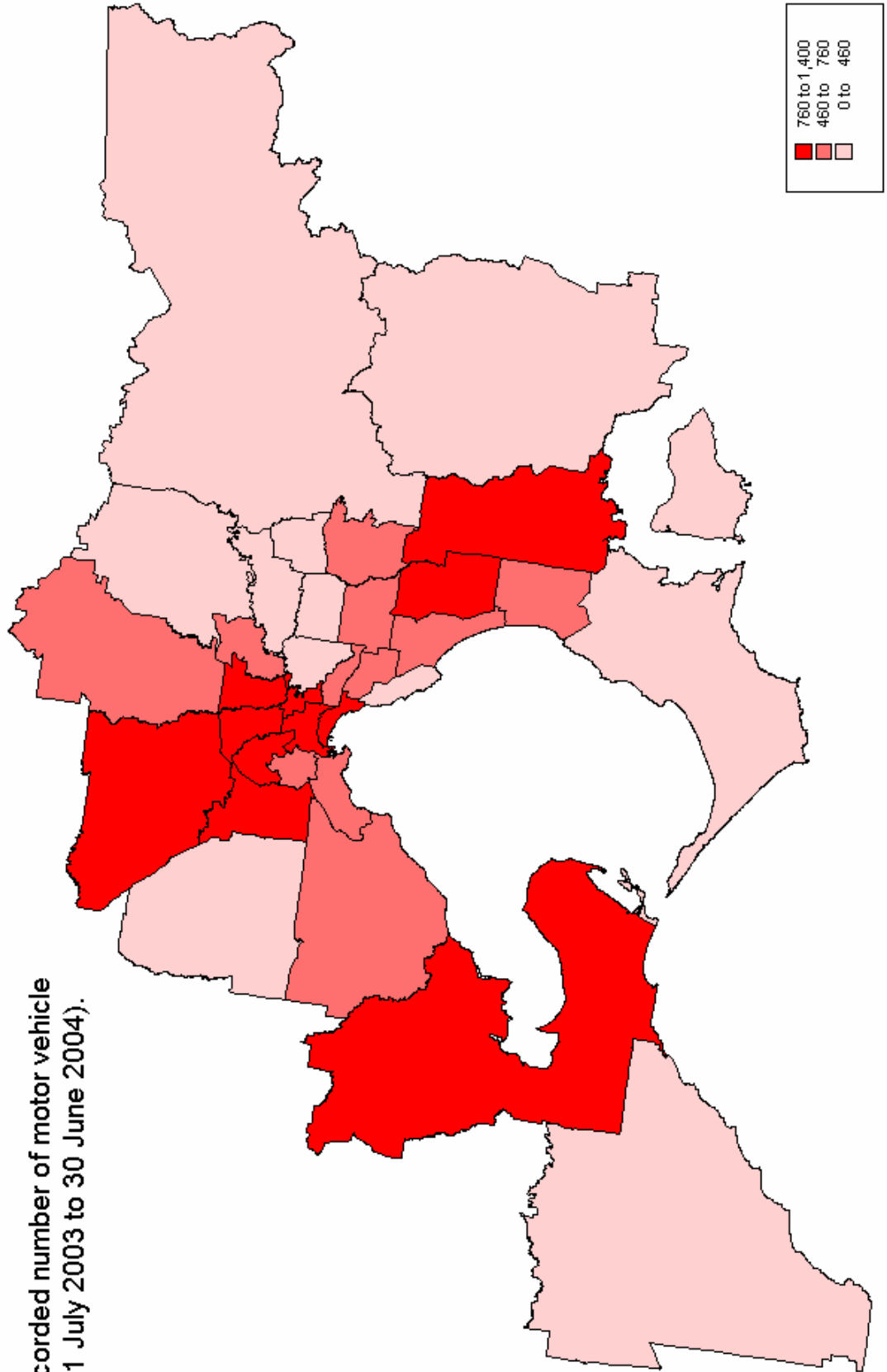
Where are the thefts occurring? (Cont.)

| Region | Division | District | July 2002 to June 2003 | July 2003 to June 2004 | Percentage change |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Melbourne | 1,637 | 1,293 | -21.0 % |
| 1 | 2 | Stonnington | 997 | 691 | -30.7 % |
| 1 | 2 | Yarra | 1,273 | 882 | -30.7 % |
| 1 | 3 | Glen Eira | 616 | 465 | -24.5 % |
| 1 | 3 | Port Phillip | 1,219 | 901 | -26.1 % |
| 1 | 4 | Bayside | 257 | 203 | -21.0 % |
| 1 | 4 | Kingston | 731 | 590 | -19.3 % |
| 2 | 1 | Brimbank | 1,633 | 1,395 | -14.6 % |
| 2 | 1 | Hobsons Bay | 595 | 479 | -19.5 % |
| 2 | 1 | Maribyrnong | 803 | 692 | -13.8 % |
| 2 | 1 | Melton | 304 | 277 | -8.9 % |
| 2 | 2 | Geelong | 985 | 848 | -13.9 % |
| 2 | 2 | Surf Coast | 35 | 36 | 2.9 % |
| 2 | 2 | Wyndham | 470 | 573 | 21.9 % |
| 2 | 3 | Ballarat | 532 | 511 | -3.9 % |
| 2 | 3 | Cent Goldfields | 39 | 32 | -17.9 % |
| 2 | 3 | Moorabool | 126 | 114 | -9.5 % |
| 2 | 4 | Horsham | 40 | 29 | -27.5 % |
| 2 | 4 | Nth Grampians | 28 | 32 | 14.3 % |
| 2 | 5 | Corangamite | 50 | 56 | 12.0 % |
| 2 | 5 | Sth Grampians | 48 | 64 | 33.3 % |
| 2 | 5 | Warrnambool | 85 | 89 | 4.7 % |
| 3 | 1 | Darebin | 1,636 | 1,187 | -27.4 % |
| 3 | 1 | Whittlesea | 847 | 741 | -12.5 % |
| 3 | 2 | Hume | 1,000 | 1,010 | 1.0 % |
| 3 | 2 | Moonee Valley | 837 | 763 | -8.8 % |
| 3 | 2 | Moreland | 1,281 | 989 | -22.8 % |
| 3 | 3 | Bendigo | 346 | 309 | -10.7 % |
| 3 | 3 | Macedon Ranges | 122 | 93 | -23.8 % |
| 3 | 4 | Campaspe | 179 | 147 | -17.9 % |
| 3 | 4 | Shepparton | 309 | 235 | -23.9 % |
| 3 | 5 | Mildura | 275 | 315 | 14.5 % |
| 3 | 5 | Swan Hill | 65 | 51 | -21.5 % |
| 4 | 1 | Banyule | 708 | 619 | -12.6 % |
| 4 | 1 | Manningham | 205 | 155 | -24.4 % |
| 4 | 1 | Nillumbik | 107 | 116 | 8.4 % |
| 4 | 2 | Boroondara | 581 | 418 | -28.1 % |
| 4 | 2 | Monash | 813 | 529 | -34.9 % |
| 4 | 2 | Whitehorse | 622 | 441 | -29.1 % |
| 4 | 3 | Knox | 768 | 545 | -29.0 % |
| 4 | 3 | Maroondah | 575 | 456 | -20.7 % |
| 4 | 3 | Yarra Ranges | 504 | 406 | -19.4 % |
| 4 | 4 | Benalla | 73 | 54 | -26.0 % |
| 4 | 4 | Mitchell | 123 | 104 | -15.4 % |
| 4 | 5 | Wangaratta | 60 | 70 | 16.7 % |
| 4 | 5 | Wodonga | 133 | 114 | -14.3 % |
| 5 | 1 | Frankston | 771 | 729 | -5.4 % |
| 5 | 1 | Mornington Pen | 412 | 369 | -10.4 % |
| 5 | 2 | Cardinia | 168 | 147 | -12.5 % |
| 5 | 2 | Casey | 1,042 | 861 | -17.4 % |
| 5 | 2 | Dandenong | 1,340 | 1,010 | -24.6 % |
| 5 | 3 | Baw Baw | 114 | 64 | -43.9 % |
| 5 | 3 | Bass Coast | 86 | 84 | -2.3 % |
| 5 | 3 | La Trobe | 295 | 262 | -11.2 % |
| 5 | 4 | East Gippsland | 103 | 67 | -35.0 % |
| 5 | 4 | Wellington | 64 | 71 | 10.9 % |
| <i>Total</i> | | | 29,067 | 23,783 | -18.2 % |

