

RPA News

Regulation. Protection. Action.

News update for all practitioners from the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner

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Commissioner warns legal clients against email and internet scams

On Thursday 7 January 2016 I issued a [Consumer Alert](#) warning both consumers and solicitors alike to protect themselves from trickery and infiltration by thieves and scammers.

This warning followed a [news report](#) on 6 January in *The Daily Mail Australia*, which published news of a cruel hoax involving a conveyancing client of UK solicitor. Scammers had somehow intercepted emails between the clients and their solicitors, and made their move just before a large payment was due to be made. The young couple received an email, apparently from their lawyers, advising them to transfer the deposit for their new home to a different bank account, as “the firm’s usual bank account was being audited”. The victims lost tens of thousands of pounds by transferring money to thieves, thinking they were entrusting money to their solicitor.

Although the Victorian regulator has not yet discovered these same frauds being perpetrated on Victorian clients, the likelihood of similar criminal activity affecting Victorians is high. Law firms are asked to anticipate the risk of their clients being tricked into transferring trust money inadvertently to thieves. Some of the steps to be taken or considered are listed in the [Consumer Alert](#), along with some useful links to other websites.

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