

Media Release

The Hon Nick Staikos MP
Minister for Consumer Affairs
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STAY SAFE FROM ROMANCE SCAMS THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

The Allan Labor Government is urging Victorians to stay mindful of scammers this Valentine's Day.

More than \$5.6 million was lost to online romance and dating scams across the state last year.

Advancements in technology such as AI and "deep fake" videos are leading to more sophisticated methods of deception.

Australians reported losses of more than \$27 million to romance fraudsters in 2025 – with men and women of all ages impacted by these scams.

To protect yourself or someone you know from a dating or romance scam, look out for these red flags:

- be wary of anyone who makes over-the-top expressions of love, known as 'lovebombing', or anyone who quickly tries to move the conversation to another app
- be mindful of anyone who encourages you to make 'easy money' through different investments, like cryptocurrency
- question anyone who requests money or banking details – they may tell you they have an emergency and urgently need your money, or ask you to set up accounts or transfer money
- be mindful of your own profile across social media channels, particularly personal information you share
- be wary if someone won't meet in person – real people want to meet you, but scammers usually can't.

While data shows Australians are getting better at recognising the red flags and detecting dating and romance scams, scammers are constantly finding new ways to trick their victims.

Anyone who believes they have been the victim of a romance scam should contact their bank or financial institution immediately. They should also be wary of 'recovery scams', where scammers pose as trusted third parties offering help to get finances back.

Victorians should report scams to Scamwatch at scamwatch.gov.au, as well as to the platform where the scam happened, such as online dating apps.

If you've shared personal information, contact IDCARE on 1800 595 160 for identity theft support. If you are experiencing emotional distress, you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Nick Staikos

"As technology becomes more advanced, romance scams have become increasingly sophisticated and convincing, and they can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender or background."

"We want to help people understand how to spot the red flags and protect themselves from romance scammers who will go to the most deceptive lengths to fool hard-working Victorians out of their hard-earned money."