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SECURITY CONCERNS OVER PASSPORT PROCESSING BEING SOLD OFF

The postal union has raised serious security concern over reports the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is considering selling off Australia Post's passport application services.

Communication Workers Union Secretary Greg Rayner said reports today that the department was considering several companies to replace Australia Post's service were a surprise and could lead to increased security fraud.

"Australia Post has been a trusted provider of passport processing for a long time and has developed rigorous processes in place to guard against identity fraud," Mr Rayner said

"This is not an area of government administration you would want cost cutting by tendering to the cheapest bidder – you need qualified people within an organisation experienced to guarantee security of information. Australia Post has both, where others have neither.

"We are deeply concerned this will lead to increased identity theft and security fraud."

Mr Rayner said communities across the nation valued being able to access a local Post Office to have their passport application processed.

"Most Australians who have travelled overseas have used Australia Post's passport processing service and they trust this means their identity is in safe hands.

"I'm not sure they will take kindly to the idea a company they've never heard of would have access to their most important identity document.

"This is a reckless idea – we can only hope it has come from a junior bureaucrat and will be shot down by the Communications Minister.

"People's passport information should not be for sale to the highest bidder."

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