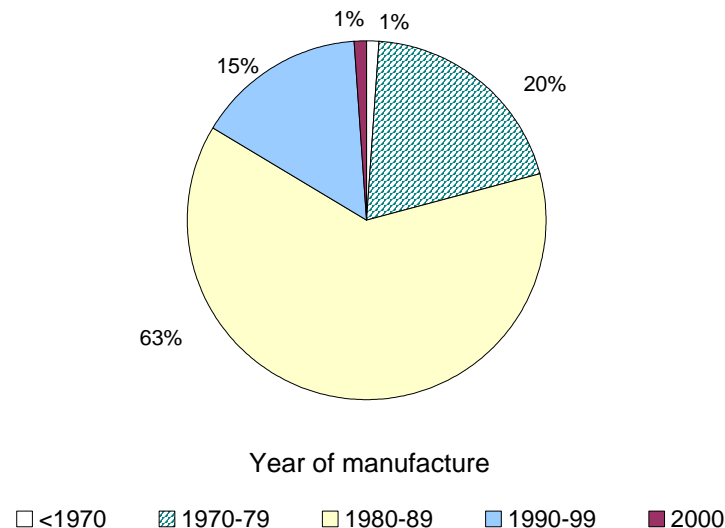


Motor Vehicle Theft Targets

During 2000 a total of 12,835 motor vehicles were reported stolen to the South Australian Police. Of these, vehicles manufactured in the 1980s account for six out of every 10 (62.6%) thefts and a further two (or 20.7%) were manufactured prior to 1980. These vehicles are particularly popular theft targets as there are over 500,000 of them registered in South Australia and they generally lack any form of effective security. Young opportunistic thieves target these vehicles for transport, joyriding or to commit another crime with little preference for make and model, being driven more by availability.

Figure 1. Motor vehicle thefts reported to SA police during 2000 by year of manufacture.



From 1992 onwards the engine immobilisers and deadlocks started to be introduced into the mainstream models sold in Australia. While many of the early model engine immobilisers do not make a vehicle 'theft proof' they certainly do restrict the average opportunistic offender. Thus vehicles manufactured after 1992 are more likely to be stolen by professional thieves intending to gain some financial reward from the sale of the vehicle and or its parts.

Amongst these newer vehicles the primary targets were vehicles which are also popular with the consumer, thus there is a large range of vehicles from which the thief can choose and there is also a large market of unsuspecting potential buyers for the re-identified vehicle and or its parts.

During 2000 the Holden Commodore topped the most frequently stolen table of vehicles manufactured from 1992 onwards. In fact, the VT, VS, VR and VP series Commodores took out the top four rankings. The Holden Commodore took out the top four places. The next most frequently stolen vehicle was the Hyundai Excel X3. Nationally, the Excel X3 is the number one theft target across Australia with particularly high levels of theft recorded in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australian and the ACT. While occasionally being targeted by professional thefts the Excel X3 has relatively poor security and is more commonly taken by the opportunistic offender. The top theft targets also demonstrate that it is not necessarily the high performance or high priced vehicles that are stolen by offenders. In addition to the Excel X3 seven other small cars are included amongst the top targets including the Ford Laser KH, Ford Festiva WB, Holden Barina SB, Nissan Pulsar N15, Ford Festiva WF, Mitsubishi Lancer CC and Toyota Corolla 101/102. Similarly, certain light commercial vehicles such as the Toyota Hilux, Holden Ute VS III, Holden Ute VR and 4-wheel drive vehicles such as the Toyota Landcruiser 70 Series, 80 Series, and Nissan Patrol are also popular targets.

Table 2. Most frequently stolen passenger and light commercial vehicles (1992 models onwards) based on thefts reported to SA Police during 2000.

Ranking	Make	Model/Series	Number of thefts	Number recovered*
1	HOLDEN	COMMODORE VT	103	88
2	HOLDEN	COMMODORE VS	64	55
3	HOLDEN	COMMODORE VR	50	44
4	HOLDEN	COMMODORE VP	47	42
5	HYUNDAI	EXCEL X3	42	38
6	FORD	FORD FALCON AU	26	23
7	FORD	FORD FALCON EF	26	19
8	MITSUBISHI	MAGNA TR	23	21
9	TOYOTA	HILUX	23	21
10	FORD	FALCON EB II	22	18
11	HOLDEN	UTE VSIII	18	16
12	FORD	FALCON EL	17	15
13	SUBARU	LIBERTY	13	13
14	FORD	LASER KH	12	10
15	SUBARU	IMPREZA	12	10
16	MITSUBISHI	MAGNA TE	11	9
17	MITSUBISHI	MAGNA TF	11	9
18	MITSUBISHI	MAGNA TS	11	8
19	FORD	FALCON ED	10	8
20	FORD	FESTIVA WB	10	9
21	HOLDEN	BARINA SB	10	9
22	NISSAN	PULSAR N15	10	10
23	TOYOTA	LANDCRUISER 80 SERIES	10	9
24	FORD	FESTIVA WF	9	8
25	HOLDEN	UTE VR	9	7
26	MITSUBISHI	LANCER CC	9	7
27	TOYOTA	CAMRY 20 SERIES	9	8
28	TOYOTA	LANDCRUISER 70 SERIES	9	5
29	NISSAN	PATROL	8	6
30	TOYOTA	COROLLA 101/102	8	8

* Number recovered is based on recovery status as at 31/12/2000

Less than 2% of all vehicles stolen during 2000 had an Australian Standards equivalent immobiliser fitted as standard equipment. This demonstrates the value of immobilisers in reducing the risk of theft.

Further analysis of those vehicles stolen with an Australian Standards equivalent immobiliser has been undertaken to determine how these vehicles were stolen. Based on those vehicles that were recovered, it was found that 56% were stolen because the offender had access to the keys, 35% appeared to have no access to keys and in 9% of cases the records did not provide enough detail to determine if the offenders had access to keys or not.

This finding demonstrates the importance of car keys for immobilised vehicles and the need for them to be protected at all times. Of the vehicles identified as being stolen via access to keys, 38% of cases involved offenders breaking into homes or businesses to get the keys. Other common methods were taking the keys from gyms or other recreational facilities while victims were busy with other activities or theft of rental vehicles whereby offenders would use false names and id to obtain vehicles.

Motor Vehicle Theft is one of a number of long-term research interests within the Office of Crime Statistics. To this end OCS has established, in conjunction with the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council Inc., the National CARS Project. The National CARS (Comprehensive Auto-theft Research System) Project gathers data from police services, vehicle registration authorities and insurance companies from around Australia and uses this information to monitor trends and assist in the development and evaluation of vehicle theft reduction strategies