



Department of Energy, Mines,
Industry Regulation and Safety
Consumer Protection

WA **ScamNet** 

Year in review 2024





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as being the Traditional Custodians of Western Australia.

We acknowledge the enduring connection Aboriginal people continue to share with the land, sea, and sky through both their ancestral ties and custodianship to Country.

We pay our respect to Elders both past and present, and acknowledge the value brought to our department through the collective contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Western Australia.

Overview

The Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety – Consumer Protection Division (Consumer Protection) receives thousands of enquiries concerning scam-related problems. Many of these are enquiries from people wanting to advise Consumer Protection of a potential scam.

Consumer Protection's Contact Centre provides advice on whether these enquiries are scams, how to avoid losing personal and financial information and how people can better protect themselves in the future.

Consumer Protection's WA ScamNet team manages more complicated enquiries, often including situations where victims have fallen for a scam and lost a monetary amount or personal information.

Reports of scams are received from several different sources including:

- Online Scam Reporting tool (OSR) on www.scamnet.wa.gov.au;
- Consumer Protection's Contact Centre;
- Crime Stoppers WA;
- WA Police; and
- other state and national government agencies.

While WA ScamNet primarily receives calls about scams in Western Australia (WA), calls are also received from other Australian states and from overseas. This report only focuses on reports and victims within WA.

The OSR allows people to report a scam anonymously, or on behalf of someone else or a business. Data, including demographic information, is collected relating to the scammer, the victim and the type of scam.



2024 | Key numbers

Consumer Protection's Contact Centre

Phone enquiries



1,198

Scam-related calls

▼ 42%



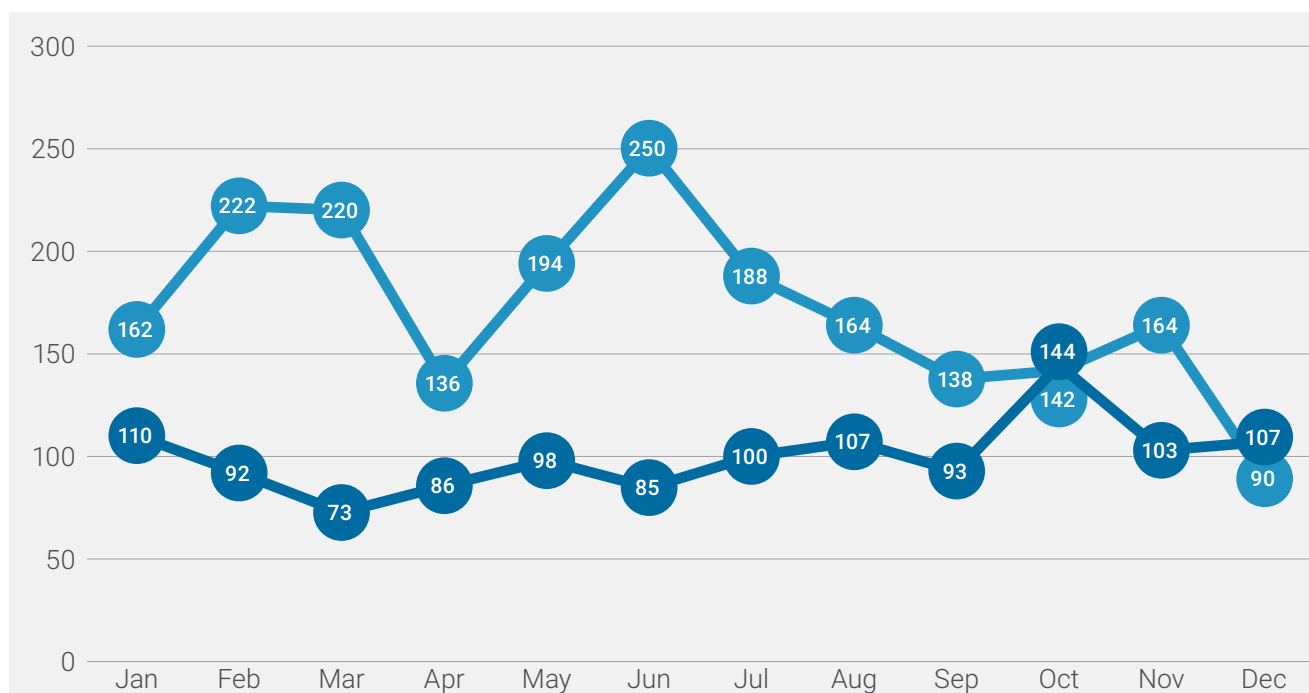
100

Calls per month (average)

▼ 58%

Figure 1: Scam-related enquiries received by the Contact Centre

— 2024 — 2023



▲ ▼ Arrows indicate the increase/decrease from 2023.

