**Question on Notice**

**No. 407**

**Asked on Thursday, 13 March 2008**

**MR MOORHEAD** asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minster Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland (Mr Shine) –

**QUESTION:**

(1) Will the Attorney-General inform the House of the results of the Office of Fair Trading's 'Fraud Fortnight' campaign?

(2) Did the campaign raise awareness in Queensland of the presence of fraud schemes?

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Honourable Member for the question and his interest in protecting consumers from fraudsters.

I am pleased to say that the Office of Fair Trading's participation in the national Fraud Fortnight campaign did result in some excellent media exposure highlighting fraud schemes in Queensland.

This media exposure translated into a significant increase in the number complaints about scams to Fair Trading and to the scam pages on the OFT website.

There was a 56% increase in the rate of scam complaints over the two weeks and a 39% increase in traffic to the website compared to the previous three fortnights.

There were a total of 98 complaints and alerts about scams during Fraud Fortnight compared to an average of 63 complaints in the three preceding fortnights.

As usual, the common scam types included overseas lotteries, advance fee fraud (Nigerian fraud), chain letters, employment scams (often money-mule types), invoice fraud, gambling/share trading software, and phishing.

The 41 identifiable scam web pages on the Fair Trading website also saw a considerable increase in visits during Fraud Fortnight.

During the two weeks the scam pages had a total of 2,810 page views which was an increase of 792 views compared to the average for the previous three fortnights.

The OFT website experienced its busiest day on Thursday March 6th with 373 views on the scam pages that day. This was more than double the pre-campaign average for Thursday's

It's quite clear that the combination of Fraud Fortnight and the strong messages from hard working local members raised the awareness of scams in Queensland resulting in an increase in hits on the OFT website.

Fraudulent scams cause significant financial hardship to those people unfortunate enough to be caught by these criminals.

The Office of Fair Trading received more than 1625 complaints about scams last year and these figures are only a fraction of the number of scams we know are circulating in the community.

Many victims of scams don't report the crime because they feel they've been duped and are willing to lose their money without complaining out of fear of embarrassment.

Fraudsters can make tens of thousands of dollars from unsuspecting victims, and they don't care who they target.

However, through target campaigns like Fraud Fortnight and other ongoing campaigns this Government will help maintain awareness of these scams and educate consumers about scam pitfalls.

Queenslanders looking for further information about protecting themselves from scams should visit the Office of Fair Trading at www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au or phone 13 13 04.