MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW TURNS THE SCREWS ON NUMBER PLATE THIEVES

Tamper resistant screws will be installed in thousands of NSW vehicle number plates as part of a campaign to reduce the rate of stealing from motor vehicles, Police Minister Michael Gallacher and Attorney General Greg Smith SC announced today.

“This campaign builds on the success of Operation Tabella in 2009, which saw tamper resistant number plates installed on 12,000 vehicles in the areas of Sydney with the higher rates of number plate theft,” Mr Gallacher said.

“NSW Police conducted a review of these vehicles 10 months after Operation Tabella and found that only four vehicles had fallen victim to number plate theft.”

On average, a number plate is stolen from one in 400 vehicles in Sydney each year.

Over coming months, police will conduct Operation Tabella 2, where tamper resistant screws will be installed in vehicles at a range of locations, including Bankstown, Blacktown, Brisbane Waters, Cabramatta, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Green Valley, Lake Illawarra, Lake Macquarie, Liverpool, Macquarie Fields, Mt Druitt, Newcastle, Parramatta, Quakers Hill, Tuggerah Lakes, and Wollongong.

Mr Smith said reducing number plate theft would also help reduce other crimes.

“Stolen number plates are often reattached to vehicles used in petrol theft, robberies and toll evasion, so if criminals are unable to access stolen plates they may think twice about committing these crimes,” Mr Smith said.

The NSW government’s Steal From Motor Vehicle strategy will also include:

- exploring changes to car park design and other options to reduce the opportunity to steal items from vehicles;
- working with stakeholders to develop guidelines for public car parks to reduce their vulnerability to criminal activity; and
- a targeted awareness campaign reminding people not to leave valuables in their vehicles.

An online register for GPS and other mobile devices is being explored, and crime prevention design standards for service stations are currently being developed.
The campaign to reduce stealing from motor vehicles was developed in consultation with NSW Police, Transport for NSW, Designing Out Crime Research Centre, Insurance Council of Australia, Shopping Centre Council of Australia, Parking Association of Australia, Australian Retailers Association and the Service Stations Association.

For more information about car security, visit the NSW Government’s crime prevention website: www.crimeprevention.nsw.gov.au. The website contains a suite of audit tools to help owners and managers of car parks to reduce the risk of steal from motor vehicle offences occurring.