

## **Netsafe Annual Report shows New Zealanders scammed out of tens of millions**

**13 December 2022**

New Zealanders have been scammed out of more than \$35 million in 2022 according to new data contained in Netsafe's annual report.

The agency, which is the country's independent, not-for-profit online safety organisation, has recorded a 90% increase in complaints compared to 2021. The complaints cover every type of online harm, including scams which have risen 20% year-on-year.

This year's numbers are the highest Netsafe has seen in its 24-year history.

Netsafe filed 28,253 reports this year ranging from disclosure of sensitive personal information and harmful hate speech to privacy breaches and child sexual abuse material.

Netsafe also received 15,384 complaints related to fraud or scams however the agency does not receive funding to help investigate and resolve these issues.

CEO Brent Carey says Netsafe has expertise but requires funding to be able to support victims of scams and provide solutions to drive prevention.

"More than half the complaints were scams and we didn't receive any funding for trying to help the victims. Ram raids have been one of the country's biggest problems this year, but digital ram raids have tallied over tens of millions in damage and they aren't getting the same attention."

"Our data shows it's a significant problem that needs addressing. We need funding to be able to start victim remediation work and help people who were scammed financially recover."

The annual report listed investment scams as the most common, shortly followed by relationship and trust fraud. In most cases, a scam artist posed as someone from a bank, utility service or government and conned the victim out of thousands of dollars.

"One reason why scams are rising is because people don't know what warning signs to look out for. Next year one of Netsafe's main drivers will be to disrupt scammers by better informing New Zealanders about how to recognise a scam."

Despite the increase in reports made, Netsafe improved its closure timeline by 20%, moving from 13.1 working days last year to 10.1 in 2022.

Netsafe Chair Colin James says the results of the report are an opportunity for the entire online safety ecosystem to improve.

"Lockdown periods and disruptions to work patterns have contributed greatly to these numbers, but there is no denying online harm is getting worse every year."

"We need to continue developing new products and services that will keep all New Zealanders safe when surfing the internet. Next year we are hoping to see funding that will strengthen agencies and create new approaches to tackling online harm."

## **Ends**

### **About Netsafe**

Netsafe is an independent non-profit organisation with an unrelenting focus on online safety. We keep people of all ages safe online by providing free support, advice and education. Visit [netsafe.org.nz](https://netsafe.org.nz) for free resources and to report incidents of online harm.