WA ScamNet

Statistics for reports to WA ScamNet

Losses reported

The figures below show the total number of scam reports and the amount lost to scams in 2024, including seven significant losses through four investment scams and three dating and romance scams.



\$29,105,772

Amount lost

▲ 28%*



2,451

Reports

▼ 40%



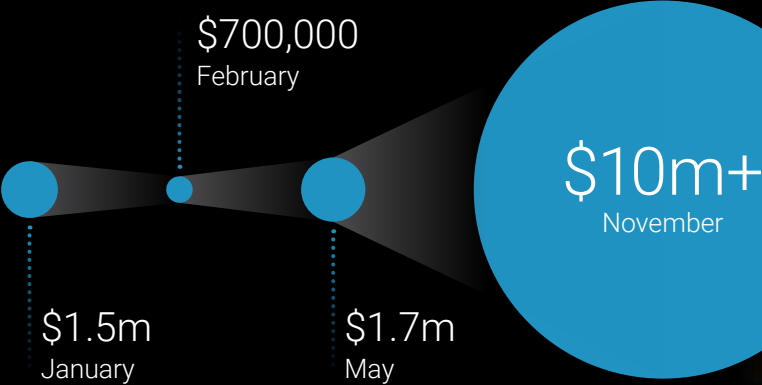
940

Reports with financial loss

▼ 32%

* The database is updated as new information is reported to WA ScamNet. Therefore, 2023 figures reported may differ from the 2023 WA ScamNet Year in Review report.

