



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealand Universities and Non Profits Targeted in International Scam

A number of Universities and non-profit organisations across New Zealand have been the targets of an international scam which is reaping the perpetrators hundreds of millions of dollars. The scam revolves around a large number of University researchers and staff from a number of New Zealand and Australian non-profit organisations who attended a grant writing workshop in Sydney in 2008 run by an American organisation – The Grants Institute. The vast majority of those who attended the workshop and who paid by credit card have now found their cards have been recently debited thousands of dollars by an American company called Mother Road when in fact none of the organisations have made any purchases from the company or in fact initially had any idea who the company was. Research shows that one of the Project Managers of Mother Road was also a coordinator with the Grants Institute.

To compound this latest scam, all attendees of the initial grant writing workshops were duped and lost thousands of dollars in registration fees when the training and supporting documents promised as part of the course were not provided. All attendees have been chasing a refund ever since with no results to date. The Grant Institute however seems to have stopped operating yet the scam is now continuing under another guise. The Director of Australian based firm Red Tape Busters, Mr Shane Bowering, who also was an unwitting victim of the scam explains, “The Grants Institute advertised a high quality workshop aimed at assisting Universities and non-profit organisations to tap into much needed Government and Philanthropic funding. Universities and non-profits are all in dire need of extra funding and so the courses sounded a great opportunity for attendees to enhance their skills and knowledge. Unfortunately the courses were a sham with attendees leaving disgusted and disillusioned and nobody has been able to make any headway in getting a refund.”

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Please direct any media enquiries to:

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“To add insult to injury this latest scam of Mother Road debiting credit cards for unauthorised transactions is simply outrageous. I am lucky in that they didn’t have my credit card details but these scam artists are reaping a massive bonanza from the schemes.” Mr Bowering said.

Many attendees have undertaken their own research which has identified that the scam is in fact being perpetrated across the globe with stings in the US, New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain and Europe. It is estimated that the scam, which has been operating in a variety of forms for a number of years in the United States has reaped a windfall of hundreds of millions of dollars. Authorities seem powerless to stop the scam given that it is operating across International Boundaries. Anyone caught up in the sting should immediately contact the Federal Attorney General’s Department for advice and assistance and should immediately contact their financial institution.

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