

## **Pareto Phone Cyber Incident**

### **FAQs for IFAW Donors**

#### **1. Who is Pareto Phone?**

Pareto Phone is a telephone fundraising services provider that partners with Australian charities. Pareto Phone conducts donor outreach as part of tele-fundraising campaigns and may have contacted you for fundraising purposes on behalf of our charity.

#### **2. What has happened?**

In April 2023 Pareto Phone experienced a criminal cyber-attack involving access to its systems by an unauthorised third party, including access to certain personal information held by Pareto Phone as part of fundraising on behalf of various charities including IFAW.

On 8 August 2023, the unauthorised third party published (on its external dark web leak site) a listing of the data that it claimed to have obtained from Pareto Phone's systems. Subsequently, on 14 August 2023, the unauthorised third party published the actual documents on that same leak site.

The incident was reported to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) at that time.

Pareto Phone subsequently confirmed the incident impacted a total of 325,000 data files. Working with external forensic experts, Pareto Phone identified the nature of the files and any that were likely to contain personal information relating to donors. This analysis identified a limited subset (approximately 12,000 files) which were likely to contain donor information.

Pareto Phone also worked with an external data discovery provider to analyse any data that constituted personally identifiable information (PII) – for example, names, contact details, dates of birth, BSB/account information, payment card information (PCI) and any government identity documents.

This was a complex task, including because of the different file types involved, and took some time to work through. Pareto Phone's analysis of the compromised files to understand the potential impact on individual donors was completed on 18 September 2023.

#### **3. Has IFAW's systems or security been impacted?**

No. At no time was IFAW's own systems or security impacted by this incident.

#### **4. What information relating to IFAW supporters has been impacted?**

In late September 2023, Pareto Phone indicated to IFAW that the data set specifically impacting IFAW supporters contained donor names, email addresses and/or phone numbers, but no identity documents, bank details or date of birth information.

IFAW subsequently investigated the data set independently and found the impacted personal information of supporters was limited to full names and addresses of donors, email addresses and donor gift amounts, Phone numbers, date of birth information and bank details were not impacted.

#### **5. What should I do now?**

To help support any donors who may be impacted, Pareto Phone partnered with IDCARE, Australia's national identity and cyber support community service. They have expert Case Managers who can work with you in addressing concerns in relation to personal information risks. IDCARE's Case Managers will work with you to design and implement a tailored individual risk assessment and response plan.

IDCARE's services are at no cost to you. If you wish to speak with one of their expert Case Managers, please complete an **online Get Help form at [www.idcare.org](http://www.idcare.org) or call 1800 595 160.**

Note that IDCARE specialist Case Managers are available from 9am - 5pm AEST Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. **When engaging IDCARE please use the referral code PAPHCH23.**

We also recommend that you **take the following steps to protect your personal information** from the risk of identity theft and other scams:

- Remain alert to increased scam activity, especially email and SMS or telephone phishing scams (i.e., fraudulent communications disguised as if to look like they come from an organisation you trust). In particular, any such scam activity purporting to come from Pareto Phone or IFAW.
- Do not click on any suspicious links or provide your passwords or any personal information. Always refuse any unprompted request from an individual to access your computer even if they say they are from a credible organisation.
- Consider changing your online account passwords. The Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) provides guidance around good password practices here: <https://www.cyber.gov.au/protect-yourself>
- To monitor your financial records, you can apply for an annual free credit report or credit report ban from each of the consumer credit reporting agencies below:
  - Equifax: <https://www.equifax.com.au/personal/products/credit-and-identity-products>;
  - Illion: <https://www.creditcheck.illion.com.au/>; and
  - Experian: <http://www.experian.com.au/consumer-reports>.
- Further information on online safety, cyber security and helpful tips to protect yourself and respond to scams, identity theft and other online risks, can be found at <https://www.cyber.gov.au/threats>.

## **6. How could my information be used?**

Given the access was limited to names, addresses and donor gift amounts, and not other personally identifiable information, the potential use of that information by criminal actors is very limited, and not likely to result in serious harm to the individual the information relates to.

## **7. Am I at risk of identity theft?**

Pareto Phone has not identified any government identity documents as being impacted in respect of any donors, and as such, the risk of identity theft is very low. This is consistent with the fact that Pareto Phone does not collect such data from donors.

Out of abundant caution, we recommend you take the following steps to protect your personal information from the risk of identity theft and other scams outlined in question 4 above.

## **8. I haven't donated to IFAW for many years. Why did Pareto Phone still have my data?**

Pareto Phone held records of client donors for active and non-active campaigns for fundraising purposes. There may be a number of reasons why donor data was held for certain periods of time depending on the nature of the data involved and to meet specific charity requests (for example, Pareto Phone has at times been requested by its charity partners to provide data from older campaigns for various purposes, often dating back years).

IFAW adheres strictly to data protection policies, which include the responsible handling and timely destruction of donor data. Pareto Phone was obliged to comply with these standards, per the data retention provisions in our contractual agreements with them.

Regrettably, as reports in the media indicate, Pareto Phone retained personal information of donors from various charities, including IFAW, for periods extending beyond what was agreed. The

prolonged retention of old donor data by Pareto Phone, now in liquidation, was done without our knowledge or consent and is a clear deviation from our data management policies. This action is unacceptable and goes against the principles of data privacy and security that IFAW upholds.

We are deeply concerned and disappointed by this revelation and are committed to ensuring that such an oversight does not occur in the future. Measures are being taken to reinforce our data protection policies and to exercise greater scrutiny over any third-party service providers we engage.

#### **9. What happens now that Pareto Phone has gone into liquidation?**

On 27 October 2023, notice was given that at a general meeting of the members of Pareto Phone held on 27 October 2023, it was resolved that the company be wound up and that Michael Brereton & Sean Wengel of William Buck be appointed liquidators.

For further information, the **liquidators may be contacted at (02) 8263 4000 or [emalee.cgilmour@williambucknsw.com.au](mailto:emalee.cgilmour@williambucknsw.com.au)**. We have also requested the liquidators keep us informed of developments that may be relevant to the incident.

#### **10. What if I have any further questions?**

We are deeply sorry that Pareto Phone's data breach has impacted our supporters, as the privacy of your personal information and support of IFAW is so important to us.

Please feel free to contact our Australian Donor Relations team at [info-au@ifaw.orgc](mailto:info-au@ifaw.orgc) if you have any further questions. We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support through this difficult time and into the future.