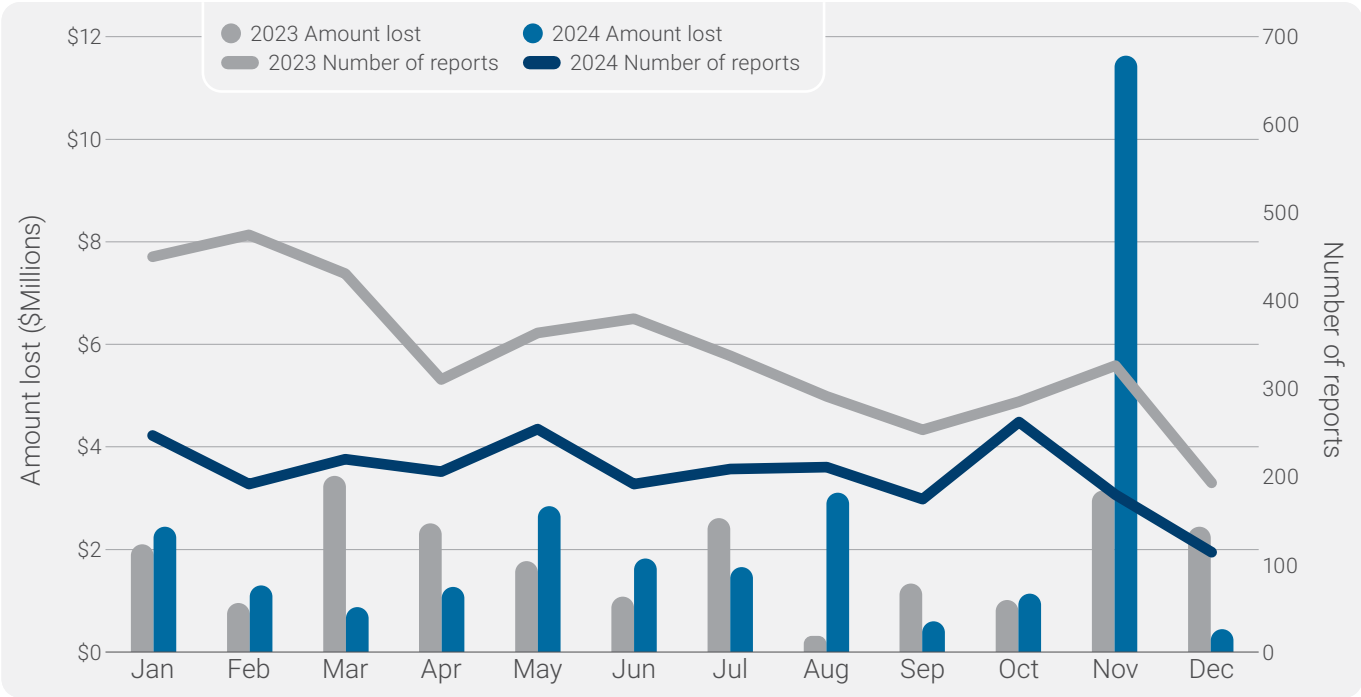
Investment scams



Dating and romance scams



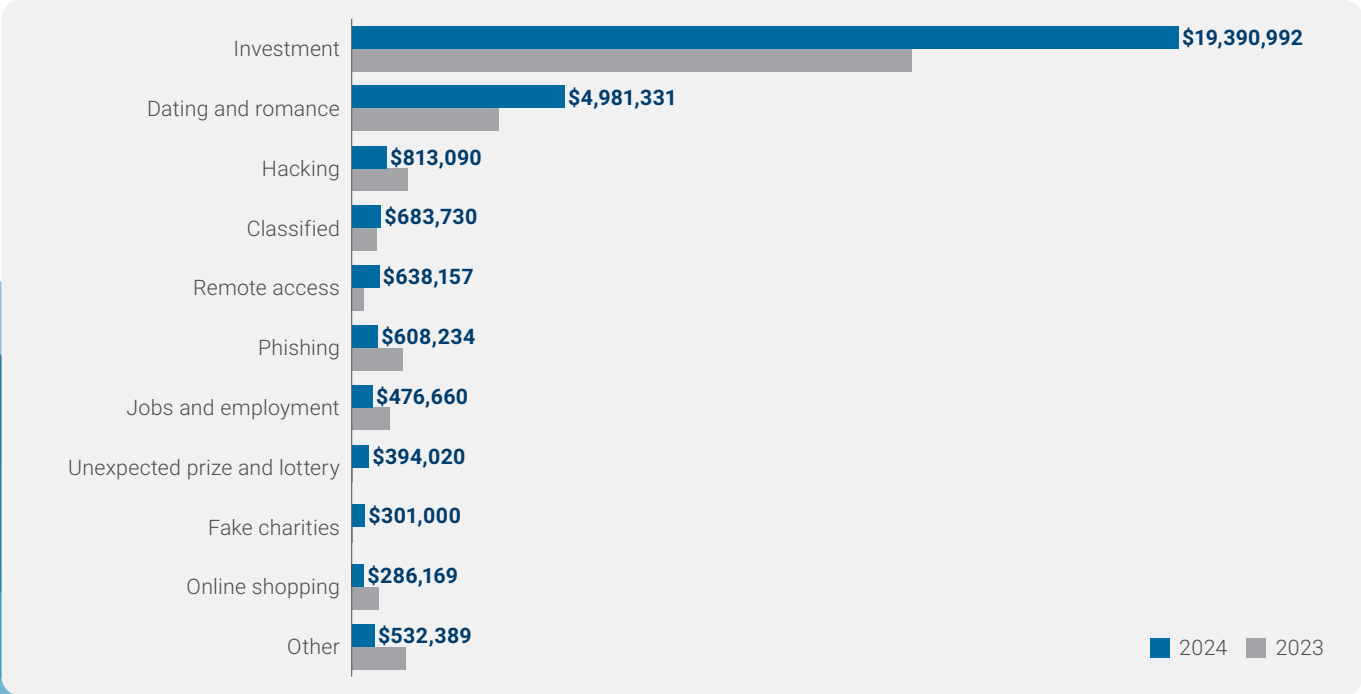
Figure 2: Total amount lost and number of reports to WA ScamNet



