



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Industrial Relations

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OPERATION TO TARGET HIGH INCIDENCE OF PETROL THEFT

Attorney General John Hatzistergos has today taken part in the launch of a new operation to crackdown on petrol theft, which has emerged as a major problem.

Under Operation Tabella, police will distribute special one-way screws to stop thieves stealing number plates, before reattaching them to their own cars, filling up with petrol and driving away without paying.

Mr Hatzistergos said the Attorney General's Department was contributing \$20,000 to the operation, which was targeting petrol theft in south west Sydney.

"Fraud in the only crime category on the increase in NSW, and studies show it is directly related to the high cost of petrol."

Mr Hatzistergos said the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) recently found that for every 10 cents per litre added to the average monthly petrol price, an extra 120 reported incidence of NSW petrol station fraud occur that month.

"Securing numbers plates with irreversible screws is a simple, cost-effective way to reduce the theft of petrol from service stations in areas of Sydney which have been hard-hit by the global recession."

Mr Hatzistergos said as part of Operation Tabella, police planned to fit one-way screws to 12,000 vehicles over five days, on July 24 and 25, and on August 7, 8 and 9.

He said motorists will be encouraged to come to designated stations where the screws will be fitted by police and community volunteers at no charge.

There will be approximately 30 fitting stations over the five days. The locations are available at www.crimeprevention.nsw.gov.au or www.police.nsw.gov.au

Operation Tabella complements the work of the Attorney General's Department which has provided funding for theft resistant screws to be fitted to more than 15,000 vehicles over the last six months.

Mr Hatzistergos said aside from fitting one-way screws to their number plates, motorists should deter would-be thieves by not leaving valuables in their cars.