

# St Francis Bay businesses targeted by robbers

Three business robberies occurred late January, adding to more than a dozen during the festive season.

In February so far, things have quietened down, though businesses and residents are advised to remain on the alert and improve security measures.

Several businesses broken into did not wish to report the incidents out of fear or because the loss had been minimal. Most of the battersies occurred in the early hours of the morning. And it appears the thieves' target is computers, cellphones and cash.

Harcourts St Francis Bay suffered an unfortunate break-in in the early hours of 18 January. The sliding door was removed out of the frame and the burglars made off with expensive computer equipment and a flat screen monitor. The robbers vandalised surrounding items trying to remove the PC. Marsh Haupt Cooper, principal of Harcourts, they only discovered the burglary when they entered the premises early morning.

"The police were at the scene fast and were most efficient," she says. "The lady doing the fingerprints followed and we were able to resume our duties and repair broken doors and items at 11 am.

"At 1.49 pm I received a call that the computer had been recovered and I went to identify the item. By 2.45 pm the computer was back in Harcourts' offices. "Our policemen and women are friendly, efficient, accommodating and very supportive. Kudos to the men and women in Blue," Haupt Cooper adds.

The SAPS said on 19 January that SAPS members followed up on

information about the theft at Harcourts and the computer was recovered at a residential home in Sea Vista. No arrests have yet been made but detectives are following up on all possible leads and a breakthrough is expected soon.

Other burglaries reported to the SAPS included one at Customs' Construction, from where thieves made off with a laptop.

Detectives also recovered the laptop the same day. No arrests were made, but a breakthrough was expected, the SAPS said.

The third late January robbery occurred at a shop in Asisi Drive. Armed robbers allegedly broke into the shop early on 17 January, threatened the owner and then fled with an undisclosed amount. Armed robbers allegedly broke into a St Francis Bay shop early this morning, threatened the owner and then fled with an undisclosed amount of cash.

The SAPS incident happened at 6 am at a shop in Asisi Drive. It is alleged the owner was busy opening her store when three unknown suspects approached her and threatened her with a firearm before making off with cash.

A case of business robbery is under investigation.

The SAPS warns business owners to be more alert. "Get security firms to assist when opening and closing business for the day. Do not keep large sums of cash at premises but rather go to the bank regularly," the SAPS advises.

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## CRIME SCENE HIGHLIGHTS

### Octogenarian stabbed in JBay house

An 82 year-old man was stabbed when he tried to resist armed robbers who had broken into his Jeffreys Bay home in the early hours of this morning.

Police say a couple, who live on a smallholding 4kms outside the town, were sleeping at around 12.30 am today, 2 February, when three suspects allegedly gained entrance to their home and threatened them with knives. The suspects searched the house for valuable items. The octogenarian tried to prevent them searching the bedroom and he was stabbed in the leg by one of the suspects.

The suspects allegedly took an undisclosed amount of cash from the safe, a plasma TV and fled in a vehicle.

The wife managed to alert the police and her husband was taken to a local hospital for medical treatment.

Jeffreys Bay police detectives are investigating a case of house robbery. The SAPS appeals to home owners to keep all doors and windows closed and locked at all times and to report any suspicious movement immediately to the police or their security company. Anyone who might be able to assist with any information, may contact SAPS Jeffreys Bay on 042 200 6800, the investigating officer, Detective Warrant Officer Eunice Potgieter on 082 441 8160 or Crime Stop number 08600 10111.

-edited by Bev Mortimer

### Missing children found

Two children 10 and 11 years of age were reported missing in Aston Bay, Jeffreys Bay, last month and following a search by Smhart Security, the boys were found.

Riehagh Janss van Rensburg, NSRI Jeffreys Bay station commander, said at 4.46 pm on 10 January, NSRI Jeffreys Bay duty crew were activated following reports from Smhart of two children missing after reportedly going for a walk to a local park. They were last seen at 11 am and failed to return home.

Smhart members initiated a search and NSRI Jeffreys Bay crew dispatched its sea rescue vehicle and additional NSRI

volunteer duty crew in their private vehicles. The SAPS also joined in the search.

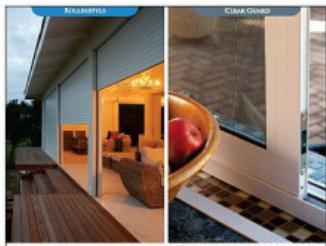
Their most likely movements were determined in discussions with the children's grandmother and mother. During an extensive search the children were located safe by Smhart security officers and were found between Aston Bay and Paradise Beach.

The boys were reunited with their family and were unaware they had been reported missing. NSRI commended Smhart for escalating the search and all involved in ensuring the children were found.

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