

## Residential Security Research Project Feb 2020.

### **Background.**

During 2019, there were several comments made on facebook about the number of break in's or criminal activity occurring within the Baw Baw Shire.

I thought there might be an education process in which could occur which could assist local home occupiers whether they own or rent the property in which they reside in, which might help minimize some of the issues which were occurring.

I am a Licensed Security Advisor in the State of Victoria, and have spent many years in the Security Patrols, Guards sector, which I will declare as any sort of conflict in people may see.

The purpose of the report is to identify where residential occupiers could improve their security, a copy of the report will be sent to council for their viewing and considerations, where they may decide to obtain grants to help residential occupiers to improve their security, where they identify the risks to be.

The survey link was mainly shared through the Drouin community facebook group, which has just under 16,000 members, and groups members were encouraged to share it with their friends, so whilst it was disappointed that only 74 people completed the survey, which could be less than 1% of the group numbers who were interested in providing an answer to the survey, although no personal information was requested or kept after the survey was completed, however I appreciate people were cautious about completing a security survey on their premises..

### **Results.**

Around 85% of the respondents to the survey were home owners, therefore either owning their own home, or having a mortgage on the home and therefore paying Mortgage repayments.

Around 74% of the respondents identifying as to not having any sort of security cameras within their homes, which cameras are a good assistance to Police when it comes to investigating a break in or other incident once it occurs, the positive part is that 25% of the respondents have made the financial commitment to having security camera's.

Around 91% of the respondents identified as to not have security alarms installed into their premises, as we know on occasions alarm systems were great for acting as a deterrent to the possible offender looking to break into a residential home, it was soon identified that Security systems do not always stop break ins, however they are good for telling Police exactly what time the incident occurred, disappointing to see only around 8% indicated they has an alarm system, but this is also understandable due to the cost of an alarm system and the ongoing monitoring costs which can arise.

When it came to deadlocks, which can be a useful tool to preventing the access of a property by the possible offenders there were only 50% of the respondents said they had deadlocks which means 50% of the respondents do not have deadlocks.

When it came to window locks, it was a positive feedback, where 64% of the respondents indicated that they have taken the opportunity to install window locks to reduce the access points to the possible offenders, although glass can still be broken.

Almost 48% of respondents indicated they had a dog for protection, therefore feeling safer when there is a dog in the house, I may have to assume from the research, although the question was not asked, these were bigger dogs which people had purchased obtained for the security protection in which some dogs can offer.

There was 16% of respondents who admitted to having been broken into previously, or about 1 in 6 people who responded to the survey, and I guess what was not researched through this survey is how it has affected their mental health or feeling safe within their own home environment and what extra precautions have they now put into place, following the break in.

As we know every week we read stories of Break ins occurring where items have been stolen from sheds, sometimes unlocked sheds, where doors are left open, the positive part of this survey was around 74% of respondents mentioned that their sheds are always secured/ locked, however the alarming part was the almost 10% who indicated that they cannot lock their shed doors, meaning their sheds are always unlocked, making them easy targets for the potential criminal.

The next question was about people securing their houses, one of the main investments we make in life, however we also know there are now more home invasions occurring around the State where people are actually home at the time. Whilst around 68% of the respondents mentioned that they always lock their house, the alarming part is the 30% who only lock their houses when they go out, which means it allows criminals to enter one part of the house whilst someone is in another part, and at times this occurs without people knowing. The 2% of the respondents indicating that they never lock their house is a little concerning, however I partly expect this is a wider issue due to some remote living and country lifestyle within the shire boundaries.

The difficult part to record as far as % of respondents was the open question about any further comments about security in the area.

Many called for CCTV/ Cameras to be placed around the area, more for apprehension of offenders rather than being monitored 24 hrs a day, cameras were also suggested to become compulsory for some of the new estates so people to enter and exit the development can be identified which might help with the identification of possible offenders. The usual Police station 24 hours a day was suggested, as they believe extra police or security patrols in the area would assist, however the disappointing part was a couple of people indicated they had no faith in the local Police when it came to security within the area.

People were concerned with the increase of break ins on houses, or theft of motor vehicles.

A couple wanted more information on security for farms and how they can better protect themselves, which can be an education process which can be considered.

There was a request for a list of suppliers of security products within the shire, and the possibility of shire being able to assist in arranging such services for the Pensioners and the elderly of the community who may still be living at home.

### **Summary.**

Whilst it was disappointing it was a low percentage of respondents with in this survey, however there is an insight into what people are possibly thinking when it comes to Security within homes and residential areas.

Some it appears to be costs which stop people improving their security within their homes, not sure whether there could be grants out there to help in this area.

However, there seems to be concerns about not sufficient cameras in public places and insufficient lighting meaning people aren't feeling safe in the public domain, and it is possible from time to time there are community safety grants available up to 10000 dollars which might suit this purpose.

It is slightly concerning that people turn to dogs for protection, rather than the electronic devices, as dogs can cause injuries not only to offenders/ intruders but even visitors and family members in the wrong circumstances as this is what they might be trained to do, they just can't always tell the difference.

Educational items can be increased, e.g. purposes and benefits of having deadlocks and window locks around the house, roller shutters can be beneficial for a number of reasons however are costly to home owners.

People don't feel they have the faith with the local police resources in the area, and whilst a 24/7 station in every town won't solve anything, there needs to be more of a police presence in the area, so people can see them out and about, however residents still have a vital role in ensuring they are doing all they can to protect their homes and assets.