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## Fraud victims just don't listen: police

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Three in four victims of email investment scams continue to send money after police warn them they're being deceived, Queensland's top fraud cop says.

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Detective Superintendent Brian Hay detailed the extent to which fraud victims became caught up in the scams as he called on the community to help rather than ridicule those who had been duped.

Investigators from Nigeria, Ghana and the United States yesterday joined with Queensland police at a conference south of Brisbane focused on tackling the global "fraud pandemic".

Common email frauds feature requests for money to unlock a promised inheritance payment in the future or reap rewards from a business opportunity, while criminals also prey on vulnerable people through long-running romance scams.

Superintendent Hay, head of the Fraud and Corporate Crime Group, said each month about 2000 Queenslanders transferred a total of \$2 million to scammers in Nigeria and Ghana.

He said police often had a hard time convincing fraud victims they had been tricked.

"We know in the business investment category 76 per cent of people continue to send money after we tell them it's a fraud," Superintendent Hay said.

"I've had numerous circumstances where no matter what I do I can't convince them it's a fraud."

Superintendent Hay cited the sad case of an elderly north Queensland man who had fallen for an elaborate romance scam.

Such scams typically involve tricking people into sending tens of thousands of dollars to fraudsters who pretend to have fallen in love with them.

"Two years ago I tried to convince him it was a fraud and now he's lost his house and still doesn't fully believe," Superintendent Hay said.

Superintendent Hay urged people to have greater compassion for scam victims.

"It's still a concern because it's very easy to sit back in the cold light of day with no emotional attachment to look at the circumstances and be critical," he said.

"But if you've built a relationship over nine months and feel you've given over your trust to the fraudster you've got this heavy emotional investment.

"We as a society tend to say, they're stupid or greedy, [but] anyone approached at the right time in their lives with right

stories will be vulnerable to a fraud.

“Fraud victims are victims of a crime, they need our respect and need our support and need our help to rebuild their lives.”

Speakers at yesterday's fraud symposium at the Hyatt Regency, Sanctuary Cove, included law enforcement officials from Nigerian and Ghana.

The United States Department of Justice and the FBI were also represented at the conference.

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