

For immediate release

21 April, 2016

## Personal fraud on the rise: how you can stay safe

- ➔ 1.6 million Australians experienced personal fraud in 2014-15
- ➔ \$405.6 million scammed through fraudulent card transactions
- ➔ Tips to keep you safe from fraud: [finder.com.au/personal-fraud](http://finder.com.au/personal-fraud)

**21 April, 2016, Sydney, Australia** – Australia's biggest credit card comparison website [creditcardfinder.com.au](http://creditcardfinder.com.au)<sup>1</sup>, is warning Australians to be more cautious when making transactions, following new research which shows personal fraud is on the rise.

There were 1.6 million Australians who experienced personal fraud in 2014-15 – 8.5% of the population aged 15 and over, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, released April 20, 2016). This has jumped from 6.5% of people in 2010-11.

Card fraud was the most common fraud type, with 1.1 million people being scammed.

What's more worrying was that of those who experienced card fraud, almost one in three people (31%) reported two or more incidents.

In fact, there were 1.89 million fraudulent card transactions in the 2014-15 financial year, worth \$405.6 million, according to the Australian Payments Clearing Association (APCA). This is up from 1.53 million fraudulent card transactions in the previous financial year (or 24%) – worth just over \$344 million (or 18%).

Interestingly, the average value of fraudulent card transactions per card has fallen, from \$224.84 in 2013-14 to \$214.60 in 2014-15, according to the [creditcardfinder.com.au](http://creditcardfinder.com.au) analysis.

Michelle Hutchison, Money Expert at [creditcardfinder.com.au](http://creditcardfinder.com.au), says it's alarming to see more cases of personal fraud in Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> Experian Hitwise since 2013

“While it’s great to see that the amount of money being stolen has fallen on average, it’s concerning to see more fraudulent transactions taking place as digital and card transactions continues to rise.

“A new report by APCA (released yesterday, April 20, 2016) shows electronic transactions have increased by 6.3% and card payments have risen by 11.1%. This is compared to 16.3% fewer cheques and 5.5% fewer ATM withdrawals in 2015 compared to 2014.

“With more Australians being scammed, it’s important to know how to protect yourself to avoid fraud and what to do if you notice anything suspicious,” says Mrs Hutchison.

[Creditcardfinder.com.au](http://Creditcardfinder.com.au) tips on keeping your cards and identity safe from fraud:

- **Monitor your credit card account:** One strategy criminals use is to test your vigilance by making a few small transactions to see if you notice. So make sure you regularly monitor your accounts, check your statements and keep your receipts to ensure your transactions are accounted for.
- **Notify your provider:** If you see any unusual or unauthorised transactions, notify your provider as soon as possible. While card processing companies (Visa/MasterCard/American Express) all have policies in place to protect customers in the event of fraudulent transactions, it can be a somewhat exhaustive process to go through to get a refund, particularly if you take too long to notify your provider.
- **Check ATM machines:** Before using an ATM machine, check for any extra mirrors or anything attached or sticking out from the card slot. Criminal can stick card skimmers onto machines.
- **Hide your PIN:** Be wary of anyone standing near you with a smartphone as they could be recording your actions. Make sure you cover your PIN or if you’re using a contactless payment system cover your card details from sight. Don’t allow anyone to take your card from you where you can’t watch them and check the amount before scanning your card.
- **More tips on avoiding credit card fraud traps and scams:**  
[finder.com.au/personal-fraud](http://finder.com.au/personal-fraud)

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