



## The scam is in the email.

*For immediate release*

This Stay Smart Online Week, the Australia Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is warning the community to be cautious of common online scams as they continue to increase in prevalence in Australia. Keep Me Posted (KMP), a campaign who advocating for the consumer's right to choose without charge how they receive vital communications, has been following this issue closely as it is at the core of their campaign.

According to the ACCC's Scamwatch, 'false billing', when scammers pretend to be from a provider and send a fake bill, is in the top 3 of the scams that Australians are most likely to encounter online. Along with 'phishing scams', when scammers pretend to be from well-known businesses and government departments, conning unsuspecting victims out of their personal information and money.

The ACCC's Scamwatch and the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network (ACORN) revealed that in 2016 more than 42% of the scams were delivered by email or the internet (mail only represents 4.1%) – it was 38% only in 2015. In addition, Scamwatch and ACORN reported that close to \$300 million was lost due to online scamming.

KMP argues it is critical that people must have the option to receive important information by post, without penalty, given online communications remain so unsafe.

"It's difficult to spot a scammer online these days as they go to great lengths to trick the public and steal personal information and money," ACCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard said.

"Online scams are one of the many aspects of how paper fees impact people's lives. We often refer to the digital divide and cost as factors why people want to receive paper communications, however online safety is a critical aspect of this issue," commented Kellie Northwood, Executive Director, Keep Me Posted.

KMP have research highlighting consumer preferences and trust in digital communications with a survey of 5,000 supporters showing that 75% declare they are concerned about internet fraud.

Further, the latest Toluna survey shows distrust in digital with 66% of Australians agreeing that they are increasingly concerned that their personal information held electronically is at risk of being hacked, stolen, lost or damaged.

Northwood concluded, "Some consumers are eligible for exemptions from paper fees however they are not automatic, and not easy to access. We urge corporations to act fairly and remove these fees."

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High-resolution Media Pack available here: [http://www.keepmeposted.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/hr\\_media-pack-sept-17.zip](http://www.keepmeposted.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/hr_media-pack-sept-17.zip)

**Keep Me Posted**

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## **Keep Me Posted:**

The Keep Me Posted (KMP) campaign represents advocate groups, charities, consumer groups, employer and employee representatives, industry and political representatives who believe in the right to choose the way companies communicate with them. KMP believes every consumer should be able to choose, without penalty, how they prefer to be communicated to via banks, utility companies and other services providers. **[www.keepmeposted.org.au](http://www.keepmeposted.org.au)**

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