

# BULLETIN

## VACC Industry Divisions



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### **New technology to crack down on number plate theft and cloning**

Members are advised that on 22 March 2019 the Andrews Labor Government [announced](#) that it would begin trialling new technology to crack down on number plate theft and cloning. The trials are a partnership between VicRoads, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Victoria Police and La Trobe University.

Data from the Victoria Police reveals that Victoria Police has recorded more than 19,000 incidents of number plate theft. The Government believe the new digital identification methods would make it harder for an offender to hide a vehicle's identity as the additional identifiers will not match a stolen or cloned number plate.

#### **What is the aim of the new technology?**

The aim of the new technology is to reduce the instances of number plate theft and cloning. These two issues have long been enablers to the crime of fuel theft for fuel retailers and also resulted in major inconvenience for new and used car dealers when receiving speeding and other traffic violation tickets, toll infringements and enquiries relating to other crimes where a stolen or cloned number plate has been used.

#### **What technology will be trialled?**

The Government has advised one type of technology being trialled is the introduction of a Radio Frequency Identification inside a sticker on a vehicle's front windscreen that in essence will act as a third number plate. This type of technology has a failsafe that includes a self-destruct functionality when the sticker is removed. It is the Government's view that this type of technology will enable Victoria Police to identify vehicles that are suspected of having a stolen or cloned number plate.

#### **The Government has also advised that other technology to be trialled includes:**

- Dedicated Short Range Communications, a new digital technology that can communicate with road infrastructure and could also be used to identify automated vehicles in the future.
- Additional security features for number plates, like holographic patterns on driver's licences and passports, will also be tested.

The trials will determine how the technologies operate in practice and how they will integrate with existing systems including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) currently used by police. It is hoped those technologies will be rolled out to ANPR systems that industry has invested heavily in.

#### **What is VACC's view?**

VACC welcomes the Governments long overdue decision to introduce measures to counteract the issues and expense accrued by industry as a result of cloned or stolen number plates. However, there is more to be done.

VACC has for the past 4 years lobbied for changes to the VicRoads Vehicle Registration Enquiry (VRE) that would allow for the VRE to publicly advise as to whether a car's registration plate was stolen. This is yet to eventuate. It is the view of VACC that the VRE must be adapted to allow fuel retailers to fully utilise technology such as ANPR systems. This will enable fuel pump operators to have access to a live Application Programming Interface (API) with the VRE. The instruction of an API between a business's ANPR system and the VRE will allow retail fuel operators to make a decision as to whether they will open a fuel bowser or not.

Access to a live data feed and alert streaming from the VRE would also enable new and used car dealers to react in an efficient manner when dealing with an inordinate number of speeding, traffic and toll infringements that are generated as a result of registration plate cloning.

VACC has seen instances where, for example, one new car dealer had \$26k of fines relating to one vehicle whose plates were cloned. The only option the dealer had was to challenge the fines in court. Not cheap and resource intensive.

VACC thanks those members of industry from the VACC Service Station and Convenience Store Division, Victorian Automobile Dealers Association and VACC Used Car Traders Division who have provided evidence-based portfolios that has led to the announcement of the trials.

Members are encouraged to send instances of registration cloning to VACC.

VACC will keep members advised of further outcomes.

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