



For Immediate Release

ID fraud our fastest growing crime

\$1 billion cost to Australian economy annually

Identity fraud has become the fastest growing crime in Australia with half a million victims in the past 12 months at an estimated cost of \$1 billion to the economy¹.

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 of 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 fraud³ from criminals who “dumpster dive” for this type of material.

Those most at risk are professional women in their 20s and 30s.

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

“This is the only safe way to ensure your personal information is secure from dumpster divers,” according to National Chairman of Crimestoppers, Peter Price.

Mr Price also strongly recommends the shredding of CDs containing personal records and old credit cards and driver’s licences.

“It’s not just hard copy information we should worry about. People store a lot of personal information on CDs these days,” he said.

The first ever Australian Bureau of Statistics study into ID fraud released in June found that in the past year 383,300 people experienced at least one unauthorised, fraudulent transactions using their credit cards or account details¹.

Identity theft accounted for another 124,000 victims of identity fraud¹. These victims included those who experienced unauthorised use of their personal details, such as a driver’s licence, tax file number, or passport to conduct business, open accounts or take out loans illegally in their name.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (Released 27th June 2008) Personal Fraud Survey, Australia

² Unisys Security Index (2008) Newspoll Survey, Australia

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

During National Identity Fraud Awareness Week, organisers are warning people to be careful with a host of unassuming personal information.

Peter Campbell, National Marketing Manager, Fellowes Australia said that celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Paris Hilton or Tiger Woods have all been victims of ID fraud.

"They have had information as simple as birth dates, social security numbers, credit card statements, utility bills and tax returns stolen that provide proof of identity," he said.

"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."

About National ID Fraud Awareness Week

National Identity Fraud Awareness Week is a joint initiative of Crimestoppers Australia, data storage and security experts Fellowes Australia, and credit check specialists Veda Advantage.

The campaign aims to educate consumers and businesses about the dangers of ID fraud and preventative steps that can be taken.

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For further media information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

Catriona McGauchie
Communicado Marketing Communications
Tel: 03 9522 9944 Mob: 0428 368 371
Email: catriona.mcgauchie@communicado.com.au

David Coghlan
Communicado Marketing Communications
Tel: 03 9522 9906 Mob: 0403 844 429
Email: david.coghlan@communicado.com.au