



Artarmon Neighbourhood Watch - CW5 – Winter Update

by Clare Hamilton-Bate

Identity Theft – are you at risk?

Identity theft is a part of identity fraud and specifically refers to the theft and use of the personal identifying information of an individual.

It can range from somebody using your credit card for their purchases over the phone or the internet, through to having your identity assumed by another person to open bank accounts, take out loans or conduct other business illegally in your name.

It can happen very easily and you may not be aware you are a victim until well after the fact. Sorting everything out and extracting yourself from the mess can be a long and stressful process.

The cost of identity fraud in Australia has been estimated at \$1.1 billion (2001-02). However, this figure does not take into account the non-financial costs to organisations or victims, nor the amount of undetected identity fraud.

Preventing identity theft – tips for the community

- Order a copy of your credit report regularly. Activity you are not aware of can be an indicator that your identity has been stolen. There are several credit reporting agencies in Australia, eg, Dun and Bradstreet, Veda Advantage.
- Place passwords on all your important accounts. Select passwords carefully, don't use obvious ones such as birth dates, mother's maiden name, and telephone numbers. Use passwords or PINs that others would

find difficult to work out. It's not a good idea to write them down or store them on your computer.

- Secure personal information. If possible, lock up important documents in your house, don't leave them lying around in case your house is burgled. If you share accommodation, or have a cleaner or maintenance people regularly in your house take particular care to find a secure place for your documents.
- Don't carry personal information unless you have to. Don't carry your PIN in your wallet with your ATM card. Only carry the cards you need - leave other credit cards and charge cards at home.
- Destroy personal information before disposal. A home shredder can be a good investment to destroy prior to disposal any documents with personal details such as account numbers, date of birth, personal signature, card numbers, etc.
- Avoid giving out personal information. Be sure you know who you are dealing with before giving out any personal information. Be wary of unsolicited contacts by phone or email and don't respond to personal questions. Be suspicious if things don't seem right.
- Secure your mail. Make sure you have a lockable letter box big enough to take all the mail you normally receive. If you are going away get a trusted neighbour to empty the box for you. Only post mail in secure, official post boxes. Know when regular bills arrive in case your mail has been diverted without your knowledge.

- Check your billing and account records carefully. Check bank statements and credit card statements for transactions you haven't made.
- Have low credit limits on credit cards. Have a credit card with a low credit limit for use if you use credit a lot on the internet. This will limit your loss from illegal use.
- Write cheques and fill forms out carefully. Fill out cheques carefully to avoid having details changed. Put a line through unused spaces.
- Remove your name from mailing lists. If you receive unsolicited mail from companies with which you have had no dealings, get your details removed from their mailing list. This is particularly important if you receive an unsolicited pre-approved credit card application.
- If you lose your wallet or purse, contact banks and credit providers immediately to put a hold on those accounts to prevent further usage and to limit your liability. Make sure you have a way of accessing cash until the cards are reissued. Report the incident to the police.
- List all account details. Keep a list of all account and card details including emergency contact numbers in a secure place so you can respond quickly if need be.

If you would like to join the NW committee and help support the activities of Neighbourhood Watch in our area, contact Clare by email clarehb@telstra.com.

Incidents (other than Break & Enter) Reported to Police for all of Artarmon Apr – Jun 2009

Incident Category	Sub-category	Number	Comments
Assault	5 common assault 1 indecent assault	6	2 on train, 2 indoors, 1 outdoors. Indecent assault on train
Malicious damage	Graffiti	1	Business premises
Malicious damage	Malicious damage to property	7	2 public place; 3 residential premises; 2 commercial premises
Robbery	Various	3	2 commercial; 1 outdoor
Stealing	Steal from motor vehicle	8	2 residential car park; others public place
Stealing	Other steal	8	2 from residential premises; 5 from commercial premises; 1 outdoors
Steal motor vehicle		8	6 from public place; 2 from business car parks

Break & Enter Incidents Reported to Police for all of Artarmon Apr – Jun 2009

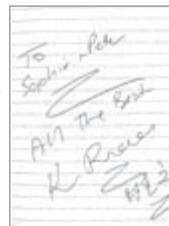
Incident Category	Locations	Number	Point of Access	Method of Entry
Break and Enter - residential.	5 units/ town houses; 8 houses/garages	13	5 window; 7 door; 1 other	4 open window; 3 forced lock; 2 smashed door/window; 4 other
Break and Enter - business, commercial, recreational.		9	8 front door; 1 rear door	5 forced lock, 4 glass smashed

Source: COPS, NSW Police.

Talking 2064

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd

was a surprise early morning customer for Sophie and Peter at **Coffee Express** on Tuesday 28 July. The Prime Minister stayed for about 45 minutes, taking the opportunity to chat with them in both English and excellent Mandarin, and finding out from other customers how government policy is affecting them.



In response to our 'Choosing Chooks' article in the May Gazette, **Alethea Morison** was interviewed on FM99.3's drive show on Friday 29 May. Well done to Alethea, who managed to deftly slip in references to Sustainability St and the Gazette!

The **new Cityrail timetable**, incorporating the Chatswood to Epping rail link, begins on 11 October. This will be a bonus for any local residents who attend Macquarie University. The APA has managed to extract some concessions from Cityrail in relation to an additional service stopping at Artarmon in the am peak.