

Cuckoo smurfing

How to spot, avoid and protect yourself from this money laundering scheme

If you send or receive money from overseas using a money transfer business, you may be at risk of criminals targeting your bank account using ‘cuckoo-smurfing’.

Cuckoo smurfing is a method of money laundering used by criminals to make money generated by criminal activities appear to have come from a legitimate source. Organised criminals use professional money laundering syndicates to target the bank accounts of people receiving money transfers in Australia.

Protect yourself from this criminal activity by learning the warning signs and reporting suspicious account activity.

What are the warning signs?

Look out for and report unexpected and suspicious activity occurring in your bank account, including:

- multiple cash deposits in amounts under \$10,000
- multiple cash deposits made on the same day or within a short period
- cash deposits made across various branches and ATMs, including across different states
- cash deposits from multiple third parties.

Who is a target?

You could be at risk if you are expecting a money transfer from overseas involving a money transfer business. This includes:

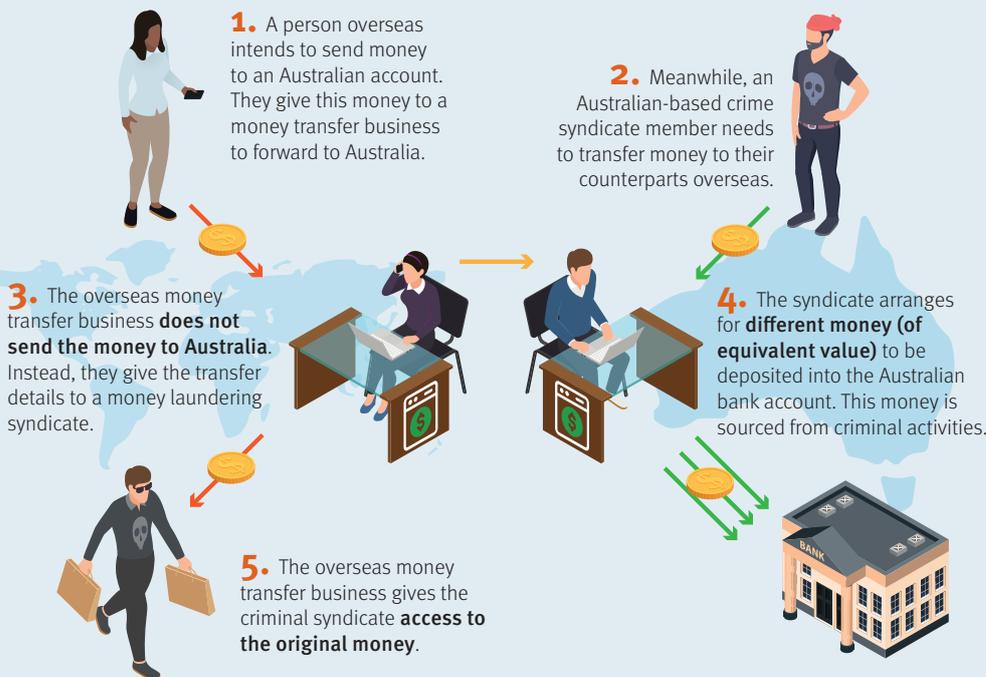
- Australian expatriates
- Australian exporters
- international students studying in Australia
- international investors
- migrants wishing to settle in Australia.

How to protect yourself

Only deal with, or request funds be sent through, legitimate financial institutions or money transfer businesses.

If you’re expecting to receive funds from overseas, review your bank account activity and report any suspicious transactions.

Here’s how it works:



The deposits into the Australian account (the ‘cuckoo’s nest’) are often made by cash mules (‘smurfs’) in amounts less than \$10,000. **It is a criminal offence to deliberately split large transactions into smaller amounts of less than \$10,000 in an attempt to avoid threshold transaction reporting.**

Reporting suspicious account activity

If you notice any suspicious activity occurring in your bank account, including the warning signs above, you should immediately report it to your bank in the first instance, or call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

If you become aware of this activity, it is important to report it. Failure to report this activity means you could face the prospect of criminal prosecution, confiscation of these funds or your bank closing your account(s).

For more information visit www.afp.gov.au/proceeds-crime