



Amanda Rishworth MP

Member for Kingston

MEDIA RELEASE

COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS A HEALTH HAZARD

Federal Member for Kingston, Amanda Rishworth MP, says a new website will help Australian consumers identify counterfeit goods which are potentially risking their health, compromising their safety and supporting organised crime.

“In the case of personal care products and food items, they contain unknown chemicals and in all likelihood have been produced in unsanitary conditions posing a direct health threat.

“It threatens consumer safety and brand reputation. Consumers are ripped off. As counterfeit good move into skin care, shampoos and toothpaste, there is a real concern over the safety of these products,” Amanda said.

In 2007, Customs seized more than 1500 shipments of counterfeit goods containing more than 600,000 individual items, including clothing, handbags, perfumes, food products, batteries and toiletries.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation reports that sub-standard components in automotive parts, batteries and electrical goods have caused equipment failure, accidents, explosions and even fires.

To mark last weekend’s World Intellectual Property Day the AFP has joined with Customs to educate consumers about the emergence of potentially dangerous trade in counterfeit goods in Australia.

“IP crime is a global problem and the trade in counterfeit goods could easily gain a foothold in Australia if we are not vigilant,” Amanda said.

“In February Customs seized tonnes of counterfeit laundry powder that was being sold as a reputable brand. But because it only contained a small amount of the active ingredient, the remainder was made up of unknown chemicals which could potentially be harmful to people exposed to it.”

The AFP has launched a website with fact sheets, downloads and links regarding IP crime. This valuable resource aims to help Australian consumers to recognise and reject counterfeit goods.

Visit www.afp.gov.au/national/ip-crime.

Consumers are also urged to report cases of piracy and brand imitation to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.