

[Scam warning after consumers left stranded at airports](#)

May 30,

The risks consumers face in booking travel online without carefully checking have been illustrated yet again, with NSW Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe urging the public not to deal with apparent travel scammers operating as www.myholidaysclub.com.

In a statement issued at the weekend and headlined PUBLIC WARNING – WWW.MYHOLIDAYSCLUB.COM, Stowe said Australian Consumer Law regulators including NSW Fair Trading and Consumer Affairs Victoria had received at least 15 complaints about the apparent scam.

“In 2015 and 2016, a number of Australian consumers received unsolicited calls offering deals on travel and accommodation to various domestic and international destinations, asking them via email to pay for the bookings with a bank transfer,” Stowe said.

“Since 1 January 2015 nine consumers have reported to NSW Fair Trading that after purchasing travel, their e-tickets were not honoured, causing a total detriment of more than AUD 31,000.”

Consumer Affairs Victoria has received five complaints with an estimated total consumer detriment of more than AUD 50,000, with one consumer alone losing AUD 18,000.

The release from NSW Fair Trading said consumers had been left stranded at airports and unable to obtain refunds because calls and emails to the business were not answered and the addresses on the website did not relate to the business.

“The scam is suspected to be operating offshore with more than one consumer asked to transfer money overseas.

“The apparent scammers have previously provided e-tickets for flights, itineraries for hotels and vouchers for car hires. When consumers checked with airlines/ hotels/car hires their bookings were confirmed but then 48 hours before flights, payments were withdrawn. More recently, no travel or accommodation confirmations have been received. Consumers seeking refunds have been told to forward additional funds to cover the costs of refunds.

“The website myholidaysclub.com is still operating and phone numbers are still connected, posing a serious risk to consumers,” a NSW Fair Trading statement advised.

“The website lists Australian phone numbers that change periodically. Those numbers ring for an extended period of time and if they are answered, it is with a general greeting that does not mention the business name. The website also lists business addresses in Victoria that are residential addresses.”

NSW Fair Trading said the Australian Business Number (ABN) used by the apparent scammers appears to have been appropriated from The Holiday Club Pty Ltd, which is unrelated to the scam.

“The website features poorly written text and false testimonials from alleged consumers in English-speaking countries.”

Under the Australian Consumer Law, it is an offence to wrongly accept payments without supplying goods or services. Consumers should be very wary when contacted by telemarketers offering cut price deals that seem too good to be true.

“Avoid anyone asking for payment by bank transfer or telegraphic transfer,” Fair Trading advised.