WHAT IS A GIFT CARD SCAM?

As the number of Australian's being scammed continues to rise, it's important to remain vigilant about gift card scams and how you and your loved ones can avoid them.



So, what exactly is a gift card scam?

A gift card scam typically involves scammers tricking or threatening people into buying gift cards, before stealing the value of the card. Often the gift cards are from reputable companies such as Coles, Apple, Myer, Google Play and Steam.

Once the scammer has used the value of the gift card it is often impossible to track. This leaves the victim at a financial loss, distressed and embarrassed. It is estimated that less than five percent of victims report being scammed.



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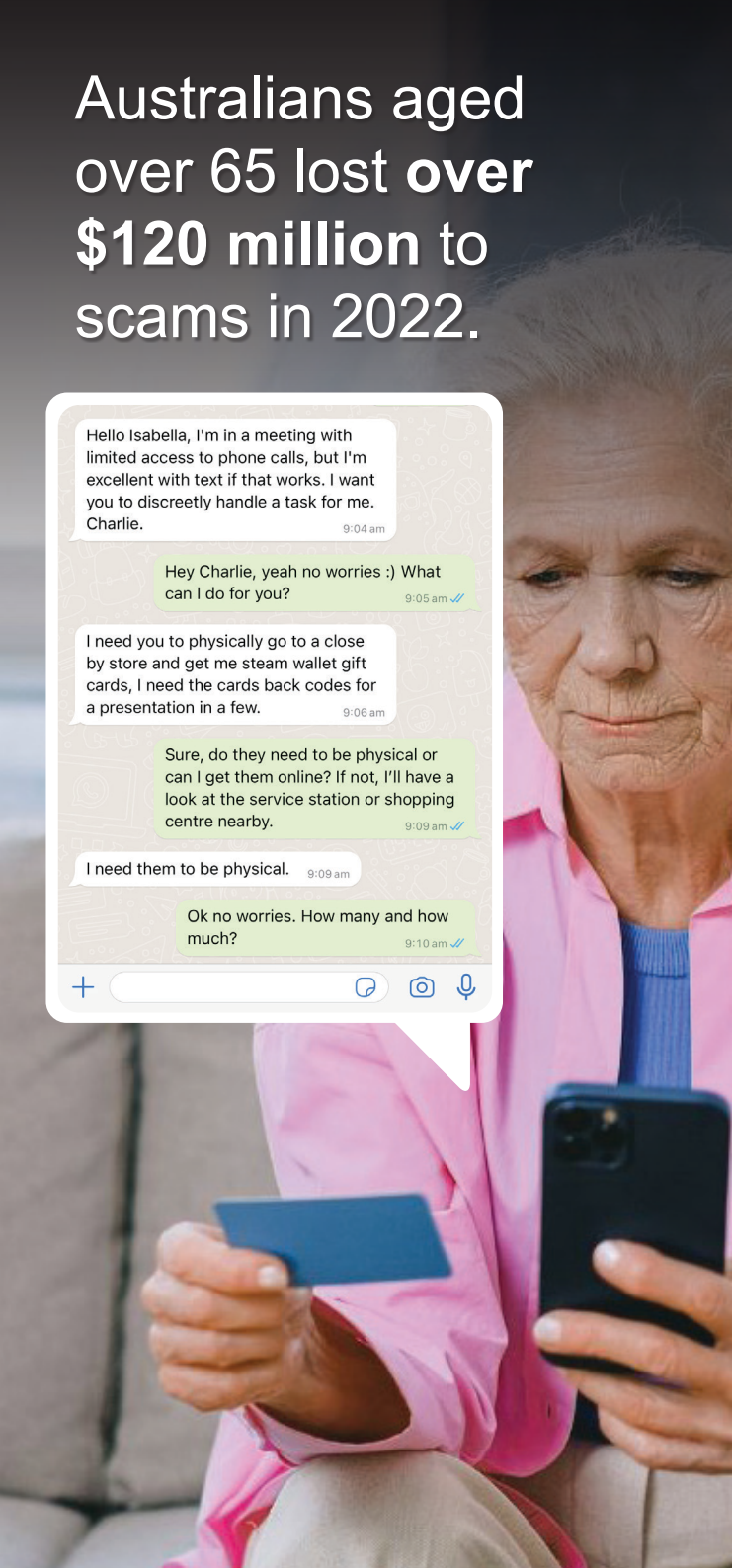
HOW TO SPOT A GIFT CARD SCAM



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Australians aged over 65 lost **over $120 million** to scams in 2022.



HOW DO GIFT CARD SCAMS WORK?

Gift card scammers prey on people's trust and their desire to resolve issues immediately.

The scammers will often text or e-mail their victims, posing as your boss, people known to you, legitimate businesses, or authority figures.

They will then claim the victim owes money for a variety of reasons including tax bills, an online service, or as a request from a person they know.

Scammers create a sense of urgency and can be threatening to the victim or their loved ones. This may be the threat of arrest, court action and other penalties if they do not follow the payment solutions offered.



The victim is then told to make the payment in the form of gift cards. Once the gift cards have been purchased, the scammer will ask the victim to share the gift card numbers and PINs, usually by sending a photo via text message or other messaging apps.

Once the scammer has these details, they quickly redeem the value of the gift cards, leaving the victim empty handed.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM A VICTIM?

Remember, legitimate companies will NEVER ask for gift cards as a form of payment.

If you do receive a request for a gift card, ensure you verify the authenticity with the person making the request.

If you think you have been contacted by a scammer, or have already provided gift card details to them, there are several steps you should take:

- If you have been contacted about making a payment through gift cards, stop and verify the authenticity with someone you trust. More likely than not, it's a scam.
- If you have already bought gift cards, do NOT provide their code or pin to anyone.
- If you have been scammed, report the scam to **scamwatch.gov.au** and the police.
- Make sure you talk to your loved ones about scams to help prevent others from falling victim to the same scam.

WHO CAN SUPPORT ME?

If you have any concerns about your gift card purchase at Coles, please pick up a Scam Alert Leaflet, speak to the Store Manager or call our Customer Care team on **1800 061 562**.