

## **Thieves favourite cars – is yours on the most wanted list?**

**Auckland – 1 October 2008** – AA Insurance today revealed its list of the ten models of cars most attractive to thieves, following an analysis of theft claims made for vehicles insured by the company over the last four years. Nissan Silvia heads the list, followed by the Subaru Impreza and the BMW 325 coupe, of cars stolen more often than average.

To calculate theft incidence AA Insurance measured theft claims by model for cars on which it held policies. It expressed the data as a percentage of total cars of that model insured and then ranked models and identified the top ten targets.

### **Top 10 targets<sup>1</sup>**

1. Nissan Silvia
2. Subaru Impreza WRX
3. BMW 325 coupe
4. Nissan 200SX
5. Mazda Lantis
6. Subaru Legacy turbo
7. Subaru Impreza non-turbo
8. Nissan Skyline
9. Subaru Legacy non-turbo
10. Honda Prelude

“It’s important to point out that this list is no reflection on the security features offered by the various vehicle manufacturers, but shows the model preferences of car thieves as experienced by AA Insurance policyholders who filed claims for theft,” says Chris Curtin, CEO, AA Insurance. “It does not take into account other insurers’ data, but we are a sizeable insurer of motor vehicles and releasing this information serves as a reminder that people need to take all reasonable steps to prevent theft.”

Contrary to popular belief, your car is at risk from thieves even when close to home. The 2008 AA Insurance Drivers Index, which surveyed 2,573 New Zealand drivers aged 18-75, found some 26 percent of thefts occurred when the car was parked at home in the garage, carport or driveway. Some 16 percent of thefts occurred when the car was parked at home on the street or a nearby street.

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<sup>1</sup> Source AA Insurance claims data for vehicles stolen between August 2004 and July 2008

Over one third of people whose cars had been stolen (36 percent) thought they could have done more to prevent the theft.

Yet when those who regularly don't lock their cars were asked about where they left them unlocked, almost a quarter said they don't lock their car at home, with 23 percent saying they don't lock their car when it's parked outside their house, and 22 percent say they don't lock their car when it's parked in the garage at home.

Some 40 percent of New Zealanders don't bother to investigate security features when looking to buy a new car, according to AA Insurance.

The most commonly used security feature is a security coded or removable stereo system, with 26 percent of those surveyed using one of these in their car. The second most popular security feature was an alarm, used by 25 percent of those surveyed. And 23 percent of people used an immobiliser to increase their car's security. But a quarter of those surveyed don't have any added security at all to help keep their car safe.

"Our message to car owners is that there are simple things you can do to make your car less attractive to thieves," says Chris. "Remember, thieves will always go for the easiest, fastest option. So if you make it just a little bit harder for them, the chances are they'll lose interest in your car and move on to an easier target. Install an alarm, consider an immobiliser and advertise them in your car – thieves are quickly discouraged by the flashing light or alarm sticker.

"Lock your car, even when you're at home. When parking on the street, park under a streetlight, making your car – and any potential thieves – easier to spot. And if parking in a car park, park near the attendant or in front of a security camera where you know your car will be seen.

### **Eliminating insurance surprises if your car is stolen**

- Make sure you are covered for theft. If you've purchased third party insurance only (rather than third party, fire and theft or full insurance), your insurer can't help you.
- If your car policy talks about Agreed Value, you know this is what you are going to get if your car is stolen or damaged beyond repair. If your policy talks about Market Value, this means your insurer will pay out what the car was worth at the time it was stolen or damaged – and you may be surprised how much its value has dropped.

### **When looking to buy a new car**

When looking to buy a car, you can call your insurer to get a quote for the insurance before you buy it. Don't wait until you have paid and are ready to drive away.

"We've had a number of cases where young men have bought a high-powered, late model car and then been shocked at the cost of insuring it, particularly if the car has modifications like mag wheels, and the car owner is a relatively young driver," says Chris. "There's even been instances when the person has actually found it very difficult to get insurance."

**ENDS**

### **About AA Insurance**

AA Insurance was launched in 1994 and is a joint venture between New Zealand Automobile Association and Suncorp-Metway Limited.

AA Insurance has over 300 staff servicing 130,000 plus customers and manages almost 300,000 policies. Over half of those policies cover motor insurance risks including cars, bikes, caravans, and motor homes, and the remainder are house and contents insurance.

AA Insurance Limited has an A+ (Strong) insurer financial strength rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd on 17 May 2008. For further information visit [www.aainsurance.co.nz](http://www.aainsurance.co.nz)

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