



Find out where your flowers are really coming from this Valentine's Day

11 February 2022

The ACCC is urging consumers buying flowers this Valentine's Day to ask where their flowers are coming from and make sure they are not being misled into thinking large 'order gatherers' are locally-based florists.

The ACCC is investigating the florist industry and looking closely at the operations of online order gatherers, and reports that some large national suppliers are making misleading representations online that they are local florists or that their business has a local presence, when that is not the case.

These large businesses either create floral arrangements themselves in large distribution centres or outsource orders to local businesses after charging undisclosed commissions.

"Consumers are often willing to pay premium prices at local florists in the hope they will get fresh flowers, a direct point of contact and reliable delivery. When national order gatherers use suburb specific information in their online digital marketing, it may mislead a consumer into thinking they are dealing with a small local business," ACCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard said.

When order gatherers have a business relationship with a local florist, they should make that relationship clear to consumers including if a commission is taken from a consumer's payment.

"Hidden commissions can reduce the overall value of a customer's order and can undermine small businesses that often operate on small margins," Ms Rickard said.

Ordering indirectly through an order gatherer may also reduce a consumer's ability to determine the quality or the origin of the flowers they are buying.

Industry reports suggest that many consumers do not know that their flowers are not locally grown, but instead have been cut days earlier and treated with chemicals, before being imported into Australia.

"The ACCC is reminding all businesses in the industry, including florists, growers and order gatherers that they must be able to substantiate claims they make, which includes statements about where their business is based and where their flowers come from. Any business unable to do so may be in breach of the Australian Consumer Law," Ms Rickard said.

"We are aware of reports that supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic may impact the supply and price of roses, so our advice is to shop around and shop early."

When ordering flowers online or over the phone, the ACCC recommends that consumers:

- check for a physical address when searching online and ask the business where their operations are physically located
- search for reviews on external review websites
- check a local business' social media pages
- ask where the flowers are grown, if this is important to them.

The ACCC is asking florists to share their experiences about their dealings with order gatherers in an [online survey](#). The survey closes on 28 February 2022.

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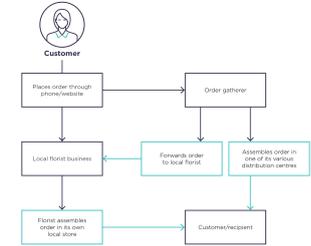
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