METROPOLITAN AREA

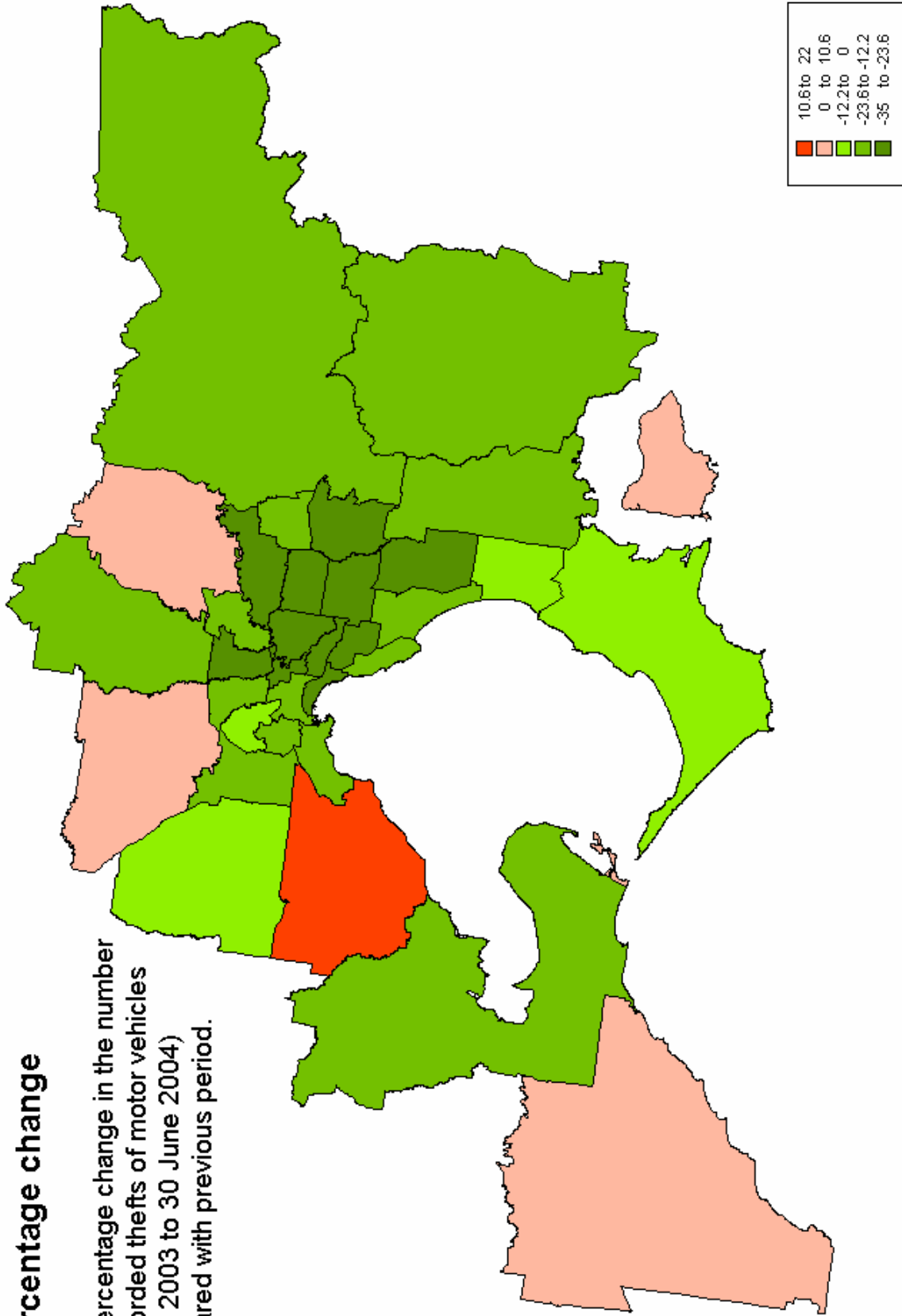
- Volume

The recorded number of motor vehicle thefts (1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004).



