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## Impreza joins dots for security

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Safer: DataDot security should eventually make the Subaru WRX cheaper to insure.

THE new Impreza will be harder to steal and cheaper to insure if a Subaru plan succeeds. It has just introduced the anti-theft DataDot security branding feature on the Impreza range launched in Melbourne this week.

An average 10,000 tiny DataDots are sprayed on to each car. They show its vehicle identification number (VIN), allowing authorities to check for stolen or "rebirthed" cars and track down stolen parts.

While it will initially be only an Impreza feature, Subaru will introduce DataDots for all cars next year.

DataDots are one of the security upgrades Subaru has introduced for the WRX, which was the vehicle of choice for ram-raid thieves.

All new WRXs were fitted with key-pad-operated alarm systems from 2001, and the carmaker has deleted the keylock from the passenger door and also from the boot on the hatch model to make the new model harder to steal.

Subaru claims only one 2002-model WRX has been stolen, and that was towed away, but the car still attracts high insurance premiums.

Subaru Australia general manager Nick Senior says improvements in the security of the WRX will mean owners will be less at risk of having their cars stolen. "We'll have to wait and see, but we think the message is getting through," he says.

Senior is confident insurance premiums will drop as the rate of WRX thefts declines.

"Insurance premiums are basically driven by statistical data, so it is going to take a couple of years for that to come through," he said.

"We have had an indication from at least one company that it is going to reduce its premiums because of the measures we have taken with the new Impreza range."

BMW, HSV, Tickford and Mitsubishi have used DataDot technology to protect their cars, but the Subaru Impreza -- which starts at \$25,990 -- is definitely the cheapest car to be fitted with the anti-theft technology.

National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council executive director Ray Carroll says DataDots will deter criminals.

"There is no doubt the ease with which thieves have manipulated traditional vehicle identifiers, such as metal compliance plates, has played straight into the hands of crooks.

"But microdot technology sets a new standard, making it virtually impossible to remove all traces of identification," he says.

*Herald Sun*

