

MEDIA RELEASE

Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs

10 January 2008

INTRODUCTION AGENT SCAMMING TERRITORY CONSUMERS

A notorious fraudster Gregory John Elliott has been ripping off vulnerable Territory consumers who are looking for love.

The Acting Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Gary Clements has warned consumers to be careful when responding to 'personal' classifieds that are vague and ambiguous.

Mr Elliott places personal advertisements offering to facilitate introductions with local women. To use his introduction service, Mr Elliott requires consumers to make an upfront payment, via electronic transfer, into his bank account. Once payment has been received, Mr Elliott inevitably fails to follow through on his promises.

Mr Elliott was successfully prosecuted by Consumer Affairs Victoria in 2003 for fraudulent introduction agent activities and is known to consumer affairs agencies across Australia.

"A number of Territorians have already been caught out by Mr Elliott and his colleagues, and have lost large sums of money in the process," Mr Clement said.

"Consumers should never make an upfront payment for services by direct debit unless they are confident in the identity of the service provider, they have undertaken appropriate background checks on the proprietors, and there is a contract in place for delivery of the services.

"Introduction agents such as Mr Elliott prey upon the vulnerable and lonely and count on the fact that consumers will not report fraudulent activity out of embarrassment or shame.

"I urge anyone who has fallen prey to this sort of scam to contact Consumer Affairs. I will not hesitate in taking action against anyone operating such activities."

Consumers who would like to report the activities of Mr Elliott, or any other scammer, should immediately contact Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319.

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