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Guy Barnett, Minister for Building and Construction

Fraud Week 2017 – Avoid Social Media Scams

Today I give my support to National Consumer Fraud Week 2017 and encourage Tasmanians to guard themselves against the scourge of social media scams.

Fraud Week is an annual initiative of the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce (ACFT) that works alongside private sector, community and non-government partners to prevent fraud.

Fraud Week's theme this year aims to raise awareness of social media scams and provide consumers with tips on avoiding online scammers.

Last year alone, victims reported losing over \$9.5 million to social media scams – almost three times more than in 2015.

Social media is also becoming a common first point of contact for dating and romance scammers.

The recent global cyber extortion attack underlines the importance of being alert to scams and other online attempts that seek to deceive or defraud consumers.

Telling the difference between genuine profiles or ads on social media and fake profiles or fake traders can be difficult at times with online scammers becoming more sophisticated in their approach.

Some tips for staying safe and spotting social media scams include:

- Don't accept invitations on social media from people you don't know.
- Don't send money to someone you've never met in person.
- Check reviews before buying online. Try to find how reputable a seller is by searching for reviews.

I encourage Tasmanians to keep alert when using social media and be aware of common tricks used by scammers.

Consumers concerned about scams should visit the ACCC's Scamwatch website www.scamwatch.gov.au/fraudweek2017 for more information about social media scams, how to protect yourself and what to do if you've been scammed.