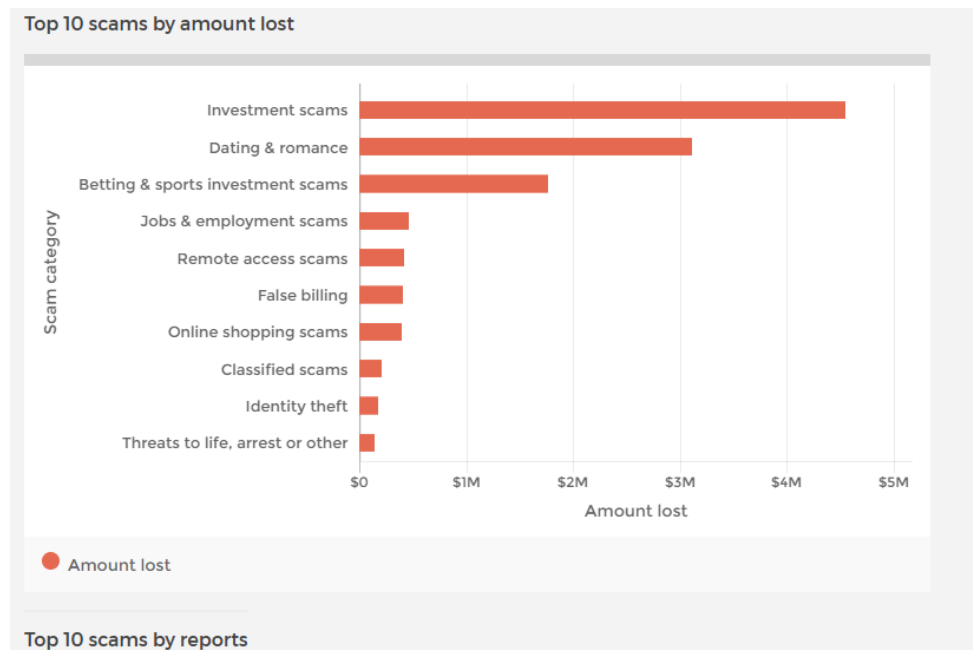


Link for facebook - <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/get-help/real-life-stories/dating-romance-scam-georginas-facebook-fianc%C3%A9-leaves-her-flat-broke>

Balranald Shire Council wishes to remind residents to be cautious and keep an eye out for scams that can come from phone calls, email, social media, Facebook etc. The ACCC Scamwatch report that there are various ways scammers become involved with unsuspecting citizens including; investment, dating & romance, betting, online shopping, identity theft etc. In the year 2017 the total loss through Investment scams was over \$31M with 1997 reports filed.



2017 Table from
Scamwatch.gov.au

Investment scams had the highest financial loss in the year to 2017 where by you are offered a seminar that makes claims such as 'risk-free investment', 'be a millionaire in three years', or 'get-rich quick'. You are invited to attend a free seminar, but there are high fees to attend any further sessions. The scammer, posing as the promoter, may offer you a loan to cover both the cost of your attendance at the additional seminars and investments. You may see an advertisement promising a quick and easy way to 'unlock' your superannuation early. (taken from Scamwatch.gov.au)

Interestingly the second highest report of financial loss is in the category of Dating & Romance which is explained on the Scamwatch web site; Scammers typically create fake online profiles designed to lure you in. They may use a fictional name, or falsely take on the identities of real, trusted people such as military personnel, aid workers or professionals working abroad. They often claim to be from Australia or another western country, but travelling or working overseas. Often the scammer will pretend to need the money for some sort of personal emergency. For example, they may claim to have a severely ill family member who requires immediate medical attention such as an expensive operation, or they may claim financial hardship due to an unfortunate run of bad luck such as a failed business or mugging in the street. The scammer may also claim they want to travel to visit you, but cannot afford it unless you are able to lend them money to cover flights or other travel expenses. The scammers seem very convincing having 3763 reports of scams lodged for the 2017 year and majority coming from over 45yr olds.

There are many other types of scams to watch out for and report high financial losses include: Betting and Sports Investment, Jobs & Employment, Remote access scams (Remote access scams try to convince you that you have a computer or internet problem and that you need to buy new software to fix it), False Billing, Online shopping scams, Threats to life or arrest.

The Purpose of Scamwatch is to help you recognise scams and avoid them. You can find helpful resources or report information you believe to be a scam to the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission via scamwatch.gov.au

- End -