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'Do not' get confused by call registers

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, is urging South Australians not to get confused between two different registers, which deal with unsolicited calls and contacts.

The Federal Government last year established the 'Do Not *Call* Register' to deal with unwanted telemarketing contacts. Since then it has emerged that a private business has also set up a similar register called the 'Do Not *Contact* Register'.

"People should be very careful not to confuse the two registers. The Commonwealth initiative is a free service crafted specifically to stop telemarketing calls. The private register however, is a business operated by an Australian company that charges a fee for its service," Ms Rankine said.

The aim of the Do Not *Contact* Register is to combat uninvited telemarketing, direct mail and email marketing but subscribers are charged an annual fee of \$10 for every telephone number or address they record on the Do Not *Contact* Register.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs has been contacted by people who've been confused by the similar names of the services advertised, and the fact that one requires them to hand over money to register.

"The similarity in names will inevitably create some confusion, but people need to be aware that the services on offer differ significantly," Ms Rankine said.

The Commonwealth register allows telemarketers to check their lists against the register's database. Contacting someone whose number is registered on the database is an offence punishable by a substantial fine.

The private service however, claims it will advise businesses of your wish not to be called and will simply "remind" them if they continue to call you. The service says it will take up the issue of repeated contacts with the Privacy Commissioner and reserves the right to commence legal action on your behalf.

"It's important people recognise the difference between the two services. Ultimately it's up to them which service they choose to subscribe to, but they need to be able to make this choice clearly and without confusion.

Just ask yourself 'Do I need to pay if the free service offers me all I need?' and 'Will I get any extra benefit by paying for another service?' Ms Rankine said.

If people have any questions about these telemarketing registers or would like a brochure they should contact the Commonwealth 'Do Not *Call* Register' on 1300 792 958 (local call cost), visit the website at www.donotcall.gov.au or contact OCBA on 8204 9777.