Scam categories breakdown

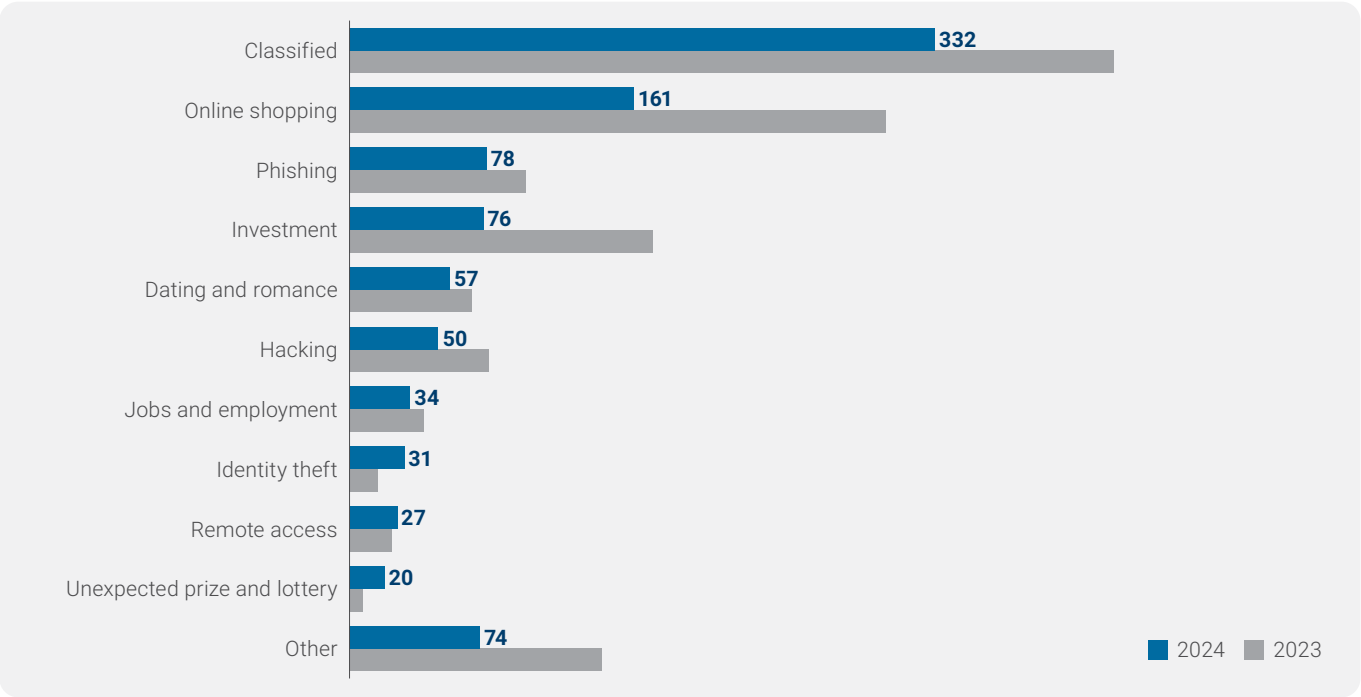
The top 10 scam categories in 2024, by amount lost, accounted for 98 per cent of the total losses recorded. Investment scam losses contributed to 67 per cent of losses (Figure 3). The category “Other scams” consists of all scams outside of the top 10 categories.

