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MEDIA STATEMENT

Inattention behind WA's costly rear-end collisions

Inattention by drivers is believed to be a key factor behind a large proportion of rear-end vehicle collisions on Western Australian roads, according to the Insurance Commission of Western Australia (Insurance Commission).

Of the 3,500 compulsory third-party (CTP) personal injury claims received by the Insurance Commission in 2012-13, the cause of the accident was listed as 'ran into rear' in 40% of those claims.

The personal injury claim costs paid out by the Insurance Commission in 2012-13 from 'ran into rear' claims was \$84m. Total claims payments (i.e., for all types of crashes) for 2012-13 were approximately \$374m.

The Deputy Chief Executive of the Insurance Commission, Lew Watts, said the estimated cost of 2012-13 rear-end crashes was approximately \$59,000 per personal injury claim.

"This \$84m paid in 2012-13 is only for personal injury insurance claims, and does not include motor vehicle repair costs and other costs to individuals and the community, so the costs from these crashes are much higher," Mr Watts said.

"Rear-end crashes have been highlighted here due to their obvious link to inattention however it can be argued that the vast majority of motor vehicle crashes causing personal injury are in part due to inattention," said Mr Watts.

"Given the cost of these personal injury insurance claim payments is paid from premiums collected from motorists each year, reducing the number and size of insurance claims will reduce pressure on premium rates," according to Mr Watts.

Road Safety Council Chair, Professor Murray Lampard, said the insurance data was yet another reason road users needed to recognise that driver and rider attention was vital in reducing serious injuries and fatalities on WA roads.

"Traditionally, these crashes get called 'fender benders', but the term underplays the serious and frequent personal injuries that arise from following-vehicle collisions and also the dollar cost to our community," Mr Lampard said.

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