



For immediate release

July 2007

## **Three in Four Australians at Risk of Identity Fraud Middle Australia at most risk**

A staggering 75%<sup>1</sup> of Australians throw out enough personal information such as credit card statements in their rubbish and recycling to put them at risk of identity fraud.

What makes this figure more shocking is that 87%<sup>2</sup> of Australians are concerned about identity theft, meaning that while the majority of Australians are concerned, they're also continuing to put themselves at risk.

Identity fraud is a growing threat to Australians which the Australian Federal Police (AFP) estimate costs the nation up to \$4 billion a year.

Fellowes National Marketing Manager, Peter Campbell, says that while there is widespread concern about identity theft, Australians hold misconceptions about the issue, believing that it will never happen to them.

"The fact that we're continuing to dispose of sensitive information in this manner indicates that the threat is yet to strike a chord with the average consumer," says Campbell.

It seems Australians are willing to take responsibility for protecting their identity. When given the hypothetical scenario of identity thieves stealing documents from their rubbish to defraud them, 83% of Australians believe they should take some responsibility for the loss.

"Shredding documents like bank statements and credit card offers is the only reliable way to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of identity theft," adds Campbell.

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<sup>1</sup> Galaxy Research Omnibus (May 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Galaxy Research Omnibus (May 2007)

The Galaxy survey also found that:

- Nearly 40% of Victorians and Tasmanians believe identity theft is still rare in Australia, which it no longer is;
- 41% of those from New South Wales are under the false impression that they are at low risk because identity thieves target people with more assets;
- When it comes to concerns about identity theft such as fear of financial loss, poor credit rating, feeling personally violated and embarrassed, women are more frightened than men;
- 81% of middle Australia (household income \$40k - \$69k) are most likely to put themselves at risk of identity theft by throwing out personal information such as utility bills and credit card statements

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