

EMBARGOED UNTIL 18 MAY 2020

Research shows 1 in 5 Australians turn a blind eye to crime, says Crime Stoppers

An independent national survey commissioned by Crime Stoppers Australia has revealed as many as 1 in 5 Australians choose to turn a blind eye to unsolved crime and suspicious activity rather than speaking out – with another 1 in 3 survey respondents preferring to share information with family or friends rather than authorities.

While over half of respondents said they were prepared to speak up, those who wouldn't said they were held back because of personal concerns (79%) – primarily because they didn't want to get involved or were concerned for their own safety and feared repercussions.

The results have concerned the nation's preeminent information service, which is using National Crime Stoppers Day on Monday 18th May to urge all Australians to play a part in building a safer community by sharing with Crime Stoppers what they know, without having to say who they are.

Crime Stoppers Australia Chair, Diana Forrester said the research found a number of respondents second-guessed themselves before picking up the phone or going online to make contact, even though all types of crime information was welcomed.

"Of those people who said they weren't prepared to speak up, we found 65% thought what they knew wasn't worth sharing, 36% believed the crime information wasn't serious enough to share, and 19% were held back because they didn't know if something was actually illegal or not," Ms Forrester said.

"These moments of self-doubt mean some people in the community are not sharing potentially critical information about an unsolved crime or suspicious activity with us. We want people to know that even the most insignificant piece of information might be all it takes for police to solve a crime, and we welcome information about every type of crime, no matter how big or small," she said.

"It may be an overheard conversation, odd neighbourhood comings or goings, or something that just doesn't feel right – and that's the very time that people should *listen to their instinct* and share what they know with Crime Stoppers without having to worry about getting further involved or going to court."

"That is why our theme for this year's Crime Stoppers Day is "Trust Your Gut."

When it comes to the types of crime currently of most concern in our neighbourhoods, the research found people are most worried about becoming a victim of theft or robbery (83%), while nearly half (43%) are also concerned about the impact of drugs in their local community. When asked about Australia's biggest national crime threat, drugs emerged as the number one concern by almost half of the survey participants.

The landmark research, conducted by Colmar Brunton in February and March 2020, surveyed a statistically significant sample of Australians aged 13 years and older, which was then followed by a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews.

No crime is committed in secret.

If you know or suspect something, report it anonymously to Crime Stoppers WA at www.crimestopperswa.com.au or call 1800 333 000. Help us keep your family and community safe.

Crime Stoppers is a registered charity and an independent, not for profit organisation.

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This is the first time Crime Stoppers Australia has specifically included people under 18 years of age (10% of participants) and persons from non-English speaking backgrounds (15%) in its market research activities, providing a more comprehensive understanding of Australians' views on a range of crime issues.

"This is the most comprehensive research of its type we have ever undertaken and the results not only provide valuable insights into what motivates and prevents people from speaking up, but also assists to focus our efforts in the years ahead to make sure everyone can confidently share what they know with Crime Stoppers without fear of retribution," Ms Forrester said.

"Even though most people are self-isolating at home right now, they can still keep an eye out for something that doesn't sit right and speak up. We want to empower people by reminding them that Crime Stoppers is here for everyone and every crime, every piece of information can make a difference and a safer community can be achieved by people contacting us."

Other survey insights include:

- One in five people (20%) with information about illegal activity say not providing personal details encourages them to contact Crime Stoppers
- 80% of people agree that Crime Stoppers plays an important role in keeping the community safe
- 71% of people say that Crime Stoppers is a reporting service they trust
- More than half (63%) say Crime Stoppers delivers campaigns and information that helps to prevent and solve crime
- People living in regional areas have a higher awareness of Crime Stoppers (77%) compared to metro (67%)

In Australia, someone contacts Crime Stoppers every two minutes to share information about an array of unsolved crimes and suspicious activity that is then passed to police and leads to an average of 100 apprehensions every week across the nation for a range of crimes.

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About Crime Stoppers Australia

Crime Stoppers is Australia's most trusted information reporting service that provides people with opportunity to share what they know about unsolved crimes and suspicious activity without saying who they are. We were first established in 1987 as an independent not-for-profit registered charity representing the collective eight Crime Stopper organisations operating in every state and territory in Australia. We work closely with police, media and the community to help solve, reduce and prevent crime by collecting information and passing on those details to police and other law enforcement agencies to help keep communities and families safe.

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Date: 18/5/20

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