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CAR THEFT IMMOBILISED

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson says new figures show four out of five vehicles stolen in South Australia are not fitted with an immobiliser.

The finding is part of data to be discussed at the Vehicle Theft Awareness Seminar, which will be officially opened by Mr Atkinson in Adelaide today.

The event brings together industry, government and community groups that are focussed on preventing vehicle theft.

“When a car is stolen it not only ruins the owner’s day but it costs all motorists. Each stolen car is factored into car insurance premiums and hits the hip pocket of every driver,” Mr Atkinson said.

The Comprehensive Auto-theft Research System (CARS) data also reveals:

- South Australians are almost half as likely to be victims of vehicle theft now than they were seven years ago
- Passenger and light commercial vehicles without an engine immobiliser are twice as likely to be stolen as vehicles fitted with an immobiliser, and
- Keys are the most common way to steal an immobilised vehicle, with access gained to keys in three quarters of thefts of modern cars.

Mr Atkinson said immobilisers make would-be car thieves think twice.

“It’s tremendously difficult to hot-wire a car that’s fitted with an engine immobiliser. The electronic device disrupts critical components needed to start the vehicle’s engine,” he said.

“The mandatory installation of immobilisers in new cars and improved vehicle security is driving down car theft,” Mr Atkinson said.

“The latest CARS statistics show that since the Rann Government came to office vehicle theft has dropped by 39 per cent – from 11, 942 vehicles in 2001 to 7, 252 last year.”

But the Attorney-General said there’s only so much the police, technology and law reform can do to limit this kind of offending.

“All motorists should invest in an immobiliser and remain vigilant with their keys. Tough laws and heavy penalties send a strong message to potential offenders but prevention is still the best cure.”