

Crime proof your farm

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A new tool to help farmers keep their properties safe has been created by Neighbourhood Watch in conjunction with Victoria Police and RACV.

"How safe is my farm" is intended to help Victorian farmers identify what they can do to reduce the risk of crime on their properties.

It includes an online tool that asks a series of questions about security and gives users a personalised report on how safe their farm is.

Co-director of the Centre for Rural Criminology at the University of New England Alistair Harkness said thefts from farms have enormous social and economic impacts and can be costly, disruptive and mentally straining.

"That's why the innovative

How safe is my farm tool from Neighbourhood Watch is invaluable. It lets farmers conduct an audit to see where vulnerabilities might exist and to think carefully about what crime prevention measures might be implemented to improve safety and security.

"For farming communities, it is important to keep an eye out for each other, report crime and suspicious behaviour when it does occur, and prevent crime occurring in the first place by implementing measures on farms to deter offending."

Warragul Police leading senior constable Paula Fowler said police would be at Farm World this weekend to provide locals with advice on how to keep safe.

Snr const Fowler said farmers in the Baw Baw Shire should take the time to lock up their sheds and ensure the keys for tractors, motor-bikes and vehicles are stored somewhere safe and out of sight.

She encouraged anyone who witnesses suspicious behaviours or vehicles in or around their properties to contact police, call triple-zero or contact Crime Stoppers.

Data from the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency has revealed more than 2000 offences were committed on Victorian farms in 2022, with theft - including the theft of firearms and live-stock - account for more than 60 per cent of crimes.