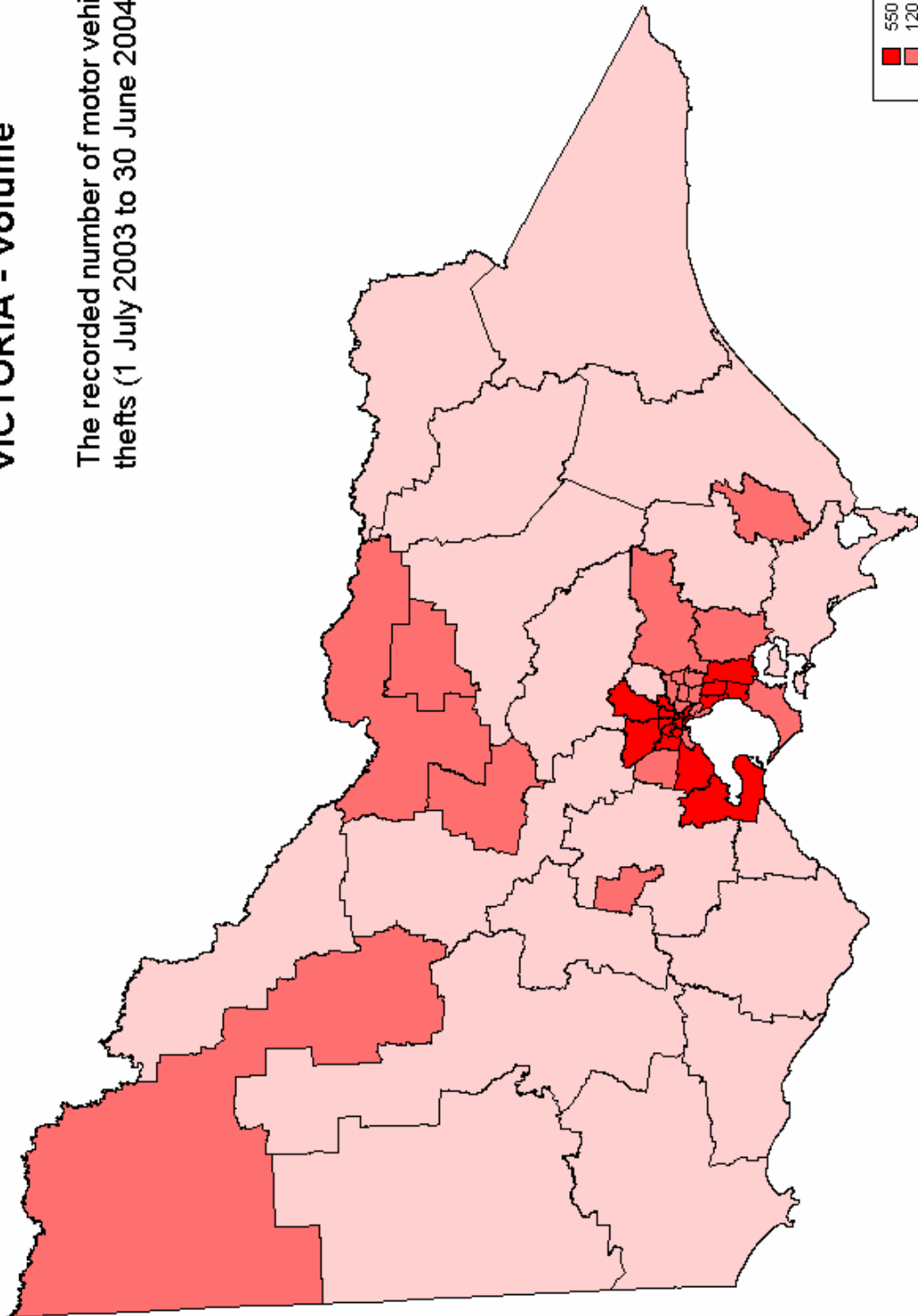
METROPOLITAN AREA - Percentage change

The percentage change in the number of recorded thefts of motor vehicles (1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004) compared with previous period.



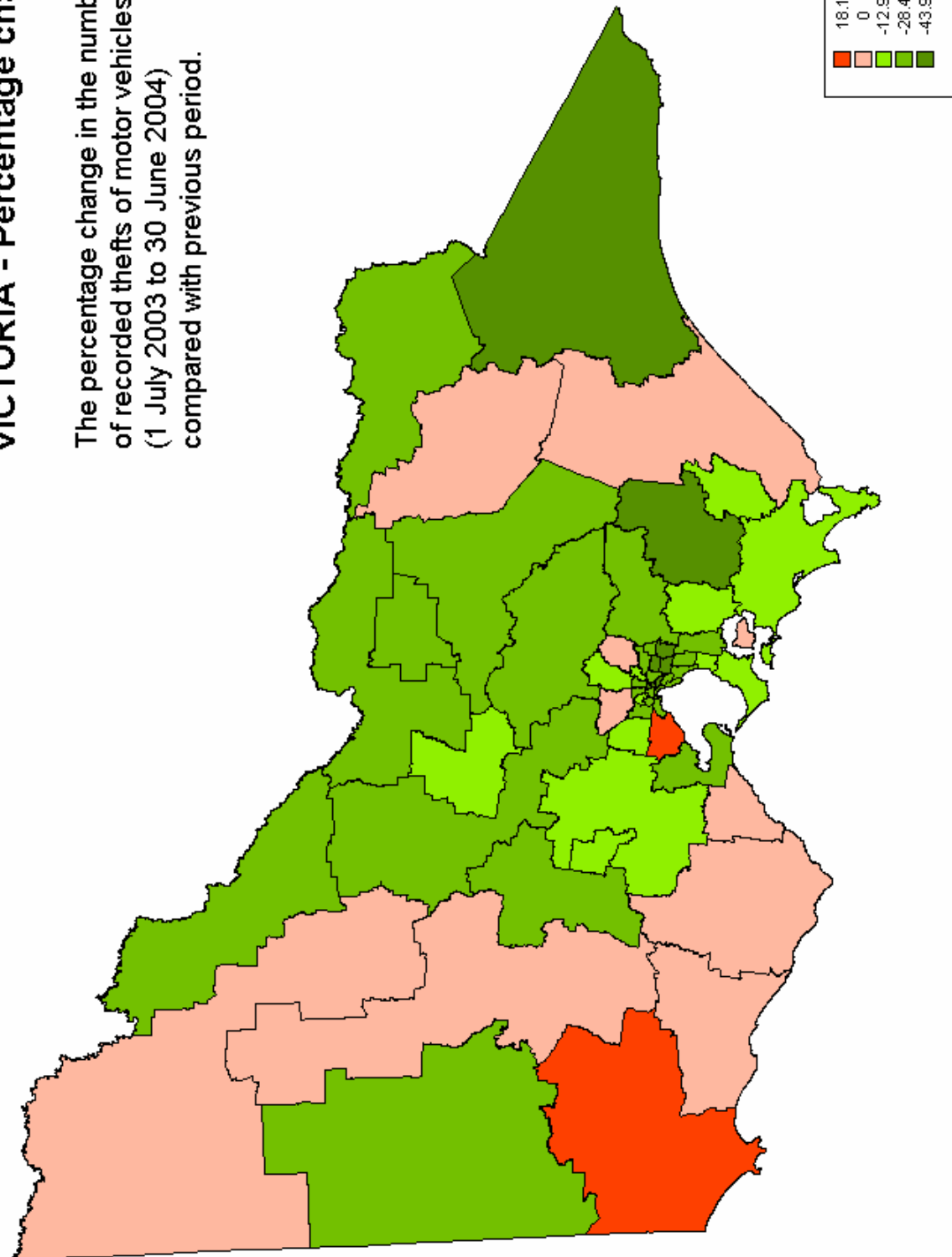
VICTORIA - Volume

The recorded number of motor vehicle thefts (1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004).



VICTORIA - Percentage change

The percentage change in the number of recorded thefts of motor vehicles (1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004) compared with previous period.



From what locations are the thefts occurring?

As a percentage of total thefts of motor vehicles, there is no significant change in the type of location where the motor vehicle theft occurred. 52.9% of thefts occur from either outside a private address, the street / road / freeway or a shopping centre car park. This figure is a 1.2% decrease from 54.1% recorded in the previous period.

The percentage change in the number of motor vehicle thefts from various locations is shown in the following table. It is interesting to note that most location types have experienced significant decreases. However Reserves, Car park - Beach and Forest / Bushland have experienced increases. These types of locations are subject to persons leaving their vehicle unattended for a while giving a car theft the chance to steal the vehicle undisturbed.

| Location | July 2002 to June 2003 | July 2003 to June 2004 | Percentage Change |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Outside Private Address | 7,018 | 5,388 | -23.2% |
| Street / Road / Freeway | 5,568 | 4,734 | -15.0% |
| Car park - Shopping Centre | 3,127 | 2,455 | -21.5% |
| Private Driveway | 2,667 | 2,316 | -13.2% |
| Car park - Railway | 1,680 | 1,191 | -29.1% |
| Car park - Other | 1,177 | 934 | -20.6% |
| Private Carport | 866 | 826 | -4.6% |
| Business Car Yard | 573 | 471 | -17.8% |
| Car park - Licensed Premises | 528 | 429 | -18.8% |
| Car park - Flats | 462 | 396 | -14.3% |
| Car park - Commercial | 439 | 334 | -23.9% |
| Other Commercial Premises | 356 | 315 | -11.5% |
| Private Yard | 339 | 297 | -12.4% |
| Car park - Sporting | 277 | 199 | -28.2% |
| Car park - School / University | 218 | 163 | -25.2% |
| Car park - Hospital | 140 | 74 | -47.1% |
| Service Station | 143 | 70 | -51.0% |
| Construction Site | 53 | 46 | -13.2% |
| Reserve | 38 | 43 | 13.2% |
| Car park - Beach | 24 | 26 | 8.3% |
| Forest / Bushland | 12 | 19 | 58.3% |
| Creek / River | 3 | 1 | -66.7% |
| Other | 288 | 293 | 1.7% |
| Not Classified | 3,359 | 3,056 | -9.0% |
| <i>Total</i> | 29,067 | 23,783 | -18.2% |

The joyrider versus the professional

A motor vehicle thief can be usually classified as two types (i) joyrider (ii) professional. Although there is no systematic way of identifying these types on the LEAP database, joyriders are generally considered to be juveniles who steal and then dump a motor vehicle. Whereas professionals tend to be older and steal cars that are newer, have higher security (anti-theft device fitted etc.) and of more value and/or prestige.

