

Consumers Warned of Scam Competitions



Dubious competitions increase over the holiday period

Australian consumers have been warned to take extra care over the Christmas period, when being contacted about winning online competitions. Founder and Editor of CompetitionsGuide.com.au, Craig Seitam, has noted an increase in complaints of late, and is urging the public to take care when responding to winning announcements. Seitam warns; "Scam competitions such as European lotteries are hopefully easy to spot, but those that offer more realistic prizes are harder to detect. The problem is not with competitions that are being offered in Australia, but instead, people being awarded prizes in competitions that weren't entered in the first place". An increasing concern are phone calls from overseas travel companies. Seitam explains; "The way that it works is a person gets an international call offering congratulations for a major holiday prize. The intended winner gets excited, and is then asked to verify their identity with a credit card. Or sometimes it's even as forward as asking for a security deposit. The real problem happens when the person realises that they've been conned, and have no way of contacting the company to demand a refund." The rise in popularity of online competitions has added to the confusion. Seitam says; "If a competition enthusiast enters hundreds of competitions, they need to take a note of each one. If a prize winning phone call comes, this can be simply checked against the list. Treat any phone call or email with suspicion, and ask the person directly for a link back to the competition. Verify every detail you can, and never give credit card or any other financial information." CompetitionsGuide.com.au encourages the public to notify them of any suspicious competition campaigns or prize notifications.

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