



**For Immediate Release**  
**20 February 2018**

## **Aucklanders lose over \$2.7 million to online scams in 2017**

**Auckland residents reported losing \$2.7 million to online scams and fraud last year, and online safety organisation Netsafe says this is just the tip of the iceberg.**

Kiwis reported losing \$10.1 million dollars to online scams and fraud last year, with the largest single loss reported to Netsafe as \$480,000. Auckland residents reported the highest loss by region at \$2.7 million, ahead of losses in Wellington of \$1.14 million and losses in Canterbury of \$969,000.

Netsafe CEO Martin Cocker says that the reported losses in Auckland and the rest of the country likely represent only a small percentage of actual money lost.

"In the last week Netsafe has received two reports where people have lost several hundred thousand dollars to scams. We do find that some people feel embarrassed about reporting these losses, but it's important to report so we accurately understand the scale of the problem, and can evolve our national response and education accordingly," says Cocker.

Online scams and fraud is a lucrative endeavour, and many are tightly run schemes operated by criminal groups. Scam tactics are becoming more sophisticated as scammers take advantage of technology and digital marketing techniques to create scams that appear more authentic than they have in the past. Online scams and fraud are a difficult issue to police as many scams are operated outside of New Zealand.

"Generally, these criminal enterprises are based off shore, so it's very unlikely that targets will be able to recover the money – basically once it's gone, it's gone. That's why proactive education is important to mitigate the risk in the first instance. We encourage everyone, no matter how digitally savvy they think they are, to improve their knowledge of scams and to talk to friends or family who might need a bit of extra help," says Cocker.

The scam most commonly reported to Netsafe is the fake PC tech support scam. Scammers make contact about a fake issue with a computer and offer to fix it by requesting remote access to the device. The largest loss reported to Netsafe in 2017 was \$480,000 to an investment scam. Kiwis lost \$1.4m to online romance scams in 2017.

People in Auckland and New Zealand can get advice or report a scam to Netsafe by calling 0508 NETSAFE or by visiting [www.netsafe.org.nz](http://www.netsafe.org.nz)

### **Netsafe's tips to avoid scams**

- Think twice if you're unexpectedly contacted about a deal or problem.
- Don't respond to unexpected contact about problems with your computer.

- Legitimate organisations will never ask you for your passwords.
- Think carefully before entering your personal details online or giving them to someone.
- Be wary of unusual payment requests like gift cards, money transfer or iTunes vouchers.
- Be wary of partners recently met online who request money or hint at money problems.
- If you're using a trusted trading or booking website, don't pay outside of it.
- If you're not sure if something is genuine you can contact Netsafe for free advice.

<b>Online scam and fraud losses reported to Netsafe in 2017</b>	
<b>Region</b>	<b>Losses (NZD)</b>
Auckland	\$2,749,362.31
Bay of Plenty	\$358,325.53
Canterbury	\$969,052.98
Chatham Islands	\$0
Gisborne	\$563,744.00
Hawke's Bay	\$70,474.00
Manawatu-Wanganui	\$609,689.30
Marlborough	\$7,600.00
Nelson	\$26,754.31
Northland	\$31,621.48
Otago	\$36,471.41
Southland	\$20,933.85
Taranaki	\$43,837.97
Tasman	\$80,419.99
Waikato	\$772,047.91
Wellington	\$1,146,460.84
West Coast	\$264.63
Undisclosed	\$2,681,614.65
<b>Total losses</b>	<b>\$10,168,675.16</b>

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### **Media Contacts**

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## **About Netsafe**

Netsafe is New Zealand's independent, non-profit online safety organisation. Netsafe provides online safety education, advice and support for people in New Zealand. Taking a technology-positive approach to the opportunities and challenges digital tech presents, Netsafe works to help people in New Zealand make the most of technology by providing practical tools, support and advice for managing online challenges.

Netsafe's helpline is open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-5pm weekends and public holidays.

**[Netsafe.org.nz](https://www.netsafe.org.nz) - 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723) - [help@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:help@netsafe.org.nz)**