Joyriders will usually dump a stolen vehicle when they are finished with it making the vehicle more likely to be recovered. Whereas the professional will generally hide-away and/or strip the motor vehicle down, making the vehicle less likely to be recovered.

The following sections will examine various factors recorded on LEAP to determine what type of thieves are stealing motor vehicles. These factors are as follows:

- 1) Recovery rates and times of stolen motor vehicles
- 2) Method of entry into vehicle
- 3) Age of offenders stealing motor vehicles
- 4) Types of vehicle makes stolen
- 5) Property taken from stolen vehicle
- 6) Motor vehicles stolen and where located

The recovery rate of the stolen motor vehicle

During 2003/04 the recovery rate of a vehicle stolen was 78.8%. This recovery rate is down 3.6% from 82.4% corresponding to the previous period. A breakdown of recovery rates recorded during the operation period in each division is shown in the following table.

| | Recovery rates of a stolen vehicle during operation period | | | | |
|----------|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | DIVISION 1 | DIVISION 2 | DIVISION 3 | DIVISION 4 | DIVISION 5 |
| REGION 1 | 82.5% | 84.5% | 78.2% | 82.9% | n/a |
| REGION 2 | 75.5% | 74.6% | 72.9% | 63.5% | 80.8% |
| REGION 3 | 83.9% | 80.6% | 69.7% | 69.5% | 70.9% |
| REGION 4 | 81.8% | 83.5% | 83.0% | 55.0% | 69.1% |
| REGION 5 | 74.5% | 77.7% | 69.9% | 75.4% | n/a |
| STATE | State average = 78.8% | | | | |

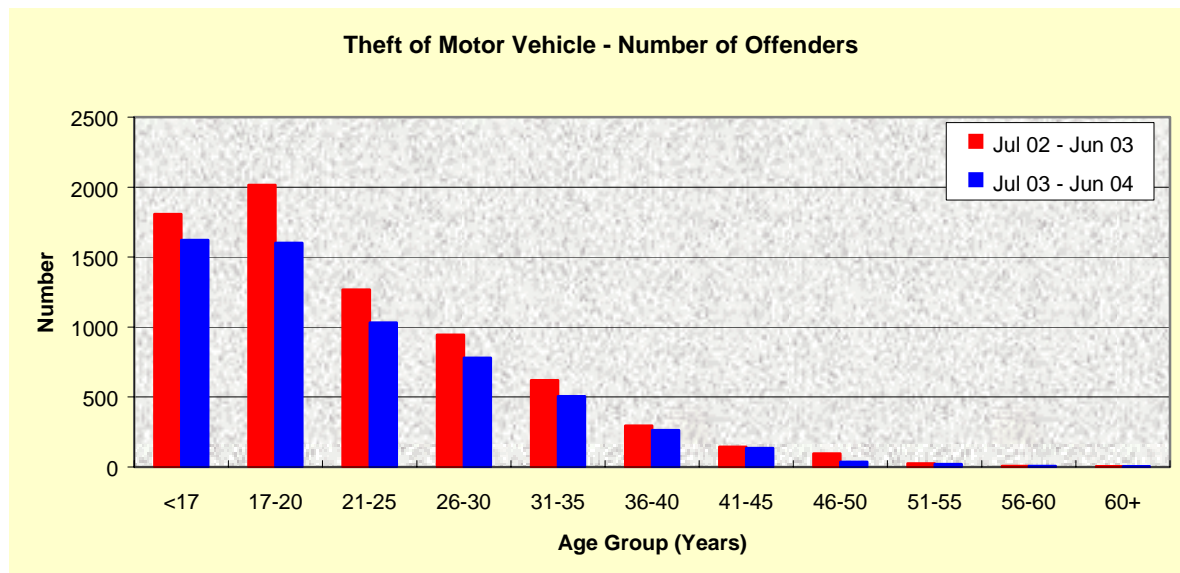
The recovery time of a stolen motor vehicle

Of those vehicles recovered, the time required to recover the vehicles was analysed. As shown in the adjacent table, there has been an increase in the percentage of vehicles found within one day of the theft 50.8% compared to 48.9% recorded in the previous period.

| Time required | Percentage of total motor vehicles recovered | |
|---------------|--|------------------------|
| | July 2002 to June 2003 | July 2003 to June 2004 |
| Same day | 31.5% | 33.8% |
| 1 Day | 17.4% | 17.0% |
| 2 Days | 9.5% | 8.7% |
| 3 Days | 6.4% | 5.8% |
| 4 Days | 4.6% | 4.1% |
| 5 + Days | 30.7% | 30.6% |

Who are the alleged offenders?

A profile of alleged offenders apprehended for the theft of a motor vehicle was composed. Of all offenders apprehended 89.2% were male. The total number of offenders in 2003/04 apprehended have decreased 16.9% compared to 2002/03. The age groups of the alleged offenders are shown in the graph below, which clearly indicates that more than half, namely 53.7%, of offenders are younger than 21 years of age.



Theft of motor vehicle and property

When a stolen motor vehicle is recovered, it can be determined whether any items from the motor vehicle were also stolen.

The table to the right lists some of the most common types of car accessories that are missing from the recovered vehicle.

There have been increases in the proportion of car stereos, child's car seats, E-Tags, car battery and street directories whereas the proportion of wheels and tyres stolen has decreased.

| Car Accessories stolen from the recovered vehicle | Percentage of recovered cars | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|
| | Jul02 to Jun03 | Jul03 to Jun04 |
| Car Stereo | 26.4% | 27.3% |
| Street Directory | 8.7% | 9.1% |
| Wheel | 10.8% | 7.1% |
| Child's Car Seat | 6.0% | 5.7% |
| Car Part | 2.2% | 4.4% |
| Tyre | 4.8% | 3.5% |
| Car Accessory | 3.1% | 3.0% |
| Car Seat | 3.0% | 2.5% |
| Steering Wheel | 2.7% | 2.2% |
| E Tag | 1.8% | 2.0% |
| Seat Cover | 2.1% | 2.0% |
| Car Battery | 1.6% | 1.7% |
| Number Plate | 1.4% | 1.5% |
| Car Mirror | 0.4% | 1.0% |
| Other | 25.1% | 26.9% |

The model of the stolen motor vehicle

The adjacent table indicates the most popular vehicle makes stolen. This is to examine whether any particular type of motor vehicle make was being targeted.

