

MEDIA RELEASE

Commissioner of Consumer Affairs

26 September 2011

Mystery Shopper Internet Scam Hits Northern Territory

Consumer Affairs is warning Territorians about an internet scam that has been circulating throughout the Northern Territory in the past few days. The email, which seeks to recruit mystery shoppers, is a sophisticated money laundering scam that requests personal details that could also be used in identity fraud.

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs, Gary Clements, said the scam email offered potential mystery shoppers the chance to earn \$300 per venture if they simply email their details.

“The reality is they are about to be lured into illegal money-laundering,” he said.

“Victims of the scam are sent bogus cheques for as much as \$5000 to deposit into their own bank account. They lose out when, after keeping a fee, they are asked to test the efficiency of money transfer services by sending the balance of funds they received back to their alleged employer. This transfer commonly happens before they discover the cheque is fake and by that time the money is usually unrecoverable.

“Scammers can make counterfeit cheques look very convincing using high-quality printers and scanners and are often overlooked even by banks,” Mr Clements said.

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs advises consumers to delete spam email, install anti-spam software, sign up for the Do-Not-Call Register if they are receiving unwanted telemarketing calls and never send money to anyone they do not know or trust.

If you require more information contact Consumer Affairs, telephone 1800 019 319 or email consumer@nt.gov.au.