Figure 3: Top 10 scams for 2024 by amount lost



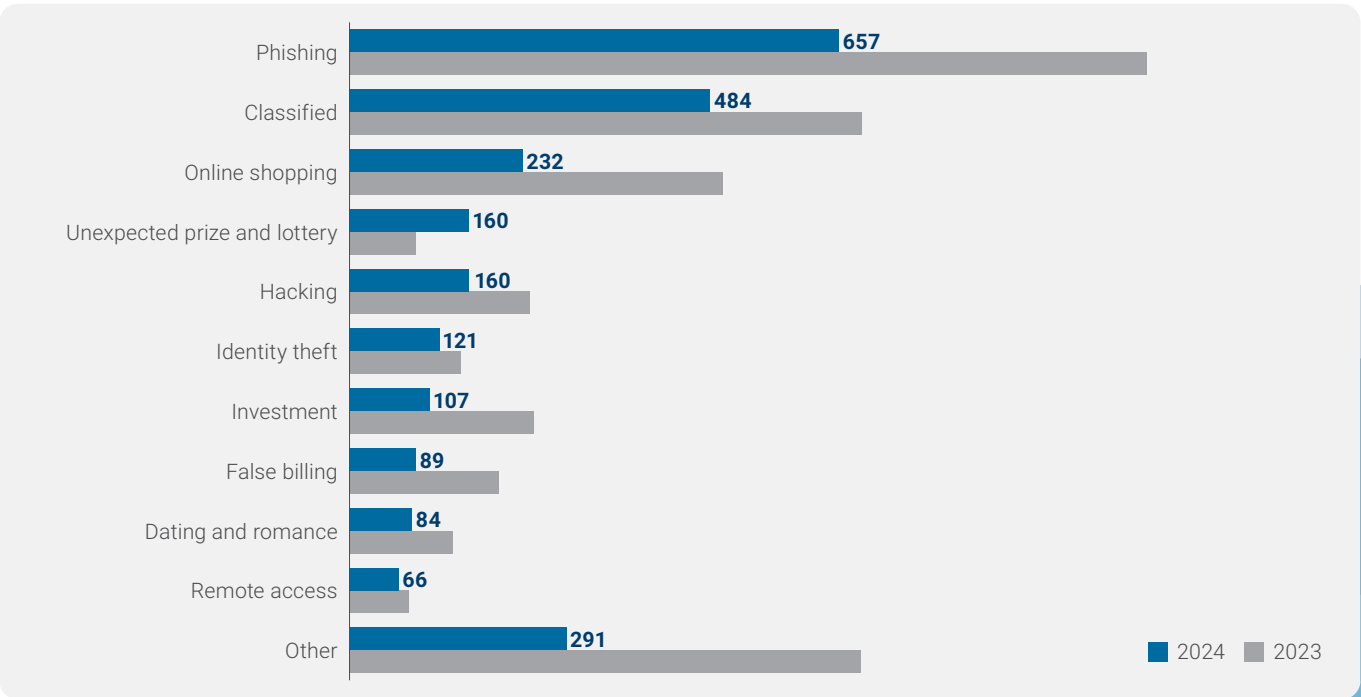
In 2024, 940 victims reported losing money to a scam, with 35 per cent falling for a classified scam (Figure 4). The top 10 scams, by number of victims, account for 92 per cent of victims.

Figure 4: Top 10 scams for 2024 by number of victims



Phishing scams accounted for 27 per cent of the total scam reports in 2024 (Figure 5) with the top 10 reported scams making up 88 per cent of the total reports.

