

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.01am AEST Sunday April 6, 2014

Consumer alert: warning about unsolicited calls from compensation touts

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) today warned consumers to be wary about unsolicited calls in connection with potential motor accident compensation claims.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan said information provided in these calls may be misleading or false, and the person receiving the call might be unable to determine which organisation is making the call or who the caller represents.

“In recent months, insurers have become aware of an increase in unsolicited calls to motorists that promote compensation services or ask for personal information,” Mr Whelan said.

“These calls can follow a car accident, and the caller may attempt to refer the motorist to a claims or compensation service. The ICA strongly encourages anyone receiving an unsolicited call to protect their personal information.”

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), which operates the SCAMwatch website strongly supported the ICA’s concerns. SCAMwatch provides information to consumers and small businesses about how to recognise, avoid and report scams.

“With scammers now targeting Australians in a myriad of ways, it is now more important than ever that we stay alert to scam approaches. The key message for consumers is, if you receive a phone call out of the blue promising money or offering services, verify the number independently or just hang up. If something is too good to be true, it probably is,” ACCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard said.

The ICA offers the following general advice to consumers:

- If you receive an unsolicited call of this nature, do not provide any personal information. Instead, ask the caller for the caller’s name, organisation, website, email address and a return phone number. You can report the call and this information by visiting the ACCC’s SCAM watch website – www.scamwatch.gov.au – or call the SCAMwatch ACCC Infocentre on 1300 795 995 or call your insurer
- If you receive an unsolicited call, and you have had a motor accident, you are strongly advised to contact your insurer.
- If you receive an unsolicited call, and you have suffered an injury in a motor accident, you can also contact the relevant motor or transport accidents authority in your State or Territory.
 - NSW: contact the Claims Advisory Service of the NSW Motor Accidents Authority on 1300 656 919 to find out the Green Slip insurer of the vehicle that caused the accident

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- ACT: contact the ACT CTP insurance scheme on 13 22 81, <http://www.treasury.act.gov.au/compulsorytpi/index.shtml>
 - NT: contact TIO Motor Accidents Compensation on 1300 301 833, <http://www.tiofi.com.au/wps/wcm/connect/tio/website/mac/>
 - QLD: contact the Motor Accident Insurance Commission (MAIC) on 1300 302 568, www.maic.qld.gov.au
 - SA: contact the Motor Accident Commission's (MAC) motor injury fraud on 1800 013 443, www.mac.sa.gov.au
 - TAS: contact the Motor Accidents Insurance Board (MAIB) on 1800 006 224, www.maib.tas.gov.au
 - VIC: contact the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) on 1300 654 329 or 1800 332 556, www.tac.vic.gov.au
 - WA: contact the Insurance Commission of Western Australia (ICWA) on 08 9264 3333, www.icwa.wa.gov.au
- If the person making the unsolicited call has knowledge of your personal information, and you believe that they should not have this information, you may be able to make a privacy complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Contact the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

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