

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



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PLANNING A CARAVAN TRIP? BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

The Andrews Labor Government is warning Victorians to be vigilant when planning a caravan holiday in the wake of coronavirus restrictions easing, following a surge in scams over the past five months.

Consumer Affairs Victoria has received 17 reports of caravan scams since October 2020, compared with two reports in 2019, and is reminding consumers to be cautious when making significant online purchases.

Scammers are advertising caravans online, then making excuses – or taking advantage of lockdown limitations – to convince buyers not to view the vehicle in person, encouraging them to make their purchase ‘sight unseen’.

Buyers are then being persuaded to deposit money into a bank account, with promises that they’ll be able to come and collect the caravan, or that the vehicle will be delivered to them. After the buyer makes the deposit, the scammer stops communicating, and the product is never received.

Melbourne resident Andrea purchased a caravan through eBay in October last year, with the hopes of taking it around Australia.

Having successfully purchased many other products online, Andrea had no reason to doubt the experience.

It was only when the delivery of the caravan was expected to be on a public holiday that alarm bells were raised for Andrea.

She sent multiple emails for confirmation, both leading up to and following the expected delivery date. When she received no response from the proposed seller, she realised that she had been caught by a scam.

Andrea was one of many Victorians who lost a combined total of more than \$1.5 million to online shopping scams in the past year.

When buying online, be wary of anyone who stops you from seeking further information about a product as this can often be a sign of a scammer.

Anyone who believes they may have been involved in an online shopping scam should report it to Consumer Affairs Victoria via consumer.vic.gov.au/reportascam.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne

“It’s a great time to plan a holiday in Victoria right now, however if you’re buying a caravan, make sure your wheels are the real deal.”

“After a challenging 2020, it’s understandable that many Victorians want to hit the road, but be wary of scammers who want to take advantage of your desire to see the best of what our state has to offer.”

“If you’re making a major purchase, such as a caravan, make sure to see it in person before you pay any money. Being vigilant will save you a lot of time, money and disappointment in the long run.”

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