Figure 5: Top 10 scams for 2024 by total reported

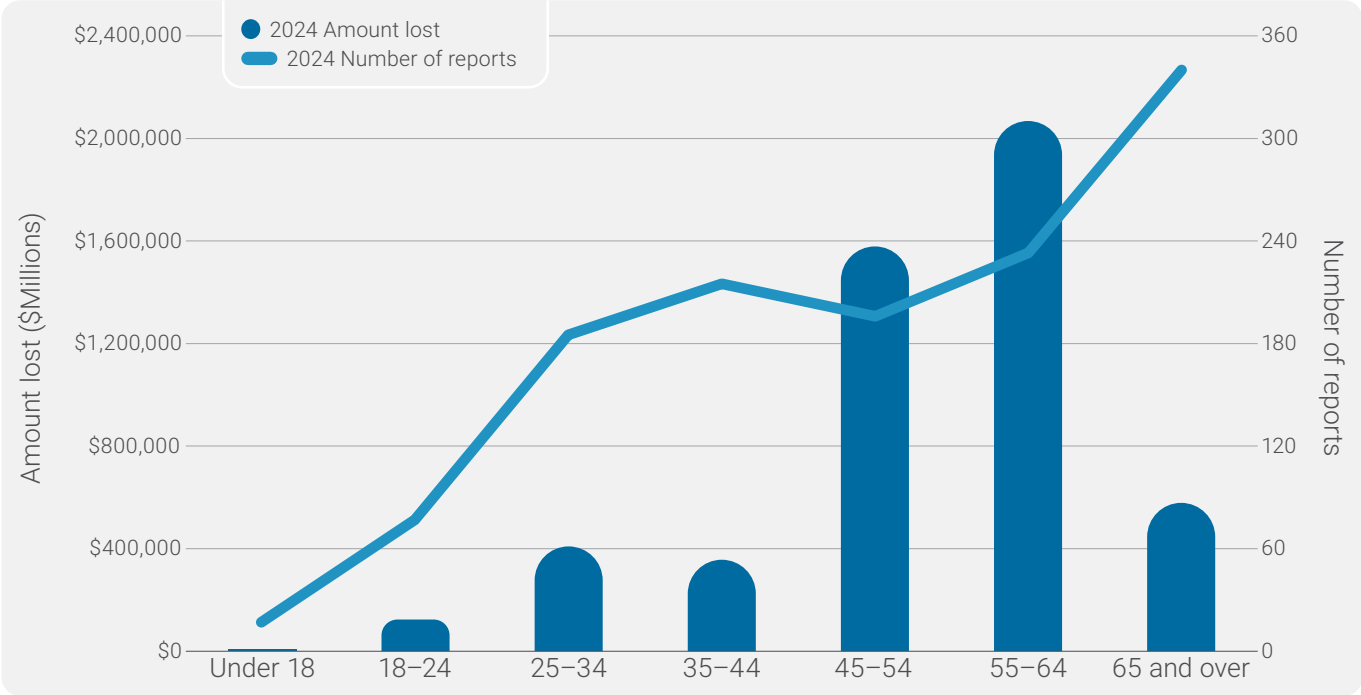


Demographics

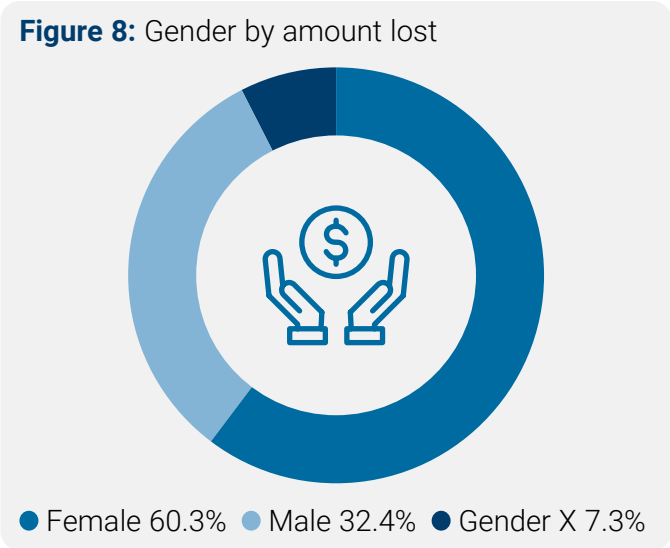
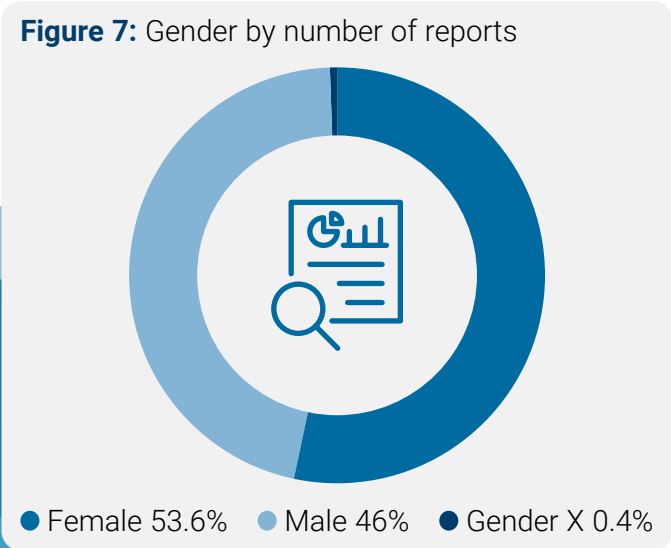
Age group information is only captured through the OSR. Age groups were provided in a total of 1,263 reports in 2024, 85 per cent of total reports received through the OSR.

