

Burglary hotspots warning

Kelly Brown

NORTH Melbourne is in the top 10 of Melbourne's most-burgled suburbs, the RACV says.

One in 24 North Melbourne homes were burgled in 2006-07. The figures, released last week, were compiled from police crime statistics and ABS census figures.

RACV homesecurity general manager Peter Brindley said North Melbourne had seen a 33 per cent increase in burglaries from 2005-06 to 2006-07.

"What is a big concern is the significant increase we are starting to see in burglary hot spots," Mr Brindley said.

"By being aware of the risks, it is much easier to identify a number of simple steps that can be taken to improve your level of home security and deter potential burglary."

Flemington/Newmarket was number 29 on the list with one in 36 homes burgled.

It was equalled by Ascot Vale/ Maribyrnong, which

also recorded one in 36 homes burgled.

Mr Brindley said contributing factors to burglaries included: adjoining laneways that offered an easy escape, lack of visible security measures, homes in quiet or secluded areas, obvious displays of wealth and poor security maintenance.

Moonee Valley Insp Nigel Howard said his police region covered only a small part of North Melbourne west of Melrose St.

"The burglaries in and around that part of North Melbourne are very low," he said.

"The thing you have to be mindful of is that these are older statistics, there were issues identified last year and we've put measures in place to address a higher burglary rate."

Insp Howard said the latest crime statistics in the next fortnight would give a more up-to-date picture of Moonee Valley's home burglaries.



Picture: GLENN DANIELS N52MV903

Best backyard gong to architect

ONE Moonee Ponds homeowner can boast having the best outdoor area in Australia thanks to architect Mario Di Natale.

Mr Di Natale (pictured with his Moonee Ponds backyard design) said he had enjoyed building and designing ever since he was young.

Now an architect, designer and owner of Innovative Space Design in Moonee Ponds, Mr Di Natale was awarded the Housing Industry Association Australian outdoor project of the year award.

The project, an outdoor living space in Moonee Ponds, took the local businessman about 10 months to complete from design to construction.

"We're quite passionate about what we're doing in design and construction. It's great to get recognition," Mr Di Natale said.

"I'm overwhelmed, I must say. It's an old federation home at the front with a contemporary addition at the rear.

"Our client wanted to blend the

outdoor space with the additional contemporary area of the home."

Mr Di Natale created different outdoor living spaces accessible all year round.

There is a barbecue and dining area, an in ground heated pool, a water feature and an outdoor wood fireplace.

In business for 13 years, this was the first design competition Mr Di Natale had entered thanks to the encouragement of colleagues.

The company entered two projects.

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