

SIM card crackdown

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BUYING a mobile phone SIM card could soon require the same identity checks as opening a bank account.

One hundred points of identification, including a passport or birth certificate, would be required for a SIM card under a police plan to counter terrorism and crackdown on organised crime.

The proposal was widely endorsed by state and territory police commissioners during a federal inquiry into the future impact of organised crime in Australia.

New South Wales Police Commissioner Ken Moroney said there was a fear riots and violence could be organised during Sydney's APEC meeting in September via text messaging and use of rent-a-crowds.

He said changes to regulate the purchase and distribution of SIM cards were needed to fight crime and terrorism.

"I think it (100-point ID check) would help identify those responsible for crime and assist our focus on terrorism," Mr Moroney said.

"As far as NSW Police are concerned, we seek greater regulation in the acquisition of explosives within a terrorism context and it would seem sensible that there be similar thinking in terms of how we regulate the issue of SIM cards."

Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission committee member, Liberal MP Jason Wood, said criminals often registered SIM cards under fake names, including Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck.

He said the 100-point ID check would make buying a SIM card similar to opening a bank account.

"The police were very uniform in their call in the committee hearing. They were unanimous in saying they support the 100-point ID check and how it will have a major impact on crime in Australia," Mr Wood said.

"As an anti-terrorism measure, it would be effective in the awful event an attack does happen. It gives investigators a first point of call to find out addresses and can be useful in preventing secondary attacks."

The proposal arose partly out of police frustration at catching drug traffickers and other criminals who change SIM cards up to six times a day.

"It will make it more difficult for villains to go out and get SIM cards in false names as they are going to have to use their own identification," Mr Wood said.

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