

Monday 29 March, 2010

Most cars pose serious risks for pedestrians

More than two thirds of cars sold in Australia do not pass international standards for pedestrian safety, according to the country's leading road crash organisation based at the University of Adelaide.

Daniel Searson from the Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR) says of 33 models available for sale in Australia, only about six would currently pass the Global Technical Regulation (GTR) for Pedestrian Safety.

Mr Searson, who will present a public seminar in Adelaide this Wednesday 31 March on pedestrian safety, says Australia lags behind Japan and Europe when it comes to designing cars which protect both occupants and pedestrians.

"The key factors in vehicle design which help minimise pedestrian injuries are the car's ability to absorb impact from a human body and the clearance between the bonnet and the engine," Mr Searson says.

"Currently there is no legal requirement for vehicles sold in Australia to take into account either of these design features."

Australia is a signatory to the GTR and it is hoped that the Federal Government will adopt the global regulations in the near future.

Mr Searson says a recent CASR study has estimated that at least 28 lives per year and about 1000 injuries could be saved if all car manufacturers adopted the minimum pedestrian safety requirements in Australia.

"In dollar terms this amounts to about \$385 million per year in savings – not to mention the obvious human factor, where many families will be spared a lot of grief."

Mr Searson has a degree in Mechanical Engineering (Honours) from the University of Adelaide and is currently finishing his last year of a PhD researching impacts of crashes involving pedestrians.

WHAT: CASR Public Lecture: "Regulating Vehicle Design for Pedestrian Protection" by Daniel Searson

WHERE: Art Gallery of South Australia Auditorium, North Terrace

WHEN: Wednesday 31 March, 4pm-5.30pm

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