



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

MEDIA RELEASE

May 2019

Police issue urgent warning following QPS phone number used in scam

X.XXa/pm

Detectives from the State Crime Command's Financial and Cyber Crime Group have issued a warning to Queensland residents about a scam using a Queensland Police Service phone number to legitimise a government or Australian Taxation Office (ATO) impersonation scam.

In this instance the criminals are using a practice known as **caller ID spoofing** where they inappropriately manipulate the telephone network to indicate the incoming call is from a different number (in this case a QPS number).

The scam starts when the criminal calls the victim impersonating a government department. They advise the victim has an outstanding fine or fee with them (for example, the ATO). While this type of scam has been doing the rounds for some time, police are concerned this version of the scam has an additional layer which may result in more members of the community falling victim.

The second part of the scam involves the criminal calling the victim from what appears to be a trusted or well-known government phone number and impersonating an employee from the organisation (in this case a police officer) to legitimise the scam. The criminal threatens you with arrest or states they will commence legal action before demanding a form of payment.

"While this may sound alarm bells and cause the public to become extra cynical when they receive a call like this, then we are 100% fine with this. We want you to be on your guard and we want you to question anyone who asks you for money.

"The biggest fault in this scam is that they ask you to pay the fee or fine in gift cards. Just know, no government agency, law enforcement or any legitimate organisation will ask you to pay them in gift cards," Detective Superintendent Terry Lawrence of the Financial and Cyber Crime Group said.

Australian Cyber Online Reporting Network (ACORN) indicates they have had 121 reports of the ATO scam in Queensland in 2019, totalling \$173,000.

Police have commenced enquiries regarding this scam and the illegal use of the police number.

Members of the public can learn about scams at www.scamwatch.gov.au, mypolice.qld.gov.au R U In Control. Scams can be reported to www.acorn.gov.au

Issued by the QPS Media Unit: Brisbane, Australia.

View our media releases at www.myPolice.qld.gov.au

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If you have information for police, contact Policelink on 131 444 or provide information using the online form 24hrs per day.

You can report information about crime anonymously to Crime Stoppers, a registered charity and community volunteer organisation, by calling 1800 333 000 or via crimestoppersqld.com.au 24hrs per day.

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