



Department of Consumer  
and Employment Protection  
Government of Western Australia  
Consumer Protection

## *Media Statement*

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### **Overseas students hit by accommodation scam**

International students looking for accommodation in Perth are being targeted by cyber criminals advertising rooms and properties for let on the Internet.

Consumer Protection has received a number of complaints from international students who have paid upwards of \$2000 as a deposit or bond to secure accommodation advertised on Internet websites.

When the students arrive in Perth, they discover that the accommodation does not exist or is someone else's private home.

Consumer Protection Commissioner Anne Driscoll said international students should not lease accommodation sight unseen.

"Overseas-based scammers often use photographs and details of real homes, sourced from "For Sale or "For Lease" Internet advertisements, to hood wink students. The scammers ask the students to sign a lease agreement and then request a deposit, bond or rent to be sent by wire transfer," she said.

"In some cases, the scammers have approached international students who have posted their interest in renting in WA on specialised websites.

"Students should always wait until they have inspected the property before handing over money and should never wire transfer money to strangers because it is untraceable."

Ms Driscoll said international students were best advised to book accommodation through their university or college accommodation support services.

"These services have been established to ensure students are not taken advantage off by scammers or unscrupulous landlords," she said. "They can also provide important information about your legal rights as a tenant or border if you choose to rent privately."

#### **Statement Ends**

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