



# Con woman jailed for duping job seekers

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**Melissa Iaria**

A con woman known as "Charlotte" was on the run from Queensland when she set up a children's party business in Victoria that fleeced job seekers by using their identities to obtain loans.

Courtnie Thomas, 27, was jailed for four months on Monday for stealing the personal details of job candidates for her party business and using them to obtain \$19,000 in loans.

Now Queensland Police plan to extradite her to answer 54 similar charges.

Thomas pleaded guilty to six deception related charges in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court on Monday.

The court heard she obtained loans in the names of three victims and tried to obtain a further \$7000 with a fourth last year.

The victims, who knew her as "Charlotte", were candidates applying for jobs with her party business.

She used their identities to apply for online loans, and eventually shifted the money to her own bank account.

She also used a fake passport to lease a Point Cook rental property, for which more than \$4000 in rent was never paid.

Defence barrister George Balot said the offending was amateur in nature, given the money fraudulently taken was traced to Thomas' own bank account.

He said the single mother of two had suffered anxiety and depression and was separated from her children in custody.

But magistrate Charlie Rozencwajg said Thomas had put them at risk by fleeing from Queensland, where she was wanted for similar crimes, and then offending again in Victoria.

When police tried to arrest Thomas at her home earlier this month, she was seen jumping the back fence to avoid capture.

Despite being wanted on two Queensland warrants, Thomas' offending continued undeterred in Victoria and involved planning, using a legitimate business as a cover to defraud job seekers, Mr Rozencwajg said.

"I find it hard to reconcile your personal issues with the manner these offences were planned and executed," he said.

"They involved some sophistication, using a legitimate business as a cover.

"It's not just a rip-off of financial institutions, it's the interference in the lives of people whose identities you stole," he said.