

TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2023

RACV AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH VICTORIA SHARE CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE

RACV and Neighbourhood Watch Victoria are encouraging Victorians to take the necessary steps around their home to help improve their safety and security and ensure their home insurance is up to date.

The reminder comes off the back of [the latest data from the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency](#) that shows property and deception offences are the types of crimes that have had the largest increase in the last 12 months, up 15.6 per cent to 272,790. Property and deception offences include burglary, break and enter and theft.

RACV claims data also shows that over the last two years, almost 57 per cent of car key theft occurred in people's homes.

RACV Head of Home and Business Insurance Kirsty Hayes said the sad fact of property theft was when victims found their insurance did not cover their lost items.

"It's essential to check that your home insurance is up to date, with an adequate level of cover," Ms Hayes said.

"You can calculate the estimated cost to repair or replace your contents by using a [home contents calculator](#).

"You can also look into a variety of home security products from RACV to help protect your home including alarm systems and monitoring, smart home security and security cameras (CCTV)."

RACV and Neighbourhood Watch are also encouraging Victorians to use [How Safe is My Place](#) to help identify vulnerabilities in their property. Last month, the website was translated into Chinese, Punjabi and Vietnamese to expand the reach of Neighbourhood Watch – in particular to new migrants who may not have a similar program in their original countries.

Neighbourhood Watch Victoria CEO Bambi Gordon said that there were steps home-owners could take to prevent robberies and keep our belongings and loved ones safe.

"The frustrating fact is that we need to do better at protecting our properties – a home is burgled in Victoria every 20 minutes and a third of those burglaries are opportunistic and don't even require forced entry." Ms Gordon said.

Ms Gordon called for Victorians to come together and use the strength of community networking to make their homes and property safer.

“When Neighbourhood Watch Victoria started in 1983, it was the residents of brand-new estates who embraced the initiative. These young families – English, Greek, Italian – were moving into the then ‘new’ suburbs of Melbourne and forming friendships – some that remain today, 40 years later,” Ms Gordon said.

“We are seeing the same pattern now and many of these new neighbours are often members of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and by translating How Safe is My Place into languages other than English, we are making our advice more accessible and supporting people to engage with their neighbours and us.

“Joining or starting a Neighbourhood Watch group in your local area is not only a fantastic way to meet and connect with your neighbours, but also the best crime-prevention tool in your arsenal,” Ms Gordon said.

When it comes to crime prevention, Ms Gordon said many people underestimated how simple mitigation techniques can have an enormous impact.

“Ultimately, burglars are scared of being caught and they’re lazy – but if we make things easy for them, they will take advantage.

“There’s a layer of things you can do to make your home safer. In addition to getting to know your neighbours and communicating any suspicious behaviour to police, remember to lock all your doors, windows and garages and invest in home security equipment – that you regularly check.

“Keeping valuables out of sight may seem like an obvious piece of advice, but many of us will ignore the risks of leaving keys, wallets and bags in plain sight inside a car or by the front door.”

You can find your local Neighbourhood Watch group at <https://nhw.com.au/groups>, or register through the website to start your own and you can learn more about [RACV Home Security Systems here](#).

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Further information

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