

# Just helping yourself\*

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Article from: **Daily Telegraph**

**ONE in five Australian businesses are affected by fraud and many may not even be aware of it, says a leading employment law specialist.**

A partner in the national law firm Hunt & Hunt Peta Tumpey said it was estimated fraud cost the Australian community up to \$14 billion a year.

After many years, this silent theft can total hundreds of thousands of dollars, even millions. While these frauds make the headlines, they are not as numerous as less serious, but equally immoral, frauds.

Ms Tumpey says many employers are unaware they have employed unscrupulous people who are cheats, thieves and liars.

The group most likely to commit workplace fraud is non-management employees, Ms Tumpey says. The most common type of workplace fraud is lying on a CV to get a job.

**Once the job is obtained, the second most common form of fraud is lying on the timesheet, such as claiming overtime or hours not worked.**

Obviously, this type of cheating is more common in industries involving shift work and irregular hours. The KPMG survey also found untrustworthy employees misusing computers and files accounted for 17 per cent of major frauds in the workplace.

Ms Tumpey says other types of fraud that cost the community include feigning illness and then claiming sick pay, inflating expense claims, stealing or wasting food in the catering industry or stealing stock in shops.

Obviously, employing a prevention strategy will stop some, even most, fraud, says Ms Tumpey.

But she says that it is important that the strategy does not cost more than the fraud itself.

Strategies she suggests are video surveillance, regularly changing the people handling cash, making daily and random till checks, checking the books more carefully, and checking CVs.



**“The second most common form of fraud is lying on the timesheet, such as claiming overtime or hours not worked.”**

Picture: Vanessa Hunter / News Limited newspapers