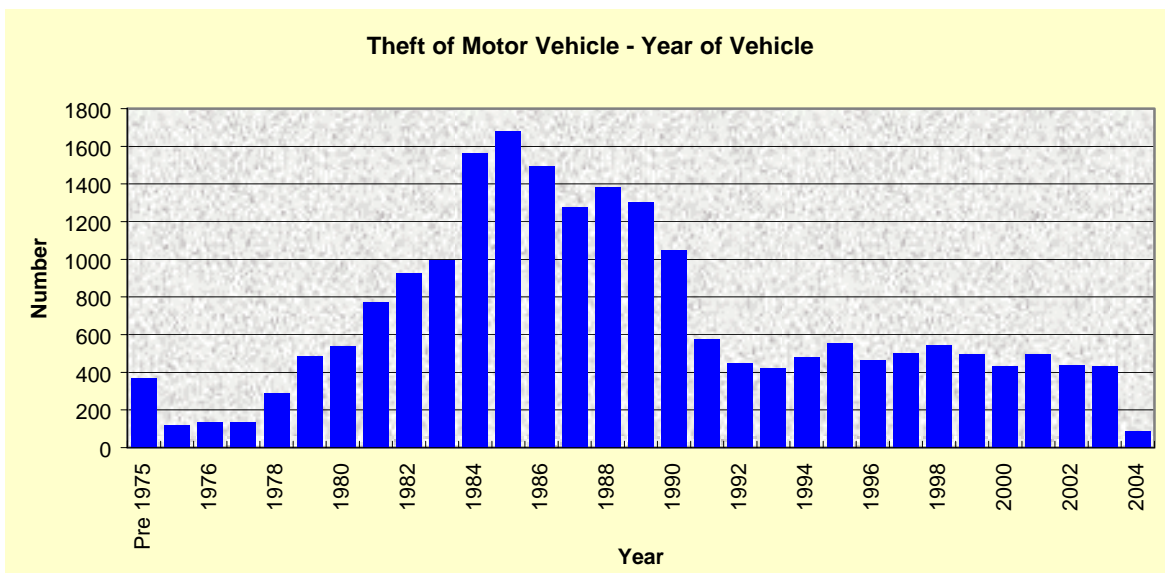
It is obvious that Ford and Holden vehicles are the most popular makes stolen. These two makes alone account for 63.2% of all cars stolen during 2003/04. This figure is a decrease of 1.4% to 64.6% recorded during 2002/03.

There have been increases in the theft of BMW, Honda, Hyundai, Mercedes Benz, Suzuki, and Volvo vehicles (2.0%, 4.4%, 7.8%, 4.3%, 23.1% and 26.7% respectively.)

| Make of vehicle | Jul02 to Jun03 | Jul03 to Jun04 | Percentage Change |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| BMW | 148 | 151 | 2.0% |
| Chrysler | 112 | 56 | -50.0% |
| Daihatsu | 64 | 41 | -35.9% |
| Datsun | 180 | 123 | -31.7% |
| Ford | 7,525 | 5,754 | -23.5% |
| Holden | 7,697 | 6,122 | -20.5% |
| Honda | 753 | 786 | 4.4% |
| Hyundai | 231 | 249 | 7.8% |
| Jaguar | 27 | 17 | -37.0% |
| Mazda | 1,689 | 1,226 | -27.4% |
| Mercedes Benz | 115 | 120 | 4.3% |
| Mitsubishi | 1,091 | 952 | -12.7% |
| Nissan | 1,122 | 943 | -16.0% |
| Saab | 82 | 44 | -46.3% |
| Subaru | 229 | 194 | -15.3% |
| Suzuki | 238 | 293 | 23.1% |
| Toyota | 3,107 | 2,688 | -13.5% |
| Volkswagon | 88 | 53 | -39.8% |
| Volvo | 30 | 38 | 26.7% |

The year of the stolen motor vehicle

The graph below shows ty year makes of motor vehicle stolen during 2003/04. It can be noted that vehicles made from 1984 to 1990 are the most widely stolen. Motor vehicles made after 1990 seem to be stolen less frequently. This is possibly due to better security features (ie. immobilisers) installed to these later model vehicles.

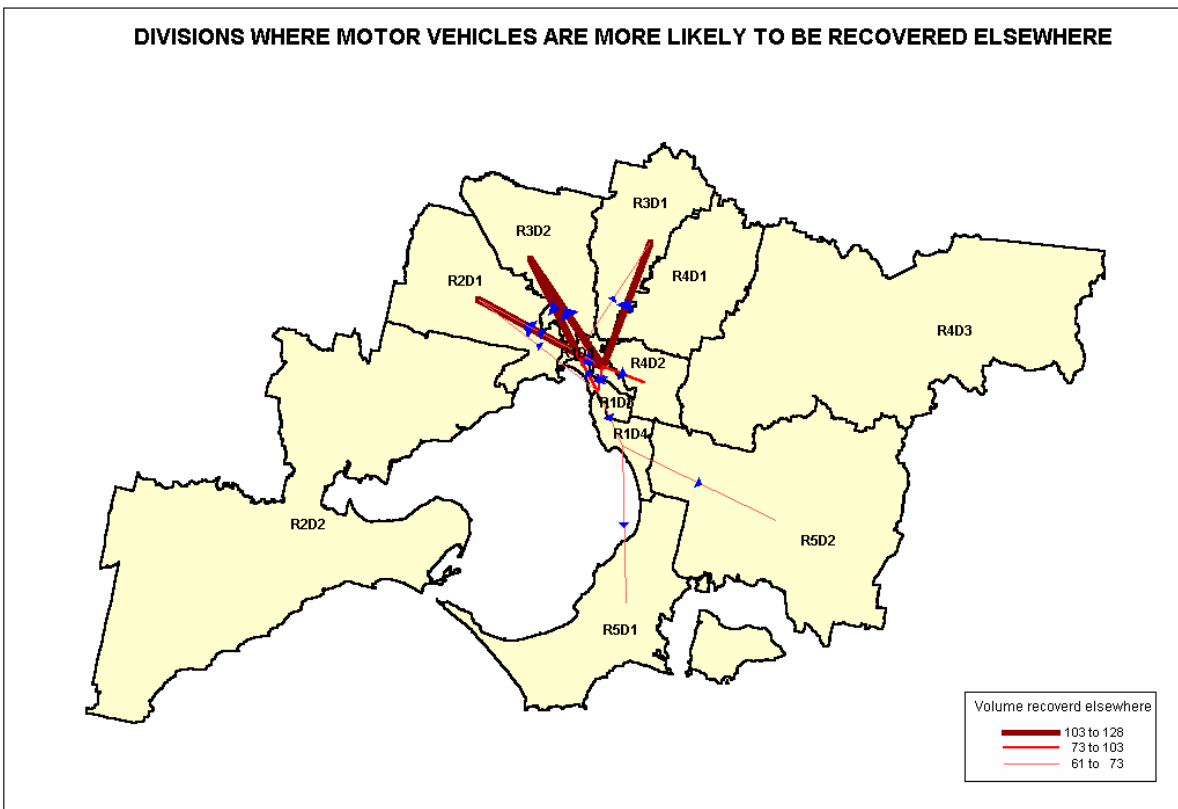


Motor vehicles stolen and where located

The table below shows a divisional breakdown of the percentage of vehicles stolen from and recovered in the same division. On average, across the state, 64.4% of motor vehicles are stolen and located within the same division. It is interesting to note that all divisions from Region 1 shows a proportion less than 50%. This means that vehicles stolen from these four divisions are more than likely to be recovered in another division than the one stolen from.

