

## Donna wins the luckiest job on earth

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January 27, 2008

A GROWING number of Australians are turning what was once a hobby into a job, netting tens of thousands of dollars by entering competitions.

While cash can be on offer, most competitions offer prizes, which many "compers" then sell through online auction sites.

But authorities warn that the cost of entering - including stamps, phone calls and text messages - can outweigh the gains.

Donna Battams, the founder of AussieCompers, said most compers were women, many of them stay-at-home mothers aged between 20 and 40.

"There are quite a number of people who treat comping as a full-time, or at the very least, a part-time job," Ms Battams said.

"I have a girlfriend who last year made \$80,000 [in prizes].

"In 2006 I made over \$70,000."

Two years ago, Ms Battams's winnings allowed her to buy a block of land in Queensland.

Her haul includes tens of thousands of dollars in cash, \$30,000 in overseas trips, \$25,000 in travel within Australia, \$40,000 in home services, a laptop computer, a home theatre system, a scooter and a GPS navigating system. She has also netted about \$20,000 in toys, as well as mobile phones, stereos, iPods, televisions, books, DVDs and movie tickets.

"I can morph one prize into something else by selling it, or I can simply give stuff away to others less fortunate," she said.

The Australian Taxation Office does not require the proceeds of competitions to be declared as income.

Serious compers can spend more than six hours a day entering competitions online, over the phone or via text message, and outlay time and money shopping for the products required to enter competitions.

Associate Professor David Bednall, a consumer behaviour expert from Deakin University, said: "Some of the competitions are designed to induce purchases and some are designed to build mailing lists. The cost of entering these things can be quite high if you have to purchase anything to enter."

*Source: The Sun-Herald*

*This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/26/1201157740010.html>*