

Tuesday, 5 July 2005

HELP FOR CAR BUYERS

Consumer Affairs Minister, Karlene Maywald today launched a new initiative to help car buyers, particularly those in remote areas, from being targeted by unscrupulous operators.

“Last year, the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) received about 8,500 complaints about buying or owning a vehicle in SA,” Minister Maywald said.

“Complaints about buying a car are consistently in the top three of all complaints reported to OCBA and the Office is particularly concerned about disadvantaged consumers who are being conned into buying cars that are not roadworthy.”

“OCBA has been alerted about unlicensed dealers passing around scrapbook catalogues to consumers in remote areas who don’t have ready access to vehicles for sale. Consumers place their order and pay their money, only to receive an unroadworthy vehicle.”

“The best defence for any consumer is to understand their rights. An education program has been developed specifically for disadvantaged consumers in remote areas featuring a new booklet providing tips on things to look out for when buying a car,” Minister Maywald said.

“The Office is hoping to reduce the number of complaints by cracking down on shady car deals and helping consumers to better understand their rights when buying a car.”

The guide to “Buying or owning a car” provides answers to commonly asked questions, including buying a new or second hand car, private sales, buying from a dealer, contracts, warranties and repairs.”

“Consumers spend a large amount of money on cars every year. In addition to the purchase price there are running costs, servicing and repairs. Some of these costs can be reduced if consumers make an informed decision about the type of car that’s right for them and one that’s in good working order,” Minister Maywald said.

OCBA has worked collaboratively with the Motor Trade Association (MTA) and the Royal Automotive Association (RAA) to develop this educational booklet.

Minister Maywald said anyone considering buying a vehicle could get hold of a copy of the new booklet by contacting OCBA on 8204 9515.

For more information about consumer rights and obligations when purchasing a car, telephone 8204 9777 or 131 882 (regional callers) or visit www.ocba.sa.gov.au.