



Speech by

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COMPUTER CRIME

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (7.02 p.m.): Last week we each received a flyer from the Australian Institute of Criminology, 'Trends and Issues', about patterns of victimisation amongst small retail businesses. When I looked at this and at the kinds of crimes that were going on in small businesses, one of the things that struck me was that there was no separate category for a fraud which is becoming more common in businesses, that is to do with e-commerce. I also notice that there was no particular category for this in the Queensland Police Service annual statistical review.

I raise this issue because it came to my notice in a press release from the Computer Security Institute in the United States, which announced the results of its seventh annual computer crime and security survey. The computer crime and security survey is conducted by CSI with the participation of the San Francisco Federal Bureau of Investigation's Computer Intrusion Squad. The aim, of course, is to raise the level of security awareness as well as help determine the scope of computer crime in the United States.

A large number of security practitioners are surveyed, including corporations, government agencies, financial institutions, medical institutions, universities and the like. I thought it would be interesting to highlight to members some of the results of that particular survey, because they actually hold an interest for everyone who is interested in seeing the development of electronic commerce and further work in the computer technology area.

The highlights included: 90 per cent of respondents, primarily large corporations and government agencies, detected computer security breaches within the last 12 months; 80 per cent acknowledged financial loss due to computer breaches; and 44 per cent were willing or able to quantify their financial losses. Of these, they reported financial losses in the United States last year of \$455,848,000. That is a great deal. Of those, the most serious financial losses occurred through the theft of proprietary information, estimated at \$170 million, and financial fraud, estimated at \$115 million.

I think these issues are becoming more significant as we become a more highly computerised society. I hope that in the future police annual reports and reports from the Australian Institute of Criminology start to concentrate on the growing presence of crime in this area. Unless the statistics are collated, we will not end up identifying and concentrating on these emerging issues.

Time expired.