



Scamwatch radar alert

Vulnerable consumers lose record amount to scammers

Dear reader, subscribe

Australians who are older, Indigenous or have disability reported record losses in 2018 according to the ACCC's annual [Targeting Scams report](#) released this week.

Australians aged over 65 submitted over 26,400 reports to Scamwatch in 2018, with losses of over \$21.4 million. This represents an increase of five per cent in reports but 22 per cent in losses.

“Scammers will scour dating sites and social media for older Australians who have recently divorced or lost a long term partner, taking advantage of those who are inexperienced with these sites and may be in a vulnerable emotional state,” ACCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard said.

“Investment scams are the most financially harmful because the scammers invest time and money into convincing sales pitches, flashy websites and even glossy brochures.”

Older Australians looking to grow their nest eggs but who instead get caught up in investment scams reported losses of \$7.6 million, and those misled through fake

“Scammers will start with a cold call to their victim promising low risk investments for high returns. They may spend months grooming their victims and once a victim invests, they’re quickly convinced to put more and more money in. As soon as the victim tries to cash in on their investment, the scammer quickly disappears,” Ms Rickard said.

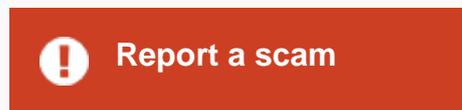
Scamwatch received over 7800 reports from people with disability or who identified themselves as having a chronic illness with over \$8.7 million in losses. These Australians also reported higher losses per report to investment scams and dating and romance scams when compared with those that did not identify as having a disability or chronic illness.

Indigenous Australians also reported record losses in 2018. Scamwatch received 2434 scam reports from Indigenous people with losses exceeding \$3 million – a 79 per cent increase compared to 2017. Investment scams were the most financially harmful with \$1.1 million reported lost.

“The ACCC is committed to continuing our education and awareness efforts including our Indigenous outreach work and distribution of our Little Black Book of Scams. As vulnerable consumers can be difficult to reach through traditional channels we also encourage the wider community to assist in warning these consumers about scams,” Ms Rickard said.



Follow us on Twitter



Report a scam on our website