ATTORNEY-GENERAL

TOUGH MEASURES TO PREVENT IDENTITY THEFT

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The Country Liberals Government is taking tough new measures to further protect Territorians from identity theft.

Attorney-General John Elferink in Parliament tomorrow will propose changes to the Criminal Code that will see it become an offence to collect and store identification information belonging to another person for the intent of committing a crime.

Under current legislation, a person who obtains identification information cannot be prosecuted until and unless a further offence is committed.

Mr Elferink said that if a person has all the pre-cursors in place to commit a crime, they should be charged with a crime.

The proposed Criminal Code Amendment (Identity Crime) Bill 2014 covers:
- Dealing with another person's identification information (including financial information);
- Possession of identification information of another; and
- Possession of equipment used to make false identification information.

The proposed legislation will also make it an offence to possess a skimming device to obtain credit or debit card data from an ATM or EFTPOS card.

In 2010 to 2011, it is estimated that 1.2 million Australians lost $1.4 billion as a result of being a victim of personal fraud, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Mr Elferink said identity crime is a major concern for this Government with identity theft being a key enabler for national and international serious and organised crime.

“Identity theft has considerable consequences for the community and the victim, including adverse credit ratings and higher prices from retailers in an attempt to recover losses,” Mr Elferink said.

“The community should always be vigilant and cautious of credit card fraud, identity theft and scams, and always report the matter to Police.”

Offences under the proposed legislation will carry maximum penalties of three years imprisonment for possession of identification information and equipment, and seven years imprisonment for committing a further offence with the information.

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