



## **AA Insurance Reveals Summer Security Risks**

### ***Use Common Sense to Keep Stuff Safe This Summer***

**Auckland – 23 February 2009** – AA Insurance reports that a growing number of preventable losses are occurring as people enjoying the summer fail to take reasonable precautions to look after their property.

“It’s important to take care even at the beach or the park,” says Martin Fox, Deputy General Manager, AA Insurance. “Think about what people often carry with them in their beach bag. Wallet, sunglasses, phone, camera, iPod – it can easily be worth thousands of dollars – as well as car keys. And once thieves have the keys, they can access the person’s car as well.

“While remote central locking is really convenient for drivers, it’s also convenient for thieves. Once they have a set of keys they can casually wander a street or car park pressing the remote, waiting for the right car to answer by flashing its headlights or answering with a beep.

“Our message is to take extra care with your car keys, whether you’re swimming, picnicking or playing sport. Treat your keys with as much vigilance as your cash – if you can’t keep them on you, at least make sure you keep them in your line of sight.”

AA Insurance recently received a claim from a woman who was playing with her child at Western Springs Park. Thieves stole her handbag from a park bench and when she went to her car it had been stolen too.

Many of AA Insurance’s vehicle theft claims this summer have not been for high end vehicles, but for cars which are easy to break in to and carry standard parts, so are easier to strip and sell.

#### **Increased windscreen damage from off-road driving**

The company’s claims for windscreen damage this summer also follow a seasonal pattern with almost 40 percent more claims than in winter (comparing average claims received in January-March with those of July-September).

“We usually put this down to the seasonal increase in driving off main roads. Drivers need to slow down on metal roads, especially when driving through road works or following another car,” says Martin.

“Also, check that your policy covers driving off-road before launching cross country, because having a four-wheel drive vehicle doesn’t mean automatic insurance cover in any environment.”

This recent example from AA Insurance claims illustrates the point.

A man wanted to give his overseas friends a real Kiwi experience by driving his vehicle on a local beach, and as a finale drove through a shallow pool just before the car park. The pool was deeper than he thought and the \$35,000 Mercedes became lodged in the water. As he tried to reverse, the van’s air intake sucked salt water and sand into the engine, meaning irreparable damage.

### **Secure your home, even when at home**

When the weather is hot and humid people are also tempted to leave windows open when leaving the house. Likewise in good weather people understandably want to leave doors and windows open while relaxing at home. If done without care, open doors and windows can mean an easy option for thieves.

Unfortunately it’s a good idea to keep the front gate and door closed, if not locked, when you’re at home, because AA Insurance has seen an increase in claims for burglaries which happened while people were inside, or out on the deck or the garden.

AA Insurance claims staff have dealt with a number of similar claims which happened while people were at home.

A woman had left the front door unlocked while she was outside catching up on the weeding. Someone let themselves in and stole her handbag and camera.

A man was in his kitchen at the rear of his villa. Someone walked up the side of his house, saw his camera sitting by the window and stole the camera through the open window.

“It’s important to have a place to store your valuables such as cameras and keys, so that thieves can’t simply grab them from the hall table or a hook by the front door,” says Martin. “Try to store them out of sight. This is especially important in summer when we all want to enjoy relaxing at home with doors and windows open.”

### **About AA Insurance**

AA Insurance was launched in 1994 and is a joint venture between New Zealand Automobile Association and Suncorp-Metway Limited.

AA Insurance has over 300 staff servicing 130,000 plus customers and manages almost 300,000 policies. Over half of those policies cover motor insurance risks including cars, bikes, caravans, and motor homes, and the remainder are house and contents insurance.

In 2008, AA Insurance was a finalist in the unlimited/JRA Best Places to Work Survey in the medium-large workplace category, making it one of the top places to work in New Zealand.

AA Insurance Limited has an A+ (Strong) Insurer Financial Strength Rating given by Standard and Poor’s (Australia) Pty Ltd on 8 January 2009. For further information visit [www.aainsurance.co.nz](http://www.aainsurance.co.nz)

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