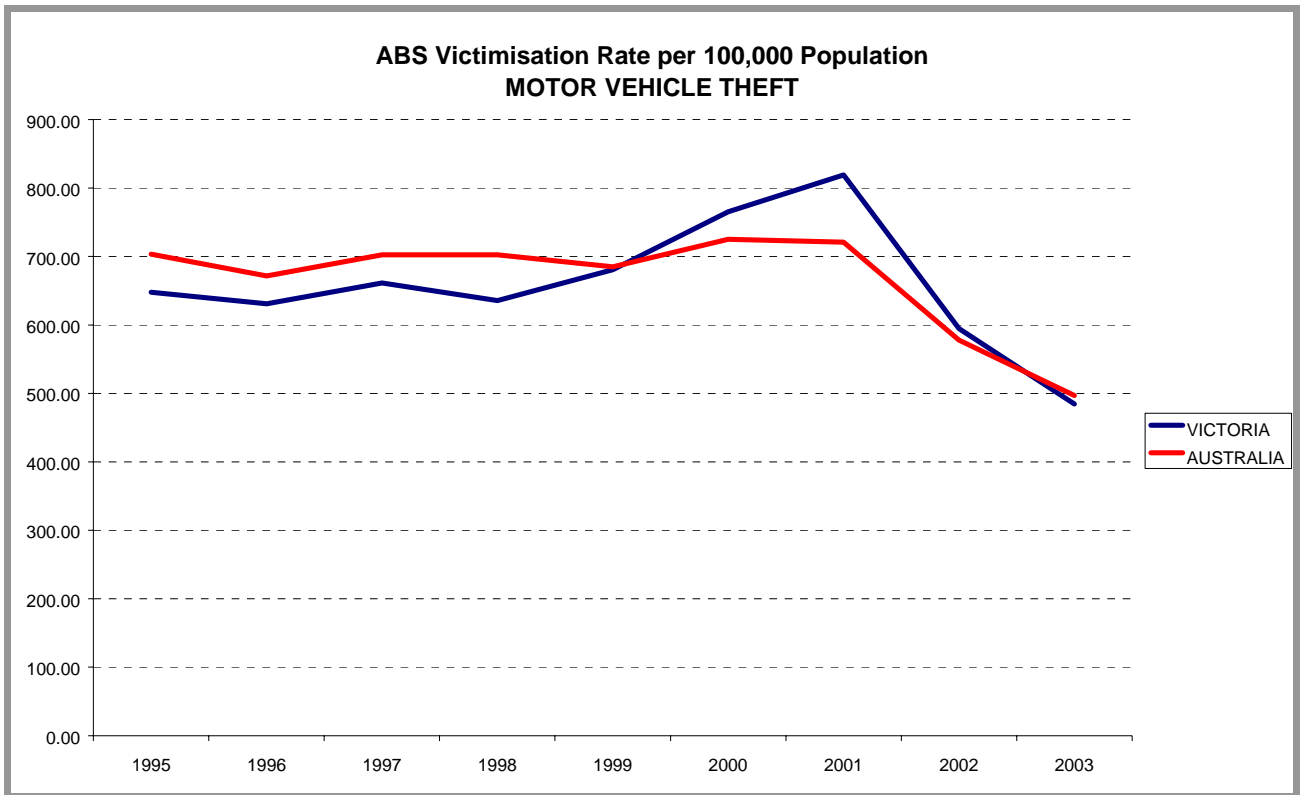
| | % Stolen and Recovered within the same Division | | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | DIVISION 1 | DIVISION 2 | DIVISION 3 | DIVISION 4 | DIVISION 5 |
| REGION 1 | 37.5% | 39.7% | 43.5% | 49.7% | n/a |
| REGION 2 | 73.5% | 82.8% | 91.7% | 80.6% | 90.1% |
| REGION 3 | 63.3% | 64.0% | 88.2% | 91.6% | 94.2% |
| REGION 4 | 56.4% | 50.3% | 74.9% | 63.0% | 90.1% |
| REGION 5 | 75.2% | 71.1% | 85.1% | 84.3% | n/a |
| STATE | State average = 64.4% | | | | |

The following map shows pictorially these four divisions where vehicles are more likely to be recovered elsewhere than the division in question. As you can see these four divisions are central to Melbourne and the vehicles recovered seem to branch out from the centre and most likely heading in a northern direction.



Comparison of Motor Vehicle Thefts in Victoria against the National trend

The following graph is compiled using the ABS definition for Motor Vehicle Thefts. Please note that this definition is a victim based count and differs from the Victoria Police method of counting.



Source: ABS (NCSU) Recoded Crime – Victims, Australia 2003 (Cat. 4510.0)
Prepared by Corporate Statistics, Victoria Police.

According to the graph above, Victoria has experienced a significant decrease in the victimisation rate for Motor Vehicle Thefts since 2001. A similar decrease has been experienced nationally.

The ABS figures show Victoria's Motor Vehicle Thefts rates per 100,000 population has decreased from 819.1 in 2001 to 484.5 in 2003, a 40.8% decrease.

Between the same two time periods, a 31.0% decrease has been experienced nationally.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this report reveals that:

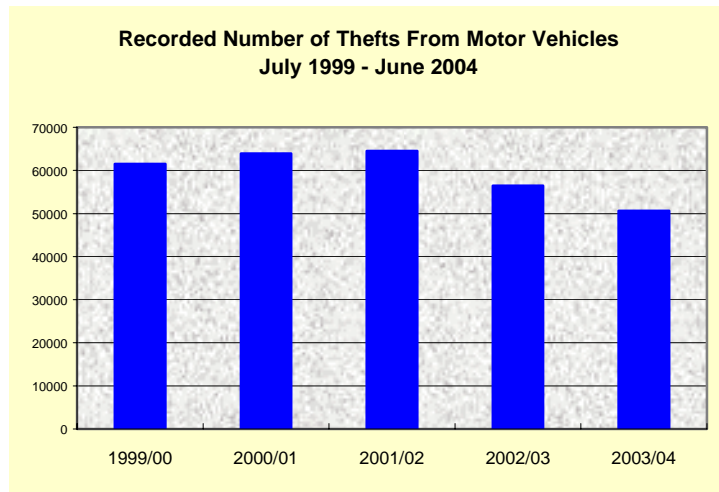
- During 2003/04 there were 23,783 recorded thefts of motor vehicles. This is a significant decrease of 18.2% when compared to the same time in the previous period. Most districts (about 80%) have experienced decreases.
- About 53% of the motor vehicles stolen were from either outside a private address, the street/road/freeway or shopping centre car parks.
- There have been increases in the theft of BMW, Honda, Hyundai, Mercedes Benz, Suzuki, and Volvo vehicles (2.0%, 4.4%, 7.8%, 4.3%, 23.1% and 26.7% respectively.)
- All age groups experienced a decrease in the number of alleged offenders during 2003/04. A notable decrease of 20.1% in offenders aged between 17 & 20 was experienced.
- Most (64.4%) vehicles stolen are recovered in the same division. The exception being vehicles stolen in divisions from Region 1, which are more likely to be recovered in another division.
- The recovery rates of the metropolitan Divisions of Regions 2 & 5 are lower than the metropolitan Divisions of Regions 1, 3 & 4.
- ABS figures show Victoria's Motor Vehicle Thefts rates per 100,000 population has significantly decreased by 40.8% since 2001.

