



Speech By  
**James Martin**


**MEMBER FOR STRETTON**

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## **TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (3.26 pm): I rise to speak on committee report No. 12 of the Transport and Resources Committee—Inquiry into Vehicle Safety, Standards and Technology, including Engine Immobiliser Technology. As a new member of the Transport and Resources Committee, I take this opportunity to thank the committee and in particular the committee chair, the member for Kurwongbah, for his wise guidance and advice. Unfortunately he is not here today; he is having surgery this week. It is great to be part of such a well-functioning committee which I am sure is largely due to the sensible approach taken by the member for Kurwongbah. I hope that the committee continues in this way.

A key issue that the committee looked at in this report goes back to the technological definitions about what different immobilisers are. An engine immobiliser is a security system designed to prevent the engine from running without the appropriate key or fob. Most engine immobiliser systems work with a transponder chip embedded in the key or fob that sends a code signal into the vehicle's computer when the key is turned on. Engine immobilisation technology, as mentioned by other members, is the primary measure that we all know well which addresses unauthorised vehicle use, including theft.

Immobiliser devices are electronic switches fitted to vehicles that require an electronic transponder or key to unlock the vehicle's ignition. Vehicles with engine immobiliser technology cannot be hot-wired, as we have heard, or have their engines started without having a key present.

As the MTAQ noted, immobilisers have been mandatory in all passenger and light commercial vehicles since 2001 and have contributed to a large reduction in motor vehicle theft. In fact, now 70 per cent of vehicles are stolen using their own keys. As the RACQ submitted to the committee, there was a need to consider what actions can be taken to address the issue of key security. This has the potential to provide significant and low cost improvements.

On this point, I acknowledge the hardworking police officers in my local area who work in the crime prevention unit. They hold a number of 'coffee with a cop' events. One of the main things they talk about at these events is key security, a focus on improving safety—which is everyone's responsibility—public awareness about where you leave your keys and also making sure that you leave your car locked.

Moving on from that, remote engine immobilisers are a recent extension of engine immobiliser technology. This technology is generally referred to as a remote controlled engine locking system or a remote engine locking device. These devices introduce the ability to control a vehicle's ignition from a distance using digital or wireless technology. It is important to recognise that fixed immobilisation prevents a vehicle from starting whilst remote immobilisation can also operate on a moving vehicle. Ghost immobilisers are immobilisers that require a pin to start the vehicle and a ghost immobiliser is a device that is aimed at providing an additional layer of security which prevents vehicle theft even if the thief has access to the keys.

The report is interesting because the committee initially anticipated that remote engine immobilisers would form a large part of the inquiry. However, what became clear from speaking to all the stakeholders and submitters was that the technology itself, whilst appealing, is not sufficiently developed to be a viable solution to vehicle thefts. There were a wide range of disadvantages identified by the stakeholders in relation to remote engine immobilisers. These include that the technology was simply not mature enough for reliance on in the medium term at this point. It was the opinion of many stakeholders that it would quickly be overtaken by new vehicles anywhere, where we will be able to track and identify where a vehicle is without having to engage in any form of pursuit.

In addition, dynamic immobilisation has not been broadly adopted internationally due to the complexities and significant risks associated with it. The RACQ said that there were other safety concerns in relation to shutting down a moving vehicle. In conclusion, I thank the committee for all of their work. I wish everyone in this place a happy Christmas.