

News Release

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Hon Gail Gago
Minister for State/Local Government
Relations
Minister for the Status of Women
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister Government Enterprises
Minister Ast Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Energy

Wednesday, 9th December 2009

CONSUMERS TO AVOID EVENING DOOR TO DOOR DISTRACTIONS

South Australians will be spared an annoying evening doorknock from traders peddling their business with our Government planning to adopt a national approach cutting off door-to-door trade at 6pm (currently 8pm) when nationally consistent consumer law comes in to force.

The earlier cut off for door-to-door trading has been settled at a meeting of the nation's Consumer Affairs Ministers who also agreed on the final form of the new Australian Consumer Law.

SA Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago says it includes plans for a new national product safety law carrying tougher enforcement powers.

“This is a significant step in bringing about improved protections for all consumers,” says Minister Gago.

“The new Australian Consumer Law represents the largest reform to consumer laws in more than two decades, offering consumers greater protection than ever before.

“All consumers - regardless of which state or territory they live in - need to be protected by laws that are up to date and traders need clear guidelines about what conduct is or isn't acceptable.

“South Australian families lead increasingly hectic lives and we recognise their right to guard their privacy from these intrusive doorknocks, while also providing business substantial opportunity to provide their goods or services during more suitable hours.

“Importantly, visits will still be able to occur outside these hours by arrangement with the householder.”

Minister Gago highlighted three areas of reform that form part of the Australian Consumer Law.

- **Product safety** - A new national product safety law will be in place by 31 December 2010 and will place tighter controls on traders that supply, install or are involved with the maintenance of consumer products. The law will also give regulators tougher enforcement powers.
- **Unsolicited sales practices** - The Ministers agreed that people selling goods and services door-to-door will be limited in the hours they can approach households, to protect consumers who may become anxious or irritated with an unexpected knock at the door after the evening dinner. A single national law will set nationally consistent default hours, and SA plans to reduce the

allowable time from an 8pm cut off to 6pm weekdays (no door to door trade is allowed on Sunday or after 5pm Saturday).

Minister Gago also sought action in relation to allegations that some traders are infusing water into meat and poultry to increase its net weight. This item was brought to the Ministerial Council after concerns were raised by the Hon Ian Hunter MLC. The Council agreed to write to Food Standards Australia / New Zealand which has responsibility for the Food Standard Code that regulates the use and disclosure of food additives, including water.

“I am excited about the future of consumer protection in Australia, where consumers can buy goods and services with greater confidence and businesses can thrive with simpler streamlined legislation, applicable across the country,” says Minister Gago.