



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 24 April 2009

All you need is love...and \$22,000. Love Search Intros accused of swindling diabetic pensioner.

Consumer Action Law Centre (**Consumer Action**) has issued legal action against R & H Consulting, trading as Love Search Intros, an introduction agency, on behalf of a 73 year old client whose diabetes medication causes short term memory loss, diminished cognitive abilities and a weakened capacity to process numbers.

The claim alleges multiple breaches of the Victorian *Introduction Agents Act (1997)*, unconscionable conduct, misleading and deceptive conduct, and seeks almost \$22,000 in refunds and damages.

Consumer Action Senior Policy Officer, Zac Gillam, said that the claim alleges that Love Search Intros had demanded at least thirteen payments from the client over a period of approximately seven months, for introduction services which were not properly provided and/or not provided as required by the Act.

"Our client approached Love Search Intros after seeing a newspaper advertisement in August 2007. Despite what we say are his obvious frailties, Love Search Intros took an initial fee of \$370."

"We are instructed that over the next seven months Love Search Intros continually pressured our client, demanding successive payments until he had paid them nearly \$22,000," Mr Gillam said.

"At one stage a representative from Love Search Intros allegedly drove our client to a branch of his bank twice in a week, so that he could increase the limit on his credit card in order to make further payments. The second time the branch refused to increase the limit."

"He claims that once he was refused, he was advised by a Love Search Intros employee to mortgage his house."

Mr Gillam said that this was not the first time in recent months that Consumer Action has taken legal action on behalf of a vulnerable consumer regarding the conduct of an introduction agency in Victoria.

"Despite our client's obvious frailties, Love Search Intros apparently continued to pressure him for payments, including accepting money orders even though they had completed a warning schedule that there was no reasonable chance of providing my client with any introductions."

Mr Gillam said that Consumer Action's claim has been lodged in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

"We are claiming damages for our client, for full repayment of all monies paid."

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