



Media Release

The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Federal Member for Flinders
Minister for the Environment

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Residents warned to be wary of scams

I urge residents to be wary of a scam that asks people to pay money to retrieve 'lost' taxes.

My office has received several calls, often from older residents, who have been contacted via telephone by people unknown to them who claim to be from government departments, usually the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

The scammers tell their intended victims they have paid too much tax and can reclaim it – the amount is generally between \$5000 and \$7000 – if they send \$189 through a Western Union account at their local post office.

The scammers ask their intended victims not to reveal the details of their conversations to post office staff or anyone else. This scam is a variation on one that has been around since at least 2010, and would likely be occurring in other parts of the country.

I urge residents not to give out personal details, bank details or credit card information to someone they don't know. Scammers will often be fishing for this information so that they can get access to your money.

According to the ACCC's SCAMwatch website www.scamwatch.com.au the scammers may also tell you that the refund is taxable and you will have to pay the tax amount before receiving the refund. The scammers may also trick you by appearing to be privy to your personal information.

A similar scam is also going around in relation to solar panels. Scammers claim to be calling on behalf of the federal government offering a deal to install solar panels. They will ask for credit card, banking and personal details in order to access your money.

People are asked to report suspected scams to the ACCC via the report a scam page on the SCAMwatch website or by calling 1300 795 995.

Residents are reminded that any information distributed on behalf of the government will always be sent in writing.

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