



Scale of Scams Exposed

Digital Scams Exploit Cost-of-Living Crisis, Draining Over \$2.3 Billion

from Kiwis' Back Pockets in 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Amid New Zealand's cost-of-living crisis, scams are draining billions from Kiwis' savings, with total losses surpassing \$2.3 billion in 2024 — equal to 0.6% New Zealand's GDP. The latest State of Scams in New Zealand 2024 report from Netsafe and the Global Anti-Scam Alliance (GASA) exposes the scale of the issue, highlighting online shopping scams as the most prevalent scam type this year, surpassing identity fraud.

Half of all New Zealanders reported a spike in scam encounters over the past 12 months, yet troublingly, fewer Kiwis are reporting scams to law enforcement. The report found a 9% decrease in reports compared to the previous year. Many remain uncertain about where to report scams or doubt that a complaint will make a difference, creating opportunities for scammers to continue undeterred. Additionally, while 47% of Kiwis were unsure whether AI was used in scams against them, awareness that AI could be used to scam is high, indicating a need for better education on recognising AI-driven deception.

Netsafe CEO Brent Carey said that one of the most alarming findings is the high rate of underreporting, which limits support for victims and enables scammers to operate unchecked.

“Only 17% of scam victims managed to recover their losses, while 43% attempted but failed to retrieve funds, and 23% didn't try at all. We need to reverse this downward trend in reporting and recovery and encourage a community-wide response to make New Zealand safer from these online predatory behaviours.”

Carey also points out that the low reporting and recovery rates indicate that more needs to be done to rebuild public trust and make support for scam victims easily accessible. “Scams aren't just unfortunate mistakes; they are sophisticated high tech crimes that require action.”

Key findings from Netsafe's State of Scams in New Zealand 2024 report

- **Record Financial Losses:** Over \$2.3 billion was lost to scams this year, up from \$2.1 billion in 2023. Scams are impacting Kiwis of all ages, with increasing victimisation rates.
- **Broad Exposure:** Nearly 18% of New Zealanders have been directly affected by scams, while 62% encounter scam attempts at least monthly. More than half of respondents noted a marked increase in scams compared to last year.
- **Digital Danger Zones:** Scammers are heavily targeting digital platforms, with 53% of scams occurring on mobile apps and social media. Scams via Gmail,

Facebook, and similar platforms are common, as fraudsters impersonate trusted contacts.

- **Top Types of Scams:** Investment scams, including fake cryptocurrency and quick-profit offers, accounted for 72% of total financial losses. Online shopping and identity theft scams also inflicted significant financial and emotional harm.

The full set of findings can be found in the [report](#).

Netsafe's call to action

Netsafe, together with the banks, Consumer New Zealand, and other consumer protection agencies, are urging for government support to establish an independent, broad-based Anti-Scam Centre.

This initiative would unify the efforts of private, public, and NGO sectors, enabling a coordinated response to the growing threat of scams. As we move closer to the end of the year, we know the more than 14,000 New Zealanders who use NetSafe's scams helpline each year are eager for updates on the establishment phase of an Anti-scam centre, particularly with scams affecting more Kiwis every day.

To further strengthen victim support, Netsafe urges law enforcement and financial institutions to adopt a 'victim-first' asset recovery process. This includes transparent communication on the status of recovery efforts, dedicated support to help victims navigate the claims process, and faster disbursement of recovered funds.

Carey explains; "By making asset recovery victim-centric, we take a firm stance against scammers and give Kiwis confidence that reporting scams leads to real financial justice. With dedicated recovery processes, we can offer victims a clear path to reclaiming what's been lost, restoring trust and resilience in our communities."

The report findings also highlight that agencies with scam and fraud mandates need to increase public awareness around AI-driven scams so that Kiwis can better recognise and protect themselves against threats like deepfakes, voice cloning, AI-generated text, and social media manipulation.

Netsafe's resources

To help Kiwis proactively protect themselves from scams, Netsafe provides a variety of tools and resources. These include updated scam alerts, practical online safety tips, and tools like [Re:Scam.org](#), our AI Scam system which automatically gathers scam intelligence from forwarded scam emails, and [checknetsafe.nz](#), which enables users to verify suspicious links before online shopping. Netsafe's website, [netsafe.org.nz](#), also hosts extensive information to support Kiwis in recognising, reporting, and preventing scams effectively.

Netsafe's top scam-prevention tips:

1. Stay sceptical of unexpected links: Avoid clicking on unsolicited links.

2. Verify the source: Always confirm requests for personal or financial information by directly contacting the organisation through their advertised official contact methods.
3. Report scams quickly: Reporting scams to Netsafe, Police, or your bank helps prevent further losses and strengthens community defences against scammers.

For more information and to access Netsafe's scam prevention resources, visit netsafe.org.nz/scams where new sections have been updated on [Marketplace scams](#) and [Group](#) job scams. There is also an online learning hub for adults where you can learn to recognise online scams when you see them.

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About Netsafe

Netsafe is an independent non-profit organisation supporting people in Aotearoa to have safe and positive online experiences. We keep people of all ages safe online by providing free support, advice, and education. Visit netsafe.org.nz for free resources or to report incidents of online harm.

About GASA

The Global Anti-Scam Alliance (GASA) is a non-profit, bringing together policy makers, law enforcement, consumer authorities, NGOs, the financial sector, cybersecurity, and commercial organizations to share insights and knowledge surrounding scams. GASA releases the annual Global State of Scams report, alongside many secondary reports which focus on the state of scams in various countries.