



DAVID MORRIS MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government

Member for Mornington

Motor Vehicle Registration – Repairable Write-Offs Legislative Assembly 12th August 2009

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — I also raise a matter for the Minister for Roads and Ports this evening. The action I seek from the minister is that he ensures the government promptly considers and responds to recent work undertaken by the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council with regard to the increasing practice of inappropriately repairing and re-registering vehicles classified as repairable write-offs. I am aware from the licensed motor car traders in my electorate that this has become a considerable issue.

Already this state has a framework via the Road Safety Act to control the repair and reuse of smashed vehicles, including the distinctions that are made in the legislation between repairable write-offs and statutory write-offs. I am not suggesting that this is a problem for the state of Victoria alone. Clearly it is a matter which affects all states and territories.

It is a practice that has at least two serious impacts. The first is when a motor vehicle trader gets stuck with a trade-in that somehow got registered when it should not have been registered. On many occasions they have paid tens of thousand of dollars, sometimes many tens of thousands of dollars, for a vehicle they could do nothing with, so they have simply had to accommodate the cost. The second concern is that the purchaser of these vehicles is running a considerable risk of death or injury from the construction of a vehicle from second-hand parts cannibalised from other vehicles.

In October 2008 the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council completed a preliminary report on the management of written-off vehicles. In the report it talked, amongst other things, about improved recovery rates for newer stolen vehicles. It considers that the statutory ban on the re-registration of severely damaged vehicles has effectively dealt with the traditional rebirthers. But it is becoming clear that, as a consequence, repairable write-offs are now emerging in the market, and the current processes make it difficult to refuse registration.

In July this year the council held a workshop on the matter. I understand it is now preparing a final list of actions for reform of the current system. I urge the minister to consider these reforms promptly and to deal with and eliminate this problem once and for all.