Section 2: THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLES

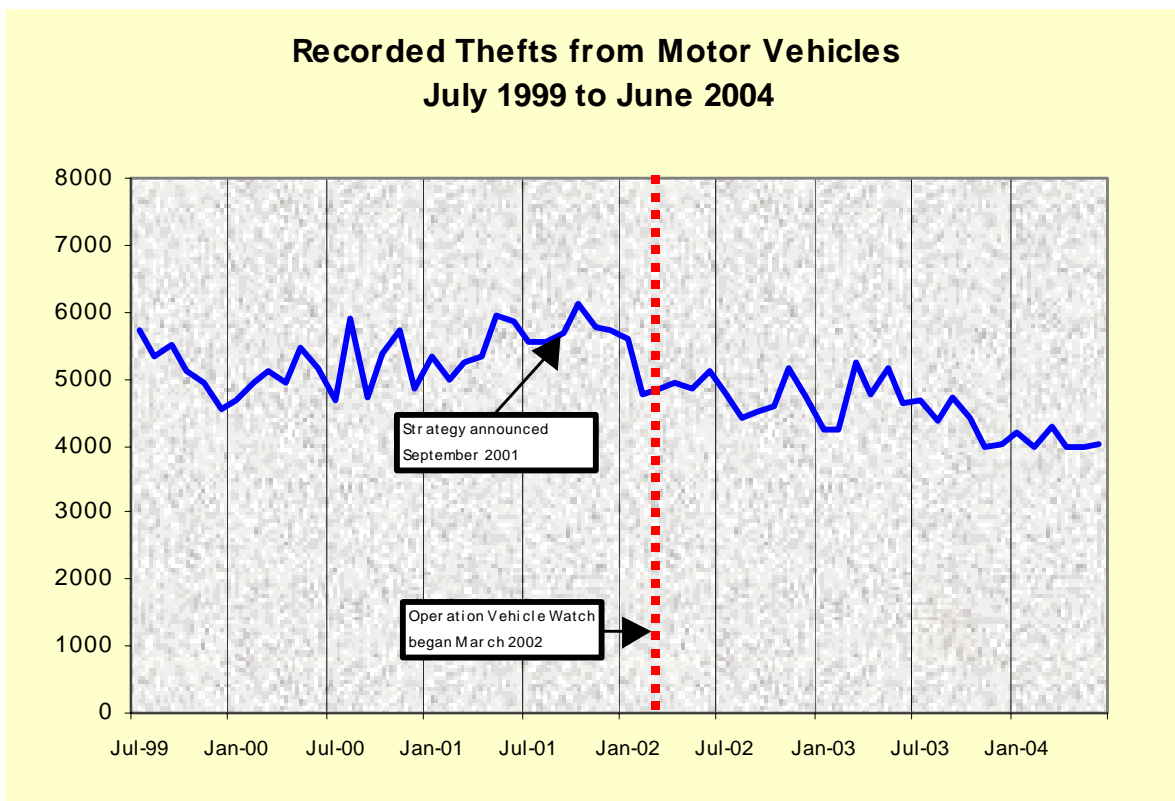
Trends in the thefts from motor vehicles

During the 2003/04 financial year there were 50,623 recorded theft from motor vehicle offences compared to 56,458 recorded for the same time period in 2002/03. This is an overall decrease of 10.3%.

It can be noted from the graph to the right that this is the second significant decrease experienced since the 2001/02 financial year.



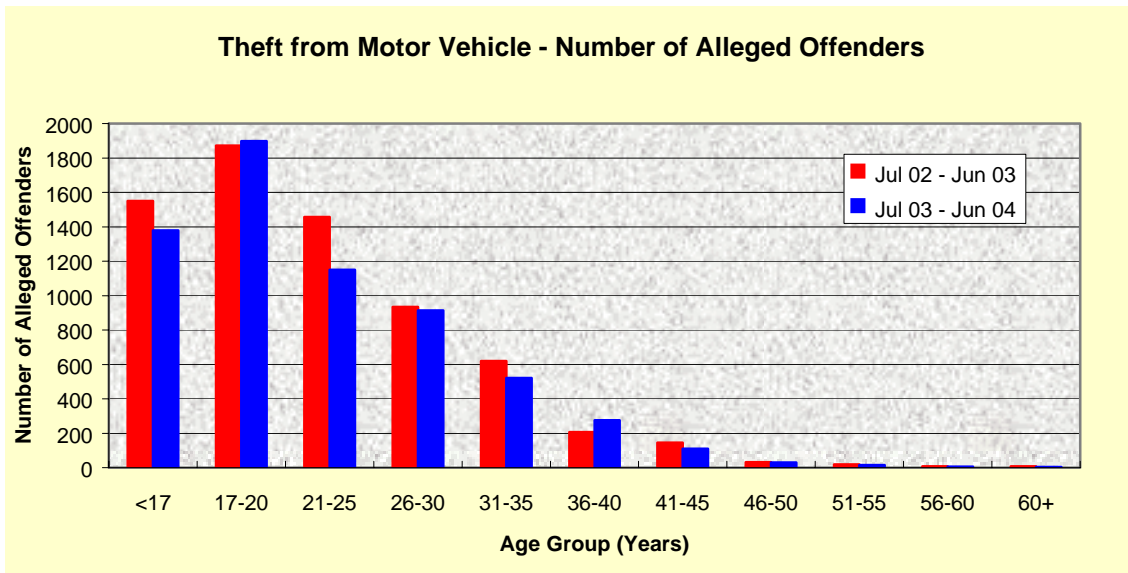
The number of recorded thefts from motor vehicles per month is indicated in the following time series chart.



Who are the offenders?

A profile of alleged offenders apprehended for the theft from a motor vehicle was compiled. Of all offenders apprehended 93.1% were male. The number of offenders apprehended had decreased 8.0% compared to the previous period. The age groups of the alleged offenders are shown in the graph below. This clearly indicates that more than half, namely 52.0%, of offenders are aged less than 21 years.

Although the number of offenders apprehended has decreased compared to the previous financial year, an increase in the number of offenders aged between 17 - 20 and 36 - 40 (1.4% and 33.5% respectively) was experienced.



The method of entry to a motor vehicle

For each recorded theft from a motor vehicle, the method that was used to gain access was investigated. The percentage figures of various methods of entry to a motor vehicle are given in the adjacent table.

The most common visible method of entry was either a smashed window (33.8%) or a forced lock (20.7%). The proportions associated with each method type are very similar comparing 2002/03 and 2003/04.

| Method of Entry | Percentage of total thefts from motor vehicles | |
|-------------------|--|----------------|
| | Jul02 to Jun03 | Jul03 to Jun04 |
| Smashed Window | 33.7% | 33.8% |
| Forced Lock | 20.8% | 20.7% |
| Nil Visible Force | 38.3% | 38.0% |
| Other | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| Not Classified | 7.1% | 7.4% |

What was stolen from the motor vehicles?

This table lists the most common items stolen from vehicles between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004. The percentage change from the corresponding period in the previous financial year is given in the right hand column.

For both periods, the most common items stolen from motor vehicles were mobile phones, cash, CD's, car stereos and wallets. The number of these items stolen has decreased during 2003/04.

However the number of computers and cameras stolen from vehicles during the 2003/04 financial year has increased 10.4% and 8.6% respectively.

| Item | Jul02 to Jun03 | Jul03 to Jun04 | Percentage Change |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Cash | 6926 | 5998 | -13.4% |
| Mobile Phone | 6733 | 5513 | -18.1% |
| Cd | 5701 | 4612 | -19.1% |
| Car Stereo | 4665 | 4084 | -12.5% |
| Wallet | 4357 | 3874 | -11.1% |
| Number Plate | 3478 | 3266 | -6.1% |
| Sunglasses | 3683 | 2929 | -20.5% |
| Credit Card | 2451 | 2096 | -14.5% |
| Cd Player | 2246 | 1952 | -13.1% |
| Computer | 1756 | 1938 | 10.4% |
| Camera | 1675 | 1819 | 8.6% |
| Bag | 1812 | 1818 | 0.3% |
| Drivers Licence | 2109 | 1784 | -15.4% |
| Handbag | 1742 | 1692 | -2.9% |
| Speaker | 1709 | 1524 | -10.8% |
| Tools | 1391 | 1297 | -6.8% |
| Purse | 1318 | 1227 | -6.9% |
| Account Card | 982 | 980 | -0.2% |
| Drill | 1210 | 976 | -19.3% |
| Clothing | 1021 | 965 | -5.5% |
| Jacket | 1285 | 924 | -28.1% |
| Wheel | 1002 | 910 | -9.2% |

Note: More than one of these items can be stolen from a motor vehicle in one incident.

