

MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES — PORTFOLIOS — BUSINESS SCAM

5846. Mr B.S. Wyatt to the Minister for Emergency Services; Fisheries; Corrective Services; Veterans:

I refer to the online news article published by the ABC online on 17 August 2016 in relation to scammers stealing \$500,000 from West Australian businesses over the past two years as reported by the Department of Consumer Protection, and I ask:

- (a) have any WA Government agencies within the Minister's portfolio of responsibility fallen victim to these scams over the past two years;
- (b) if so which agencies have been impacted;
- (c) for each agency impacted, what was the nature of, and the dollar amount lost in connection to each scam;
- (d) have criminal charges been laid against any persons or entities in connection to these scams; and
- (e) what measures have you taken to ensure that public funds are not lost to scammers via WA Government agencies?

Mr J.M. Francis replied:

The Department of Corrective Services

The Department of Corrective Services advises:

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not Applicable.
- (e) The Department has rigorous approval processes in relation to procuring goods and services.

Department of Fire and Emergency Services

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) advises:

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not applicable.
- (e) DFES has a number of controls and practices in compliance with the Treasurer's Instructions to provide management confidence that the risk of paying a fraudulent invoice or funds transfer is mitigated. These controls are listed below however, it is important to note that no payment is released by DFES unless the request for payment is supported by an invoice or contractual document and physically authorised by a delegated incurring officer within the Department.
 - (1) The Finance Branch has significant awareness of financial fraud and is the custodian of the incurring register. Departmental policy is to restrict the amount an officer can incur based on seniority and responsibility within the agency.
 - (2) All incurring officers are made aware that they must be satisfied that all conditions contained in TI 304(4) have been met before an invoice is incurred.
 - (3) DFES is proactive in reporting and notifying all staff via email of any suspicious activity.
 - (4) Various other fraud risk reduction strategies are documented and made available to all staff through the Departmental Financial Management Manual.

State Emergency Management Committee

The State Emergency Management Committee advises:

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not Applicable.
- (e) The agency has a number of financial and purchasing controls and assurance mechanisms in place to manage the risks associated with potential scammers.

Department of Fisheries

The Department of Fisheries advises:

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not applicable.

- (e) The Department of Fisheries provides regular email updates to all staff regarding potential and current scams and ensures all finance staff are briefed about how to identify potential scams at all training sessions.

Veterans

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet, on behalf of the Veterans portfolio advises:

- (a)–(e) Not Applicable.