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Snagged McNapping in Southbank

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Victoria Police arrested a man in his early 30s after he was found asleep in a stolen Toyota LandCruiser at a fast-food outlet car park on City Road, Southbank, Melbourne, on **27 July 2025**. The vehicle had reportedly been stolen from a Balaclava address on **20 July**, and police traced its movements across multiple suburbs, Thomastown, Preston, Thornbury, Fairfield, Alphington, Clifton Hill, Fitzroy, and Abbotsford, before it stopped at the Southbank location.

Officers discovered the man, who is of no fixed address, asleep in the backseat; he was arrested and is currently awaiting questioning. The driver, reportedly inside the restaurant at the time, fled before police arrived. Authorities are appealing for public assistance to help identify and locate this individual.

This incident follows a broader rise in vehicle thefts across Victoria. Intelligence from Victoria Police indicates a sharp increase, particularly involving vehicles with electronic key systems such as LandCruisers, Hiluxes, and Prados. Offenders are increasingly using electronic key programming devices to bypass security systems.

Recent police operations have specifically targeted these offences. A recent operation in Southbank car parks, conducted from **18 to 20 July 2025**, resulted in the arrest of 17 individuals for various offences, including vehicle theft and robbery. Separately, Operation Trinity has led to over 1,700 arrests of burglars and car thieves in the past year across Melbourne, averaging more than four arrests per day.

The LandCruiser case is one of several involving high-risk vehicle thefts. In a separate incident in June 2025, a stolen white LandCruiser was driven through a shopping centre in Preston. That vehicle was also believed to have been compromised using a key reprogramming device. A 27-year-old man was arrested and charged with multiple offences, including reckless conduct endangering life.

Police advise motorists to take preventive measures such as locking vehicles, removing keys or fobs, and installing OBD port locks. The Vehicle Crime Squad is continuing to work with manufacturers to strengthen electronic security and urges the public to report suspicious activity or footage to Crime Stoppers.