



Road carnage is no accident



Road crashes are rarely accidental and generally occur because at least one party involved has breached a road rule – yet crashes are still commonly referred to as accidents.

Inspector Chris Thomas from the Queensland Police Service State Traffic Support Branch believes the term accident is at the root of a psychological barrier which prevents drivers from taking road rules seriously and being responsible for the choices they make.

“The word ‘accident’ implies that there has been an interplay of random or chance factors and does not help the road safety effort because it undermines the notion that crashes have causal or contributory factors,” Inspector Thomas said.

The road rules provide a system for safe road usage, and when adhered to there is no reason why all road users should not reach their destination safely.

Yet over the past five years more than 1,600 people have

been killed and another 28,666 hospitalised following incidents on Queensland roads.

The combined social cost of these incidents was more than \$14.5 billion.

Inspector Thomas said it had become part of our culture to refer to crashes as accidents and it would take time and a range of strategies to change that culture.

“The terminology must change before there can be any significant change in driver attitude and thus a reduction in road trauma.”

Inspector Thomas is also liaising with other government departments and agencies to help bring about a move away from use of the word accident. ■