



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

Hon Anthony Roberts MP

Minister for Fair Trading

MEDIA RELEASE

19 March 2012

MONEY SCAMS THE FOCUS OF FRAUD WEEK

The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, today urged the community to be more vigilant about protecting private information, such as banking passwords and personal identification numbers.

A “Slam Scams” campaign is the focus of National Consumer Fraud Week (19-25 March). It encourages people to ignore suspicious emails, letters, house visits, phone calls or mobile phone text messages.

“As technology is advancing, so too is the sophistication of scams,” Mr Smith said.

“Fraudsters frequently use websites that look very professional and allow them to pose as a trustworthy person or organisation. It’s a slick way of convincing people to disclose their personal financial details.”

The number of scams reported to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission almost doubled in 2011, with the ACCC receiving more than 83,000 reports from consumers and small businesses.

“The old saying applies: if an unsolicited offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is,” Mr Smith said.

The Fair Trading Minister, Anthony Roberts, said scams were becoming increasingly sophisticated as criminals sought to capitalise on new technology.

“Scammers typically seek to target the most vulnerable consumers, but the variety and volume of scams mean that everyone is at risk,” Mr Roberts said.

“It is important that we all work together to raise awareness and make it as difficult as possible for criminals to steal people’s money through scams.”

The Attorney General said people should take simple precautions when entering their personal identification number (PIN) or password.

“I can’t stress enough the importance of keeping your PIN and banking passwords a secret,” Mr Smith said.

“Make sure there is no one looking over your shoulder when you do your online banking and cover your hand when entering your PIN at an ATM.”

Mr Smith said locking mobile phones and protecting passwords was another way of guarding against fraud.

“A smart phone contains a treasure trove of personal information that could be exploited if it falls into the wrong hands,” Mr Smith said.

“Smart phone users should also be careful when downloading apps and should consider installing security software from a reputable provider.”

The Department of Attorney General and Justice is a Principal Partner of National Fraud Week, along with a number of government, business and community group partners. The Department is supporting National Consumer Fraud Week through an online campaign to educate consumers about payment fraud.

For more information about the various types of payment fraud, as well as tips on how to lessen the chances of becoming a victim, go to: www.crimeprevention.nsw.gov.au