

No security? Alarm bells should ring

A combination of measures can help protect property, writes **Jason Mountney**.

When Trish Tring moved to her new home in Sydney's inner west it came with a security alarm already installed, albeit one missing a couple of pieces.

However, the high school teacher decided not to set up the alarm, relying instead on a mix of window bars, security screens and reinforced glass that has the added advantage of cutting traffic and aircraft noise.

"The house is quite difficult to break into anyway," she says, adding that her home's position in a row of terraces and the noise of the neighbours' dogs act as a further defence against unwanted intruders.

Tring says that as well as being satisfied her other security measures would keep out unwanted visitors, she decided against the alarm, partly because its loud bell was in her young daughter's room.

According to a 2012 survey by Newspoll and GIO Insurance, 35 per cent of NSW respondents don't

bother investigating or calling the police when a neighbour's security alarm starts ringing.

It is little wonder then, that the same survey found 40 per cent of respondents with alarms installed didn't bother activating the security device when they left the house. More alarmingly, nearly 30 per cent

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Luke Percy-Dove, Matryx

left doors unlocked at inadvisable times and 18 per cent left keys under pot plants and doormats.

Luke Percy-Dove, of security consultancy Matryx, says alarms remain popular for homes and businesses, particularly now they can be teamed easily with closed-circuit TV (CCTV) cameras.

This removes dependence on the



Peace of mind ... some security systems can send alerts to the home owner's smartphone. Photo: Michael Kai

vigilance of passers-by and neighbours. "The CCTV market is flooded," he says. "You can get cameras anywhere.

"Alarms are still popular, but adding CCTV tends to add value. Now more people have smartphones, the alarm sends the signal straight to the handset so the owner can see what is going on straight away."

In addition to peace of mind,

security devices such as screens and even alarms can reduce insurance premiums. The corporate affairs manager at GIO, Duncan Bone, says his company recognises that secured homes are harder to break into and therefore easier to insure.

"We ask a number of questions," he says. "It can reduce your premiums if you have a combination of elements."

He says GIO looks for items such

as secure locks on doors and windows and security screens. "We do also take into account back-to-base alarms."

He says a simple alarm that lets off a loud noise can contribute to a reduced premium but will not be seen to be as efficient as one that calls out help from a base.

"Installing security is a wise idea to prevent break-ins," he says. "We know it lowers the risk."