

Taking the pain out of vehicle claims

This service makes such good commercial sense that it's amazing that it hasn't been offered before. Even better – it's free to brokers.

Crash Brokers provides a service in accident management and collision repairs, linking your clients with on-the-spot advice, and a network of quality repairers throughout the greater Auckland area. These are CRA certified structural repair centres, MTA members and/or AA affiliated – and all are authorised by all major insurance companies.

"The service is available to everybody; is very popular with fleet operators and is an excellent way brokers can provide an added service for clients at no cost," says managing director, Karen Knight.

There are already a number of brokers using the service, which has the support of IBANZ, but Knight is keen to spread the word to others. Crash Brokers is also supported by major insurers, she adds.

"There's a misconception among the public that in the event of a vehicle accident claim that the insurance company organises everything. It's actually up to the customer to organise their own repairs and that's where we come in," says Knight. "And finding a reputable repair shop that is handy and able to provide a courtesy car is not easy."

Knight knows this from experience. In her earlier years she owned and operated The Panel Shop, one of Auckland's largest repair facilities and is credited with introducing the 'courtesy car' service to the industry – an idea she picked in the US in the early 1980s.

Later in her career, as the national vehicle manager of a major car leasing company, Knight saw the other side of the crash repair industry and the need for a repair management service.

"The principle of offering a service became blindingly obvious as many fleet clients could not afford the time and resources to manage their own quality repairs." Companies were even prepared to pay for the fleet repair management programme, based on a per vehicle, per month basis, regardless of any claim.

Knight also realised that there was no such broking service looking after small businesses that lease cars or even the private motoring sector.

The result is Crash Brokers, a business built around a 'free of charge' service that puts private motorists and all-size businesses in touch with a network of crash repairers who guarantee a level of good service – such as priority repairs and access to courtesy cars. The cost of the service falls on the repairer.

Crash Brokers has already been picked up by a number of brokers, including Trevor Strong Brokers and David Parker Executive Broker, but Knight says there has been a misconception among others that insurers do not support the service. "Insurers are, in fact, very comfortable with the concept," she says, "and every job is still assessed by an auditor."

Customers have access to a 0800 numbers that works 24/7 and a 'repair solution' is put together very quickly, says Knight, from point of impact, roadside rescue, to a convenient repair location – depending on the type of vehicle and availability of a courtesy car. "The client and broker are kept in the loop with progress reports during the whole process."

A recent online innovation on the Crash Brokers website allows the client and the broker to track their repair job in real time.

"It's another way that this service adds value and strength to the relationship between brokers and their clients. It simply takes the hassle and stress out of a vehicle repair job at no cost to either party."

Brokers can get more information by emailing or phoning Karen Knight on 0800 227 274, enquiries@crashbrokers.co.nz, and checking out the website, www.crashbrokers.co.nz



▲ No problem – Karen Knight, Crash Brokers



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