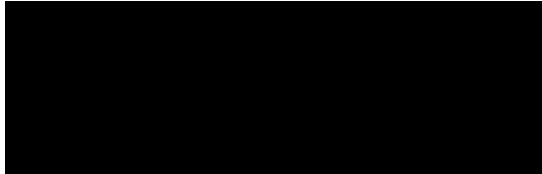


21 December 2018



Official Information Act #18.134 – WiseBanc / Bitcoin Evolution

1. We refer to your request of 18 December 2018 for information about any complaints received by the Commerce Commission (the Commission) about WiseBanc or Bitcoin Evolution.
2. We have treated this as a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Our response

3. We have decided to transfer your request to the Financial Markets Authority (FMA) under section 14(b)(ii) of the OIA, on the basis that we believe the information is more closely connected with the functions of the FMA.
4. The Commission has not received any complaints about WiseBanc or Bitcoin Evolution/Revolution.
5. However, we note that the FMA¹, United Kingdom Financial Conduct Authority² and Central Bank of Ireland³ have all issued warnings about WiseBanc. The FMA has also issued a warning about a company called Bitcoin Revolution.
6. The FMA WiseBanc warning was issued on 12 December 2018 and states:

WiseBanc is not registered on the Financial Service Providers Register, it is therefore not permitted to provide financial services to New Zealand residents.

WiseBanc are based overseas with no presence in New Zealand and do not appear to be subject to regulation by an overseas regulator.

The UK Financial Conduct Authority and the Central Bank of Ireland have each recently published a public warning about WiseBanc and Orion Service EOOD.

¹ <https://fma.govt.nz/news-and-resources/warnings-and-alerts/wisebanc/>

² <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/warnings/wisebanc>

³ <https://www.centralbank.ie/news/article/central-bank-of-ireland-issues-warning-on-unauthorised-investment-firm-WisebancOrionServiceEOODBulgaria>

7. From this information, it appears that WiseBanc is an unregulated forex trading platform based in Bulgaria, not Australia.
8. The FMA Bitcoin Revolution warning⁴ was issued on 24 October 2018 (last updated 12 December 2018) and states:

It could be involved in a scam.

Articles posted on social media about The New Zealand Treasury and/or current or former prime ministers investing in bitcoin are false.

9. We can find no evidence that our Prime Minister nor Keven Mealamu endorse WiseBanc or Bitcoin Evolution/Revolution.
10. We suggest you contact the FMA for further information **before** engaging any further with these traders.
11. Unsolicited e-mails offering investment opportunities are rarely genuine and we refer you to this advisory from fraud awareness week:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KabBZx2u7U>
12. Please note the Commission intends to publish this response on its website. Personal details will be redacted from the published response.
13. If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us at oja@comcom.govt.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'R' and 'B' in a stylized, cursive font, followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Rosie Brown
OIA Coordinator

⁴ <https://fma.govt.nz/news-and-resources/warnings-and-alerts/bitcoin-revolution-limited/>