

**VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO  
THE REPORT OF THE LAW REFORM, ROAD  
AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE  
INQUIRY INTO FUEL DRIVE-OFFS**

**OCTOBER 2016**

# OVERVIEW

The Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee (the Committee) tabled its report on its Inquiry into fuel drive-offs (the Inquiry) on 9 March 2016.

The Inquiry made eight recommendations and four findings directed at the Victorian Government, Victoria Police, the fuel industry, Crime Stoppers Victoria and VicRoads. This document provides the government response to the recommendations.

## RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

**That Victoria Police develops an online fuel drive-off incident report form and a withdrawal of complaint form.**

Support in principle. The use of online reporting for fuel drive-offs will be considered as part of Victoria Police's strategic planning for the use of information technology. This will involve consideration of online reporting for a range of non-urgent offences.

Existing crime reporting mechanisms include a disposition category for "complaint withdrawn". Accordingly, there is no plan to introduce a withdrawal of complaint form specific to fuel drive-offs.

### Recommendation 2

**That Victoria Police works with its officers to enhance compliance with the 2013 Instruction to investigate fuel drive-offs where there is clear evidence of criminality. This would include reporting mechanisms for drive-offs and the adoption of a clear, consistent response by police to such reports, in particular to repeat fuel drive-offs committed by the same person.**

Support in full. Victoria Police has already commenced work to improve and enhance compliance with the 2013 instruction. As part of this, Victoria Police will formalise the instruction as a policy in the Victoria Police Manual.

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Victorian fuel retail industry, through its representative groups and associations, develop options for an entity based on the British Oil Security Syndicate model. These options should be developed in conjunction with the Victorian Government, Crime Stoppers Victoria and agencies including Victoria Police and VicRoads.**

Noted. The government notes that primary responsibility for the development of options for an entity based on the British Oil Security Syndicate (BOSS) model should properly sit with the fuel retail industry itself. High industry membership will be critical to the effectiveness of this type of model. The government will engage with the fuel industry as it develops options for an entity based on the BOSS model.

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the Victorian Government facilitates the implementation of a state-wide fuel drive-offs education campaign developed in partnership by Victoria Police, Crime Stoppers Victoria and the fuel retail industry.**

Support in principle. The government believes that raising awareness of and promoting the crime prevention measures in the industry guide at recommendation 6 may be a more effective response to this recommendation, than a state-wide fuel drive-offs education campaign.

### **Recommendation 5**

**That Victoria Police conducts six monthly forums with the fuel retail industry to discuss the issue of fuel drive-offs. Potential areas of discussion include:**

- **The need for improved reporting of such incidents to Victoria Police;**
- **Victoria Police working with industry to explain the complexity of the theft offence;**
- **The operation of Victoria Police's 2013 Instruction;**
- **Industry examples of crime prevention measures;**
- **Community education campaigns; and**
- **Other issues relating to forecourt safety.**

Support in full. Victoria Police has held two stakeholder forums (8 December 2015 and 28 April 2016) involving members of the fuel retail industry. Victoria Police will continue to hold forums to encourage an open dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

## **Recommendation 6**

**That Victoria Police develops a guide for industry on fuel drive-off prevention, with reference to the value of reporting incidents and sharing intelligence when drive-off incidents occur.**

Support in full. Victoria Police Safer Communities Unit will prepare a guide for industry on design initiatives, based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles, and other practical crime prevention initiatives that the industry could apply to help minimise the risks of fuel drive-offs.

## **Recommendation 7**

**That VicRoads completes and implements its project for access to its publicly available database, including access to number plate matched vehicle description data, stolen number plates and stolen vehicles. VicRoads should work with Automatic Number Plate Recognition and other technology providers to ensure that this data can be suitably and appropriately accessed.**

Support in principle. VicRoads is undertaking a business assessment of a number of options to provide access to number plate matched vehicle description data and stolen vehicle data. This includes consideration of how Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology might be used to link number plates with relevant data.

VicRoads will also upgrade its existing Vehicle Registration Enquiry (VRE) system, to include the provision of stolen vehicle data.

## **Recommendation 8**

**That the Victorian Government, in consultation with industry groups and key agencies, considers measures to assist the fuel retail sector to implement prepayment systems to prevent fuel drive-offs.**

Support in principle. The government will consider measures proposed by the fuel retail sector to assist them to implement prepayment systems, taking into account the significant concerns raised by the fuel retail sector about the impact of implementing the prepayment option via its submissions to the Inquiry.