

New technology in Australian supermarkets and retailers catches out would-be thieves

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EXCLUSIVE

SHOPPERS and dodgy employees incorrectly scanning items or stealing goods are being caught red-handed by new technology being trialled by retailers across the country.

And many have no idea they are now under close surveillance.

Retail sources have confirmed to News Corp Australia new technology is being piloted in retailers dotted throughout the country including in Sydney and Melbourne, so shoppers beware.



Shoppers who are not correctly scanning items are getting caught out. This includes in supermarket and mid-tier department stores.

Latest retail figures show shoplifting remains a huge problem and is costing stores around 9.3 billion a year — or 3 per cent of their total annual turnover.

Using camera and video technology it gives a bird's eye view of exactly what shoppers are doing at the checkout, from neglecting to scan items, incorrectly scanning goods or "sweethearting."

This is when shop assistants allow friends and family members to get items for free by failing to scan items or alternatively putting them through as something that costs less.



The new technology can distinguish when a customer scans items incorrectly. The technology has been created by US company Stoplift and has been in testing phase since starting late last year.

Chief executive officer Malay Kundu said it had so far "found a fair amount of theft and loss at both manned and self-checkout consistently across various locations in Australia."

"Our algorithms are analysing that material continuously so it's able to watch all of that video footage and compare that with transaction data," he said.

The vision is monitored using artificial intelligence to catch out thieves.

Alerts are also sent to staff monitoring self-serve check-outs via a mobile device when customers are incorrectly scanning items or not scanning them at all.

The Australian Retailers' Association's executive director Russell Zimmerman warned deceitful shoppers and retail workers to watch out because they will get caught.



Australian Retailers Association executive director Russell Zimmerman says dodgy shoppers will get caught out for doing the wrong thing.

“Buyer beware, if you risk it you are going to get caught and you need to expect the force of the law to come down on you,” he said.

“Retailers need to up the ante to ensure they capture everything that they possibly can to eliminate the cost of retail theft in their stores.”

Mr Zimmerman said honest consumers were “paying the price” for retail thieves.

Items commonly stolen included lipsticks, makeup, batteries, razor blades and baby food.

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