



For immediate release

Half a million Australians victim of ID Fraud, just like Paris, Oprah and Tiger

You may not be as rich and famous as Oprah Winfrey, Paris Hilton or Tiger Woods but you can just as likely be a victim of identity fraud as those with millions in the bank.

That's the message for Identity Fraud Awareness Week, October 13 to 17, which aims to warn Australians to be careful with a host of unassuming personal information.

These celebrities have all been victims of ID fraud resulting from theft of information as simple as birth dates; social security numbers; credit card statements; utility bills; tax returns and other documents that provide proof of identity.

Identity fraud has become the fastest growing crime in Australia with half a million victims in the past year costing the economy an estimated \$1 billion¹.

No wonder 60 per cent of Australians fear having their credit card details stolen more than an act terrorism (38%), a serious health epidemic (36%), or meeting their future financial obligations (33%)².

Despite the fear, a Newspoll survey showed nearly 70 per cent ³of people threw away bank and credit card statements, social security and TFN details, utility bills and other personal information, putting them at great risk of falling victim to ID fraud from criminals who "dumpster dive" for this type of material.

On the eve of National Identity Fraud Awareness Week October 13 – 17th, Australians are urged to shred all their statements and personal information before placing this sensitive material in a recycling bin.

Peter Campbell, National Marketing Manager, Fellowes Australia said that millions of us don't think twice about posting personal information as simple as birthdays on Facebook and Myspace or tossing paid bills into the recycle bin.

"These two simple pieces of information can be the start of some-one stealing your identity that can lose you money and take years to recover your credit rating," he said.

"It's also particularly important that people don't give out any personal details in response to any unsolicited mail, email or phone calls without first confirming that the contact is genuinely from the source they claim to be," Peter said.

ENDS.

For further information, media enquires and interviews contact:

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¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) Personal Fraud Survey, Australia

² Unisys Security Index (2008) Newspoll Survey, Australia

³ Fellowes (2008), Newspoll Survey, Australia - ID Fraud Awareness