

Thursday 19th July 2007

Black-market 'Armani' leather jackets seized in raid

Eleven large boxes, filled with more than 400 polyester jackets, have been seized under the *Trade Standards Act 1979* due to insufficient labelling on the garments.

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, said the confiscation follows a warning issued earlier this month, urging people to be wary of salespeople attempting to sell **fake "Armani"** leather jackets from the back of vans and cars.

All of the items seized have '**Reportage**' labels with a fake certificate of authentication, explaining that the brand is a division of Armani. It is a breach of the *Fair Trading Act 1987*, to misrepresent the history and characteristics of goods.

A tip off from a member of the public led authorities to uncover a stash of unauthentic goods inside a Cavan warehouse, after the person recalled seeing an article in the paper about fake leather jackets possibly being sold in South Australia.

"The information supplied by members of the community has been of great assistance in recovering hundreds of these jackets, which fail to comply with industry standards," Ms Rankine said.

Witness accounts suggest that the sellers were ripping off labels, which stated that the jackets were made in China.

"These jackets did not have sufficient labelling required including care instructions, or what material the jacket was made of. It's also understood those in possession of the jackets had been tearing off the original labels," Ms Rankine said.

Australian representatives for Armani have advised Consumer Affairs that '**Reportage**' is not an Armani label and Armani do not manufacture goods of this kind in China.

Consumer Affairs has launched its own investigation, and is also working closely with SAPOL along with interstate fair-trading agencies, with a view to establishing any links between the jackets found and those being sold on the street from random vehicles.

Intelligence indicates some salespeople have been approaching potential customers at service stations, near car parks or along the street near cafes. They have Italian accents and tell their intended victims they have leather jackets for promotional use and will do 'a really good price' as the jackets are worth between \$1100 and \$1300. Stocks presented to people are bomber style jackets in leather-look or suede, and in a variety of colours.

“If anyone has bought one of these jackets from the aforementioned salespeople, they are urged to call Consumer Affairs immediately so they can be included in the investigation. Our aim is to stop these itinerant fraudsters in their tracks,” Ms Rankine said.

It’s not the quality of the jackets alone or the misrepresentations about their origins and what they are made of that triggers concern.

People are also not being informed about their door-to-door cooling off entitlements. Any trader working outside their business premises and approaching someone to sell goods is considered to be selling door-to-door. The *Fair Trading Act 1987* requires that, if a trader selling door to door sells an item for over \$50, the buyer must receive documentation to sign and be informed about their cooling off rights.

Anybody who thinks they may have bought a fake leather jacket in this fashion should phone Consumer Affairs on 8204 9777. Regional callers can phone on 131 882.