

Media Release

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HELP FOR CONSUMERS AND SMALL BUSINESS TO MARK WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY

A new fact sheet to assist consumers in buying household goods and an online tool to help small businesses comply with consumer protection laws have been launched to mark World Consumer Rights Day today.

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs Paul White says Consumer and Business Services (CBS) received 469 complaints in 2012 about household goods such as furniture, appliances and home entertainment systems.

“Over half of these complaints were about the quality of the goods and consumers having difficulty getting the problem addressed by the trader,” Mr White said.

“The *Buying household goods fact sheet* will provide consumers with helpful tips as well as a warning about extended warranties that can sometimes turn out to be completely worthless.

“By helping consumers to make more informed decisions at the time of purchase they will be able to prevent common issues before they occur.”

Mr White said the launch of the *Small business self assessment checklist* serves as a timely reminder for small business owners in South Australia to be aware of their obligations to consumers.

“We want a thriving business community in South Australia where businesses are innovative while respecting consumer rights,” Mr White said.

Under the Australia Consumer Law (ACL) all businesses have responsibilities when it comes to the products or services they deliver, how they market them and in their dealings with customers.

The checklist help small business owners quickly and easily identify which sections of the ACL apply to their practices by directing them straight to the information they need to know.

“Small business owners don’t have the time to work through legislation to identify which regulations apply to them. The new checklist, which is available on line at all times, makes it easy to pin-point which business practices require compliance under the law,” Mr White said.

The checklist covers a range of small business issues such as contracts, advertising, consumer guarantees, refunds, lay-bys, billing and receipts.

“Consumers benefit when businesses trade fairly, but on the flip side of this, both consumers and businesses suffer when there is non-compliance,” he said.

“Given the significant penalties associated with breaching the law, this new tool will



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help small business owners in South Australia to avoid potentially expensive fines or court action.”

The maximum penalty for breaching the ACL is \$220,000 for an individual and \$1.1 million for a corporation.

The *Buying household goods fact sheet* and *Small business self assessment checklist* are available on www.cbs.sa.gov.au or phone CBS on 131 882 to request a copy.

For more information on the Australian Consumer Law visit www.consumerlaw.gov.au