



# MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC  
Attorney General  
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## NEW LAWS TARGET BILLION DOLLAR I.D. CRIME INDUSTRY

Attorney General John Hatzistergos today announced the Rees Government proposes to introduce tough identity crime laws to crack down on the billion dollar personal fraud industry, built on new cyber technologies.

Mr Hatzistergos said the laws would create new identity offences, which would carry up to five years imprisonment, and allow police to target criminals who possess or trade in personal information for the purpose of committing fraud.

Mr Hatzistergos said the proposed laws would also simplify fraud and forgery offences, and double the maximum penalty for serious fraud to 10 years in prison.

“Identity thieves who use emerging technology to perpetrate fraud, are responsible for a crime wave that is costing Australians approximately \$1 billion a year,” said Mr Hatzistergos.

“These proposed laws would identify new types of fraud and give law enforcers the ability to stay on the heels of the faceless cyber criminals who are committing them.”

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) last year found 450,000 Australians lost a combined \$997 million to personal fraud in the previous year. The ABS said the crime wave was the result of the rapid expansion of internet technology, and electronic data sharing and storage.

Mr Hatzistergos said the new offences would make it a crime to use or trade any information that identifies a person, such as their name or address, driver licence, PIN or password, for the purpose of committing a secondary offence.

Under the proposed laws it would also be an offence to use everyday devices such as scanners, printers and laminators to produce fake identity documents in order to commit crimes.

Using devices to skim personal details from credit or debit cards, which are sometimes attached to ATMs, would also be specifically targeted by the laws.

“Criminals who once forged cheques are now using skimming devices and digital voice technology to steal people’s banking details and empty their accounts.”

Mr Hatzistergos said emerging cyber scams include “Phishing” (using fake electronic communication to elicit personal details), “Vishing” (using automated voice telephone calls to request identity information), and “Carder Forums” (web forums where criminals trade credit card and other personal information).

The proposed laws will be put out for public consultation until late August and the Government intends to introduce them to Parliament in the Spring Session.