

Don't get stung by dating and romance scams

Dating and romance is often great, but sometimes people you meet online aren't who they say they are.

WHAT ROMANCE SCAMMERS DO



Scammers pretend to be a potential partner or lover to steal other peoples' money. They may do this by setting up a fake social media or dating profile or sending emails or texts using a name that is not their own.

Once the scammer has the person's trust, they may make up a reason why they need money straight away.

Sadly, this type of scam tends to be the **most financially damaging for Indigenous communities.**

Remember: If you've been a victim, you don't have to be embarrassed or ashamed. Scammers target people of all ages, genders, education levels and races. They are also becoming more clever with their tactics, which makes scams hard to spot.

Below are some facts about scams and tips to protect yourself.

THE FACTS



- Dating and romance scammers collected more than \$56 million in 2021.
- Social networking and mobile applications were scammers' methods of choice in 2021, followed by internet and email.
- Men reported a slightly higher number of dating and romance scams than women across the year. All genders can be victims of scams though.
- People aged between 45 and 54 reported the highest volume of scams in 2021. Again, scammers target all age groups.

Source: ACCC's Scamwatch 2021.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

- The person you're "dating" becoming very clingy or **emotionally attached fast**. They may say they love you or have strong feelings for you quickly.
- If they **don't turn up** to a planned meeting or **don't turn their camera on**, they may not be who they say they are.
- If they **say they need money** because something bad happened. This is a common tactic.
- If they become more **desperate for money** or help and start contacting you more frequently.
- If they **stop contacting you** after you send them money or bank details.

Catfishing: More than a type of fish

Catfishing is when someone tries to get someone else to form a relationship with them using a fake identity. This is a type of dating and romance scam.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Don't send money or banking details** over text, messaging or email to someone you haven't met. Even if you have met, be careful about sharing this personal information with anyone.
- **Reduce how much you tell people online**. Scammers can use this information to steal your identity, to learn about your interests or to pretend to have more in common with you than they actually do.
- **Do a reverse image search** of the person you're speaking to. You can do this via Google.
- **Be wary of someone who won't meet or turn their camera on**. They may not be the person you think they are.
- **Keep an eye on scams doing the rounds**. The ACCC's Your Mob Rights Facebook page shares information about scams that are circulating.

HOW TO REPORT A SCAM

If you think you may have been scammed, call the ACCC Indigenous Infoline on **1300 303 143** or you can report it online at **scamwatch.gov.au**. Reporting a scam can help authorities to find the scammer and stop them from targeting other victims.

For more helpful money tips, visit tomorrowmoney.co

Where to get help

IF YOU ARE FEELING DISTRESSED

Contact Lifeline on 13 14 11

IF MONEY OR YOUR FINANCIAL INFORMATION HAS BEEN TAKEN:

- Contact your bank and ask for their fraud team.
- Locate a financial counsellor in your area.
- Consider contacting your local police.

Sources: ACCC Scamwatch; Customer Owned Banking Association; esafety.gov.au.