The 55 to 64 year-old age group reported the highest losses (Figure 6) with a total of \$2,067,413. A \$700,000 investment scam loss contributed significantly to this total. This represents 40 per cent of all losses with demographic information.

Figure 6: Amount lost and number of reports by age group where reported (OSR) in 2024



Females accounted for both a higher proportion of the reports made (Figure 7) as well as the majority of money lost to scammers (Figure 8).



Cryptocurrency investment scams

2024 | Case studies

Victim reported loss: \$200,000

WA ScamNet received a report that a person had fallen victim to an investment scam after being contacted through LinkedIn by someone offering services to assist in trading on a cryptocurrency platform.

The victim was provided with step-by-step instructions on setting up their own trading account as well as advice as to how and what to trade in. They were shown real time figures showing their portfolios growing and becoming profitable.

They were able to withdraw a small amount of money with no issues after providing ID documents and then continued investing more money by transferring into crypto and bank accounts. When their “profits” showed they had over \$1 million, they attempted to withdraw \$100,000 but the ‘scam’ support team would not allow it and requested a further \$20,000 be paid to cover taxes. After sending the money, they were still unable to withdraw the profits, and more money was requested, which alerted the victim to the scam.

The victim contacted their bank and was able to retrieve \$20,000 that was sent via bank transfer.

WA ScamNet’s role

- Referred the victim to lodge a report with WA Police via the Australian Cyber Security Centre.
- Provided the details for ID Care, a national identity and cyber support service, as the victim had handed over sensitive personal information.
- Assessed the website which appeared to have been shut down. Many website reviews were negative, stating that other people had invested money and not been able to retrieve any of their funds.
- Assessed the company name which was not registered with ASIC or any overseas regulator.
- Reported accounts to receiving banks for internal review.

Fact Bank



17
Reports



9
Victims with
reported losses



\$346,725
Amount lost



Facebook Marketplace scams

2024 | Case studies

Victim reported loss: \$4,300

WA ScamNet received a report from a person who replied to a listing on Facebook Marketplace regarding a shipping container.

The listing directed them to a website for a company selling shipping containers, sheds and mobile homes.

The victim sent an email to the company for a quote and received a phone call to discuss the purchase and their requirements. They were emailed an invoice for payment which included an ABN. The victim searched the ABN to confirm legitimacy and saw that it was registered to a name matching the business.

The victim paid the invoice and a delivery date was set. The day before delivery, they received an email stating the delivery of the container would be delayed due to repairs. A new delivery date was confirmed, stating the victim would receive a phone call from the delivery driver with a time.

They did not receive a phone call, and all attempts of making contact through phone and email were ignored. The victim searched through Facebook and the page was no longer active. They noticed the same pictures from the original advertisement were being used in other advertisements.

As the victim paid via direct deposit into a bank account, they contacted their bank to dispute the transaction.

WA ScamNet's role

- Reported the bank details to the receiving bank.
- Investigated the website and noted it was registered with the ABN.
- Contacted the registered ABN holder to inform them of the use of their ABN.
- Reported the website to the domain holder advising of the scam.
- Included shipping container scams in a media warning on fake listings on Facebook Marketplace where scammers use legitimate business information to convince victims into making purchases.

Fact Bank



353
Reports



257
Victims with
reported losses



\$161,122
Amount lost





Government of Western Australia

**Department of Energy, Mines,
Industry Regulation and Safety**

www.demirs.wa.gov.au

Regional offices

Goldfields/Esperance	(08) 9021 9494
Great Southern	(08) 9842 8366
Kimberley	(08) 9191 8400
Mid West	(08) 9920 9800
North West	(08) 9185 0900
South West	(08) 9722 2888

Consumer Protection Division

Gordon Stephenson House
Level 2/140 William Street
Perth Western Australia 6000
Locked Bag 100 East Perth WA 6892

Call: 1300 30 40 54

Email: consumer@demirs.wa.gov.au

www.consumerprotection.wa.gov.au



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