

Scammers fleece Australians out of \$90 mln

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This file illustration photo shows a pedestrian speaking on a mobile phone while standing next to a promotional billboard, on May 2, 2006. Australians were fleeced out of more than \$90 million last year by scammers, and officials on Monday said they believe it was just the tip of the iceberg. The majority of scams were delivered over the phone.

Australians were fleeced out of more than Aus\$93 million (US\$90 million) last year by scammers, and officials on Monday said they believe it was just the tip of the iceberg.

The money people lost was up nine percent on the previous year with a big jump in online shopping scams, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) said in a new report.

The biggest fraud was people being asked to pay to access a share in a sum of money they are told they are owed, with gullible [Australians](#) handing over more than Aus\$30 million.

This was followed by Aus\$23.3 million being sent to someone they think they are in an online relationship with, but is in fact a con.

Online shopping fraud, using increasingly sophisticated fake logos, emails or websites, raked in more than Aus\$4.0 million.

"Reports of [financial losses](#) to the ACCC are just the tip of the iceberg as victims of scams are often too embarrassed to report their experience," ACCC deputy chair Delia Rickard said.

"[Scammers](#) continue to find sophisticated methods to deliver scams, taking advantage of new technologies and communication methods to try and slip under your radar.

"Nowadays it can take just the click of a button to fall victim to a [scam](#), so it is more important than ever that we practice safe techniques when communicating with others—whether online, on the phone, at one's business or even at home."

The report said most consumers who reported being duped lost between Aus\$100 and Aus\$499 in what the agency described as "high volume" scams targeting many people.

The majority of scams were delivered over the phone, with voice and text messaging also popular with fraudsters.

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