

National Victoria [Crime](#)

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The crimes least likely to be solved in Victoria

By **Craig Butt & Garreth Hanley**

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It has been more than a week since thieves broke into Boris Siguenza's home in the dead of night while he, his wife and their two-year-old son slept, and made off with his family's two cars.

One of the cars – his wife Emma's beloved Herbie replica – has been spotted by Cranbourne residents since then, but police have not yet recovered the VW Beetle or made any arrests.

The statistics show it is unlikely the family will get the car back – almost two-thirds of the state's aggravated burglaries were not solved last year.

Of the 3075 residential aggravated burglaries reported in Victoria in the last financial year, 64 per cent remained unsolved as of June 30, along with 76 per cent of the 13,787 car thefts, figures from the Crime Statistics Agency show.

A residential burglary is classed as aggravated if a resident was in the building at the time. For break-ins that took place when nobody was at home, the clearance rate was even lower.

Of the 25,262 non-aggravated residential burglaries police logged between July 2017 and June 2018, 88 per cent have not been solved.

But these figures are not new – the solve rate for these crimes has remained relatively constant throughout the past decade.

A Victoria Police spokeswoman said many cases remained unresolved because police did not have sufficient evidence, particularly if there was no CCTV footage available, or could not identify the offender.

However, she said that when police were targeting repeat offenders, and when they were identified, they could be linked with previous incidents and charged.

The data shows that bike thefts have the lowest solve rate of any crime in Victoria, at 7 per cent.

The solve rate for all property theft and fraud offences, which make up most of the incidents reported to police, is 28 per cent.

Solve rates for crimes against the person (such as assaults and sexual assaults) are much higher, and 80 per cent of incidents reported to police last year have been resolved.

Aggravated burglary rates are declining

Crime Statistics Agency figures released on Thursday showed a significant drop in the number of aggravated residential burglaries in many of the areas where there have been terrifying cases of families being woken at night by masked assailants.

In Casey (which takes in Cranbourne and Narre Warren), there were 179 aggravated burglaries reported to police in the past financial year, down by 67 from 246 in 2016/17.

They dropped by almost half in Cardinia (which takes in Pakenham) last year; by 24 per cent in Wyndham (which takes in Werribee, Point Cook and Tarneit); 19 per cent in Frankston; and 17 per cent in Melton.

These areas also recorded drops in the number of non-aggravated residential burglaries.

But despite the decreases, these areas still have some of the highest rates of break-ins in the metropolitan area. For example, Casey ranks fifth (behind Greater Dandenong, Maribyrnong, Yarra and Brimbank) for residential aggravated burglary rates.

Hume (which takes in Broadmeadows, Sunbury and Craigieburn) and Melton recorded the highest rates of residential burglaries, despite both areas experiencing a drop of about 10 per cent in the number of break-ins.

Statewide there were 25,262 homes burgled last financial year, 5152 fewer than the previous period. The data shows the rate of home break-ins hit a 10-year low last year.

Aggravated residential burglaries are also down, but they are still occurring at a higher rate than under the Brumby, Baillieu and Napthine governments.

A total of 3075 homes were broken into while residents were present last year, down from 3348 in the previous period.

This figure does not include the 187 home invasion and 19 attempted home invasion offences recorded last year. This offence type was introduced in December 2016 to count brazen burglaries involving a group of assailants, and data is not available for the solve rate .

Because this home invasion offence code has been in effect for less than two years, it is not possible to gauge whether these crimes have increased or decreased in the past year. Nor do the Crime Statistics Agency figures provide an area breakdown of where home invasions were recorded or their solve rates.

‘Your security is violated’

Mr Siguenza says he and his wife, Emma, have had trouble sleeping since the aggravated burglary at their Cranbourne East home last Thursday, in which thieves snuck into the couple's home through a large pet door, snatched the keys for two cars and made off with the vehicles.



Boris, Emma and two-year-old Maxton Siguenza with their dog Archie. Thieves snuck into their home through a doggy door and stole two cars in an aggravated burglary on September 13. JOE ARMAO

“The problem is ... your security is violated; you don’t sleep well, you are always paranoid about stuff, you are always double-checking everything,” he said.

He said the stolen Volkswagen was Emma's dream car: "It's not just any old car; we have looked after it and it's irreplaceable."

His neighbours were on high alert about the threat of break-ins, he said, and people in his street had CCTV cameras activated at all hours in case anything happened.

Mr Siguenza said the Andrews government was not keeping up with the “crime wave”, and that security would be a major state election issue for him.

“Something has got to be done about it,” he said.



Craig Butt joined The Age in 2011 and specialises in data-driven journalism. Connect via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [email](#).