

Thief strikes during Eltham open-for-inspection

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A mobile phone was stolen from Lorna Lumalasi's home during "open for inspection".
Picture: RICHARD SERONG

AN ELTHAM woman has warned house sellers to be cautious about “open for inspection” days after property was stolen from her home.

Lorna Lumalasi said her late husband’s mobile phone was taken from a drawer in her bedside table during a recent “open for inspection”.

She said the distinctive phone had a spirit level in it and would be of no value to anyone else, though it held much sentimental value to her.

The real estate company that arranged the day said it contacted police immediately after learning of the theft, offering to replace the phone, but the offer was declined.

Eltham police Constable Sarah Knight said the incident was being investigated.

She advised residents who were having an “open for inspection” to lock valuables away and urged any residents who had property stolen under similar circumstances to contact her so that police could identify any links between the thefts.

Consumer Affairs Victoria spokeswoman Heather Abbott said estate agents could not be held responsible for theft from a property during an “open for inspection” if they had “taken all reasonable precautions to ensure that a vendor’s possessions are not stolen or damaged”.

She said CAV received only a few complaints about damage or theft at “open for inspections” each year.

CAV advises residents to discuss security arrangements with their real estate agent before an “open for inspection”, lock valuables away out of sight and reach agreement with their estate agent on whether it was in their best interests to be present during the inspection.

Anyone with information about this should contact Constable Knight on 9430 4500 or [Crime Stoppers](#) on 1800 333 000.