

media release

Passport registration service to combat the problem of identity fraud

Sydney, 28 May 2007: Secure Sentinel, part of the Vero Group of companies, has a service designed to combat the growing problem of identity fraud, and in particular, to discourage criminals from using a lost and/or stolen passport to conduct illegal activities. This service was introduced in response to Federal Government legislation (Passports Act, 2005).

Members can register their passport details with Secure Sentinel and in the event of it being lost or stolen, they can report it to Secure Sentinel's customer service centre with one free call. The call can be made from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Secure Sentinel will report the theft or loss directly to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT), on the member's behalf.

With approximately 30,000 Australian passports lost or stolen every year, the Passports Act requires Australians to report a lost or stolen passport to the police or the nearest passport office in Australia or abroad, as soon as possible. The passport will be immediately cancelled and international border control authorities notified.

The Act also encourages passport holders to be responsible and to keep their documents safe. An additional fee is incurred to replace a lost or stolen passport and if a person loses their passport more than twice in five years, they may be refused a replacement or new passport altogether.

Denise Bofill, General Manager, Secure Sentinel said they are actively working on new ways to protect members' valuables, cards and documents.

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“Secure Sentinel is the only authorised organisation in Australia who can report lost or stolen passports directly to DFAT and arrange a replacement passport on behalf of the passport holder.

“We can also provide travelers with \$1,000 emergency cash advance via Western Union in the event that their wallet is lost or stolen, as well as help customers locate the nearest Australian Consulate,” Ms Bofill said.

Secure Sentinel also provides members with a passport renewal reminder service and this can help members ensure they have a valid passport for when they need to travel overseas.

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About Secure Sentinel™

Secure Sentinel is Australia and New Zealand's leading provider of registration and protection services to minimise the risk of fraudulent use of lost or stolen financial cards and mobile phones, and to assist with the retrieval of personal possessions. Secure Sentinel has operated for over 20 years, providing a round-the-clock service to members. Membership extends sophisticated protection to personal items including credit and ATM cards, mobile phones, keys, luggage, passports, important documents and valuables. Members also have access to a change of address service and an emergency cash advance of up to \$1,000 for travellers in distress. In the event of loss or theft only one phone call to Secure Sentinel is required to cancel cards, block mobile phones or begin the retrieval process.

Secure Sentinel is part of the Vero Group of Companies.

About Vero

Vero Insurance Limited (“Vero”) is a subsidiary of the Suncorp-Metway Limited (“Suncorp”). Vero, formerly Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Australia Limited, has for many years been offering highly specialised solutions to its large range of customers.

Vero is one of Australia's largest intermediated general insurance companies and has 19 branches across Australia, providing a suite of quality specialised risk management products and services through brokers, corporate partners and risk managers.

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