The theft rate from motor vehicles of cameras and / or camera related equipment

The table to the right represents the most common locations where cameras and / or camera-related equipment are stolen from during a motor vehicle theft. The most frequent location for these thefts occurs at a Street / Lane / Footpath. It has also increased by 11.9% compared to the previous financial year. It is interesting to note also that single level, multi level and railway car parks have experienced increases too in the number of camera and / or camera related equipment stolen.

| Location | Jul02 to Jun03 | Jul03 to Jun04 | % Change |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Street / Lane / Footpath | 940 | 1052 | 11.9% |
| Carpark (Single Level) | 443 | 456 | 2.9% |
| Frontyard | 371 | 332 | -10.5% |
| Carpark (Multi Level) | 104 | 204 | 96.2% |
| Other Residential (Not Elsewhere) | 40 | 63 | 57.5% |
| Garage | 44 | 52 | 18.2% |
| House | 13 | 38 | 192.3% |
| Backyard | 27 | 33 | 22.2% |
| Unspecified / Unknown Location | 84 | 84 | 0.0% |
| Railway Carpark | 11 | 26 | 136.4% |
| Parkland/Reserve | 10 | 14 | 40.0% |

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this report reveals that:

- During 2003/04 there have been 50,623 recorded thefts from motor vehicles. This is a decrease of 10.3% when compared to the previous financial year.
- The number of offenders overall have decreased 8.0% compared to the previous period. Offenders aged 17 - 20 and 36 - 40 have increased in 2003/04.
- Vehicles gained entry either through smashed windows has remained relatively the same as the previous financial year.
- The most common items stolen from vehicles are mobile phones, cash, CDs and car stereos.
- There have been increases in the number of computers and cameras stolen during 2003/04.

Section 3: Strategies adopted to reduce Thefts involving Motor Vehicles

What strategies were adopted?

Victoria Police has initiated a strategic plan developed at preventative, reactive and pro-active measures in addressing the reduction in theft of and theft from motor car offences since 2001. The following strategies were adopted by Victoria Police to reduce Thefts involving Motor Vehicles:

INTERNALLY

ORGANISED MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT SQUAD

- INDUSTRY LIASON forums
- OPERATION LICTOR – focus on corruption and registration of ‘re-births’.
- VEH. WRITE OFF REGISTER
- Tighter registration procedures

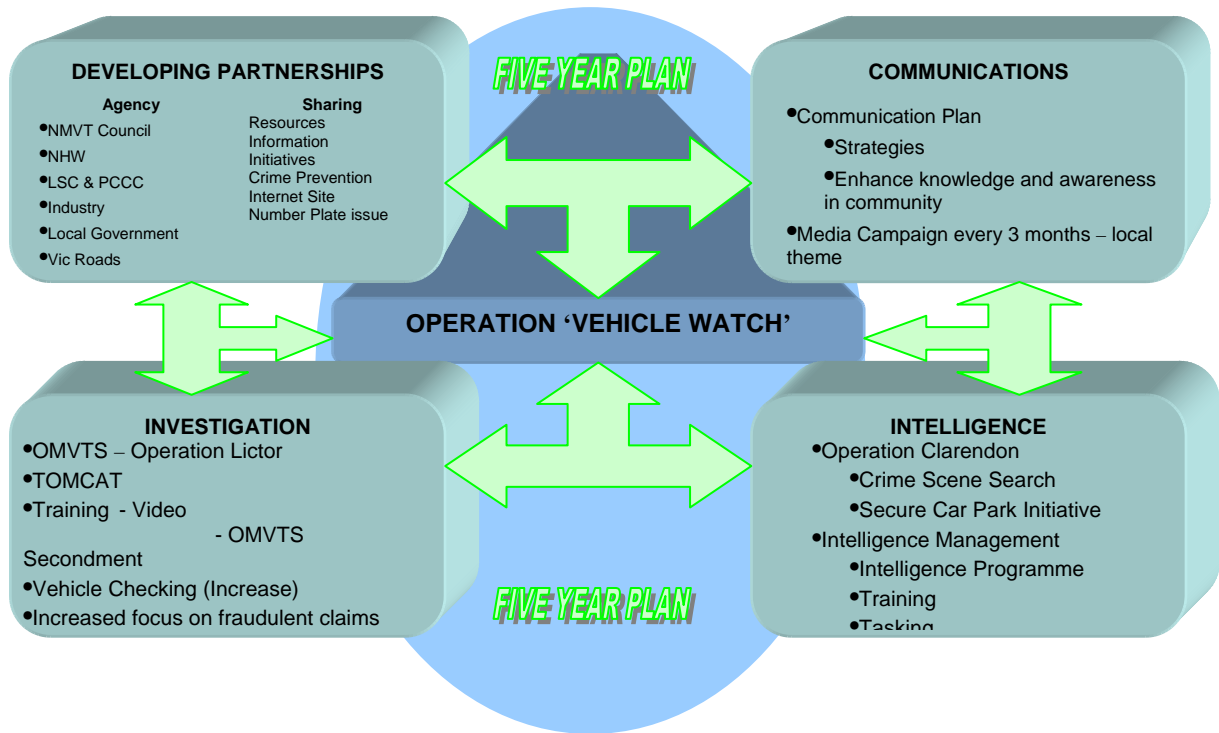
REGIONAL FOCUS

- Theft of Motor Car Actions Teams at Region/Division level. (TOMCATS).
- CLARENDON - Focus on developing fingerprints at scenes of vehicle locations and thefts from.
- LOCAL PLANS – contain strategies to address problems.
- LOCAL MANAGEMENT FOCUS – monitoring progress.
- COMPSTAT – monitoring progress.
- TECHNOLOGY
- NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION Project in Region.
- DATA DOT.

INDUSTRY LIAISON

- Organised Motor Vehicle Squad – conducts regular forums.
- VACC - supports Industry Forums.
- Data Dots update.
- Bunnings Store Sponsorship. 2000 ‘one way’ screws for affixing number plates to be provided through 38 Stores.
- Immobilisers Scheme - Subsidy.
- Vic Roads Anti –Fraud Forum.
- Vocational Training for Recidivists.

Operation Vehicle Watch



What has been achieved in Motor Vehicle Theft reduction over 2001/02 to 2003/04?

These strategies / initiatives were carefully designed and selected to focus on targeting every local area in the state in order to reduce incidents of thefts of and theft from motor vehicles, including specific initiatives necessary for any particular local area. The combination of area wide situational crime prevention strategies and initiatives including high level of police enforcement was found to be very effective.

As a result, over the past three financial years, theft of and theft from motor vehicles offences have fallen significantly, 43.7% and 28.8% respectively across the state.

The reasons for such a decrease are complex and a combination of the outcomes of many activities conducted within the community and by industry that have focussed on taking action to achieve a reduction.

It was also noted that the most successful projects implemented were a combination of short and long-term measures.