



MEDIA RELEASE

Bob Baldwin, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the
Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources

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Trade Mark Invoice Scam Warning for Business

Trade mark applicants need to beware of a scam involving bogus invoices sent to businesses whose trade mark application details have been published in the Australian Official Journal of Trade Marks, according to Bob Baldwin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources.

In one recent case, an Australian company was asked to pay almost \$2,000 in registration charges for inclusion of their trade mark in an unknown international trade mark database operated by a Swiss company.

“Trade mark applicants should be very cautious about invoices received from overseas companies. If they are in any doubt about the legitimacy of any documents asking for money in relation to their trade mark application, then they should contact IP Australia for assistance”, said Mr Baldwin.

Trade mark applicants/owners may receive unsolicited documents from overseas companies that appear to be invoices for registering their trade mark in an international register (database) that may be of no worth to them. These invoices are usually sent soon after the trade mark details have been advertised in the *Australian Official Journal of Trade Marks* or the *WIPO Gazette of International Marks*.

While there are a number of companies that commercially publish consolidated international trade mark databases for the legal profession, legitimate publishers are unlikely to approach or attempt to charge individual trade mark owners.

Trade mark registration in Australia can only be obtained by lodging an application with IP Australia, the Australian Government agency responsible for administering the trade marks, system. Registration fees for an Australian trade mark are paid only once, to IP Australia, and the registration lasts for ten years.

IP Australia is obliged to publish certain trade mark information under the *Trade Marks Act 1995*, and the official Australian trade mark register is freely available and can be searched through the IP Australia website.

A list of companies reported to have sent bogus invoices and a sample bogus invoice are available on IP Australia's website at www.ipaustralia.gov.au/media.

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