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Territory works to combat consumer fraud

The Northern Territory has joined forces with 17 other jurisdictions across Australia and New Zealand to combat consumer fraud.

The Australasian Consumer Taskforce's four-week campaign warns of the thousands of scams that circulate every year and advises people how to protect themselves against becoming a victim.

The Attorney General and Justice Minister Peter Toyne said consumer fraud and scams cost Territorians significant amounts of money each year.

"This is a great initiative to protect Territorians against unscrupulous operators out to make a quick buck," he said.

"Agencies across Australia receive thousands of complaints, and often calls for help each year about scams received by e-mail, phone and mail.

"To protect against scammers people should hit the delete key, hang up or throw it in the bin."

Consumer Affairs identified the top scams in 2005 as:

- cold calling schemes
- lottery scams
- share trading and get-rich-quick schemes
- e-mails purportedly from your bank asking for your details

Dr Toyne said consumers are their own best defence and the easiest way to combat fraud is to educate and change the behaviour of people.

"So resist the temptation. Be wary. Do not respond to these scams. Do not send money upfront to collect supposed winnings from lotteries that you didn't enter," he said.

"Don't reply to letters promising you rich returns. Don't click on links in e-mails and provide personal information, and don't believe people who call to offer you a great investment deal.

"All of these scams promise much but deliver nothing."

"The key message for consumers is "Don't help the scammers scam you!"

Consumers who think they've spotted a scam can check it out at www.scamwatch.gov.au or report it on 1300 795 995.

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