

Teens smarten up for fake IDs to buy booze

UNDER-aged teenagers have been caught dressing up in suits and ties to create 'believable' fake IDs to buy alcohol for the start of Schoolies Festival.

An investigation by liquor licensing officers has uncovered a racket involving more than 160 fake IDs which have been circulating in Brisbane.

More than 35 teenagers have been caught and fined for using the fake 18-plus cards, learners' licences and full driving licences at liquor stores and clubs in Brisbane over the past week.

Liquor Licensing Minister

Peter Lawlor said an organised group of teenagers was behind the racket and had been infiltrating school parties and offering to make IDs for a fee of up to \$200.

"The teens are obviously parting with their money for these supposedly high quality fake IDs and then getting caught on their first night out," he said.

Mr Lawlor said teens were finding themselves almost \$1000 out of pocket once they were caught by liquor licensing officers.

Fines for using, producing or defacing ID cards range from \$300 to \$600 and offenders can be slapped with multiple fines for the one card.

The fake ID sting in Brisbane came after officers detected a large spike across the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane in October.

Officers believe many holders had been testing their cards at liquor stores and clubs before hitting Surfers Paradise for Schoolies this weekend.

"We also believe they are interested in using the cards

before Schoolies to stock up on alcohol before they go," a spokesman said.

Mr Lawlor said the fake cards held tell-tale flaws which were obvious to seasoned security guards and liquor store staff.

In many cases, he said, the cards were missing key embossing features, had numbers that did not line up or had scratches where photos had been inserted to suit the new owner.

Police are believed to be close to identifying the members of the organised group making the fake IDs.